

MONDAY MORNING

WHEREAS, the UCCSA will commemorate its 200th anniversary in 1999, celebrating the arrival of the first British Congregational missionaries in southern Africa; and

WHEREAS, the UCCSA and the United Church of Christ have repeatedly committed themselves through the United Church Board for World Ministries to engage together in partnership;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ congratulates the UCCSA on its 200th anniversary;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod reaffirms the historic relationship between the United Church of Christ and the UCCSA.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

The Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson returned the podium to Assistant Moderator Frieberg.

13. RESOLUTION "INTERFAITH RELATIONS AND THE CHURCHES"

Assistant Moderator Frieberg called on Mr. David Cavanaugh (CA NV,N), Chair of Committee 13.

Mr. Cavanaugh referred the delegates to page 124 in the Program/Worship and Business Book and the Report on "Interfaith Relations and the Churches," and page 87 of the Program/Worship and Business Book for the recommendation of the Executive Council regarding this resolution. Mr. Cavanaugh moved receipt of the report and asked Rev. Randi J. Walker, Chair of the United Church of Christ Council on Ecumenism to speak to this motion. One change in wording was noted on page 130, paragraph 11 replacing the words "available for the common good" with the word "respected for the common good."

99-GS-29 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod receives the policy statement of the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA titled "Interfaith Relations And the Churches;" and requests its constituent bodies to engage in a two-year study of the statement utilizing resources developed by the NCCCUSA and to develop a mechanism for providing feedback to the United Church of Christ Council on Ecumenism so that a United Church of Christ statement on Interfaith

Relations may be developed for report to and consideration by the Twenty-third General Synod.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS AND THE CHURCHES

A POLICY STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA

Developed by the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, this statement is the result of a four-year process of consultation with member communions and with NCCCUSA program units, in particular the Faith and Order Commission and the Ecumenical Networks Commission, and the Black Church Liaison Committee. At a number of stages, representatives of other religious traditions also shared responses to the document, which have been helpful in its creation.

This Statement provides policy guidelines for the National Council of Churches, and is offered for the consideration of its member communions as a source for guidance, reflection, and action. When approved, this document will be made available with accompanying material for study and discussion. It is our hope as well that it will contribute to the wider discourse on religious diversity and community in our national life.

PREAMBLE

"As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). As disciples, we seek to testify to the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, to embody that love in the world, and to respond to the leading of God's Holy Spirit. We seek God's grace in our common effort to understand ever more fully how to live as the body of Christ in this religiously plural and culturally diverse time and place.

We speak out of a changing experience of religious diversity in our country. Events in the United States and across the world have made us more aware of the significance of the world's religions and their influence on politics, economics, and cultures. We speak out of what we have been learning in our shared ecumenical life. At home and abroad, the work of building Christian unity and our efforts for peace and human development are increasingly intertwined with questions regarding our relationships with those of religious traditions outside the historic Christian church.

Historical, Political and Social Context

The Americas have always been religiously plural. For millennia, their indigenous peoples have practiced their

MONDAY MORNING

religions, diverse yet all based on respect for and connectedness with the earth and all of creation. Christians of various backgrounds made up the bulk of the settlers from Europe. But Jews were also among the original colonists and participated in the American Revolution. Muslims and practitioners of African religions arrived with those brought from Africa, most as slaves. Asian immigrants who came from Asia in the 19th century to work on the railroads and in the mines brought with them Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto.

The USA's history has not always been marked by tolerance or Inclusivity. Religious liberty and freedom developed here only slowly, despite the protections of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Early visions of that freedom were (and unfortunately still are) often infected with triumphalism and racism. We must confess that Christians participated in attempts to eradicate indigenous peoples and their traditional religions. We must acknowledge the complicity of many of our churches in slavery, a system in which most African Americans were prohibited from practicing Islam or African traditional religions.

Today the spectrum of religious tradition and practice in the United States is wider and more complex than ever before. Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Native American traditions, Baha'i, and other faiths are now part of the American landscape. Many factors have contributed to this increased diversity. These include changes such as the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 and subsequent immigration policy, increasing global inter-connections, the growth of American-born religious movements and the increasing willingness of Americans to make religious commitments outside their tradition of birth.

This increased religious diversity is a result of the changed cultural and ethnic makeup of our communities and our churches. For many of our congregations, interreligious and intercultural relations are an integral part of community and family life. Many church members have children, parents, sisters and brothers, spouses or other relatives who belong to another religious tradition. People of other faiths confront, as do many Christians, discrimination in access to housing, job opportunities or political and social position. In their efforts to address community problems, provide hope for a better society and work for justice, Christians find themselves working side-by-side with men and women who practice religions other than their own.

Interfaith relations also play a prominent role in our international concerns. In many parts of the world, religion plays an important role in politics, in economic and social development or the lack of it, in communal

strife or reconciliation. We see the growth of fundamentalism among Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Hindus. We note the central role religion often plays in a community's understanding of justice, moral good and its own identity and we see the involvement of religion for good and for ill in the struggles in many places in the world. News reports often reinforce our stereotypes and provide an erroneous base of information from which many form lasting impressions of other religious traditions and those who practice them.

In our community institutions and in the public sphere, we increasingly face issues involving interreligious understanding and cooperation. Too often, people of other faiths experience stereotyping based on both religious difference and ethnicity. The interpretation and implementation of religious freedom is a matter of lively debate. The National Council of Churches relates to other religious communities on a broad range of public policy issues and questions of fundamental social dignity. New voices and new issues are challenging traditional understandings of who and what we are as a people in the United States. The churches struggle to understand their relation to this diversity of views and people, taking their part in our society's current efforts to discern a new and more inclusive civic identity.

A Continuing Dimension of the Church's Life

Although this situation in which we live may seem to be new, it has many parallels throughout biblical history. In the stories of the Hebrew Scriptures, God relates to the Jewish people against a backdrop of religious diversity. In early Christian writings, we see that Christianity originated as a Jewish movement often in tension with other Jewish movements of the time. These tensions are often reflected in the Christian Scriptures. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus took place in one of the most religiously complex environments of the ancient world.

The Church of Christ has always lived among peoples of many different cultures and religions. Thus we join Christians of many times and places when we ask, How do we live in faithfulness to the Gospel when our friends and neighbors, colleagues and associates, parents and children are members of other religious traditions or no religion at all?

Interfaith relations and the challenge of ministry in a religiously plural world raise a number of ecumenical questions. Some questions divide the churches in terms of theology, or practice, or a mixture of the two. These include the relationship between evangelism and dialogue, concerns about intermarriage, and issues regarding interfaith worship or common prayer. These issues warrant further consultation among the churches.

MONDAY MORNING

As we become increasingly aware that the whole Church of Christ stands together in a common ministry in relation to men and women of other religions, these questions become more urgent.

There are two aspects to this challenge. Theologically, as a fellowship of Christian communions, we ask new questions about our religious identity: How do we understand our relationship to God, to other Christians and to those of other religious traditions? How do we understand the relationship between these men and women and God? Practically, we ask about Christian discipleship: How can we best live a life of faithful witness and service in a multi-faith context?

REFLECTIONS ON THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

We are indebted to the efforts of Christians from many different confessional traditions and ecumenical bodies who have struggled with these questions. We are instructed by the thinking of the Second Vatican Council, in particular its document *Nostra Aetate* (1965) and subsequent reflections and the attention given to this issue by bodies such as the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Our efforts to think and work together in this area of interfaith relations as the National Council of Churches owe much also to the pioneering work of the World Council of Churches. In its *Guidelines on Dialogue* (1979, #12) that body noted that its member churches "will need to work out for themselves and with their specific partners in dialogue statements and guidelines for their own use in particular situations."

Some member churches of the NCCC have developed policies or study documents on interfaith relations or on specific bilateral interreligious relationships. The Faith and Order Commission of the NCCC has studied those elements within particular confessional traditions which might inform their theological understanding of our relations with other religious traditions. In addition, the Ecumenical Networks Commission and many of the member churches maintain ties with local and regional ecumenical and inter-religious councils. Some member communions also have ties to national and international multi-religious efforts. Christians take part in many inter-religious efforts of social ministry and advocacy. We are grateful for, and indebted to all of this work.

God and Human Community

Understanding the churches' relationship to people of other religious traditions begins in the recognition of God's many gifts to us, including that of relationship. All are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

When we meet a human being, no matter what her or his religion, we are meeting a unique creation of the living God. "One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live on all the face of the earth." All are equal in God's sight; each is equally the object of God's love and potentially open to receive "a ray of that truth which enlightens all [humanity]." Because we are all children of the one God we are all related to one another. It is in this sense that we may call all men and women our brothers and sisters. (We also recognize a specific use of this familial language to refer to those within the household of Christian faith.) Community is itself a divine gift which we are called to make real in our lives.

In our Christian understanding, relationship is part of the nature of God. In God's own essence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in dynamic interrelationship, a unity of three in one. Similarly, humanity is created in diversity. In the scriptural account of creation, it is the first humans in community who together constitute the image of God. Being made in God's image we are created to live a life of relationship, and called to claim the unity in our human diversity.

We recognize, however, that though we are given this gift of community, we act in ways that break or undermine it. Too often we set ourselves against each other. We become separated from God and alienated from God's creation. We find ourselves in seemingly irreconcilable conflict with other people. We confess that as human beings we have a propensity for taking the gift of diversity and turning it into a cause of disunity, antagonism and hatred often because we see ourselves as part of a unique, special community. We sin against God and each other.

This is part of the reality of our human condition. We see it in the ease with which our father Adam accuses our mother Eve: "The woman you gave me for a companion, she gave me the fruit" (Genesis 3:12). Within a generation, the vision of the community for which we are created had become so distorted that Cain can challenge God with the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9).

Scripture suggests that our responsibility extends not only to a brother or sister, but also to the stranger. Hebrew Scripture celebrates the wider community to which humanity is called in the stories of Melchizedek, Jethro, Rahab and Ruth, and the Hittites who offered hospitality to Abraham. In the Torah God enjoins the Jewish people to treat the sojourner as part of their own community. Throughout the Bible, hospitality to the stranger is an essential virtue. We recall both the

MONDAY MORNING

words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it," and the example Jesus gives in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

In the churches' long history with people of other religions, as we have struggled to make actual God's gift of community, we have acted both faithfully and unfaithfully. While Christians have suffered persecution at the hands of those of other faiths and from each other, we have much to repent. Christians have persecuted Jews, and crusaded against Muslims. Christians have enslaved Africans and other peoples and have participated in subordinating indigenous peoples and erasing their religious traditions. Many Christians have accepted or perpetuated the use of their religion to bless the imposition of Western culture and economic domination. Anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim biases, together with racism and ethnic biases, have flourished among us.

We can rejoice that Christians were leaders in the anti-slavery movement and have worked for the human and communal rights of many peoples. Christians have fought oppressive economic and social systems of many societies, including our own, and have resisted injustice without regard to cost. Christians also have invited transformation of those ways of living that damage others and undermine the one human community. In many of these efforts Christians have worked closely with people of other faiths.

Our experience, therefore, is a mixture of successes and failures in building loving community and in exercising our stewardship of God's creation in justice and peace. We must struggle to reject or reform all those human actions and systems that destroy or deny the image of God in human beings or that tear down the structures of human community. On the other hand, we must seek to affirm all human impulses which build up true community.

Because God is at work in all creation, we can expect to find new understanding of our faith through dialogue with people of other religions. Such interaction can be an opportunity for mutual witness. However, mutual witness does not always take place in a context of mutual respect. We may fail in our efforts to reflect God's love for all; and even on those occasions when we succeed in the practice of a respectful presence, we do not always find our success mirrored by our conversation partners.

We find ourselves in need of repentance and reconciliation. Again and again we are reminded "of

the Christian Church as a sign at once of people's need for fuller and deeper community and of God's promise of a restored human community in Christ." As we wait for the fulfillment of God's promise, we commit ourselves to work for fuller and deeper community in our own time and place.

Jesus Christ and Reconciliation

The revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ is the center of our faith. Incarnating both the fullness of God and the fullness of humanity, Jesus Christ initiates a new creation, a world unified in relationship as God originally intended. We believe that Jesus Christ makes real God's will for a life of loving community with God, with the whole human family and with all creation. Through Jesus Christ, Christians believe God offers reconciliation to all. "In Christ God was reconciling the world to [God]self" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

It is our Christian conviction that reconciliation among people and with the world cannot be separated from the reconciliation offered in Jesus Christ. Jesus, addressing the crowds and the disciples on the mountain (Matthew 5:1 and 7:28), teaches that any who would offer their gift at God's altar must first be reconciled to their brothers and sisters in the human family (Matthew 5:24). The hope of a cosmic reconciliation in Christ is also central to Christian scripture: "The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the Children of God" (Romans 8:21).

Jesus Christ is also the focus of the most vexing questions regarding how Christians understand their relationship with men and women of other religions. Christians agree that Jesus Christ incarnated--and incarnates still--the inexhaustible love and salvation that reconciles us all. We agree that it is not by any merit of our own but by God's grace that we are reconciled. Likewise, Christians also agree that our discipleship impels us to become reconciled to the whole human family and to live in proper relationship to all of God's creation. We disagree, however, on whether non-Christians may be reconciled to God and if so, how. Many Christians see no possibility of reconciliation with God apart from a conscious acceptance of Jesus Christ as incarnate Son of God and personal savior. For others, the reconciling work of Jesus is salvific in its own right, independent of any particular human response. For many, the saving power of God is understood as a mystery and an expression of God's sovereignty that cannot be confined within our limited conceptions. One question with which we must still struggle is how to define the uniqueness of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ in

MONDAY MORNING

the light of such passages as "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6); "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); "In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things" (Colossians 1:19-20); and "as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

As Christians we recognize that Jesus is not central to other religious traditions. For men and women in other communities, the mystery of God takes many forms. Observing this, we are not led to deny the centrality of Christ for our faith, but to contemplate more deeply the meaning of St. Paul's affirmation: "Ever since the creation of the world, (God's) eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things [God] has made" (Romans 1:20). Christians disagree on the nature and extent of such "natural revelation" and its relation to salvation. No matter what our view on this may be, we can be open to the insights of others.

We recognize that scripture speaks with many voices about relationship with men and women of other religious traditions. We need to devote further attention to issues of interpreting scriptural teaching. But as to our Christian discipleship, we can only live by the clear obligation of the Gospel. When Jesus was asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he, referring to his Jewish tradition, answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Love of God and love of neighbors cannot be separated. We rejoice in our common conviction that Jesus calls us to ministries of reconciliation.

The Spirit of God And Human Hope

The presence and power of the Holy Spirit fill us with hope. The realities of religious fragmentation and conflict could become a cause of despair, especially in a world of broken community, racked by division and hate based on color, language, ethnicity and class. We are pained when our religious traditions do not empower us to build community. Yet we have hope because of the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters when the earth was void and without form (Genesis 1:2), who brings order out of chaos and can reshape our warped societies.

We believe that our relationships with people of other religious traditions are being shaped by the Spirit who,

like the wind, "blows where it chooses" (John 3:8). Though we do not always understand the Spirit's purposes, we need never be without hope, for neither we nor the rest of creation are ever without the Spirit of God.

In this time of constant change, a sometimes bewildering variety of technologies, cultures, religions and languages impinges upon our lives. The ways in which we should witness and act to bring about reconciliation in our torn world are not always clear. But the Spirit enables us to discern how to nurture the loving community of persons, which is God's intention for creation, and gives us the strength to keep working toward it.

Our experience of the transforming power of God's love overflows in joyous anticipation of a renewed and reconciled humanity. As the Body of Christ, we are called to live out this new reality and to be a sign of the restored community to which all people are called. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we witness in word and deed to this hope.

This witness will be as varied as the many circumstances in which we meet men and women of other faiths. We meet them in our families and among our friends and colleagues; at the corner store and the doctor's office, in community action groups and at work. We meet in boardrooms and schoolrooms, facing common agendas and concerns. Since God is the Lord of history, we can be open to the presence of God's Spirit in these encounters. They invite us to faithful service and witness.

We are aware that our churches are part of the body of Christ throughout the world. Our encounters with people of other faiths here in the U.S. are informed by the experience and reflection of our sisters and brothers living among men and women of many religious traditions in many nations. We stand in solidarity with each other, taking a role in international dialogue and seeking in our own circumstances to be faithful to the gospel.

We do not always agree, however, on how best to love our neighbors. Commitment to justice and mutual respect is the paramount consideration for some. For them the practice of Christian love is the most powerful witness to the truth of the Gospel. Others, while not denying the witness of faithful lives, believe that love demands the verbal proclamation of the Gospel and an open invitation to all people to be reconciled to God in Christ. Still others understand evangelization as our participation in God's transformation of human society. As we seek to respond to God's call to love our

MONDAY MORNING

neighbor, we all must seek to avoid ways of interaction which do violence to the integrity of human persons and communities, such as coercive proselytism, which "violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters." We pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that through our life with all men and women, of every religion, color, language and class, we will be instruments of God to build that time in which "steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Psalm 85:10).

Clearly, a basic aspect of our relationship to people of religious traditions other than our own must be to engage in the struggle for justice, as the prophet Amos challenges us: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream" (Amos 5:23-24). Our actions must be based on genuine respect for all men and women. "The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy" (James 3:16-17). And beyond respect, we are called to love all people so that, by the working of the Holy Spirit, we may "above all, clothe [our]selves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).

MARKS OF FAITHFULNESS

In the light of our reflections on Christian discipleship, we can discern ways to approach the challenges of our multi-religious society. We will serve faithfully, meeting others with open hearts and minds.

1. All relationship begins with meeting. The model for our meeting others is always the depth of presence and engagement which marked Jesus' meeting with those around him. In our everyday lives, we will meet and form relationships with men and women of other religious traditions. At times these may be difficult relationships, based on bitter memories. However, we have been created for loving community and will not disengage from trying to build bridges of understanding and cooperation throughout the human family.

2. True relationship involves risk. When we approach others with an open heart, it is possible that we may be hurt. When we encounter others with an open mind, we may have to change our positions or give up certainty, but we may gain new insights. Prompted to ask new questions, we will search the Scriptures and be attentive to the Spirit in new ways to mature in Christ and in love and service to others. Because those we meet are also God's beloved creatures, this risk is also opportunity. Our knowledge and love of God can be

enriched as we hear others proclaim to us how God has worked and empowered their lives.

3. True relationship respects the other's identity. We will meet others as they are, in their particular hopes, ideas, struggles and joys. These are articulated through their own traditions, practices and world-views. We encounter the image of God in the particularity of another person's life.

4. True relationship is based on integrity. If we meet others as they are, then we must accept their right to determine and define their own identity. We also must remain faithful to who we are; only as Christians can we be present with integrity. We will not ask others to betray their religious commitments, nor will we betray our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. True relationship is rooted in accountability and respect. We approach others in humility, not arrogance. In our relationships we will call ourselves and our partners to a mutual accountability. We will invite each other to join in building a world of love and justice, but we will also challenge each other's unjust behavior. We can do both only from an attitude of mutual respect.

6. True relationship offers an opportunity to serve. Jesus comes among us as a servant. We too are given the opportunity to serve others, in response to God's love for us. In so doing, we will join with those of other religious traditions to serve the whole of God's creation. Through advocacy, education, direct services and community development, we respond to the realities of a world in need. Our joining with others in such service can be an eloquent proclamation of what it means to be in Christ.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the situation of religious plurality in which our churches minister, in light of the convictions expressed above and in order to live out our faith commitment more fully, we, the General Assembly of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States, affirm the following guidelines and recommendations.

I. In regard to the life and programs of the Council: We commit the Council to continue its relationships with people of other religious traditions. In particular the Council should:

1. Maintain relations with national bodies of other religious communities in the United States, in order to foster mutual understanding and regard, examine issues

MONDAY MORNING

affecting our communities in the course of our national life and identify common concerns and appropriate coordinated responses to them;

2. Initiate conversations with people and organizations of other religious traditions in the United States, for example, the Hindu and Sikh communities, and others;

3. Continue to encourage dialogue with Americans of other religions to promote peace and justice around the globe and in particular with American Jews and Muslims as integral to the churches' efforts for peace in the Middle East (Policy Statement on the Middle East, Nov. 6, 1980); and to encourage interreligious dialogue in other situations in which religion is identified as a factor in conflict situations;

4. Reinvigorate ongoing work with institutions and people of other religions and cultures in public policy advocacy; refugee resettlement and overseas programs; the prevention of family violence and abuse (Policy Statement on Family Violence and Abuse, November 14, 1990); and to initiate work in other program areas as appropriate;

5. Encourage the efforts of existing interreligious entities within the life of the Council, such as the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, the Interfaith Broadcasting Committee and the Task Force on Religious Liberty;

6. Continue to work through collaborative bodies, including the Washington Interfaith Staff Committee, the U.S. Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the North American Interfaith Network;

7. Participate in international efforts to further interreligious relations, especially through the World Council of Churches and organizations such as the World Conference on Religion and Peace;

8. Affirm that the integrity of our Christian faith and commitment is to be preserved in all our interfaith relationships and recognize that religious commitments of many traditions, like the Christian, have political implications of which we should be aware. We should recognize and consider the political aspects of the others' religious claims and be ready to explain the religious roots of our own behavior and policies;

9. Recommit ourselves to pursue religious liberty and religious freedom for all and to defend "the rights and liberties of cultural, racial and religious minorities" (Religion and Civil Liberties in the U.S.A., October 5, 1955); and call again for "interfaith dialogue on the nature and meaning of human rights" and on "the

patterns of inter-religious intolerance and practices that lead to inter-faith conflict" (Human Rights, Nov. 12, 1994), including both intolerance toward Christians and Christian intolerance of others;

10. Condemn all forms of religious, ethnic and racial bias, especially anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-Asian and anti-Native American bias, and other forms of sinful bigotry which turn religious differences into excuses for defamation, stereotyping and violence; and defend their victims (cf. Resolution on Prejudice Against Islam and Muslims, November 6, 1986); and commit the Council and our churches to uproot all that might contribute to such prejudice in our teaching, life and ministries;

11. Continue our efforts to achieve mutuality of understanding and growth toward maturity in relation to Native American people, so that the spiritual heritage, political reality and cultural uniqueness of each group or nation may be respected for the common good (Indian Affairs, November 4, 1978); and promote the protection of sacred sites and rituals; and

12. Recommit ourselves to the development in public schools of "an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the role of religion in the life of the people of this nation," while also defending the principle that "neither the church nor the state should use the public school to compel acceptance of any creed or conformity to any specific religious practice" (The Churches and the Public Schools, June 7, 1963);

II. We charge the Interfaith Relations Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ to:

1. Work with the churches to identify or create study resources, organize and facilitate consultations and educational conferences, offer workshops, etc.;

2. Gather information on existing programs, activities, and relationships on national, regional, and local levels;

3. Promote and participate regularly in bilateral and multilateral consultations with other religious communities to explore practical and theological concerns; and

4. Coordinate the Council's interfaith work and report to the NCCC General Assembly at least biennially.

III. In service to each other as a community of communions:

We call on member communions to work together and with the broader ecumenical community, to equip

MONDAY MORNING

congregations and Christian leaders to understand and engage with people of other religious traditions and in particular to:

1. Provide study resources, sponsoring consultations, and organizing conferences to further this aim;
2. Participate in the Interfaith Relations Commission, a forum in which the churches may take counsel, make plans and undertake joint work in this field; and
3. Engage in interreligious relations ecumenically whenever and wherever possible and share these experiences with each other, the Council and partner churches and ecumenical bodies around the world.

IV. To member communions and their congregations, to the wider ecumenical community and to all those of good will who seek further understanding or participation in interfaith relations, we:

1. Recommend study and use of the World Council of Churches' Guidelines on Dialogue (1979), the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council (1965) and other statements of the churches. These documents offer theological insights and practical suggestions that can undergird efforts to understand and properly engage with people of other religious traditions;
2. Call attention to the statements of our member communions and of the wider Christian community regarding interreligious relations;
3. Recommend ecumenical consideration and study of our divided understandings of the nature of salvation, of appropriate forms of evangelism, of the bases in scripture and tradition for relations with those of other religious traditions and of the concerns among us regarding interfaith marriage, worship and prayer;
4. Urge member communions, their congregations and local ecumenical and interfaith gatherings to use the "Marks of Faithfulness" in this policy statement as a statement of commitment for study and affirmation;
5. Commend this policy statement to member communions, congregations and local ecumenical and interreligious gatherings for study and as a catalyst to reflection and action; and
6. Commend this policy statement to other religious communities in the United States for their study and invite their reactions to it in the hope and expectation of deepening friendship.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

14. RESOLUTION "AGAINST THE APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP'S APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (THE FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION AND THE WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT)"

Mr. Cavanaugh then directed delegates to the resolution entitled "Against the Apparel Industry Partnership's Apparel Industry Partnership Agreement (The Fair Labor Association and The Workplace Code of Conduct)" and moved its adoption. Mr. Cavanaugh yielded his time to Rev. Noelle Damico (NY). The Assistant Moderator granted voice to Ms. Damico for the purposes of addressing this motion only.

Ms. Damico reported the history leading to the presentation of this resolution. Rev. Rollin O. Russell, Southern Conference Minister, spoke in favor of the resolution stating that the minimum requirements requested in the resolution are the LEAST we can require or hope to require from other nations where we have no control of the child labor laws.

99-GS-30 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Against the Apparel Industry Partnership's Apparel Industry Partnership Agreement (The Fair Labor Association and The Workplace Code of Conduct.)"

AGAINST THE APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP'S APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (THE FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION AND THE WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT)

WHEREAS, the People of Faith Network (PFN), a national interfaith network of clergy, congregations, and faith activists who work together on campaigns for social and economic justice, have been organizing an educational and letter-writing campaign to expose sweatshop conditions and unfair labor practices condoned, or at least tolerated, by major U.S. corporations, including but not limited to Phillips Van Heusen and Liz Claiborne (current members of AIP);

WHEREAS, Phillips Van Heusen summarily closed the only plant in Guatemala with a union contract illegally without notice, two weeks before Christmas, forcing the majority female workforce to return to sweatshop conditions in non-union plants producing the same Van Heusen shirts;