

## MONDAY AFTERNOON

WHEREAS, U.S. Government representatives deceived the people of Bikini Atoll by telling them that their island would be used "for the benefit of mankind;"

WHEREAS, the March 1, 1954, "Bravo" hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll was detonated despite weather reports the previous day that winds were blowing to the east toward the inhabited atolls of Rongelap, Utrik, Ailuk and others;

WHEREAS, a 1985-1989 health survey in the Marshall Islands revealed cancer rates 2 to 30 times higher among Marshall Islanders than in the U.S.;

WHEREAS, a nationwide survey of thyroid problems in the Marshall Islands in the mid-1990's by doctors from Tohoku University in Japan confirmed a high rate of thyroid disorders among Marshall Islanders;

WHEREAS, the economic provisions of a Compact of Free Association implemented in 1986 will expire in 2001 and are up for renegotiation in 1999;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Government has not yet apologized to the Marshallese people for the death of Marshallese citizens and for the damage done to the homeland and people;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is the main religious denomination in the Marshall Islands;

WHEREAS, there are many United Church of Christ Marshall Islanders in Hawaii and other western states;

WHEREAS, the \$150 million trust fund provided in a Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands is woefully inadequate and not just compensation for the health injuries and deaths caused by U.S. nuclear testing to the population and the loss of their use of their atolls because of radiation contamination since 1946; and

WHEREAS, U.S. funding for medical surveillance and treatment programs is inadequate to meet the needs of the exposed population in the Marshall Islands;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the United Church Board for World Ministries and its successor to work closely with the Marshallese people, our ecumenical partners, and the Office for Church in Society and its successor to bring about an official apology and full redress including all necessary funding from the U.S. Government; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the U.S. Attorney General, the Secretary of the Department of Energy, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and each member of the U.S. Congress, with copies to the Republic of the Marshall Island Embassy Office in Washington, D.C., and to the people in the Marshall Islands.

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

### 12. RESOLUTION "ENDING THE STRANGLEHOLD OF GLOBAL DEBT ON IMPOVERISHED NATIONS"

The Moderator asked Mr. Gantt to present the next piece of business from Committee 14.

Mr. Gantt presented the Resolution "Ending The Stranglehold of Global Debt on Impoverished Nations" and moved its adoption. Mr. Gantt reported some of the information the delegates had learned regarding the impact of the global debt on impoverished nations, as well as the history of the church in addressing this issue. Mr. Gantt yielded his time to Ms. Dorothy G. Berry (KO), the resource person to the Committee.

Ms. Berry told the delegates that for the last 20 years the distribution of wealth throughout the world has become more and more inequitable and that the debt burden on the most impoverished nations in our world becomes more and more crushing despite their best efforts to meet their obligations. She continued, stating that those most adversely effected have been the desperately poor in these nations, deprived of basic food needs, adequate health care and basic education. Ms. Berry spoke about the biblical concept of debt forgiveness that we know as Jubilee and is reaffirmed by the prayer of Jesus in which constantly we pray "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" that has caught the imagination of the world.

Ms. Berry reported that at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Zimbabwe more than 300 churches voted decisively to see cancellation of these debts. In Europe the churches have collected 19 million signatures supporting debt cancellation and their anxious question is "Where are the American Christians?" She urged passage of the resolution.

Rev. Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa (OCIS), Executive Director of the Office for Church in Society, spoke in favor of the resolution asking delegates to imagine paying back-breaking debt for loans their great-

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grandparents were encouraged to take, received no benefit from and which prevented them from maintaining the basic necessities of life for themselves and their families. He stated that that is precisely what citizens of the poorest countries in our world are forced to endure. Rev. Kuroiwa urged support of the resolution.

Rev. James R. Smucker (WASH/CJA) and Rev. John R. Deckenback (CAC) also spoke in support of the resolution.

There was no further discussion and Moderator Hood called for the vote.

99-GS-40 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Ending the Stranglehold of Global Debt on Impoverished Nations."

### ENDING THE STRANGLEHOLD OF GLOBAL DEBT ON IMPOVERISHED NATIONS

WHEREAS, delegates from over 300 national churches at the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, unanimously voted to "Let the Trumpet Sound a Jubilee Call to End the Stranglehold of Debt on Impoverished Peoples;"

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ seeks to be in solidarity with those who have taken up this international call to address the crushing burden of global debt;

WHEREAS, this indebtedness of the poorest nations of the world has escalated to such a degree as to make repayment impossible;

WHEREAS, such indebtedness imposes an unjust burden on people struggling for the basics of existence, with an unequal burden falling primarily on women and children;

WHEREAS, the rules and regulations of the debt management are placed in the powerful hands of the wealthiest nations and their institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have focused on debt repayment rather than debt cancellation; and

WHEREAS, the debtor nations are not included in the decision-making regarding lending and debt repayment, placing these nations in an unjust and unfair position concerning their own destiny;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, July 1-6, 1999, encourages its members, congregations, associations, conferences to be involved in the Jubilee 2000 campaign, and calls upon them to strive to:

1. Work for the cancellation of the major debt of the most severely impoverished nations by the end of the year 2000, enabling their economies to experience new life;
2. Encourage the institutions involved in granting loans and debt repayment to devise policies aimed at preventing future debt crises and to include the debtor nations in the formulation of said policies;
3. Call upon the leaders of the richest countries, the commercial banks, the IMF, the World Bank, regional and international financial institutions to cancel these debts in a way that benefits the ordinary citizens of the countries and without conditions that would perpetuate and/or deepen poverty; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, to commend the Office for Church in Society and the United Church Board for World Ministries for their work on Jubilee 2000 and urge that they and their successors continue their work to cancel the debt;

To urge the President or General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and the Council of Conference Ministers to give strong leadership to encourage Jubilee 2000; and

To encourage the local churches to study and become advocates for Jubilee 2000.

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

### 13. RESOLUTION "GLOBAL WARMING"

The Moderator called on Rev. Gantt for the final piece of business from Committee 14.

Rev. Gantt presented the resolution entitled "Global Warming" and on behalf of the Committee moved its adoption. Rev. Gantt spoke for the motion reminding delegates of the history of the United Church of Christ in responding to environmental issues. A short video presentation, narrated by Maya Angelou, highlighted some of the issues raised because of global warming.