

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

The Rev. Pat DeJohng and the Rev. Clyde Miller invited the delegates to stand and sing "Amazing Grace."

11. RESOLUTION "CALLING UPON THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO SUPPORT THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES AS THEY SEEK OBSERVER STATUS IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA"

Moderator Ruhe called on Ms. Florence Karlstrom (SW), Chairperson of Committee Seven. Ms. Karlstrom moved the adoption of the resolution "Calling Upon the United Church of Christ to Support the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as they seek Observer Status in the National Council of Churches in the USA."

Ms. Karlstrom spoke to the resolution and indicated that two changes in the original resolution were recommended. First, the committee strengthened the statement of caring and solidarity with brothers and sisters of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches; secondly, the committee removed what many perceived as a threat to withdraw from the National Council of Churches.

Ms. Jennifer Johnson (CONN) moved an amendment to the resolution as follows: Delete the final paragraph and substitute the following wording. "Be it further resolved that the United Church of Christ will prayerfully and seriously review its membership in and its financial support of the National Council by 1998 unless the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America includes the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in Observer Status or its equivalent by that date."

Ms. Johnson yielded her time to speak to the amendment to the Rev. David Simpson (CONN) who urged the adoption of the amendment, "because it puts teeth in the resolution."

Several other persons spoke both in favor and in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. Walter John Burris (NEB) moved the previous question. Following a second, the Nineteenth General Synod voted to close debate.

93-GS-69 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod defeats the amendment.

The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte (SOC) moved the adoption of the following amendment: After the first paragraph "Therefore be it resolved..." add the following paragraphs:

Be it further resolved that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the President, the Executive Council, and the Council for Ecumenism of the United Church of Christ to pursue positive steps to affirm publicly our kinship in Christ with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches such as shared public witness, opportunities for common mission, and strengthened ecumenical relationship between our two denominations; and

Be it further resolved that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all members, churches, associations, conferences, and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the full inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as full participants in all local, statewide, national, and global ecumenical agencies in which the United Church of Christ participates:

continue with the wording of the next two resolved paragraphs, as they are in the committee report, and in the final resolved paragraph change as follows: Delete, in the final resolve paragraph, the words "the granting of their request for observer status, or its equivalent," and substitute instead the words "the inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA."

The motion was seconded and Ms. Rogers-Witte spoke to the amendment.

Discussion continued on the amendment.

The Rev. Lois Powell, Business Committee, moved the previous question and the Nineteenth General Synod voted to close debate.

93-GS-70 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the amendment offered by the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte.

After the first paragraph "Therefore be it resolved..." add the following paragraphs:

Be it further resolved that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the President, the Executive Council, and the Council for Ecumenism of the United Church of Christ to pursue positive steps to affirm publicly our kinship in Christ with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches such as shared public witness, opportunities for common mission, and strengthened ecumenical relationship between our two denominations; and

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Be it further resolved that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all members, churches, associations, conferences, and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the full inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as full participants in all local, statewide, national, and global ecumenical agencies in which the United Church of Christ participates:

continue with the wording of the next two resolved paragraphs as they are in the committee report, and in the final resolved paragraph change as follows: Delete, in the final resolve paragraph, the words "the granting of their request for observer status, or its equivalent", and substitute instead the words "the inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA."

Mr. Edgar Roosa (PNE) moved the previous question and the Nineteenth General Synod voted to close debate.

93-GS-71 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Calling Upon the United Church of Christ to Support the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as they seek Observer status in the National Council of Churches in the USA." as amended.

RESOLUTION "CALLING UPON THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO SUPPORT THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES AS THEY SEEK OBSERVER STATUS IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA"

WHEREAS, lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians are often treated as second class citizens by both Church and State in a manner analogous to that of alien and sojourner of ancient times;

WHEREAS, Scripture repeatedly called upon the people of Israel to treat the alien with hospitality and fairness:

(DEU 1:16) "I charged your judges at that time: 'Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien.'"

(DEU 5:14) "But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work - you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you."

(DEU 24:17) "You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge;

WHEREAS, we are called one in Christ by virtue of our baptism, Gal. 3:28 "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus;"

WHEREAS, we too, are called to show hospitality to all especially the stranger and the alien, (HEB 13:2) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it;"

WHEREAS, the ecumenical body of Christians known as the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA in its annual convocation of November 12, 1992, denied "Observer Status" to the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in a vote of 90 to 81;

WHEREAS, such denial destroys our fundamental unity in the baptism of Christ and represents a failure of Christian hospitality;

WHEREAS, the leadership of the United Church of Christ has spoken to "register our communion dissent" from that action;

WHEREAS, we affirm with many others that, "Unity without integrity is no unity at all;"

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has frequently testified to our baptismal unity in Christ through the witness of word and deed boycotts, and disinvestment, such as the following:

General Synod Four (1963) called for Fair Employment Practices and Civil Rights Legislation; General Synods Eleven (1977), Twelve (1979) and Thirteen (1981) called for Review, Action and Advocacy on behalf of Persons with Handicaps; General Synods Five (1965) and Six (1967) called for disinvestment and economic sanctions in southern Africa, including South Africa; General Synod Seventeen (1989) called for a boycott of Shell Oil; General Synod Eight (1971) made Racial Justice a priority of the United Church of Christ; General Synod Twelve (1979) acknowledged racial victimizing of Pacific Islander and Asian American people within the UCC; General Synods Nine (1973), Ten (1975) and Eleven (1977) have called for ministry and justice for Native Americans; and General Synod Seventeen (1989) called for significant actions in churches and society to end violence against lesbian and gay people;

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(This list of actions of General Synod is illustrative rather than exhaustive.)

WHEREAS, the exclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches from the National Council of Churches of Christ is an act of discrimination and oppression;

WHEREAS, it is the practice of the United Church of Christ as pressed by our various General Synods to witness and to advocate on behalf of those persons who have experienced oppression by virtue of age, ability, gender, ethnic origin, race, sexual orientation and wealth; and

WHEREAS, within the United Church of Christ associations and conferences, the practice exists of ordaining openly gay and lesbian clergy, and recognizing openly gay and lesbian congregations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ directs the Office of the President in consultation with the Council for Ecumenism of the United Church of Christ to lodge the strongest possible protest with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA concerning the continued exclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the President, the Executive Council and the Council for Ecumenism of the United Church of Christ to pursue positive steps to affirm publicly our kinship in Christ with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches such as shared public witness, opportunities for common mission and strengthened ecumenical relationship between our two denominations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all members, churches, associations, conferences and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the full inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as full participants in all local, statewide, national, and global ecumenical agencies in which the United church of Christ participates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ continues in partnership, dialogue and advocacy with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod urges the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA to develop and implement a program of structured dialogue within and between its member churches on the issues surrounding the desire of the Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Churches to be included in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ vows to stand with its brothers and sisters in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and to pursue untiringly the inclusion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Subject to the availability of funds.

12. POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Moderator Ruhe recognized the Rev. Loey Powell who asked for a point of personal privilege. Ms. Powell stated she voted for the resolution just passed but with sadness. She regrets that the General Synod perceived that a statement that would be an act of justice in solidarity with an oppressed people would be perceived as a threat to the body of Christ, (referring to the text of the original resolution that called for withdrawal of funds from the National Council of Churches). She asked that Synod prayerfully consider that the real threat is perhaps to the justice of God.

13. FINAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Moderator Ruhe called on the Honorable Denise Page Hood, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for the final report of the Executive Council.

14. ADOPTION OF THE BIENNIAL BUDGET

Ms. Hood called the delegates' attention to the Biennial Budget for General Synod as presented in the Program/Worship and Business Book, pages 224-256, and moved its adoption.

93-GS-72 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the Biennial Budget as presented.