

## TUESDAY MORNING

Church of Christ as a Just Peace Church, committed to friendship, justice, and common security from violence, and further declared that war must be eliminated as an instrument of national policy;

WHEREAS, the Seventeenth General Synod called for negotiations for a Just Peace in the Middle East, and United Church of Christ partner churches in Jerusalem have called upon Christians throughout the world to support them in working to bring both Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table;

WHEREAS, the Executive Council voted to encourage "inter-faith dialogue among Jews, Muslims and Christians as fundamental to working out a lasting peace with justice in the Middle East" in their vote on March 3, 1991 (91-3-EC-80);

WHEREAS, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August, 1990 was in violation of international law;

WHEREAS, although military force achieved short-term objectives with relatively small American losses, the longer term aims of justice, peace, democracy, and security for the region are as remote as ever; and

WHEREAS, the Persian Gulf War resulted in the death of over 150,000 people, as well as ongoing suffering and death in the aftermath, tragic disruption of millions of lives, and pollution of the environment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, recognizing anew as a result of the Persian Gulf War the imperative for a stable, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the Middle East on terms acceptable to the peoples of the region, urges the United States Administration and all other parties concerned to pursue efforts to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the legitimate claims of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples — as expressed in the U.N. Security Council resolutions number 242 and 338, which call upon Israel to withdraw from territories occupied in 1967 and to affirm the right for all states, including Israel, to live peacefully within the recognized boundaries — calls upon all members of the United Church of Christ to support and encourage policies which reflect this solution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls upon the United States Administration and Congress to oppose in appropriate diplomatic and economic ways the accelerated construction of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod condemns all incidents of discrimination against persons of Arab origin which occurred as a result of the Gulf War, affirms the need for a more informed understanding by Americans of the history, culture, problems, and aspirations of all the peoples of the Middle East, and encourages instrumentalities, conferences, congregations, and members of the United Church of Christ to take initiatives to develop such understanding and to overcome the hostile and unsympathetic images of Middle Eastern people which are commonly expressed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urges the United States administration to restore and nurture peaceful and constructive relationships with all countries in the Middle East, including those with which diplomatic relationships have been broken, such as Iraq and Iran, and to limit the delivery of arms to the Middle East.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urges the United States administration to work with the United Nations Security Council to lift non-military sanctions against Iraq, to enable Iraq to undertake the enormous tasks of relief and reconstruction especially the critical public health needs now confronting their population.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod rejects the interpretation of the Persian Gulf War as a just war, and urges the United States administration and Congress to cooperate in the resolution of international disputes by active negotiation among the parties concerned and, where necessary, by economic sanctions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod requests our President, Paul Sherry, to communicate with the President of the United States, George Bush, demanding that our country use all available resources, both governmental and private to rebuild immediately the civilian infrastructure of Iraq destroyed by our military in the Persian Gulf War.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls for continued coordinated efforts of all expressions of the United Church of Christ to more effectively and consistently work for a Just Peace in the Middle East. It recommends that an effective way to do this is for members to sign this resolution and present it to their congressional representatives.

### 14. RESOLUTION "SUPPORT FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR ARMED FORCES"

The Moderator asked Mr. Peter Young to give the rest of his report. He moved the adoption of the Resolution "Supporting for the Men and Women of Our Armed Forces."

Ms. Judith Brain (MASS) moved to amend the resolution.

91-GS-64 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod amends, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urges chaplains, churches, and conferences to give pastoral and prophetic support to those more than 1,000 conscientious objectors within the military who were forced to disobey orders, go AWOL, or be imprisoned - some of whom have suffered severe mistreatment - when their claims, made shortly before or during the Persian Gulf War, were seriously delayed as an unintended consequence of the war." The amendment passed 330 to 275.

91-GS-65 Voted: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Support for the Men and Women of Our Armed Forces," as amended.

#### SUPPORT FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF OUR ARMED FORCES

WHEREAS, we recognize that many of our fellow Americans have served and are serving in our Armed Forces and may be called upon to forfeit their lives for our country;

WHEREAS, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ stated on July 7, 1981, that it "desires to hold within its fellowship in love all those whose consciences are bound to Christ (including) those who accept military service . . . ;"

WHEREAS, the Sixteenth General Synod stated that in keeping with the tradition of both the Evangelical and Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches, (it) has affirmed that

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"every Christian has the right and responsibility to make his (her) daily decisions in the love of God and in obedience to (God's) living word;"

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is founded on principles of covenant as exemplified by God's relationship with the people of Israel in the Holy Scriptures, and that it is our covenant duty to offer our love, care and concern for those whose consciences and convictions have led them to serve in our Armed Forces;

WHEREAS, war results in harm to soldiers, their loved ones, the nations, and the earth itself, and God grieves for all who are harmed by such conflict.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares its care for our men and women who have served and are serving in the Armed Forces.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod supports the loved ones of these men and women with concern and understanding through prayer and kindness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod extends heartfelt appreciation and honor for their sacrifices and services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod encourages congregations and individual members to listen to the concerns and to care for these members of the Armed Forces and their loved ones.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urges chaplains, churches, and conferences to give pastoral and prophetic support to those more than 1,000 conscientious objectors within the military who were forced to disobey orders, go AWOL, or be imprisoned - some of whom have suffered severe mistreatment - when their claims, made shortly before or during the Persian Gulf War were seriously delayed as an unintended consequence of the war.

### 15. RESOLUTION "AFFIRMING GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL PERSONS AND THEIR MINISTRIES"

The Moderator presented Ms. Wendy Williams-Brinks, chair of Committee 18, who presented the Resolution "Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons and Their Ministries." Ms. Williams-Brinks reminded that such affirmation has been offered in many previous synods and thus is keeping with the tradition of the United Church of Christ.

The Rev. Ralph Quellhorst (IK) offered an amendment.

91-GS-66 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod amends the Resolution "Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons and Their Ministries," in the third "BE IT RESOLVED," to now read, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urgently calls upon the local churches, associations and conferences to engage in a disciplined dialogue in which the biblical and theological foundations for congregations to be open and affirming of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons are prayerfully discussed in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ and our Christian vocation to live as communities of grace and reconciliation. The instrumentalities are requested to provide study resources for the United Church of Christ."

91-GS-67 Voted: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Affirming Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Persons and Their Ministries," as amended.

### AFFIRMING GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL PERSONS AND THEIR MINISTRIES

WHEREAS, in the words of the apostle Paul, we know that "the whole creation has been groaning in travail" and we, too, feel these pains as we struggle to grow in our understanding of human sexuality;

WHEREAS, the actions of General Synods 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 17 have supported human rights of all persons in church and society, regardless of sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, lesbian, gay, bisexual persons and their families have shared their gifts for ministry throughout the church, and through their stories and ministries the United Church of Christ has come to a deeper understanding of the diversity of God's creation and the inclusiveness of God's call.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod boldly affirms, celebrates and embraces the gifts for ministry of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons, and faithfully continue to work for justice in our church and society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls upon local churches, associations and conferences to adopt an Open and Affirming policy (i.e. a non-discrimination policy and a covenant of openness and affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith; CF: the Fifteenth General Synod).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urgently calls upon local churches, associations and conferences to engage in a disciplined dialogue in which the biblical and theological foundation for congregations to be open and affirming of gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual persons are prayerfully discussed in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ and our Christian vocation to live as communities of grace and reconciliation. The instrumentalities are requested to provide study resources for the United Church of Christ.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls upon local churches, associations and conferences to extend their welcome and support to openly lesbian, gay and bisexual students in-care, and to facilitate the ordination and placement of qualified lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates.

FINALLY, the Eighteenth General Synod invites all persons of the United Church of Christ to experience the struggle and joy of the journey towards openness and affirmation of all lesbian, gay and bisexual persons as children of God in the community of faith.

### 16. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECESS

The Moderator thanked the delegates for their careful work. She then made an announcement that the Rev. Reuben Sheares, who is ill, has been dismissed from the hospital and is at home resting. Ms. Bernice Powell was called upon for a few announcements.

The Moderator declared the Eighteenth General Synod to be in recess until 2:00 p.m.