

## TUESDAY MORNING

WHEREAS, the death penalty is prohibited by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

WHEREAS, the Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico (the Puerto Rico Conference of the United Church of Christ) has expressed its opposition to the death penalty;

WHEREAS, the people of Puerto Rico have consistently rejected the death penalty;

WHEREAS, the death penalty has not proven to be an effective deterrent to crime, as evidenced by studies showing that states with the death penalty do not have lower murder rates than states without a death penalty in place;

WHEREAS, there is no conclusive evidence that the death penalty brings about real healing for victims' families and, in fact, public opinion strongly supports life imprisonment without parole along with some form of restitution for victims' families as a more meaningful gesture toward healing;

WHEREAS, many criminal justice and conflict resolution experts have found that the trend toward vengeance and punishment reflected in the increased number of executions in fact undermines the goals of accountability and true restoration by leaving victims' families and the community without a role in the justice process and by preventing the offender from experiencing the full consequence of pain caused; and

WHEREAS, in the midst of a violent world, the lament of Jesus that we would "know the things that make for peace" challenges us to move beyond such instruments as the death penalty to bring about true justice, healing and reconciliation;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ Office for Church in Society, Commission for Racial Justice and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, in partnership with other national instrumentalities and agencies (and their successor bodies), continue advocacy efforts to address the racial and economic biases in the administration and continuation of the death penalty, including efforts to reverse the trend toward limiting access to legal counsel and recourse;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ and the Office for Church in Society, in cooperation with congregations, conferences and the national instrumentalities, work with legislators to

introduce a "moratorium on execution" legislation in the state and federal legislative bodies;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod calls upon United Church of Christ national instrumentalities (and their successor bodies), conferences, associations and congregations to speak out in opposition to the death penalty and work for its abolition, with an immediate focus on abolishing the death penalty for juvenile offenders, the mentally retarded and the mentally ill;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ Office for Church in Society, Commission for Racial Justice and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, in partnership with all national instrumentalities and agencies (and their successor bodies), engage in renewed education efforts with United Church of Christ conferences, associations and congregations throughout the United States and Puerto Rico regarding the issue of capital punishment;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the governor of each state, the leadership of each political party of each state, Puerto Rico, the President of the United States, and each member of the United States Congress; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms the long-standing opposition within the United Church of Christ to the death penalty and urges the abolition of capital punishment as a means of working for justice and maintaining a faithful witness to remember "the least of these" our sisters and brothers.

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

### 15. RESOLUTION "RE-AFFIRMING THE FOURTH AMENDMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE DIALLO SHOOTING"

Ms. Baker presented the Resolution "Re-affirming the Fourth Amendment in the Wake of the Diallo Shooting" and recommended its approval. In speaking to the motion, Ms. Baker stated that while the focus is a specific incident, there have been similar events in many places in our country. She stated the hope of Committee 10 is that in being this specific about an event in one city this document will be a helpful tool to those working in other communities.

Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson called for discussion.

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Mr. Richard Conser (ILL) spoke in support of the resolution and related documented incidents of police violence in Chicago.

Rev. Zolton S. Sutto (CA.SY) spoke in support of the resolution and informed the Synod that he was a police officer for 26 years before going into the ministry and stated he deplored the actions in this incident.

Ms. Catharine C. Bryant (NY) offered a friendly editorial amendment in the third "WHEREAS" add comas after the word "shooting" and after the word "bullets" enclosing that phrase. Ms. Baker accepted this as a friendly amendment.

There being no further discussion Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson called for the vote.

99-GS-59 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Re-affirming the Fourth Amendment in the Wake of the Diallo Shooting."

### RE-AFFIRMING THE FOURTH AMENDMENT IN THE WAKE OF THE DIALLO SHOOTING

WHEREAS, the Bible reminds us to "act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place" (Jer. 22:3); and the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats cautions, "As you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." (Matt. 25:31-46);

WHEREAS, the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized;"

WHEREAS, the fatal shooting, using 41 bullets, of an unarmed West African immigrant, Amadou Diallo, on February 4, 1999, by four police officers of the Street Crime Unit of the New York City Police Department is an example of a systemic problem that arouses national condemnation and outrage;

WHEREAS, this outrage has moved many people, including religious and elected leaders, to express their protest through non-violent civil disobedience, risking and experiencing arrest;

WHEREAS, it is believed that the overwhelming majority of police officers in the New York City Police Department, including members of our own churches, strive to protect and defend the City's inhabitants from harm and the actions of criminals;

WHEREAS, a police force is to be praised for these efforts and not condemned for the indefensible brutality of a few individual police officers;

WHEREAS, the "stop and search practices" of the Street Crime Unit, particularly in minority neighborhoods, although credited with 40% of illegal gun seizures by police, have raised serious civil rights questions, resulting in investigations by the New York State Attorney General, by the United States Attorney in New York City and by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission;

WHEREAS, the New York City Administration has announced efforts to address some of the concerns by requiring Street Crime Unit Officers to undergo new sensitivity training and by attempting to increase minority and residential representation on the police force;

WHEREAS, there has been a long-standing lack of communication and trust between the New York City Administration and residents of minority neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, there have been many other instances of documented violations of the Fourth Amendment throughout the United States;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ re-affirms the vital importance of the Fourth Amendment's guarantee of protection from unreasonable search and seizure;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon OCIS, CRJ or their successor body to join the National Coalition on Police Accountability and to develop or provide materials on these issues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests that copies of this resolution be sent to New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Police Commissioner Howard Safir and all other appropriate agencies and individuals; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ

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encourages all local churches of the United Church of Christ to be advocates in their communities to see that the Fourth Amendment protections are justly guaranteed for all persons by:

Calling upon political leadership at all levels of government - national, state, and local - to make vigilant and constant efforts to enforce the Fourth Amendment's protection for all persons;

Calling upon Police Departments in particular, through their selection, training and monitoring, discipline and enforcement procedures, to seek diligently to dismiss from their ranks those police who fail to protect individuals' Fourth Amendment rights;

Encouraging any constructive changes in police policy and procedures, including the training of special enforcement task forces in order to address the concerns of this resolution; and

Urging the city administration in all cities to make earnest, diligent and untiring efforts at dialogue with the leaders and the people of minority neighborhoods so that a relationship of trust can be restored.

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

### 16. BLESSED INTERRUPTIONS

Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson called on Ms. Valerie Tutson for a "Blessed Interruption." Ms. Tutson led the Synod in prayer and song.

### 17. RESOLUTION "LICENSED AND ORDAINED MINISTRIES IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST"

Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson called on Ms. Cathleen Starck Wille, Chair of Committee 11, to introduce the resolution "Licensed and Ordained Ministries in the United Church of Christ." She reported the Committee asked her to emphasize that the purpose of this resolution is for dialogue with the hope for possible future action. Ms. Wille therefore commended the resolution to the Synod as an invitation for dialogue.

Ms. Wille explained there was a large amount of discussion generated by the consultants; notably Rev. William A. Hulteen, Jr., who feels very strongly about this particular resolution, and other concerned persons who spoke to the committee during the Soundings and the hearing time of the Committee Process. She stated

that there is a clear mandate for dialogue about the issues related to licensed and ordained ministries. She stated one concern of the Committee was to insure that future dialog would include the input of associations, conferences, seminaries, as well as others affected by future decisions and actions which will come from this dialogue. Therefore, in response to that concern the Committee added the words "and other affected persons" to several of the points in the "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED." The Committee had another concern not to lose the research and dialogue which has already been generated by the Office for Church Life and Leadership; therefore, the committee added the "BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED" which expresses this reminder at the end of the document. Ms. Wille moved the adoption of the resolution.

Speaking for the resolution Ms. Wille stated that many Conferences have already developed programs which establish several paths of preparation for authorized ministries and these programs differ widely from one Conference to another. She pointed out that the programs established meet local and regional needs elicited by circumstances outside our normal operating guidelines and meet the need of an apparent shortage of clergy. In addition because we are a covenantal church where clergy may seek standing in another association and now clergy from our ecumenical partner churches may seek standing in our placement system, there is a need for dialogue about mutual recognition about ministerial standing. She stated the Committee was frustrated over the fact that it will take another biennium before action can be taken on these issues; therefore, the Committee recommends with some urgency that the Synod vote to support this resolution so that the on-going dialogue can be expanded to settings which will involve more people for implementation of faithful alternatives to our understanding of authorized ministries.

Rev. Benjamin D. Motz (PSE) offered an amendment to insert a fourth point between the current third and fourth point which reads: "Calls upon local churches, conferences, seminaries, and other affected parties to work together over the next biennium with the Office for Church Life and Leadership and its successor to dialogue about how to empower, enable, and encourage potential ordained ministerial candidates to discern a call and complete a Master of Divinity degree, and this dialogue shall have priority in time, effort, and resolve over discussions concerning alternative routes to ordination;"

Mr. Motz spoke to the amendment stating his concern for local churches and the pastoral leadership of our church. He explained the intent of this amendment is