

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

AFFIRMING THE VALUE OF THE FLAG AS SYMBOLIC SPEECH AND OPPOSING EFFORTS TO RESTRICT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

WHEREAS, the Bible calls us to have no other gods than God, and commands us to avoid idolatry of all kinds;

WHEREAS, worship of nation and of symbols of national identity has always been one of the most tempting and widespread forms of idolatry;

WHEREAS, symbols should not be confused with the truths or values that they symbolize;

WHEREAS, the flag of the United States is among the most potent of all political symbols, and has been used as such in political campaigns throughout this nation's history;

WHEREAS, the use or abuse of symbols that are sacred to many people (such as the cross) as a means of communicating ideas is an accepted and protected aspect of freedom of expression in the United States;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a historic commitment to freedom of expression, and

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

- 1) affirms its deep respect for the flag of the United States as a treasured symbol of the democratic values that are the foundation of our nation;
- 2) calls upon the American people to recognize that the importance of the flag lies in its enormous communicative power as a symbol of democracy, liberty, and equality under the law;
- 3) deplors the abuse of the flag, but affirms the right to use the flag as a means of symbolic expression, even in cases where the expression is abhorrent to the vast majority of Americans, and
- 4) opposes any effort to amend the United States Constitution to restrict freedom of expression or to exalt the flag as the one and only symbol in our society that may not be used or abused as a means of political expression.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

31. RESOLUTION "PROVIDING LARGE TYPE AND BRAILLE EDITIONS OF THE NEW HYMNAL"

Ms. Keele then moved the adoption of the Resolution "Providing Large Type and Braille Editions of the New Hymnal." One friendly amendment was accepted to change the resolution to add to the "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED," . . . or other suitable aides to enable persons with visual impairments to join in singing the songs of the faith."

89-GS-96 VOTED: The 17th General Synod adopts the Resolution "Providing Large Type and Braille Editions of the New Hymnal," as amended.

PROVIDING LARGE TYPE AND BRAILLE EDITIONS OF THE NEW HYMNAL

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a vital tradition of ministry to and with those who are physically and mentally challenged;

WHEREAS, we seek to embrace all of God's children as one;

WHEREAS, some live with visual impairments or are blind and desire to participate fully in worship;

WHEREAS, Jesus said a person born blind was so born, "so that God's power might be seen at work . . ." (John 9:3);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 17th General Synod calls on the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and its hymnal committee to make available Large Print and Braille Editions of the new United Church of Christ Hymnal, or other suitable aides to enable persons with visual impairments to join in singing the songs of the faith.

Financial Implications: Subject to the availability of funds.

32. RESOLUTION CONCERNING SUPPORT OF INFACIT'S BOYCOTT OF GENERAL ELECTRIC PRODUCTS

Mr. Carrion, Chairperson of Committee 15, pointed out the two paragraphs that were duplicated and should be deleted, then he moved the adoption of the Resolution "Concerning Support of INFACIT'S Boycott of General Electric Products."

After some discussion, it was the will of the body to extend the discussion for 5 minutes beyond the scheduled time limit. Following that, the resolution was voted on and defeated. A division of the house was called for, and the Moderator's decision was upheld.

33. AGENDA

Ms. Charlene Mason announced the order of the committee reports for the afternoon as follows: Committees 12, 21, 17, 16, 8.

34. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Sherard called on Secretary Carol Joyce Brun to read the announcements.

35. RECESS

Mr. Sherard declared a recess at 12:00 p.m.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 4

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the 17th General Synod was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by the Moderator, the Rev. Robert Sherard.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Charlene Mason, Chairperson of the Agenda Committee, urged delegates to fill out evaluation forms.