

## TUESDAY MORNING

### 11. RESOLUTION "THE CALLING OF CLERGY WITH DISABILITIES"

The Assistant Moderator called on the Chair of Committee Three to introduce their action.

Rev. Bela Poznan (CA.SY) presented the resolution "The Calling of Clergy with Disabilities" and moved its adoption. Mr. Poznan yielded his time to Lauri Thomas (WIS) to speak to the resolution.

Ms. Thomas explained the action and requested voice for Rev. Charlie L. Bamforth (KO) who then spoke to the motion reminding the Synod that in addition to the call to be a multiracial and multicultural church we are also to be accessible to all. He urged support of the resolution.

The Assistant Moderator asked for further discussion.

Ms. Sylvia Dewitt (CA NV,N) spoke in support of the resolution and expressed particular concern about accessibility on the campuses of our seminaries.

There being no further discussion Assistant Moderator Frieberg called for the vote.

99-GS-55 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "The Calling of Clergy with Disabilities."

#### THE CALLING OF CLERGY WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, in 1977 the Eleventh General Synod approved the Pronouncement, "The Church and Persons with Handicaps," which encouraged all settings of the United Church of Christ to implement full employment of persons with disabilities;

WHEREAS, in 1981 the Thirteenth General Synod approved the Proposal for Action, "The Church and Persons with Handicaps," which included calls for affirmative action in the hiring of persons with disabilities in our local churches and throughout the church;

WHEREAS, in 1985 the Fifteenth General Synod approved "Full Participation for Persons with Disabilities in the Life of the Church," which "recommends that local churches, associations, conferences, instrumentalities and other national bodies seek out persons with disabilities to become actively involved in all aspects of the church;"

WHEREAS, in 1995 the Twentieth General Synod approved "Concerning the Church and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)," which challenges the United Church of Christ to embrace the spirit of the ADA and hold itself to be morally bound by the provisions of the ADA which prohibit employment discrimination against persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, despite the above General Synod actions, barriers remain within local churches, conferences, and national boards to calling clergy with disabilities to serve;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in the next two years, there be an aggressive campaign to assist clergy persons with disabilities in the call process. The Office for Church Life and Leadership and its successor body in partnership with the NCPWD is requested to lead this effort;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office for Church Life and Leadership and its successor body, in partnership with the NCPWD is requested to develop educational programs and resources for the church to address discrimination against clergy persons with disabilities and to include appropriate materials in search committee notebooks; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that all United Church of Christ related seminaries be urged to remove barriers – architectural, attitudinal, and cultural – which prohibit persons with disabilities from receiving the same training as non-disabled persons.

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

### 12. RESOLUTION "CALLING THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES (BRAIN DISORDERS)"

Mr. Poznan continued the report of Committee Three and presented the Resolution "Calling the People of God to Justice for Persons with Serious Mental Illness (Brain disorders)" and moved its adoption.

Mr. Poznan asked that voice be granted to Rev. Norma S. Mengel (PC) to speak in support of the resolution. Ms. Mengel urged support of the resolution

Rev. Dorothy Gager (SE) proposed a friendly amendment to add, in the first "WHEREAS" statement, the words "addictive disorders" in the list of serious

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mental illnesses. Ms. Gager spoke to the amendment and the issue of alcohol addiction.

There being no further discussion, the Assistant Moderator called for the vote on the amendment.

99-GS-56 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeats the amendment.

The Assistant Moderator called for discussion on the main motion.

Several persons spoke for and against the motion.

There being no further discussion the Assistant Moderator closed the debate and called for the vote.

99-GS-57 VOTED The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Calling the People of God to Justice for Persons with Serious Mental Illnesses (Brain Disorders)."

### CALLING THE PEOPLE OF GOD TO OPEN WIDE THEIR HEARTS TO PERSONS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES (BRAIN DISORDERS)

WHEREAS, serious mental illnesses - schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), unipolar disorder (clinical depression), obsessive/compulsive disorder, panic-anxiety disorder - are biological brain disorders and need to be treated as any other biologically-based medical problem of any other organ of the body;

WHEREAS, the 1990's have been declared the decade of the brain and pioneering research has resulted in new knowledge and new effective medications;

WHEREAS, these brain disorders can now be treated as precisely and effectively as other medical disorders (e.g. a higher rate of success in such treatment than for cardiovascular disorders);

WHEREAS, there continues to be strong stigma and discrimination in society against people with these brain disorders in social relationships, health insurance coverage, employment, etc.;

WHEREAS, there is great inequality in health insurance coverage for these medical conditions compared to coverage of any other physical, medical illness/disorder (diabetes, Parkinson's, etc.);

WHEREAS, at least one in four families (including church families) has a family member with one of these brain disorders;

WHEREAS, at least 30 million Americans, including at least 12 million children have these brain disorders; and

WHEREAS, the church is called to be a community which breaks through fear and isolation to offer love, hope, care and healing;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod requests the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and/or its successor body to make it a priority to educate congregations about these disorders and encourage congregations to be truly inclusive, welcoming churches, ministering with and to persons with these disorders and their families;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Council is requested to petition The Pension Boards-United Church of Christ to establish health insurance policies which provide insurance coverage for these brain disorders equal to any other physical illness; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Office for Church in Society and/or its successor body is requested to promote advocacy in state legislatures and in Congress for equality in health insurance coverage and other anti-discrimination legislation which affects this population of people.

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

### 13. MAKE A DIFFERENCE! PRESENTATION

The Moderator explained that beginning in 1985, the Fifteenth General Synod authorized a feasibility study which supported the decision made at the Eighteenth General Synod, to begin a special fund raising effort for the entire United Church of Christ known as MAKE A DIFFERENCE!. Ms. Nancy J. Fogal, Director of Special Giving with the United Church of Christ's Commission on Development was invited to present a concluding report on the MAKE A DIFFERENCE! campaign.

Ms. Fogal spoke of the importance of this campaign in the life of the church and thanked the staff members of local churches and conferences who made the campaign work. Special appreciation and acknowledgment was given to the persons on stage, Rev. W. James Halfaker, who was the original director of the campaign; Mr. Robert Polk, who worked on