

## MONDAY EVENING

Funds received for **THE CHRISTMAS FUND: Remembering Those Who Serve the Church** will be allocated by The Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, in collaboration with the Conferences as appropriate. A report of the ministry made possible will be given to the church each year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod directs that promotional materials for these four Special Mission Offerings will be sensitive to the variety of languages and cultures of the constituents and they will be distributed to every congregation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that General Synod requests congregations and congregational leaders to promote all four offerings and invite all members and friends to contribute;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all giving to these offerings will be credited to congregations as *Our Church's Wider Mission, Special Support*;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the proceeds of the offerings will be used for the announced purposes, after the necessary promotional costs have been deducted; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod directs the Stewardship Council, in partnership with the All-Church Offering Committee of the Executive Council, to begin the process of planning for, instituting and promoting the four Special Mission Offerings in order to begin this new offering process in February 2001.

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

Moderator Norman-Richardson called on Mr. Dennis Johnson (MASS) to present the recommended actions from Committee Four.

### 5. RESOLUTION "BORDER JUSTICE ISSUES: A CHALLENGE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHURCH"

Mr. Dennis Johnson, Chair of Committee Four, presented Resolutions "Border Justice Issues: A Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church," on page 163 and "Border Justice Resolution," on page 165 in the Program/Worship and Business Book. Mr. Johnson stated that since both resolutions parallel one another, the committee formed a subcommittee to create one

resolution but keep the spirit of both. Mr. Johnson moved the adoption of the resolution "Border Justice Issues: A Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church." Mr. Johnson yielded his time to Ms. Petra Malleis-Sternberg (SW) and Mr. Ron Stief (UCBHM) who spoke on behalf of Committee Four.

Ms. Malleis-Sternberg explained that the resolution is a combination of the Committee for Racial Justice and the Southwest Conference resolutions. She reported that the Committee worked hard to incorporate the concerns of both resolutions and the final product is a faithful addressing of the issues. She spoke about the benefits of this resolution and urged its passage.

Mr. Stief explained that since 1994 the Southwest Conference, the United Church Board for World Ministries and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries have been engaged in a process to educate ourselves on globalization, to analyze border economics and to reflect on our biblical mandate to do justice. He stated that this resolution is about "doing" justice, and thanked God for the individuals and churches of the Southwest Conference who have taken on a controversial issue fraught with the potential of division and brought a unified voice to this General Synod. Mr. Stief also urged passage of this resolution.

Mr. Matthew Leathers (CA NV,S) proposed a friendly amendment to add the word "legally" in the description of Mexican Americans crossing the border in the ninth "WHEREAS." He feels there is ambiguity in the resolution and an assumption that all Mexicans crossing the border are illegal.

Mr. Johnson did not receive this as a friendly amendment.

99-GS-42 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeated the motion to amend.

Discussion returned to the main motion.

Mr. Hugh C. McLean (CONN) offered a friendly amendment to substitute at the second "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED" the words "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED."

The friendly amendment was accepted by Mr. Johnson.

Ms. Linda Jaramillo (CPC) urged passage of the resolution stating she found it exciting that the resolution included the issue of transforming minds, changing hearts and making ourselves aware of what is really going on there.

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Mr. Matthew Leathers (CA NV,S) offered a friendly amendment to read "harassment of Mexicans and legal Mexican Americans crossing the border" in the ninth "WHEREAS."

Mr. Johnson did not receive this as a friendly amendment.

Persons spoke both for and against the amendment.

Rev. Zoltan D. Szucs (CA.SY) spoke against the amendment. He stated his belief that it is totally irrelevant whether you are legal or illegal because at the Mexican American border if you speak with an accent you will be harassed and delayed for hours. He said that the issue is harassment and human rights.

Rev. Henry T. Simmons (NY/CRJ) indicated he is the chair of the Board of Directors of the Commission for Racial Justice and spoke against the amendment because the issue is whether or not there are legal or illegal actions relative to border officials as they relate to individuals who are crossing the boarder.

Rev. Catherine J. Foot (CA NV,N) spoke in favor of the amendment stating that there is a young man who is clearly trying to give some information that is important to him and she wants to encourage this group to find a way to listen to him. She suggested that even if the amendment is defeated what he is trying to say to us is that there are the experiences of some people trying to cross the border who are detained and harassed regardless of their status in crossing the border. The wording of the amendment may be awkward but she appreciated his attempt to make a statement to the Synod that he has experienced that kind of discrimination.

Moderator Norman-Richardson, recognizing there was no one to speak in opposition to the amendment, called for the vote and restated the amendment. Seeing there were delegates who wished to speak against the amendment, Moderator Norman-Richardson invited further discussion.

Ms. Marilyn Pagán (ILL) spoke against the amendment stating that we need not only to hear our young people, but also educate them and the word "illegal" just feeds into the racism that American Society already has. She declared that no human being is illegal.

Mr. Mark Walz (IS) called the question.

99-GS-43 VOTE: The Twenty-second General Synod voted to close debate.

Moderator Norman-Richardson called for the vote on the amendment.

99-GS-44 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeated the amendment.

Moderator Norman-Richardson returned to the main motion and asked for further discussion.

Mr. Matthew Leathers (CA NV,S) proposed a friendly amendment in the ninth "WHEREAS" to read "There are increasing instances of harassment of documented or undocumented Mexicans and Mexican Americans crossing the border, including the building of three fences between the two nations, as well as illegal and unjust searches and detentions."

Mr. Johnson received this as a friendly amendment.

Moderator Norman-Richardson called for the vote.

99-GS-45 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Border Justice Issues: A Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church," as amended.

### BORDER JUSTICE ISSUES: A CHALLENGE FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY CHURCH

WHEREAS, the people of the United States and Mexico share a common border that runs some 2000 miles and where they are deeply intertwined in a unique common multiracial, multilingual culture, economy, and geography;

WHEREAS, the concept of a political border meant to exclude one group from another, sometimes in the most oppressive manner, runs counter to biblical teachings, including the Hebrew Bible, the imperative of Jesus in his warning "for I was a stranger and you welcomed me" and the urging of Paul to break down the walls between us;

WHEREAS, the history of the people who have had the courage to cross that "boundary" line is rich in tradition and contributions made to the growth and development of the United States, in our economic sphere, as well as in the areas of leadership, education, quality of life and when their sons and daughters have made the supreme sacrifice;

WHEREAS, the economics of globalization has led to exploitive labor practices, environmental degradation, human rights abuses and inadequate social infrastructure along the U.S. - Mexico border;

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WHEREAS, organized labor and the corporate sector must continue to be prepared to assist in the development of a skilled and competitive workforce and the search for world markets must be compatible with those values of an equitable and humane concern for the workers and the country that has given them the capacity they now enjoy in the global marketplace;

WHEREAS, examples of economic, social, and racial injustice exist in the many *colonias* - communities without water or electric utilities, environmental safeguards, schools, healthcare, or other social services - that have sprung up in the many twin cities along the U.S. - Mexico border;

WHEREAS, there has been historical exploitation of Mexican workers in the form of migrant farm labor, a livelihood that has been designated by the U.S. Department of Labor as the most dangerous in the United States;

WHEREAS, the U.S. - Mexico border is an environmental calamity in progress with mounting instances of hazardous landfills and illegal disposal of chemical wastes, unsafe working conditions resulting in exposure of workers, serious cases of air pollution, and - in many cases - the virtual nonexistence of any environmental safeguards;

WHEREAS, there are increasing instances of harassment of documented or undocumented Mexicans and Mexican Americans crossing the border, including the building of three fences between the two nations, as well as illegal and unjust searches and detention;

WHEREAS, Latino/Latina/Hispanic persons from many nations, including the United States, are being harassed by law enforcement and other officials not only along the border, but also hundreds and even thousands of miles away from the actual border;

WHEREAS, there exist indigenous nations whose sovereign lands are divided by the building of fences on the politically-imposed U.S. - Mexico border which disrupt sacred practices;

WHEREAS, the National Council of Churches conducted a Border Justice Hearing in 1994 at El Paso, Texas; the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ held its 1998 Annual Board Meeting in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and witnessed many economic and racial injustices; and the United Church Board for World Ministries (UCBWM) held a board meeting in El Paso / Juarez, followed by a United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and

United Church Board for World Ministries-sponsored consultation in El Paso in 1994;

WHEREAS, the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and the El Paso United Church of Christ churches have sponsored several conferences and convocations to inform local, national, and regional bodies and persons from both the United States and Mexico about border ministry;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ and its antecedents have had a close relationship with the Iglesias Cristianas Congregacionales de México (Congregational Christian Church of Mexico) and has been involved with Centro Alberto Rembao in Guadalajara and its educational activities about U.S. - Mexico relations and theology in the Americas;

WHEREAS, there exist fertile opportunities for building a common ministry inclusive of religious community, economic development, labor, human rights, youth and students, and cooperative development organizations;

WHEREAS, there is a need for a holistic ministry that recognizes that Latino/Latina/Hispanic, Native American, African-American, Asian-American and Anglo-American sisters and brothers must join in the implementation of a common ministry on the border; and

WHEREAS, to initiate this ministry, we need a broader base of knowledge to provide a better understanding of the multifaceted reality of the Mexican and American border, and we must seek ways to fully commit ourselves to the concept of a common border ministry as well as explore the extraordinary opportunity for ecumenical partnership with those who seek the same;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its concern about the myriad national and international issues of border justice and condemns the unjust treatment and harassment of Latino/Latina/Hispanic persons both at the border and away from the border;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is time for a complete transformation and revolution in our minds, that we learn theology and ethics from people who have been pushed to the margins of our society and religion; for example, recent immigrants from south of the border, ministers and members of churches in Mexico and Latin America;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is time for a complete transformation and revolution in our hearts, that we care for all members of our family across racial and cultural boundaries; that we risk our emotions, our relationships, our livelihoods, among the oppressed of our nation and the Americas;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is time for a complete transformation and revolution in our political will, that we contact and collaborate with churches, civic groups, businesses, non-governmental organizations, social entrepreneurs and with the government officials in other countries which are experiencing serious poverty and population problems, to assist in developing policies and programs for alleviating poverty and the oft-accompanying sense of desperation which propels many people to leave in hopes of finding a better life elsewhere; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is time for a complete transformation and revolution in our bodies, that we give our time, talents and treasures: to end human rights abuses against immigrants; to stop environmental racism, especially near the U.S. - Mexico border; to support organizations in both countries that work for justice; to lobby U.S. and Mexican legislative and executive branches - national, state and local - as well as testify before respective judiciaries; to dialogue with business owners and managers who work near the border;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ thanks local churches who have already been working on these critical issues and invites other local churches, covenant partners, conferences, and associations to a call to conscience in relation to border ministries in our own settings during the next two years. We call on the Commission for Racial Justice, the Board for World Ministries, the Board for Homeland Ministries, and their successors, the Southwest, South Central, and California/Nevada Southern Conferences, and the Council for Hispanic Ministries to coordinate activities and be responsible for a report to the Twenty-third General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 2001.

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

### **6. RESOLUTION "IN SUPPORT OF THE FARM LABOR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE'S BOYCOTT OF MT. OLIVE PICKLES"**

Moderator Norman-Richardson called on Mr. Johnson to present the final action from Committee Four.

Mr. Johnson directed the delegates' attention to the location of the resolution and moved the adoption of the Resolution "In Support of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles." Mr. Johnson yielded his time to Ms. Olga Sierra Sandman (ILL) to speak in support of the resolution.

Ms. Sandman stated she was a member of the National Farm Worker Ministry Board. She reminded the delegates that it is a well-known fact that farm workers are a poor and powerless people and yet extremely vital to our survival and sustenance as they harvest the food we eat. She stated that a consumer boycott called by the farm workers is only a tool, a non-violent strategy and a proven, effective way to bring the employer to the bargaining table. Ms. Sandman reminded the delegates of the United Church of Christ's support of the Campbell's boycott in the early '80's and that the strength of that boycott helped the Farm Labor Organizing Committee to obtain a collective bargaining agreement. Ms. Sandman quoted César Chávez and urged passage of the resolution.

Mr. James Forster (MASS) proposed an amendment to replace the second statement of the resolution with the following two statements: "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ in all of its settings to pray for the migrant workers of Mt. Olive Pickle Co. in their struggle to earn a decent, living wage." "BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings to pray for the owners and managers of the Mt. Olive Pickle Co. that they may discern a way to provide decent wages and working conditions for the workers upon whom their business depends, and to write to Mt. Olive Pickle Co., CEO, William Bryan, informing him of the same."

Mr. Forster spoke to the amendment stating that if we vote the resolution as written, we are presuming to judge the intentions of the Mt. Olive Pickle Co. and by calling for a boycott we are enacting a sentence that will ultimately hurt those we are attempting to minister to. He reminded the delegates that as a church it is not our place to judge. If the company has violated the laws of the land, then those laws have penalties attached. If the owners and managers of Mt. Olive have violated laws against humanity, then God will judge them.

Rev. Rollin O. Russell (SOC) spoke in opposition to the amendment stating he had just finished a term on the North Carolina Council of Churches as its president and moderated a meeting last month in which this matter was discussed, including the matter of the