

SATURDAY EVENING

WHEREAS, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries has a long record of participation in key labor-management disputes, including those involving the United Mine Workers of America;

WHEREAS, the collective bargaining agreement of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) has expired;

WHEREAS, the democratic institution of collective bargaining appears to be under attack both by the BCOA and by other employers who have permanently replaced striking workers;

WHEREAS, the UMWA struggle could have serious implications for the rights of all union workers in the United States, their families, and the communities in which they live;

WHEREAS, the United Mine Workers of America has called a selective strike for unfair labor practices against members of the BCOA to protest the practices of members of the BCOA and to seek to enter into a new collective bargaining agreement;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) reaffirmed its solidarity with the UMWA, its striking miners, its 120,000 retirees and widows, and all the coal field communities for which the UMWA has played such an important historical role;

WHEREAS, the UCBHM is a covenantal partner with the CORA; and

WHEREAS, over 600 religious leaders have already endorsed the statement entitled "A Call for Justice in the Coal Fields:"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ joins in solidarity with the UMWA and endorses "A Call to Justice In the Coal Fields;"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its support for public policies that restore the rights of working people to engage in collective bargaining without fear of reprisal;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the United Church of Christ communicate this resolution to the members of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the BCOA and the UMWA to negotiate a contract settlement which will bring true justice to the coalfields.

[Note: The text of "A Call for Justice in the Coal Fields" referred to in the Resolution is found in Appendix C.]

9. RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF TWENTY YEARS OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH FARM WORKERS"

Assistant Moderator Enriquez asked Mr. Lee to continue with the final resolution considered by Committee Thirteen. Mr. Lee introduced and moved the adoption of the resolution "In Recognition of Twenty Years of United Church of Christ Ministry with Farm Workers."

93-GS-21 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the resolution "In Recognition of Twenty Years of United Church of Christ Ministry with Farm Workers."

RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF TWENTY YEARS OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH FARM WORKERS"

WHEREAS, Jesus said that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for him (Mt. 25);

WHEREAS, farm workers are among the lowest-paid members of the workforce, although they perform demanding and dangerous work;

WHEREAS, the Ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting twenty years ago, also in St. Louis, Missouri, sent 95 delegates and visitors to Coachella, California, in solidarity with the organizing efforts of the United Farm Workers of America;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has maintained its commitment to farm worker organizing efforts, passing resolutions in support of migrant workers in 1961, the boycott of Chiquita bananas and non-union iceberg lettuce in 1979, and the boycott of California table grapes in 1985;

WHEREAS, the work of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) in California and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in the Midwest have demonstrated the effectiveness of organizing efforts in improving working and living conditions for farm workers;

WHEREAS, through successful three-way negotiations among farm workers, family farmers, and processing companies, FLOC has obtained employee benefits such as Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, and Workers' Compensation for farm workers, without increasing the burden on family farmers in Ohio and Michigan;

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WHEREAS, the farmers have acknowledged the benefit of their participation in this three-way bargaining and have expressed the need to extend this same relationship to other states such as North Carolina, Florida, and Texas;

WHEREAS, new farm worker organizing efforts have emerged across the country, including the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFW-WS), the Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN) (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) in Oregon, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee in North Carolina and the Farmworker Association of Central Florida (FACF) in Florida;

WHEREAS, the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) have continued the boycott of California table grapes in order to obtain contracts with pesticide protections;

WHEREAS, the United Farm Workers of Washington State (UFW-WS) have called for a boycott of Chateau Ste. Michelle and Columbia Crest wines to obtain union recognition and contracts for wine grape workers;

WHEREAS, the Pineros y Campesinos del Noroeste (PCUN) have called for a boycott of FLAV-R-PAC frozen foods, Santiam canned vegetables, and Steinfeld's pickles in order to obtain union recognition and a contract at Kraemer Farms in Oregon;

WHEREAS, the Farm Worker Association of Central Florida has called for support of post-Hurricane Andrew community organizing efforts among farm workers in South Florida; and

WHEREAS, the National Farm Worker Ministry, of which the United Church of Christ is an active member, has responded supportively to these emerging organizing efforts by endorsing these initiatives;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ commemorates 20 years of ministry with farm workers, celebrates the gains that have been made and reaffirms its commitment to support justice and self-determination for farm workers through continued education about farm worker issues, advocacy and letter-writing, support for the boycotts of Chateau Ste. Michelle and Columbia Crest wines, FLAV-R-PAC frozen foods, Santiam canned vegetables, Steinfeld's pickles and California table grapes and affirms continued financial support for the National Farm Worker Ministry and farm worker organizing initiatives.

Subject to the availability of funds.

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Assistant Moderator Enriquez called on Mr. Arthur Clyde, UCC Hymnal Editor, who led the General Synod in a brief break and hymn sing. Mr. Clyde introduced Dr. Joyce Finch Johnson, from Atlanta, Georgia, who led the General Synod in a new hymn entitled "Glorious Is Your Name, O Jesus."

11. RESOLUTION "IN SUPPORT OF AMENDMENTS TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT"

Assistant Moderator Enriquez recognized the Rev. Rodney Franklin (OH), Chairperson of Committee Three, who introduced and moved the adoption of the Resolution "In Support of Amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act."

93-GS-22 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the resolution "In Support of Amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act."

RESOLUTION "IN SUPPORT OF AMENDMENTS TO THE AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT"

BACKGROUND

WHEREAS, in 1988 the Supreme Court delivered a severe blow to religious freedom for Native Americans in Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Association, withdrawing constitutional protection from sacred sites;

WHEREAS, in 1990 the Supreme Court delivered a second blow to constitutional protection of Native American religion in Oregon State Employment Division v. Smith, ruling against the use of peyote, the central sacrament of the Native American Church, for use in religious ceremonies;

WHEREAS, the withdrawal of constitutional protection for these key elements of Native American religion makes necessary legislative protection, if there is to be any protection at all;

WHEREAS, Native American Religions generally place great importance on access to sacred sites, such as high places, lakes or isolated sanctuaries for prayer, guidance from the Spirit and conducting of special ceremonies on behalf of the whole people;

WHEREAS, the protection of these sites is severely threatened as more and more land is "developed" for non-Indian commercial, military and recreational use;