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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)

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who spoke in favor of the resolution and urged open and honest debate.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Marc Ullom (PSE) expressed opposition to the resolution. He said that while he is in agreement with the intent, the resolution is written in a way that portrays persons who disagree with gun control in a negative way.

Mr. Bradley Barnes (MICH) proposed an amendment to be inserted after line 23, page 2: "Be it further resolved that the Twentieth General Synod requests a national body of the United Church of Christ to negotiate with the national leadership of the National Rifle Association to secure its help in eliminating firearm violence." The amendment was seconded.

Mr. Barnes spoke to the amendment stating it is an effort to seek a positive solution to our differences as there are members of our churches who are members of the National Rifle Association as well.

The Moderator called for a vote.

95-GS-57 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the amendment.

Following more discussion, the Moderator indicated time for discussion had expired and the Rev. Jeffrey S. Spencer (WASH) moved that debate be extended. The motion was seconded.

95-GS-58 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod defeats the motion to extend debate.

Moderator Melendez called for a vote on the motion as amended.

95-GS-59 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Guns and Violence."

RESOLUTION ON "GUNS AND VIOLENCE"

Background

For decades the National Rifle Association blocked most gun control legislation, a powerful demonstration of how special interest groups can thwart majority sentiment. Rising gun violence finally caused enough people to demand action. When Jim Brady, former press secretary, was shot, he and his wife spent the next decade pressing for passage of the Brady Bill, requiring a seven-day waiting period. It finally was passed in 1993. In 1994 the assault weapon ban passed, banning 19 specific weapons, with the Office for Church in Society and grassroots United Church of Christ people across America mobilizing

support that helped make the difference. In 1995 our legislative agenda seeks to hold recent gains. Future gun control steps include Brady Bill 2; Senator Chafee of Rhode Island urging the total ban of handguns, a visionary proposal not yet viable; and Congressperson Owen's bill allowing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to regulate guns the same way other consumer products are regulated.

WHEREAS evening news broadcasts across the nation carry one horror story after another - teachers and students shot, children selling guns, mass murder;

WHEREAS in 1992 handguns were used in the murders of 13 people in Australia, 33 in Britain, 36 in Sweden, 60 in Japan, 128 in Canada and 13,220 in the United States;

WHEREAS in 1991 there were 38,217 people killed by firearms in homicides, suicides and accidents in the United States, more than the total number of Americans killed in the Korean War;

WHEREAS in 1992 more people were killed by guns than in automobile accidents in several states, including Illinois and Maryland;

WHEREAS a new handgun is now produced every 20 seconds; every 14 minutes someone in America dies from a gunshot wound; a child or teenager commits suicide with a gun every six hours;

WHEREAS roughly 100,000 students are bringing guns to school every day in the United States;

WHEREAS our fascination with hand guns, assault rifles, and other weapons designed to take human life reflects a deeper spiritual sickness in our cultural character, a sickness born of fear, mistrust, and the desire to dominate another;

WHEREAS gun idolatry is part of a culture of death, nurtured by the National Rifle Association (NRA), TV ratings, and an international arms industry;

WHEREAS Jesus once lamented over his own city, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem..., would that you knew the things that make for peace;"

WHEREAS Jesus, in whom we have come to know the gentle love of God, was himself the victim of a violent death and so turned us forever against the forces of violence that tempt us to seek annihilation of the enemy;

WHEREAS in proclaiming the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we confess that God's saving love alone has the power to undo the forces of violence and death and heal our cultural wounds;

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WHEREAS the time has come for religious leaders to call for repentance for the sin of violence and our idolatrous fascination with weapons, and to resolve to work with God's life-giving Spirit to restore hope to the victims of violence and our communities; and

WHEREAS the Seventh General Synod in 1969 called for licensing and testing of all gun owners, limiting ammunition sales to license owners and limiting all "handguns to persons whose occupation requires them to possess a handgun for self-protection;"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls upon all United Church of Christ churches and members to engage in renewed spiritual reflection in order to better understand the roots of violence in our culture and to consider the resources of our faith in ending such violence;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod requests a national body of the United Church of Christ to negotiate with the national leadership of the National Rifle Association to secure its help in eliminating firearm violence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod endorse legislative provisions that will:

- strengthen the licensing and registration of handgun transfers;
- restrict firearm possession by persons convicted of violent crimes and by juveniles;
- limit handgun purchases to one per month;
- strengthen regulation of gun dealers;
- increase civil and criminal liability for misuse of firearms;
- prohibit semiautomatic assault weapons, Saturday night specials, explosive ammunition and large-capacity magazines;
- require gun safety devices; and
- require training in the safe use of firearms as a condition of licensing.

Subject to the availability of funds.

7. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Moderator Melendez called on the Rev. Pat De Jong, Pastor, First Congregational United Church of Christ in Berkeley, for a time of community building.

8. RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF 100 YEARS OF U.S. COLONIALISM IN SIX ISLAND NATIONS"

Moderator Melendez called on Mr. Walter Anders, Chairperson of Committee Eight. Mr. Anders led the delegates in a prayer from Samoa using the text entitled

"God's World" from The New Century Hymnal, page 864. Mr. Anders moved adoption of the Resolution "In Recognition of 100 Years of U.S. Colonialism in Six Island Nations" as stated in the Program/Worship and Business Book, pages 169-171, and also in packet E.

Moderator Melendez asked for discussion.

The Rev. Ken Whitwer (MICH) moved that lines 43 and 44 be deleted from the resolution. The motion was seconded.

There was discussion for and against the amendment. Moderator Melendez stated that the time for discussion had expired and Mr. Rolf Wicks (OHIO) moved to extend debate for 15 minutes. The motion was seconded.

95-GS-60 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod defeats the request to extend debate.

Mr. Eric Smith (ME) moved the previous question and the Twentieth General Synod voted to close debate.

95-GS-61 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod defeats the amendment to delete lines 43 and 44 from the Resolution.

Ms. Kris Menger (CPC) proposed a friendly amendment to page 1, line 43, adding the words "non-violent" between "released" and "prisoners." The Committee Chair did not accept this as a friendly amendment. The amendment was seconded.

95-GS-62 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod defeats the amendment.

95-GS-63 VOTED: The Twentieth General Synod adopts the Resolution "In Recognition of 100 Years of U.S. Colonialism in Six Island Nations."

RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF 100 YEARS OF U.S. COLONIALISM IN SIX ISLAND NATIONS"

WHEREAS the prophet Isaiah announced the pardon of sin (40:1-2), saw Cyrus as Yahweh's anointed instrument of liberation (45:1-5), interpreted suffering as redemptive, and called the people of Israel to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives and liberty to the oppressed (61:1-2);

WHEREAS Jesus proclaimed that the time (*kairos*) had come for God's reign of justice and liberation to be fulfilled (Mark 1:15 and Luke 4:16-19);

WHEREAS the year 1998 will be the 100th anniversary of the U.S. acquisition of the lands of Guam, Hawai'i, Eastern (American) Samoa, the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico;