

TUESDAY MORNING

WHEREAS, the Nigerian military regime has abused systematically civil and human rights of the Nigerian people, as documented by Amnesty International and other international human rights organizations; and

WHEREAS, the World Council of Churches International Strategy Meeting on Nigeria in 1996 urged member churches to work towards democratization of Nigeria;

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

- A. Calls on the Nigerian military regime to move without further delay to relinquish its undemocratic hold on power and allow the country to return to civilian rule, under representatives elected June 12, 1993;
- B. Urges the government of the United States to exercise leadership concerning Nigerian issues within international organizations such as the United Nations by:
 1. Calling for a complete freeze of the assets and bank accounts of Nigeria's rulers and their families;
 2. Calling for an international travel ban on Nigeria's military rulers, their families and civilian officials in the employment of the military regime;
 3. Calling for an international ban on the sale of military or police equipment to Nigeria;
 4. Calling for an international sports boycott of Nigeria;
 5. Calling for international suspension of all non-humanitarian aid to Nigeria;
 6. Continually pressing the Nigerian military regime to free all political detainees, to lift restrictions on media, and to practice judicial processes which provide the fair legal representation to which Nigerian citizens are entitled;
 7. Making significant funds available to non-governmental organizations and grassroots community groups in Nigeria to enhance their capacity to do human and democratic rights education and other work which will encourage democratic and popular participation and build a more extensive democratic culture;
 8. Calling for an international ban on the purchase of Nigerian oil;
 9. Continuing to press Shell Oil to work to influence its parent company, Royal Dutch Shell, to cease despoliation of the natural environment in Ogoniland; to take measures to ensure that in the future the lands and livelihoods of the Ogoni people are not adversely affected by oil extraction techniques; to take steps to rehabilitate the spoiled environment in Ogoniland; and to compensate

adequately the Ogoni people whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by environmental degradation;

10. Being prepared to provide significant and sustained aid to Nigeria once civilian rule is in place to help build a strong and vibrant civil society, and to strengthen or put in place appropriate mechanisms for monitoring the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic development and the establishment of good governance practices;

- C. Directs the President of the United Church of Christ to:
 1. Represent this position to government bodies, ecumenical organizations, advocacy groups and partner churches grappling with human rights today in Nigeria; and
 2. Communicate this position to religious organizations and leaders in Nigeria, including the Christian Council of Nigeria and the Church of the Province of Nigeria;
- D. Requests the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Commission for Racial Justice to develop educational and advocacy materials focusing on human rights in Nigeria.

Subject to the availability of funds.

9. RESOLUTION "FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION"

Ms. Wade called the attention of the delegates to the next item of business to be considered, the Resolution "Female Genital Mutilation." Ms. Wade moved the adoption of the resolution, briefly spoke to the motion and asked Ms. Janet Steeds (NY) to speak to the resolution as well.

Discussion followed and Assistant Moderator Thomas called for the vote.

97-GS-43 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Female Genital Mutilation."

RESOLUTION "FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION"

WHEREAS, Jeremiah offers Biblical support that wisdom, strength, and money do not matter as much as kindness, justice, and equity;

WHEREAS, the "Good news of Jesus is violated if we ignore the pain of some of the most vulnerable children of this world." (Valerie Russell, UCC Office for Church in Society);

WHEREAS, there is no basis for Female Genital Mutilation in the Bible or the Koran, and it is not practiced in Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam;

WHEREAS, it is stated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that parties shall take all effective

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and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children;

WHEREAS, genital mutilation has been inflicted on 80 to 100 million girls and young women (another 6000 added each day) in at least 26 African countries and some Asian countries;

WHEREAS, short term results include tetanus and septicemia; and long term results, chronic uterine infection, massive scars that hinder walking, hugely increased agony and danger during childbirth;

WHEREAS, the United Nations has labeled Female Genital Mutilation a violation of human rights;

WHEREAS, Canada has declared women fleeing genital mutilation have grounds for seeking asylum; and

WHEREAS, legislation to make mutilation illegal drags in Congress as the majority of legislators hesitate to "interfere with local customs;"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ joins with appropriate groups and legislators to urge Immigration officials (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and Board of Immigration Appeals to designate that female genital mutilation (FGM) be considered a type of extreme harm and a violation of human rights, and should qualify one for protection under the Refugee Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod encourages United Church of Christ members to urge legislators to apply 1% of all foreign aid (about \$100 million) to an international commission, led by those who have devoted themselves to struggling against female genital mutilation in their countries. The money would be used for field education and training of village leadership to end female genital mutilation.

Subject to the availability of funds.

10. RESOLUTION "WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. BASES FROM OKINAWA"

Assistant Moderator Thomas asked Ms. Wade to continue with the final piece of business from Committee Three.

Ms. Wade asked delegates to turn their attention to the Resolution "Withdrawal of U.S. Bases from Okinawa." Ms. Wade stated that the committee was assisted in their deliberations by guests from Okinawa who brought a message of fear and sadness in their own lives. She reviewed the changes that were made in the resolution. Ms. Wade moved the adoption of the resolution.

Ms. Wade called on The Rev. Donald H. Fujioshi (Pacific Island Asian American Ministries) who spoke on the motion.

The Rev. Debrorah Celley (MINN) and the Rev. Tyrone L. Rhinehart (Council for Racial Ethnic Ministries) spoke in support of the motion. Mr. Alan Piper (MASS) and Mr. Isaac

Hilpman (KO) spoke against the motion.

Assistant Moderator Thomas called for the vote.

97-GS-44 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Withdrawal of U.S. Bases from Okinawa."

RESOLUTION "WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. BASES FROM OKINAWA"

WHEREAS, the women of Okinawa were instrumental in raising awareness of the negative consequences of militarism;

WHEREAS, although Okinawa Prefecture comprises only 0.6% of the whole Japanese territory, 75% of all military installations in exclusive use by U.S. Forces-Japan are concentrated in Okinawa;

WHEREAS, 90% of Okinawans oppose the presence of U.S. bases on their land;

WHEREAS, through the years U.S. nuclear weapons, poison gas, excessive aircraft noise and the live-firing of military exercises cause serious accidents, physical ailments, fear and psychological damage to civilians especially children, and lasting environmental destruction;

WHEREAS, a major part of the main seaport used for international commercial trade to enhance economic development of Okinawa is occupied by the U.S. military;

WHEREAS, the Okinawan people are asserting their self-determination from U.S. and Japan's military policies;

WHEREAS, U.S. newspapers recently announced that the U.S. will give back about 20% of the land it occupies on Okinawa, including Futenma Air Base; experienced Okinawans do not believe U.S. promises since Okinawa military bases have been put on closure lists before, and some remain active nearly twenty years later;

WHEREAS, the closing of Futenma is merely rotating the soldiers and installations to other locations in Okinawa and does not represent gradual removal; and

WHEREAS, our partner church, the United Church of Christ in Japan (the Kyodan), and the Okinawa District Assembly of the Kyodan have issued several public statements calling for the removal of all U.S. military bases from Okinawa;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the U.S. government to implement immediately a phased removal of all U.S. military bases and personnel from Okinawa and a clean-up of remaining environmental pollutants;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all members of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to support the present prefectural and local governments of Okinawa and the vast majority of the Okinawan people in their unceasing efforts to achieve the