

SATURDAY EVENING

WHEREAS there is imminent danger that in the fierce competition for health care dollars in an era of health care reform, hospitals and health care facilities will increasingly lose sight of the patient's total welfare by choosing to eliminate or severely curtail non-revenue producing services such as chaplaincy;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

reaffirms its historic Christian commitment to the provision of spiritual care as an essential part of total health care, and to so specify in all pronouncements, statements, and resolutions relative to health care, present and future; and

affirms, advocates, and calls upon our congregations, associations, conferences and national bodies to affirm and advocate for the leadership of qualified ordained or ecclesiastically endorsed chaplains and ecclesiastically endorsed pastoral counselors in the provision of spiritual care in health care settings.

Subject to the availability of funds.

6. RESOLUTION "A CALL TO A COVENANT FOR THE FUTURE REGARDING HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES"

Continuing the report of Committee Five, Mr. Palomar moved the adoption of the Resolution "A Call to a Covenant for the Future Regarding Hunger in the United States."

Ms. Mary Miller (OHIO) spoke in favor of the motion and urged delegates to go back to their local churches to address this issue.

There was no further discussion and Moderator Melendez asked the Synod to vote.

95-GS-19 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the Resolution "A Call to Covenant for the Future: Hunger in the United States."

RESOLUTION "A CALL TO A COVENANT FOR THE FUTURE REGARDING HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES"

WHEREAS I Cor. 11: 20 offers a challenge to those who share in the Lord's Supper, but are concerned only about their own consumption while others go hungry;

WHEREAS Deut. 15:11 commands us to open wide our hands to the poor and needy, not to turn our private or public backs to those who go without;

WHEREAS God's judgment is rendered on societies regarding how the poor, the hungry, the widow, the orphan

are treated-- not on government alone, nor solely on the private sectors, but all of society;

WHEREAS in the last two decades the percentage of population that are undernourished has increased in the U. S. and Africa, while decreasing elsewhere around the world;

WHEREAS almost 2 million women and men over age 65 have to choose between buying food and buying medicine, 1.3 million choose between food or paying rent and other bills, and 1.1 million skip meals because they have no food;

WHEREAS Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project surveys continue to confirm that 5.5 million children under the age of 12 are hungry in the U. S.;

WHEREAS 78% of the poor are women and children;

WHEREAS the growth of Food Banks from being non-existent prior to 1980 currently numbers 185 Food Banks serving 50,000 local feeding agencies across the nation;

WHEREAS 10.4% of the U. S. population is dependent on food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other emergency feeding programs;

WHEREAS 10% of the U. S. population now qualify for food stamps;

WHEREAS AFDC benefits have declined in purchasing power having averaged 66% of the poverty line in 1970, and now only 41.3% in 1991 (the average grant for a poor family in 1992 was \$383 per month);

WHEREAS 18% of all full-time employed persons do not earn enough to raise their family unit above the poverty level;

WHEREAS the proposals to transform U. S. government have been selective in the programs that are to be considered - engaging in set asides of Social Security, defense, Medicare and targeting, disproportionately, programs geared for the benefit of the poor;

WHEREAS the impact of poverty and hunger on the children and youth of this country can only make the creation of a covenant for the future more difficult to achieve, and result in health, educational, and social costs later;

WHEREAS both political parties have refused to look comprehensively at expenditures and revenues, seeking apparently to secure voter support through tax reductions, most of which will benefit the top 20% of the U. S. population;

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WHEREAS a large portion of the U. S. population are experiencing economic anxiety;

WHEREAS greater portions of the U. S. population are experiencing greater food insecurity as opposed to food security where persons have a reliable and sufficient supply of safe and nutritious food both now and in the future;

WHEREAS we are all challenged by the Ephesian claim that through Christ “you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are citizens together with the saints and members of the household of God;”

WHEREAS the 10th General Synod passed a pronouncement entitled, “The United Church of Christ Confronts World Hunger;”

WHEREAS the pronouncement became the foundation for the United Church of Christ Hunger Action program;

WHEREAS United Church of Christ members, congregations, Conferences and national instrumentalities have responded in many and various ways to the growing number of persons experiencing hunger domestically — most notably, through direct service outreach with 85% of all congregations involved in such efforts;

WHEREAS support of the United Church of Christ Hunger Action Fund has never reached expectations (9% of congregations) as it seeks to address the myths about hunger and poverty, raise the issue of lifestyle, grant support for groups involved in prevention, self-determination, analysis and recommended public policy action;

WHEREAS the 20th Anniversary of the Hunger Action program occurs in 1995 at a time of critical economic stress in this country; and

WHEREAS the need for an even greater outreach of the United Church of Christ Hunger Action program is now;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests that “A Call to a Covenant for the Future” be issued to all United Church of Christ churches;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said call will affirm the direct service outreach of congregations, will identify the growing need for a program like the Hunger Action ministry, call for prayer and worship emphasis on the problems of hunger and poverty, raise the issue of lifestyle and consumption, call for public action to prevent hunger, call for financial support of the Hunger Action Fund and invite congregations to share their ministry in hunger action with the Hunger Action Office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ Hunger Action Office will implement A “*Call to a Covenant for the Future*” on behalf of the Twentieth General Synod.

Subject to the availability of funds.

7. MOTION TO AMEND THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Moderator Melendez introduced the Rev. Andrew Frierson, Jr., Chairperson of Committee Four. Mr. Frierson described the work of the committee and expressed gratitude for their work. He directed delegates to the sheet containing the Motion to Amend the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, Article IV, Bylaw 220, page 31, 1995 Edition, and moved to adopt the change in the Bylaws.

The Rev. George Peters (RI) said it was an important action and that he was grateful to the Committee for its work and to the Rev. Bill Hulteen of the Office for Church Life and Leadership for his support and encouragement. Mr. Peters believes that both pastors and churches have needs and gifts in their mutual relationship.

There was no further discussion.

95-GS-20 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the proposed motion to amend the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, Section 220, page 31.

MOTION TO AMEND THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (section 220, pg 31 OCLL)

Change section 220, pg. 31 which reads, “...facilitate a system of placement that is responsive to the needs of the Local Church and sensitive to the gifts of the clergy ...” to,

“...facilitate a system of placement that is responsive to the needs **and the gifts** of the Local Church **as well as being sensitive to the needs and the gifts** of the clergy ...”)

The amended Bylaw 220 thus reads as follows:

220 The Office for Church Life and Leadership shall also seek to: initiate theological inquiry around the issues of faith that the witness of the local congregations be enhanced; work with laity and clergy that the vitality of worship, Christian nurture, and spiritual development be encouraged throughout the Church; provide strong leadership development among the laity for their effective participation in church and society; care for personal and professional growth of persons engaged in the practice of