

## SUNDAY EVENING

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod reaffirms the heritage of the United Church of Christ as an advocate for just, democratic, participatory and inclusive economic policies in both public and private sectors, including:

the responsibility of multinational corporations and international financial institutions to respect and hold themselves accountable to fundamental human rights, particularly with regard to child labor, employment of minorities, and wages that are adequate for local costs of living;

the responsibility of workers to organize for collective bargaining with employers regarding wages, benefits, and working conditions, and the responsibility of employers to respect not only worker rights but also workers' dignity, and to create and maintain a climate conducive to the workers' autonomous decision to organize;

the responsibility of collective bargaining units, such as unions, to respect their members and encourage their participation in further efforts to democratize, to respect and hold themselves accountable to fundamental human rights, and to reform and expand the labor movement domestically and abroad;

the responsibility of governments at all levels to foster a more democratic system by seeking balance among the rights and interests of citizens, workers, and corporations; and to support existing as well as to facilitate the creation of new participatory community institutions for developing jobs and caring for people;

the responsibility of businesses, governments, and communities to share responsibility for protecting the earth's environment;

the responsibility of businesses, governments, and communities to support affirmative action for all who have traditionally been denied rights in the workplace;

the responsibility of all citizens to be informed participants in the political process at all levels and to form community organizations and associations to express common interests and achieve common goals in such areas as economic planning, neighborhood development, public education, and health care;

the responsibility of religious bodies to provide moral and ethical guidance for individuals and society in ways that respect other religious traditions and resist authoritarian powers and principalities wherever they appear;

the responsibility of The United Church of Christ in covenant with all churches and church institutions to practice principles of economic democracy which foster justice and participation in its own ministries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of The United Church of Christ commends this resolution to the churches, associations, conferences, instrumentalities, and institutions of The United Church of

Christ as a basis for their own policies and their ministries of social witness.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 7. RESOLUTION "CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM"

Assistant Moderator MacDonald asked Mr. Pérez to continue the report of Committee 11.

Mr. Pérez directed the delegates to the appropriate information and moved the adoption of the Resolution "Campaign Finance Reform." There was no discussion.

97-GS-19 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Campaign Finance Reform."

#### RESOLUTION "CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM"

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches us: "You shall not pervert justice, you shall not show partiality, and you shall not take a bribe ... justice, and only justice, you shall follow ..." (Deuteronomy 16:19-20), and we are reminded in the parable of the lost sheep of the importance of every person (Matthew 18:12, Luke 15:4); and Jesus reminds us that "if anyone wants to be first, he must make himself last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35);

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Constitution states: "The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls the whole church and every member to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ by witnessing to the Gospel in church and society;"

WHEREAS, trust in our democratic process is threatened by the present system of financing campaigns for public office which allows businesses and political action committees to contribute at least twice as much as individuals and allows for the appearance of improper influence in the legislative process by large contributors, and correspondingly discourages participation by persons of lesser means;

WHEREAS, candidates spend an inordinate amount of time raising increasing amounts of money rather than speaking with the people about issues that affect our common life; and

WHEREAS, over 20 states have public financing legislation, and recent studies have shown that campaign finance reform legislation enjoys broad bipartisan support and that such legislation would enable qualified persons of limited means to be candidates for public office;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ is in support of legislation which seeks more equitable campaign financing, through, but not limited to, the establishment of a voluntary fund from which candidates for public office may equally receive campaign and media funding, and through a significantly reduced cap on contributions which applies equally to businesses, PACs and individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General

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Synod encourages individual church members to study the issue and to support the passage of campaign finance reform legislation congruent with this resolution.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 8. RESOLUTION "CALLING FOR THE CLOSE OF THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS"

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called upon Ms. Traci King, Chair of Committee 15, to present the actions of Committee 15. Ms. King moved the adoption of the Resolution "Calling for the Close of the U.S. Army School of the Americas" and yielded her time to speak to the resolution to the Rev. Craig C. Schaub (OHIO) of Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Cleveland.

Several persons spoke in support of the resolution.

A friendly amendment was offered by Ms. Kelly Dalglish (RM). Ms. Dalglish proposed adding the following to the second "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED," section (c): "Encouraging individual churches in the United Church of Christ to sponsor a yearly School of the Americas Watch Sunday, in order to inform members of the progress achieved on this challenge, beginning in 1997, and continuing until the School is closed. (Recommended Sundays are during the times of commemoration of victims of the Americas graduates: November 16, when six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter were assassinated in 1989 at the University of Central America. On this date, people from across the U.S. vigil at the gates of the School of the Americas; December 2, when the four U.S. churchwomen were executed in El Salvador in 1980; March 24, when Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980.)"

This was accepted as a friendly amendment. There was no further discussion. Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for the vote.

97-GS-20 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Calling for the Close of the U.S. Army School of the Americas," as amended.

#### RESOLUTION "CALLING FOR THE CLOSE OF THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS"

WHEREAS, the training of military leaders from the countries of Central America has occurred at the School of the Americas, U.S. Army training center at Fort Benning, Georgia, which is completely funded by U.S. tax dollars at the cost of \$5.8 million a year;

WHEREAS, the School of the Americas teaches such things as assassination training, commando operations, counter-insurgency techniques, intelligence-gathering, psychological warfare, death threats, extortion, sniper training, and low-intensity conflict;

WHEREAS, the United Nations Truth Commission Report on human rights abuses in El Salvador reports that over 75 percent of those cited by the Truth Commission for murder, torture and "disappearances" were trained at the School of

the Americas;

WHEREAS, the same report states that ten of the twelve officers of the Salvadoran army battalion that carried out the massacre in El Mozote in December 1981, when more than 800 unarmed peasants were killed, were trained at the School of the Americas;

WHEREAS, it has been established that people of faith, working in solidarity with people in Central America, have been murdered by soldiers trained at the School of the Americas, namely those responsible for the assassinations of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the four North American church women, the six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter, all in El Salvador;

WHEREAS, Pentagon documents released to the School of the Americas Watch, in September 1996, through the Freedom of Information Act, show that 1991 training manuals at the School of the Americas included instruction in such things as extortion, assassination, threats and torture;

WHEREAS, "Inside the School of the Americas," a documentary on the School of the Americas released by Richter Production Films in November 1996, contains clips of several students of the School who admit, on camera, that they were trained in torture techniques, using abducted Panamanians as their live experimental subjects;

WHEREAS, nationwide outrage over the school's activities continues to grow. For example, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has now passed resolutions in two subsequent years calling for the closing of the School of the Americas; the 800 churches in the United Methodist Church of East Ohio did likewise at their June 1996 annual meeting; over 400 people gathered in Fort Benning, Georgia in November 1996 to protest the School, up from 30 people who protested there at the same time in 1995; and some American protestors have received jail sentences for their actions, including Father Roy Bourgeois, of the School of the Americas Watch, who was jailed for six months in 1996;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress is currently reducing Federal spending and this is one of the programs that could be cut;

WHEREAS, this history and the continued existence of the school stand in the way of moving our country's relationships with Latin America towards emphasis on human rights and democracy;

WHEREAS, we as Christians and specifically as members of the United Church of Christ have committed ourselves to pray, study, and act on behalf of peace, justice and the integrity of all Creation;

WHEREAS, the call of the Biblical witness to "do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him or her who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless and the widow, nor shed innocent blood..." (Jeremiah 22:3);

WHEREAS, Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9);