

## MONDAY EVENING

The amendment was defeated.

Ms. Mary Alice Shepard (CPC) of Committee Nine proposed a friendly amendment in the first "THEREFORE, BE IN RESOLVED:" after the word "marriage," insert the words "and other covenanted relationships." The amendment was accepted.

The Rev. Lillian F. Daniel (CONN) called the question and the vote was taken on the main motion.

97-GS-38 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Fidelity and Integrity in All Covenanted Relationships."

### FIDELITY AND INTEGRITY IN ALL COVENANTED RELATIONSHIPS

WHEREAS, the Eighteenth General Synod established the responsibility of the church's recognized leaders "to embody the good news of the gospel," and "to be above reproach, blameless, of unimpeachable character;"

WHEREAS, the *Manual on Ministry* specifies in the Ordained Minister's Code, "I will not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person," and "I will live a life which honors my commitments to my family;"

WHEREAS, we live in an age in which commitments to relationships within work, church, family, and community are essential to our life as a society;

WHEREAS, we live in a world often characterized by adultery, promiscuity, sexual violence and pornography that have compromised our journey toward human wholeness and human responsibility, contributing to and perpetuating a culture in which children, women and men are demeaned and sexually abused;

WHEREAS, we are all made in God's image, as persons loved by God, and are called to accept ourselves and our sexuality fully; and

WHEREAS, as Christians we live by the teachings of Jesus Christ and our Christian faith is the foundation of our values in human relationships;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, delegates to the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting in Columbus, Ohio, July 3-8, 1997, reaffirm that the standard for sexual and relational behavior for members of the United Church of Christ is fidelity and integrity in marriage and other covenanted relationships, in singleness and in all relationships of life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod refers the Resolution "Fidelity And Integrity in All Covenanted Relationships" to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Office for Church in Society, and the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, and encourages the development of a church-wide dialogue on these matters, with a report to the Twenty-second General

Synod in 1999.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 9. RESOLUTION "FIDELITY AND CHASTITY AMONG CLERGY"

Ms. Norman-Richardson directed the delegates to page 163 of the Program, Worship and Business Book for the next resolution. She shared the work and thoughts of the Committee regarding this resolution. Ms. Norman-Richardson then moved that General Synod take no action on the Resolution "Fidelity and Chastity Among Clergy."

Ms. Norman-Richardson said that the recommendation of no action was not a unanimous vote of Committee Nine, but it was an overwhelming majority. She pointed out the concerns of the committee about the resolution and stated that only non-action invites and allows the fullest expression of diverse viewpoints on these issues in future conversations. She stated that no action is the only action that will not push anyone away from the table of conversation and discernment.

Assistant Moderator MacDonald asked for discussion. There was no discussion and Assistant Moderator MacDonald called for the vote.

97-GS-39 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod takes no action on the Resolution "Fidelity and Chastity Among Clergy." [*The complete text of the Resolution "Fidelity and Chastity Among Clergy" is located in Appendix C.*]

### 10. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Assistant Moderator MacDonald invited the Rev. Patricia De Jong and the Rev. Christopher Grundy to lead General Synod in a time of Community Building.

### 11. RESOLUTION "PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF SEMINARIANS' EDUCATIONAL DEBT"

Assistant Moderator MacDonald called upon Ms. Cathleen Starck-Wille to report on the work of Committee 12. Ms. Starck-Wille thanked the committee for their work during this General Synod and directed the delegates' attention to the materials pertaining to this resolution. She moved the adoption of the Resolution "Prevention and Reduction of Seminarians' Educational Debt." Ms. Starck-Wille yielded her time to Mr. Benjamin Motz (PSE) and the Rev. Gina VanNuyes (IK).

Discussion followed.

The Rev. Jon Prain (ILL) offered a friendly amendment to add the words, "which was adopted by," after "Fair and Just Compensation," in the seventh point. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Joel S. Pretz (PW) called the question and discussion ended.

97-GS-40 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts

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the Resolution "Prevention and Reduction of Seminarians' Educational Debt."

### RESOLUTION ON PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF SEMINARIANS' EDUCATIONAL DEBT

WHEREAS, God provides for God's church by calling and gifting persons for ministry in a variety of ways, including pastoral leadership for the church itself;

WHEREAS, the church participates in this providence of God by equipping and authorizing the ministries of some of its called and gifted members through theological education and ordination or commissioning;

WHEREAS, the well-being of the church of Jesus Christ, and particularly of each local church, is enhanced by calling faithful, educated and competent pastors, teachers and other leaders, and is jeopardized by the unavailability of such leadership;

WHEREAS, the church has historically provided for its leadership needs through institutions of theological-pastoral education;

WHEREAS, General Synod III phased out national, direct support to seminaries and called upon Conferences and local churches to assume this responsibility; and General Synod X urged each local church to support the "closely related" (now "of the United Church of Christ") seminary or seminaries in its region at a level equivalent to two percent of its operating budget, but few local churches have done so;

WHEREAS, the cost of educating persons for ministerial leadership has gradually shifted from the church itself to the persons themselves, and, inclusive of living expenses, has increased to \$24,000 per year and more for many seminarians;

WHEREAS, many of the current generation of seminary graduates have borrowed large sums of money--often \$30,000 to \$50,000 in addition to any undergraduate student loans still being carried--to complete their theological education and one seminary's average student loan for the year 1996-97 alone was \$10,200;

WHEREAS, indebted seminary graduates must seek starting salaries sufficient to enable debt repayment on top of costs of living, while the salaries offered by many local churches are marginal at best and inadequate to do so, and these local churches are increasingly hard-pressed to finance even marginally-paid leadership;

WHEREAS, these trends point toward a dearth of church leadership, with only wealthy persons being able to afford to answer God's call to full-time leadership and only wealthy churches being able to call them;

WHEREAS, the fund-raising efforts of seminaries of the United Church of Christ and of the Make A Difference Campaign, although providing some increase in scholarship resources, have not been sufficient to stave off these trends; and

WHEREAS, the crisis calls for at least a four-pronged approach: (a) to hold down the tuition costs at the Seminaries of the United Church of Christ by supporting their educational programs directly, (b) to assist seminarians with scholarship support, (c) to assist seminary graduates with the repayment of their educational debts, and (d) new and creative ways to finance the pastoral leadership of local churches;

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

- \* acknowledges the mounting educational debt load of seminarians and seminary graduates as an alarming symptom of a growing crisis for the ongoing leadership of the church;

- \* requests the Office for Church Life and Leadership to present a preliminary report to the Twenty-Second General Synod, and present to the Twenty-Third General Synod a pronouncement and proposal for action concerning the financing of theological education for the leadership of the church including exploration of the support of seminaries from the budget of General Synod;

- \* calls local churches to faithfulness to covenants of financial support of seminaries in their regions, established by the Tenth General Synod at the level of two percent of their local expense budgets;

- \* calls upon local churches and Committees on Ministry to include provisions for a financial plan for funding of students' seminary education and to enable gradual repayment of any educational debt which may occur in pastoral covenants and terms of call, and upon Conferences to include such provision in their guidelines for clergy compensation;

- \* calls upon Conferences and Associations to explore with local churches creative arrangements to distribute available wealth, to reduce the financial burden of their educational-debt-laden pastors and their hard-pressed churches;

- \* calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership to provide national leadership to the implementation of this resolution, and upon the officers and the other instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to support this Office in its efforts; and

- \* reaffirms the Pronouncement "Fair and Just Compensation" which was adopted by the Twentieth General Synod.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 12. RESOLUTION "CALVIN SYNOD"

Assistant Moderator MacDonald asked Ms. Starck-Wille, Chair of Committee Nine, to continue the report.

Ms. Starck-Wille advised delegates to have the original document regarding "Calvin Synod" available to help facilitate understanding of the recommendation. She explained the work of the committee and the decisions they