

## MONDAY EVENING

The Rev. David R. McMahill (MINN) proposed an amendment to the Proposal for Action, adding a paragraph on the last page, after paragraph 2, to read: "We call upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to assist all settings of the United Church of Christ, especially local churches and associations, to discover and develop models for spiritual direction as a calling appropriate for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ."

The motion was seconded and Mr. McMahill spoke to the motion.

The Rev. Carole C. Carlson (NH) spoke against the amendment stating that the concern was an authorization question that was inappropriate in the Proposal for Action. Ms. Carlson stated she would prefer to call this concern to the attention of the Office for Church Life and Leadership with the hope that significant work could be done.

There was no additional discussion and the amendment failed.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called on Ms. Vicki Beckman, Chair of the Agenda Committee, who proposed an amendment to delete the final paragraph of the Proposal for Action.

The motion was seconded and Ms. Beckman spoke to the amendment stating that having experienced the work of the Program and Planning Committee as it wrestled with discerning God's will for this Synod, she would like the next Program and Planning Committee to have the opportunity for that same experience. She said that the last sentence in the paragraph is vague enough that it might appear to impose a theme on the next General Synod.

Ms. Almeda Lahr-Well spoke against the amendment saying that the desire is not to impose a theme but to see if the delegates wished to have this theme. She said that the next committee would take this under consideration.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for the vote. The amendment was adopted.

97-GS-36 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the amendment to delete the final paragraph of the Proposal for Action "Renewed by God's Spirit: Affirming God's Presence and Power in the Life of the United Church of Christ," which reads: The Twenty-first General Synod further calls on the Twenty-second General Synod Planning Committee to envision that General Synod as a setting in which this pronouncement is implemented in theme and design."

A Division of the House was requested and the Assistant Moderator's ruling was upheld with 345 votes in favor and 293 votes against.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called the attention of the delegates to the main motion to adopt the Proposal for Action. The motion passed, as amended.

97-GS-37 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts

the Proposal for Action "Renewed by God's Spirit: Affirming God's Presence and Power in the Life of the United Church of Christ."

### PROPOSAL FOR ACTION "RENEWED BY GOD'S SPIRIT: AFFIRMING GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN THE LIFE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST"

#### I. SUMMARY

This pronouncement calls the whole church to identify, affirm and practice the diversity of spiritual disciplines among our local churches, associations, conferences and General Synod; to develop resources for sharing our differing spiritual disciplines and practices in order to enrich the whole church; to develop new resources where needed to promote household devotional practices and connect them to the church's corporate life.

#### II. BACKGROUND

The need for renewed attention to spiritual disciplines has been evident for some time. The Office for Church Life and Leadership developed The Pilgrimage Retreat Movement, which continues to introduce persons to a variety of spiritual disciplines with threshold experiences. Faith Exploration experiences have nurtured many of our members over the years. Yet the disciples' plea to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray!" seems to be the contemporary plea of many of our members. The Division of Evangelism and Local Church Development has led the United Church of Christ toward more faithful proclamation of the gospel. We are uncertain of the good news we have to proclaim. A more basic faith formation will contribute to numerical growth. At recent meetings of the Executive Council, conversations about the need for "revival" illustrated both the need for and diversity of spiritual gifts throughout the church.

#### III. DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT

This pronouncement calls the United Church of Christ to rediscover, practice and appreciate the diverse spiritual practices represented among our multiethnic, multicultural membership. It requests the national instrumentalities to compile and disseminate for pervasive use throughout the church a variety of spiritual disciplines and practices to nurture personal faith and corporate life for mission. The publication of Book of Worship and The New Century Hymnal are vitally important expressions of potential unity and diversity for the worship life of our congregations. Yet their effectiveness will be strengthened significantly by more disciplined faith nurtured in personal and family spiritual disciplines.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

The Twenty-first General Synod calls upon all settings of the United Church of Christ to rediscover, practice and appreciate the diverse spiritual practices present among the people of God.

The Twenty-first General Synod calls upon all covenantal

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bodies of the United Church of Christ, [including the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice, the Office for Church Life and Leadership, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the Stewardship Council, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, the Office of Church in Society, and all constituents groups of the United Church of Christ] to develop and continue to collect and publish resources for renewing our spiritual life.

We encourage all settings of the church to discover the resources already available, such as The New Century Hymnal, Book of Worship, and United Church of Christ congregational learning resources (“Bible Discovery,” “The Inviting Word,” “Created in God’s Image”), and to gather resources that allow us to share the diversity of disciplines and practices from the differing ages, cultures and races comprising the United Church of Christ.

We call on our United Church of Christ seminaries to include, in required curricula, exposure to a variety of spiritual disciplines and to offer training for clergy in spiritual direction.

We call on Conferences, associations and, especially, local churches to become places where one can find the teaching and practice of various spiritual disciplines.

### 7. POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Assistant Moderator MacDonald recognized Ms. Evelyn Rose (MO) who rose to a Point of Personal Privilege to thank the Commission for Racial Justice for their offer to provide the Martin Luther King information package.

### 8. RESOLUTION "FIDELITY AND INTEGRITY IN ALL COVENANTED RELATIONSHIPS"

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called on the Rev. Jana Norman-Richardson to report on the work of Committee Nine, which had two items of business to consider: “Faithfulness in All Covenanted Relationships,” which was presented as new business, and “Fidelity and Chastity Among Clergy,” which was in the Program, Worship and Business Book.

Ms. Norman-Richardson thanked all who assisted Committee Nine, including the Rev. Kenneth Iha, and all those who worked to develop the Discernment Card and the Prayer for Discernment and especially the members of Committee Nine. Ms. Norman-Richardson stated the Spirit was with the Committee as they worked on these resolutions and she called the attention of the delegates to the resolution that was submitted as new business. Ms. Norman-Richardson reviewed all the changes made to the original resolution, including the change in the title from “Faithfulness in all Covenanted Relationship” to “Fidelity and Integrity in All Covenanted Relationships.”

Ms. Norman-Richardson moved the adoption of the Resolution "Fidelity and Integrity in All Covenanted Relationships."

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for discussion.

Ms. Norman-Richardson spoke to the resolution and said that the recommendation from Committee Nine was a unanimous recommendation and she encouraged the Synod to unhesitatingly adopt the Resolution with joy.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for discussion and several persons spoke both in support and in opposition to the resolution.

The Rev. Mr. Thomas C. Smith (OHIO) proposed an amendment: add a paragraph after the fifth “WHEREAS” to read, “and are created to be helpmates, male unto female and female unto male.” Also, in the first “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,” delete at the beginning of the word “reaffirm...” and substitute “reaffirm that the model for sexual and relational behavior for members of the United Church of Christ to be pursued above all other models is fidelity in the marriage between a man and a woman or abstinence from sexual intercourse in singleness. Every human relationship should be filled with caring and expression of the love of Jesus Christ. This love of Jesus redeems all of us who are imperfect human creatures; and....”

Mr. Smith spoke to the amendment indicating he wished to state his position and the position of those from his local church. He said that is a position with a view of sexuality grounded in scripture as our authority and guide. He stated that he is not a member of any “parachurch” group, but he is a member of his local church, association and conference and has been a lifelong member of the United Church of Christ. He celebrates its openness to multicultural and multiracial designs and hopes.

The Rev. H. Daehler Hayes (RI) spoke against the amendment and the Rev. David W. Biebighauser (SD) also spoke against the resolution. Mr. Biebighauser stated that he came from a community and a church that probably would have applauded the intent of the maker of the amendment. Mr. Biebighauser said this was his first General Synod and he never dreamed he would be at the microphone speaking against this kind of amendment. He said that, since the time he had been at Synod and as a member of Committee Nine, he saw the wonderful work of the Spirit and the spirit of love and God's grace. He noted that, when came to General Synod, he made the assumption that part of him could control what the entire United Church of Christ did and he said that is where we have to start. In the United Church of Christ, we all have the privilege to go back to our churches, preach, teach, believe and instruct all parts of God's words as we understand it to be. He stated that he would not go back to Watertown and preach that it's OK for gays and lesbians to be married. He said that in the Spirit of where the United Church of Christ was today, he had been given the freedom to believe and teach and be a pastor as faithfully as he knows how. He strongly encouraged General Synod not to be setup for headlines but, rather, to vote down the amendment and pass the resolution which he believes was divinely inspired in Committee Nine.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for the vote on the amendment.