

## SUNDAY EVENING

WHEREAS, Isaiah 58:9b-12 says: "All you need to do is to stop oppressing the weak, stop making false accusations and stop spreading vicious rumors! Feed the hungry! Help those in trouble! Then your light will shine out from the darkness and the darkness around you shall be as bright as day. And the Lord will guide you continually, satisfy you with all good things, keep you healthy, too; and you will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. Your sons will rebuild the long-deserted ruins of your cities, you will be known as The People Who Rebuild Their Walls and Cities."

WHEREAS, we, as children of God, are called to love our neighbors as ourselves; and

WHEREAS, Archbishop Oscar Romero, in his sermon the day before he was assassinated by graduates of the School of the Americas, said: "I beg you, I implore you, in the name of God, I order you: Stop the violence! Stop the repression! You must obey a higher law: Thou shall not kill!";

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod through the President of the United Church of Christ calls upon the U. S. Congress and the Executive Branch to close the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that through the President of the United Church of Christ, the Twenty-first General Synod asks the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate why assassination, torture and related acts of violence were included as subjects in the training manuals for the School of the Americas;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod requests the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ to request an implementing body or bodies such as the Office of Church in Society and the United Church Board for World Ministries to work with Conferences in ways that will empower action, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Developing a study packet to be used in congregations to enable United Church of Christ members to have the opportunity to become aware of this challenge for justice and healing;
- (b) Facilitating a School of the Americas Watch Committee within the United Church of Christ to monitor developments concerning the school until the time that the school is finally closed;
- (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.);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod endorses continued efforts by School of the Americas Watch in Fort Benning, Georgia, Washington, D.C. and local Central American solidarity organizations across the country, to push for closing of the School of the Americas; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-first Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages church members to communicate directly with their Congressional Representatives, Senators, and the United States President, about this challenge.

Financial Implications: For the United Church of Christ, there will be minor costs, such as the cost of preparing study packets and the cost of postage for mailing letters and informational materials. For the implementing body, there will be costs associated with sponsoring educational programs and advocacy efforts with regard to the resolution.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 9. RESOLUTION "LANDMINES"

Continuing the report of Committee 15, Ms. King directed the delegates to the resolution on Landmines in the New Business packet. She moved the adoption of the Resolution "Landmines" and asked the Rev. Charles McCollough, Office for Church in Society, and the Rev. Linda S. Petrucelli, United Church Board for World Ministries, to speak to the resolution.

Several persons from the Southern Conference spoke in support of the resolution, including the Rev. Rollin O. Russell, Southern Conference Minister, and the Rev. Diane S. Snowa, stating that the Southern Conference submitted this resolution and they have a partnership with the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola. Mr. Russell and Ms. Snowa urged the delegates to support this resolution.

The question was called and discussion was closed.

97-GS-21 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Landmines."

### RESOLUTION "LANDMINES"

WHEREAS, our partner church, the Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola has called upon the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ to advocate for a comprehensive global ban on anti-personnel landmines;

WHEREAS, in Angola alone there are estimated to be between nine million and twenty million mines and an estimated 70,000 people of that country have become amputees as a result of landmines;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ, through the Board for World Ministries, has been providing aid to victims of landmines;

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WHEREAS, landmines amount to endless war, remaining hidden for years after soldiers leave the battle fields to destroy and terrorize communities and returning refugees;

WHEREAS, many military leaders, including Retired General Norman Schwartzkopf have called for such a ban on anti-personnel landmines;

WHEREAS, the use of landmines results not only in unconscionable human casualties, but also pollutes the land and the environment and renders farm land untillable; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Board for World Ministries and the Office for Church in Society are urging congregations and conferences of the United Church of Christ to join the international effort to lift our voices in opposition to the production, trade, stockpiling and use of landmines;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

- supports a comprehensive global ban on anti-personnel landmines;
- urges the Government of the United States to participate in the "Ottawa Process" to implement such a ban;
- requests the president of the United Church of Christ to communicate this resolution to the Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, and the National Security Advisor, Mr. Samuel Berger;
- urges congregations of the United Church of Christ and their individual members are to raise their voices in support of a ban on anti-personnel landmines.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### **10. RESOLUTION "A MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY AND A MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY"**

Assistant Moderator MacDonald referred delegates to the adopted Committee of Reference Report which referred the Resolution "A Mission Statement for Youth Ministry and A Mission Statement for Young Adult Ministry" directly to Plenary. She called on Mr. Christopher Gilmore of the Business Committee to introduce the resolution.

Mr. Gilmore moved the adoption of the resolution and called on Mr. Matthew Small (MASS) to speak to the resolution, stating that youth and young adult ministries are a vital part of the United Church of Christ. Mr. Small stated that the drafting body for the resolution was the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and he urged General Synod to adopt these mission statements.

Mr. Matthew Leathers (CAL.S) proposed an amendment as follows: in the Mission Statement for Youth Ministries delete the words "Sustain adult leaders in youth ministries through training and resource support." Substitute the words "Develop, nurture, and sustain adult leaders in youth ministry through training, resourcing, and networks of support." Ms.

Erika Dowd (CAL.S) spoke in support of the amendment.

97-GS-22 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the amendment.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called on James Markus (MT) from the Council on Youth and Young Adult Ministries who offered a friendly amendment to the Youth Mission Statement, that is, at the fifth point substitute the word "Youth" for "Young Adult." This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

The Rev. Donald D. Freeman (PC) said he supported the amendment but was concerned that it stated that General Synod will put this in practice in all settings of the church. He noted that General Synod does not have the power to do this. He offered a friendly amendment to address this concern. The amendment read: "that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ embraces the following Mission Statements for Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry and calls upon all the ministry settings of the United Church of Christ to embrace them and put them into practice." This was accepted as a friendly amendment and Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for the vote.

97-GS-23 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "A Mission Statement for Youth Ministry and A Mission Statement for Young Adult Ministry" as amended.

### **RESOLUTION "A MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY AND A MISSION STATEMENT FOR YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY"**

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is committed to youth ministries and to young adult ministries;

WHEREAS the life and structure of the United Church of Christ is in transition and change; and

WHEREAS, the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries recognizes the need for a foundational statement to guide and define ministry with and by youth and young adults;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ embraces the following Mission Statements for Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry and calls upon all the ministry settings of the United Church of Christ to embrace them and put them into practice.

#### **A Mission Statement for Youth Ministries**

Youth Ministries within the United Church of Christ consists of diverse youth and youth leaders from various geographic regions, racial and cultural backgrounds, and theologies, who join in covenant, called and challenged by 1 Timothy 4:12:

"Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity"

As partners and leaders in service to God within local