

## TUESDAY MORNING

"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.