

MONDAY EVENING

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

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boycott. Mr. Russell agreed that we do not know how God will judge the owners and managers of Mt. Olive pickles or us but we do know what will happen if something is not done to help the farm workers in North Carolina. He further stated that where the Farm Labor Organizing Committee has secured contracts with growers and farm workers in the Midwest, the conditions for those farm workers have improved dramatically. The reason for the boycott is to bring people to the table and that without letting the workers organize this company has an unfair advantage over other companies in the marketplace.

There being no more discussion, Moderator Norman-Richardson called for the vote on the amendment.

99-GS-46 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeated the amendment.

Moderator Norman-Richardson asked for further discussion on the main motion.

Rev. Patrick W. Morris, Sr. (PSE) reminded delegates that two groups of individuals are being discussed, the farm workers and the processors. One group being left out is the farmers and the General Synod needs to remember that this is another group of people involved.

Rev. William E. Miles (WIS) moved the previous question.

99-GS-47 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod voted to close debate.

Moderator Norman-Richard called for the vote on the main motion.

99-GS-48 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "In Support of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles."

IN SUPPORT OF THE FARM LABOR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE'S BOYCOTT OF MT. OLIVE PICKLES

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has a long history of support for farmworkers in their quest for justice and dignity, including past boycotts of lettuce, Campbell's products, and a continuing boycott of non-union California grapes;

WHEREAS, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (FLOC), is organizing the migrant farmworkers who harvest the crop for the Mt. Olive Pickle Co. of Mt. Olive, North Carolina, and more than

2,000 of these workers have signed union authorization cards;

WHEREAS, the only way these workers can improve their lives and achieve the dignity they deserve is to win union representation and negotiate a fair contract;

WHEREAS, FLOC's organizing drive is supported by more than 60 organizations such as the national AFL-CIO, the National Council of Churches, the National Farm Worker Ministry, the North Carolina AFL-CIO, the North Carolina Council of Churches, and local organizations and churches across the United States;

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Co. CEO, William Bryan, as a leader in this industry, has the ability to recognize FLOC and bargain a contract to improve the lives of the workers who harvest his crops, but to date has steadfastly refused to do so;

WHEREAS, the only resource left these workers is to appeal to the American people's spirit of fairness and justice, and urge them to join the boycott, launched by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee on March 17, of Mt. Olive Co. products;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings to support FLOC in its efforts to organize a union among North Carolina farmworkers in order to bring a greater measure of justice and dignity to those who work in the agricultural industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Twenty-second General Synod calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings to boycott all Mt. Olive Pickle Co. products until such time as a contract is signed between the FLOC and the Company, and to write to Mt. Olive Co. CEO, William Bryan informing him of the same. (Address letters to: William Bryan, CEO, Mt. Olive Pickle Co., P.O. Box 609, Mt. Olive NC 28365. Send copies to: Baldemar Velásquez, President, FLOC, 1221 Broadway, Toledo OH 43609.)

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Ms. Olga Sierra Sandman (ILL) asked that the Synod grant voice to Ms. Roberta Perry, a staff member of the National Farm Worker Ministry, who brought a letter for Paul H. Sherry sent by Virginia Nesmith, the Executive Director of the National Farm Worker Ministry.