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number of children killed in gun-related incidents is the equivalent of a classroom full of students every two days;

WHEREAS domestic violence occurs every 15 seconds in this country and is the leading cause of death for women; with 30 percent of women murdered in the United States being the victims of husbands, boyfriends or former partners;

WHEREAS children and the elderly, the most vulnerable in our society, are not safe in their homes or communities and are afraid for their lives;

WHEREAS the incidence of rape continues to increase, leaving no girl or woman free from threat either at home or in public places;

WHEREAS violence pervades all our lives, from suburbs to inner cities, in rural areas of the country, in streets, homes, schools and even churches;

WHEREAS the United States is the leading weapons dealer in the world, supplying 70 percent of the international weapons market;

WHEREAS the acceptance of violence as a “norm” in our society is a violation of the most fundamental of all our Christian beliefs; and

WHEREAS all persons deserve a place to live where they know love and can live without fear;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod publicly and actively opposes violence as a societal norm;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls upon the Commission for Racial Justice, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, the Office for Church in Society, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and the United Church Board for World Ministries, in collaboration with the Conferences:

- to facilitate nationwide hearings on violence in the next biennium, inviting local church members and members of the larger community to testify about the impact of violence in their lives and to share strategies they have used to respond to violence in their communities, and to report to the Twenty-First General Synod on the results of these hearings and proposed strategies;
- to facilitate opportunities for United Church of Christ members to participate in local, regional and national gatherings to form partnerships and offer training and assistance in setting up programs to end violence;
- to pursue legislation in the United States Congress, State Legislatures and the United Nations that will help

diminish the acceptance of violence in any form and restrict the availability of instruments of violence using every means possible to advise our leaders and the leaders of the world that the violence must stop;

- to work with members of local congregations to provide education in peaceful alternatives for conflict resolution and explore alternative forms of nonviolent entertainment; and
- to help local congregations to educate and heighten personal awareness of personal and family attitudes, forms of discipline and language of violence such as jokes or threats;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod:

- Calls on all local churches, Conferences and Associations to become involved in ending the violence in our society and endorses the national project of United Black Christians “Churches as a Safe Space;”
- Calls upon United Church of Christ members to advocate for public policy programs which address the root causes of violence and poverty; and
- Encourages each local congregation to organize its own peace action team to develop resources for alternative entertainment activities and family violence awareness and prevention curriculum;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod encourages all members of the body of the United Church of Christ to register their opposition to all forms of violence by calling or writing television stations, media producers, and companies involved. Furthermore, when such action fails to receive results, to boycott specific products made or sold by advertisers of programming that sensationalizes acts of violence and/or portrays violence as the only solution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod supports the President of the United Church of Christ in speaking out boldly and prophetically on this issue across the country.

Subject to the availability of funds.

5. RESOLUTION “CREATING A WORLD SAFE FOR CHILDREN FREE FROM VIOLENCE”

Moderator Melendez asked Ms. Bagley to continue the report of Committee Three. Ms. Bagley explained that Committee Three had looked at the resolution regarding the Character Counts program and could not support it because it called the church to endorse a specific program. However, the committee could not totally ignore the basic

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intent of the Character Counts program which is to seek ways to reinforce positive values in our children. Consequently, the issues raised in the Resolution on the Character Counts Program were incorporated in the Resolution "Creating a World Safe for Children Free From Violence." Ms. Bagley moved adoption of the Resolution "Creating a World Safe for Children Free From Violence."

Moderator Melendez asked for discussion.

The Rev. Ellen Hiatt (MO) proposed a friendly amendment to strike "Twentieth General Synod of the" so the section reads "United Church of Christ continues to respond to the issues...." The amendment was accepted.

Following discussion, Moderator Melendez called for the vote.

95-GS-56 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Creating a World Safe for Children."

RESOLUTION ON "CREATING A WORLD SAFE FOR CHILDREN FREE FROM VIOLENCE"

WHEREAS we have Christ's example of how precious children are when "he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me'" (Mark 9:36-37) and we need to affirm this also;

WHEREAS violence is assaulting our children through physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and through the media;

WHEREAS children are seriously traumatized by violence, whether they are victims, perpetrators, or witnesses;

WHEREAS patterns of violence are likely to produce more violence in future generations;

WHEREAS there are curriculum enhancement programs and resources which promote and impact the values, ethics and behavior of children and their adult role models in positive ways; and

WHEREAS we are all part of the body of Christ; when one child suffers all of society suffers;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ continues to respond to the issues that make this world unfit for children, most particularly those issues related to the occurrence of violence and its effects on the lives of children;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the Interagency Task Force on Children to coordinate the efforts of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, the Office of Communication, the Coordinating Center for Women and the Commission for Racial Justice (and other ministries that attend to the well-being of children) to develop, evaluate and disseminate resources that will promote and enhance efforts to counter the effects of violence on children through:

(a) Church school curricula for children and adults that emphasize peaceful resolution to conflict and build character and values;

(b) Assistance for parents in countering desensitization to violence caused by exposure to communication media with violent overtones;

(c) Advocacy challenging media violence;

(d) Support for federal legislation that serves to decrease the occurrence of violence in children's lives;

(e) Advocacy for appropriate programs in the schools that build a child's character and ethics;

(f) Program assistance to churches working locally to encourage the development of alternatives to violence for youths, such as after school programs and employment opportunities; and

(g) Collaboration with other national organizations and agencies which are active in the prevention of violence;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report on the progress and activities of the Interagency Task Force on Creating a World Safe for Children be given to the General Synod Twenty-One; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls upon the Office for Church in Society to facilitate training in nonviolent problem-solving and upon United Church of Christ members to advocate the inclusion of conflict resolution and nonviolent problem-solving in school curricula.

Subject to the availability of funds.

6. RESOLUTION "GUNS AND VIOLENCE"

Committee Three continued its report with the third item of business, "Guns and Violence." Ms. Bagley spoke of the work of the Committee and moved the adoption of the Resolution. She yielded to the Rev. David Sickelka (IS)