

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

people of diverse faiths and cultures in their practice of tourism and pilgrimages in and to the Holy Land; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ joins in affirming the text of the December 21, 1996, Churches for Middle East Peace statement *Heritage, Hope and Home of Two Peoples and Three Religions*.

7. RESOLUTION "PALESTINE/ISRAEL"

Moderator Dean asked Ms. Baker to continue with the second item of business from Committee Four. Ms. Baker called the attention of the delegates to the Resolution "Palestine / Israel." She assisted delegates in locating the materials and highlighted several points in the background material. Ms. Baker moved the adoption of the Resolution and spoke to the motion.

Moderator Dean asked for discussion.

The Rev. Gordon M. Forbes (CAC) and the Rev. Zoltan Szucs (CA.SY) spoke in support of the Resolution and urged the support of delegates.

The Rev. Alfred C. Krass (PSE) said he supported the Resolution but would have difficulty using it at home in his relationships with Jewish persons and Muslims. He expressed concern about the beginning of the first sentence in the Introduction and offered a friendly amendment to replace the words "the true" with the words "an important part."

This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

There was no additional discussion and Moderator called for the vote.

97-GS-52 VOTED: The Twenty-First General Synod adopts the Resolution "Palestine / Israel."

RESOLUTION "PALESTINE\ISRAEL"

Introduction:

An important part of the significance of the Holy Land to Christians lies in the living communities of Christians who dwell there. This resolution calls for support of Palestinian Christians in Israel\Palestine, and for recognition of the suffering of all people living there. It affirms that the wounds of the past must not overcome the opportunities for peace in the present.

Theological Rationale:

The Christian Church began in Jerusalem and Jerusalem has served as a spiritual image of a new community gathered in peace where the love of God shall reign. The writer of the Revelation of St. John writes:

I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... He will wipe every tear from their eye, Death shall be no more; mourning and crying and pain shall be no more, for the first things have passed away. (Rev.21:2,4)

The city remains a place of pilgrimage and spiritual renewal where scripture, read in the land where it was written, exudes a special aura of authenticity.

Background:

Many Palestinian Christians trace their roots to the first church -- the Jerusalem church. Through the centuries Christians have preserved the holy sites.

Palestinian Christians make up an educated and skilled portion of the Palestinian population often managing schools, hospitals and health clinics open to all. They have persisted in their witness despite invasions, conquests, oppression, and persecutions over the past two thousand years.

Palestinian Christians are a diminishing minority in the Holy Land. Economic uncertainty, deteriorating living conditions, and oppressive violations of human and civil rights have driven them from their land. Constituting 25% of the population of Israel\Palestine in 1900, Christians now comprise 2-3% because of the severity of occupation.

Palestinian Christians call upon the international Christian community for help. In a 1996 conference in Jerusalem attended by 200 Christian leaders from all continents and 30 countries, Palestinian Christians again alerted the international Christian community to their plight and requested advocacy for their concerns.

WHEREAS, the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ has affirmed that unilateral action regarding the sovereignty of Jerusalem only perpetuates antagonisms and threatens the peace of the region;

WHEREAS, Christians in convention in Jerusalem, in January of 1996, supported Palestinian Christians in their petition to the government of Israel to provide free access to Jerusalem for all; to cease expropriating land and expanding settlements; and to support equal housing rights for Palestinians within the city of Jerusalem;

WHEREAS, closure of Jerusalem to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza separates most Palestinians from the center of their economic, cultural, and political life and prevents most Palestinian Christians and Muslims from worshipping at their holy sites;

WHEREAS, Christians in Bethlehem have had their land confiscated for the building of Israeli settlements and the roads servicing them, which also threatens sacred and historic sites;

WHEREAS, violation of human and civil rights, the use of coercion, and terrorist acts by any party perpetuate an escalating cycle of violence; and

WHEREAS, pertinent United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 181, placing Jerusalem under a special international regime, have not been implemented;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ supports Palestinian Christians in their insistence that:

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1. Jerusalem remain a plural and diverse city both religiously and politically and that no party has the right to change the status of Jerusalem unilaterally;
2. the building of new Israeli settlements in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza cease;
3. Palestinians be permitted to move freely between Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank, for jobs, housing, and all services of community and religious life;
4. all governing authorities agree to honor human and civil rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations; and
5. all forms of violence and killing cease.

Subject to the availability of funds.

8. RESOLUTION "COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE"

Moderator Dean called on the Rev. Kekapa P. K. Lee (HI), Chair of Committee Seven, for the introduction of two Resolutions from the Committee.

Mr. Lee thanked the Committee for their work and began by explaining that one of the Resolutions assigned to Committee Seven was entitled "Harm Reduction." He said the Committee changed the title to "Compassionate Response to Substance Abuse." Mr. Lee explained the work of the Committee on this Resolution and called on the Rev. Nancy H. Nyberg (ILL), a member of the Committee, to speak to the motion.

John Bathkee and Dianna Niemann-Harris (MO) spoke in support of the Resolution.

The Rev Scott R. Johnson (OHIO) offered a friendly amendment to replace, throughout the document, the word "drugs" with the words "alcohol and other drugs."

This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

The Rev. Dorothy Gager (SE) offered a friendly amendment: in the "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED," add "to advocate for adequate treatment resources available to all." as a final point.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment and Moderator Dean called for the vote.

97-GS-53 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the resolution "A Compassionate Response To Substance Abuse."

RESOLUTION "COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE"

WHEREAS, we are called to "loose the bonds of injustice" (Isaiah 58:6), to be "removers of the yoke amongst us, and "satisfiers of the needs of the afflicted" (Isaiah 58:9,10); for then the Lord will guide us and we will be "repairers of the

breech" and "restorers of streets to live in" (Isaiah 58:11,12);

WHEREAS, our Teacher and Savior Jesus Christ has commanded us to "love our neighbors as ourselves" (Matthew 22:39); and

WHEREAS, our human family in cities, schools, prisons and homes, especially the poor, the children, and people of color, are coming to great harm, both through destructive alcohol and other drug abuse and through the costly war against alcohol and other drugs;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms that it is important to address the devastating impact of alcohol and other drug abuse in our society, and challenges our church and society to:

- confront the root causes of abuse and dependency;
- advocate a spiritual and theological approach to address these issues;
- encourage a healing movement in the United Church of Christ at all settings: local churches, associations, conferences, and national;
- support public policies that expand education, prevention, and treatment, in our prisons and in the wider community;
- seek to reduce the punitive and harmful effects of various societal responses to substance abuse and abusers, including a reduction in the use of incarceration for minor offenses and an increase in the use of additional alternatives to incarceration; and advocate for adequate treatment resources available to all.

Subject to the availability of funds.

9. RESOLUTION "PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX"

Moderator Dean asked Mr. Lee to continue with the report of Committee Seven.

Mr. Lee introduced the final Resolution of the General Synod entitled, "Prison Industrial Complex." Mr. Lee said there was strong support for this Resolution in the Committee and that the Committee celebrated that the church was responding both to the needs of victims and their families as well as to prisoners and their families. Mr Lee reviewed changes made by the Committee.

Moderator Dean asked Mr. Lee if he wished to speak to the motion. Mr. Lee again called on Ms. Nyberg who spoke on behalf of the Committee in support of the Resolution.

The Rev. Heather C. Wickes (OHIO) and the Rev. William C. Schraer (IK) spoke in support of the Resolution.

The Rev. Alfred C. Krass (PSE) said he was concerned that some might see an imbalance in the Resolution toward a support of prisoners rather than equal support for victims. He said that there were places in the Resolution that spoke to support for victims. Mr. Krass offered a friendly amendment to include the word "restitution" after the words "alternative