

22. RESOLUTION "DESTABILIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FRONT-LINE STATES"

Ms. Wong then moved the adoption of the Resolution "Destabilization of the Southern African Front-Line States." There was no discussion and

89-GS-88 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Destabilization of the Southern African Front-Line States."

DESTABILIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FRONT-LINE STATES

Background

The United Church of Christ has since 1965 demonstrated its opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa and its commitment to supporting and working for peace with justice throughout Southern Africa, and

We believe that peace with justice is God's way for us. A just peace is grounded in God's activity in creation. Creation shows the desire to sustain the world and not destroy. A just peace is also grounded in the reconciling activity of Jesus Christ. Human sin is the rejection of the covenant of friendship with God and one another and the creation and perpetuation of structures of evil. Through God's own suffering love in the cross, the power of these structures has been broken and the possibility for relationship restored. (From the United Church of Christ Peace Pronouncement)

The United Church of Christ has declared itself to be a just peace church, calling on local churches to, among other things, become:

A community of hope, believing a just peace is possible, working towards this end, and communicating to the larger world the excitement and possibility of a just peace.

A community of biblical and theological reflection, studying the scriptures, the Christian story, and the working of the Spirit in the struggle against injustice and oppression.

A community of empowerment, renewing and training people for making peace/doing justice.

A community of solidarity of and with the poor, seeking to be present in places of oppression, poverty and violence, and standing with the oppressed in the struggle to resist change and evil.

A community of resistance, standing against social structures comfortable with violence and injustice.

The South African regime has not limited its oppression and violent repression of the people to inside the borders of South Africa, but has since 1975 also engaged in an intentional militarised program of covert and overt destabilization of the front-line states, including Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The South African regime has spent \$15 billion per year on this war against its neighboring states, which has claimed the lives of over 100,000 people since 1980.

This destabilization has taken primarily two forms:

Direct military confrontation, including military invasions

(Angola 1975 et al) and the raiding and bombing of "targets" in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia (these raids have escalated in recent years).

The apartheid regime has sponsored counter insurgency (contra) terrorist groups in Angola and Mozambique, which attack civilians and destroy crops and infrastructure. As a result, over 8.5 million Angolans and Mozambicans — roughly half the rural population of these countries have become internal refugees.

In the case of Mozambique, it has become clear that the MNR - Mozambique National Resistance - (known as "RENAMO" or the "armed bandits") does not have a political vision or political goals. The group was formed in the late 70's by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Agency, to provide intelligence and to harass the Zimbabwean liberation movement which depended on Mozambican solidarity in the final days of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

The State Department concurs with this assessment of RENAMO:

"RENAMO is the creation of alien forces - that is to say, foreign forces. Sure, there are some Mozambicans who work for it and who carry out its policy and actions - largely destructive actions. But it is primarily the influence of outsiders - of South Africans, of private Portuguese elements - that account for RENAMO'S position and remaining influence."

—Dr. Chester Crocker, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

The MNR (RENAMO) continues to exist and is now engaged in the intentional destabilization of Mozambique and her newly-won independence from Portuguese colonialism. RENAMO has enjoyed the support of the South African regime, with clearly documented evidence that South Africa not only plays a role in their destabilization campaign, but in fact trains, equips, and arms "RENAMO" from camps in the Northern Transvaal region of South Africa.

RENAMO has wreaked havoc on the rural population of Mozambique. Destroying farmland, peasant villages, clinics, schools, development projects, food convoys and all infrastructure, they have engaged in a campaign of bloody terror which has included cutting off the noses and ears of their victims. They have irreversibly traumatized young boys, forcing them to go into villages to kill and destroy. This "reign of terror" has rendered Mozambique crippled in the area of agricultural production, and has forced the government of Mozambique to spend increasing amounts of the budget on defense.

The following is testimony from an 18 year old Mozambican refugee:

"RENAMO came to our village, about 15 men. They came to our house and demanded something to eat. My father slaughtered a chicken, they said that wasn't enough; he slaughtered a cock, they said that wasn't enough; he slaughtered a goat, they said that wasn't enough; so they told him they would have to slaughter him. They speared and stabbed him to death, my mother began to cry, so they killed her in the same way. I managed to escape, leaving my sisters behind. I don't know if they are still alive."

Currently 4.5 million Mozambicans are at risk of famine. More than two million have fled their homes. It is estimated that at

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least 100,000 people died between 1975 and 1985 as a direct result of actions by Rhodesian, South African, and MNR bandits. Another 100,000 died in the 1983-84 famine, mainly because MNR activity made it impossible for people to grow food or to receive food relief.

In Angola, UNITA (Union of the Total Liberation of Angola) has, with the military aid and backing of both the South African regime and the United States government, continued to wage a war in Angola, destabilizing the Angolan government and escalating the massive human cost in terms of destruction of the infrastructure, the economy, and the maiming and killing of thousands of rural Angolan citizens. Despite Angola's food production capacity, oil and mineral wealth, and considerable infrastructure, Angola's development has been held back by continuous war. Direct attacks since 1980 include more than 168 bombing raids, 230 airborne landings, and four naval landings. As a result Angola spent \$7.6 billion for national defense between 1975-81 — four times its export earnings in the same period. The real tragedy of the war in Angola, according to an official of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), results from the land mines placed by UNITA in fields where people work.

"Over 23,000 Angolans have become amputees, he noted, most by stepping on U.S. and South African 'Claymore' mines, giving Angola the highest per capita amputee rate in the world." (Teklesadik Eshutu, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Representative, Angola 1986.)

The United States policy of "constructive engagement" has served to continually support and reinforce the South African government and underscore its actions, both inside South Africa and throughout the Southern African region. (The U.S. has given aid to UNITA totaling \$14 million in 1987 alone.)

In the face of this international campaign of destabilization and terror in Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was formed in 1979, with the involvement of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, for the purpose of regional cooperation, and with the following aims:

"The reduction of economic dependence, particularly on the Republic of South Africa;

- The forging of links between member states in order to create genuine and equitable regional integration;
- The mobilization of resources to promote the implementation of national, interstate and regional policies;
- Concerted action to secure international cooperation within the framework of SADCC's strategy of economic liberation."

Recent efforts and agreements have been initiated in Southern Africa by the State Department particularly in relation to the independence of Namibia and the immediate implementation of Resolution 435. All efforts to attain peace in the region are affirmed and supported. Such peace accords need to be implemented with moral and financial support, and upheld in good faith by all parties to the agreement.

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ demonstrated its op-

position to apartheid beginning in 1965 and passed the Divestment Pronouncement at the 15th General Synod, and the expanded criteria for Divestment at the 16th General Synod;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has declared itself to be a just peace church, calling on local churches and members to be among other things "a community of solidarity of and with the poor, seeking to be present in places of oppression, poverty, and violence;"

WHEREAS, the South African regime has promoted an apartheid foreign policy engaging in a campaign of destabilization against its neighbors seeking to force them to submit to South African political, economic and military domination;

WHEREAS, the Mozambique National Resistance is a military organization created by foreign forces and maintained by South Africa solely for the purpose of the destabilization of the internationally recognized government of Mozambique and is engaged in a campaign of terror against the people of Mozambique, and

WHEREAS, the Union of the Total Liberation of Angola, (UNITA) has with military aid from the United States and aid and actual support of the South African military engaged in a campaign of destabilization against the internationally recognized government of Angola, destroying the infrastructure, killing thousands of civilians and maiming over 23,000 Angolans with land mines.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod:

1. Calls upon the office of the President of the United Church of Christ to:
 - a. Oppose U.S. aid to UNITA and call for the immediate withdrawal of all such aid, and the prohibition of future overt and/or covert aid to UNITA;
 - b. Commend the United States government for its initiatives to the government of Mozambique and support full diplomatic, trade, and development aid relations with Mozambique;
 - c. Call upon the government of the United States to pressure the government of South Africa to cease its campaign of destabilization of the region forthwith; reaffirming the United Church of Christ's Divestment Pronouncement of 1985, by the 15th General Synod and the resolution on Expanded Criteria for Divestment and Advocacy voted by the 16th General Synod;
 - d. Commend the U.S. Congress for present aid to SADCC and call upon the U.S. Congress to appropriate increased aid to SADCC, permitting all members to qualify for aid, thereby promoting peaceful cooperation and strengthening the economic infrastructure of the region;
 - e. Call upon the government of the United States to recognize the government of Angola and institute full diplomatic relations with that country, and,
2. Calls upon the United Board for World Ministries in cooperation with the United Church of Christ Divestment Implementation Committee, to:
 - a. Engage in a serious educational campaign focused on the situation in the Southern African region as a whole;
 - b. Monitor events in the region, especially the peace process, and the progress towards the future independence of Namibia;
 - c. Continue to support all those working for a unified, non-

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racial, democratic South Africa and the abolition of apartheid, especially the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa and the South African Council of Churches;

- d. Pray earnestly for our sisters and brothers in Southern Africa, especially that their suffering may soon end and peace with justice may reign in all Southern Africa;
- e. Call upon the United Church Board for World Ministries to report back at General Synod 18.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

23. RESOLUTION "MINISTRY TO PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE"

Ms. Wong pointed out some changes to be made in the text, then she moved the adoption of the Resolution "Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience." After some discussion it was

89-GS-89 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience."

MINISTRY TO PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Background

Scripture informs us that our Creator has a concern and an interest for those who are afflicted and in captivity. This concern reflected in Isaiah 58:6-9 focuses our attention on the care of others and commits us to action and faithful witness as God's people: "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free . . . to share bread . . . to bring in the homeless poor . . . to cover the naked."

Hebrews 13:3 calls us to "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body." Scripture in so stating clarifies that this is not a mere mechanical act but one of true empathy for others.

In John 10:9-10 we are informed that abundant life is only possible when Christ is made known to us, in our lives, "I am the door . . . I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Jesus teaches us that he is continually revealing himself in human history and making himself known to us through our brothers and sisters who need our care. "When did we see you, Lord? . . . When I was in prison you came to see me. If you do it to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done it to me."

As Jesus clearly manifests his personal concern for the incarcerated people, he being himself a prisoner, and teaches us that the relationship with those in prison is part of our Christian responsibility; the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience, in an attempt to respond faithfully to Christ's call, brings to your attention the cry for justice and mercy for prisoners who are subjected to discriminatory treatment from prison officials and our responsibility to improve the prison conditions of prisoners.

Text of the Resolution

WHEREAS, a Prisoner of Conscience is a person imprisoned - awaiting trial, serving a sentence, or incarcerated without a trial (such as on grand jury contempt charges) - for reasons of

acts, associations or beliefs based on a fundamental concern for social justice and human rights (some of these concerns for self-determination of oppressed peoples and nations are considered by authorities as in opposition to prevailing United States foreign, domestic and military policies); well over 100 prisoners of conscience have been identified by The Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience and other human rights organizations;

WHEREAS, the 15th General Synod committed itself to creating a Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience which would monitor the treatment of prisoners within the U.S. prison system, provide pastoral care and advocate on their behalf;

WHEREAS, the General Synod found it important that educational materials be developed on the plight of these prisoners and that public lobbying be carried out for the effecting of changes in present prison policies which perpetuate injustices to prisoners; the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience has joined the efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Campaign which will study the case of each prisoner of conscience and contact with Amnesty International has been made;

WHEREAS, the inclusive nature of the United Church of Christ required that this ministry be a shared ecumenical network of pastoral care, many denominations (Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal and Disciples of Christ) have adopted similar resolutions and have joined us in this ministry;

WHEREAS, United Church of Christ Instrumentalities (UCBHM, OCIS, CRJ, CCW), Conferences and the Chicago Metropolitan Association have shared in the commitment of making this ministry a reality through their time and financial support, the ministry today has created such a network of pastoral care, monitoring and advocacy which counts with national volunteers who visit prisoners representative of various social movements; a director; a central office in Evanston, Ill.; and an ecumenical board composed of the Midwest Regional National Council of Churches Racial Justice Working Group representatives, Illinois Conference staff, attorneys as well as lay and community persons;

WHEREAS, behavior modification units also known as control units, have been constructed (such as those in Marion, Illinois and Mariana, Florida) to carry out both physical and psychological torture of prisoners, in order that they may be made broken people and ineffective in their lives of struggle for justice, for example, Alejandrina Torres (now in San Diego, CA prison), confined in various prisons since 1984 and charged with seditious conspiracy because she and her husband, United Church of Christ Pastor Jose Torres, have been active in the Puerto Rican independence movement, during which time this mother of five and grandmother has been sexually assaulted by male guards and abused in many other ways, and

WHEREAS, the Ministry to Prisoners of Conscience needs the help of the United Church of Christ in order to further implement the work of this ministry to prisoners.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Affirms the efforts of this new ministry;

Encourages local congregations through Conferences and Associations to reach out to prisoners of conscience in local area prisons, to their families, and volunteers as they effect visits;