

SATURDAY EVENING

Award from the National Committee on Persons with Disabilities:

(posthumously) the Rev. Susan E. Lyon.

President Sherry then led the General Synod in a prayer of thanksgiving for the work and ministry of those persons and churches who had received awards.

President Sherry recognized the Rev. Harold H. Wilke, past Executive Director of the Council for Church and Ministry, for his years of service to the United Church of Christ.

5. GENERAL SYNOD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Moderator Dean opened the presentation of Committee Reports by noting the amount of time allotted to each committee and explaining the process by which discussion of the reports and motions would be conducted. Moderator Dean thanked the committee chairs and the Committee Process Team for their work.

6. RESOLUTION: "FULL COMMUNION WITH THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA"

Moderator Dean called on Mr. Angelo Mendillo (RI) to present the recommended actions from Committee Two, which addressed the Resolution "Full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Reformed Church in America."

Several persons spoke in support of the resolution. The Rev. James R. Smucker spoke in support of the resolution, but cautioned General Synod about the need to protect the United Church's stand on ordination for all qualified persons. No persons spoke in opposition to the proposed action. The question was called.

97-GS-14 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Reformed Church in America."

The resolution was voted with overwhelming support of the General Synod delegates.

RESOLUTION "FULL COMMUNION WITH THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA), AND THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA"

WHEREAS, the prayer of our Lord, the intent of our ecumenical vision, and the opportunities for mission that God is offering to us all demand that we express more fully the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ;

WHEREAS, the witness of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Europe has resulted in over two decades of full communion within the framework of the Leuenberg Agreement;

WHEREAS, the four churches represented in the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, 1988-1992, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, have their historical roots in the Reformation and, in part, have understood themselves in the context of their relationship to one another;

WHEREAS, these four churches rejoice in nearly four decades of dialogue during which the doctrines, life, and practices of the respective churches have been thoroughly discussed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a growing sense of common mission and understanding; and

WHEREAS, A Common Calling, the report of the Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations, reaffirmed a consensus reported in previous dialogues that there are no "church-dividing differences" precluding full communion among these four churches;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopts A Formula of Agreement on the basis of A Common Calling and, in full communion with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America, declares that the United Church of Christ is in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this full communion agreement will take effect when all four churches act affirmatively on this resolution in accordance with their respective governing procedures;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the United Church of Christ, in consultation with the Council for Ecumenism, appoint representatives to a Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee which will coordinate implementation of full communion in the four churches; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the President of the United Church of Christ report to the Twenty-second General Synod on the progress of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee toward implementation of full communion.

An extended standing ovation followed the approval of the resolution.

7. RECOGNITION OF FULL COMMUNION VOTE

Moderator Dean called upon the Rev. Frank Dietz, Chair of the Council on Ecumenism, to address General Synod regarding the previous action. Mr. Dietz was accompanied by the Rev. Kathy Reeves from The Presbyterian Church (USA); Bishop Stan Olsen from The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and the Rev. Douglas Fromm from the Reformed Church in America. Mr. Dietz invited Ms. Reeves, Bishop Olsen and Mr. Fromm to speak to General Synod. All expressed pleasure at the vote and at what the future holds for our churches. Mr. Dietz asked President Sherry to say a word as well.

Mr. Sherry stated that this was an historic moment, a moment