

## TUESDAY MORNING

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

### 18. RESOLUTION "VIOLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS-BEGINNING AN ENDING"

Assistant Moderator Norman-Richardson called on Moderator Denise Page-Hood for the remaining business.

Moderator Hood called on Ms. Gynii Gilliam (CPC) for the recommended actions from Committee One.

Ms. Gilliam presented the Resolution "Violence in Our Schools - Beginning an Ending." Ms. Gilliam located the resolution for the delegates, described the process used by the Committee, explained the corrections made to the document and moved its adoption.

Ms. Gilliam spoke to the resolution explaining that the Committee addressed the issue of adding language referring to gun control and decided to stay within the spirit of the writer's intent of addressing issues of violence. Ms. Gilliam deferred her remaining time to Ms. Michele Bagby (CA NV,N), a Committee member.

Ms. Bagby said it was her special joy to share this resolution with the General Synod because she has met a prophet and her name is Erin Stephens. Ms. Bagby explained that Ms. Stephens graduated from high school three weeks ago and is a member of the First Congregational Church of Northeast California. This resolution comes from Erin, her church and its youth as a result of their journey together in faith and grief after the shootings at Columbine High School. Ms Bagby shared a reading from Erin.

Mr. Jason Henderson (NH) proposed a friendly amendment in the last point of the "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED" insert the word "individuals" following "Call upon" so the last point would read "Call upon individuals, Local Churches, . . ." This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Ms. Kelly Carter (RM) moved to strike the poem from the resolution stating that we should be about healing, reconciliation through Christ and forgiveness, not wishing for more torture for those who did the shootings.

99-GS-64 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod strikes the poem and the last sentence of the previous paragraph from the Biblical/Theological/Ethical Rationale.

Moderator Hood called for The Order of the Day stating the discussion on this resolution will be continued in the next plenary.

### 19. REFLECTION

Moderator Hood called on Dr. Mary Luti and Rev. Norman W. Jackson to reflect on the proceedings.

Mr. Jackson acknowledged possible resentment about interrupting that very important and solemn kind of deliberation and suggested that "For Such a Time As This. . ." it is appropriate to keep the order of the day and stop to think theologically about what we are doing. Mr. Jackson reviewed that we have revealed who we are at such a time as this and we have heard what the world is like to which we are addressing the mission of God. He suggested that "for such a time as this" points both to us, the depth of our faith, and to the nature of this hostile world in which we live.

Ms. Luti related that she overheard the conversation of a visitor who said "Resolutions? They are a dime a dozen." The visitor also said "Resolutions never change anything." The visitor went on to say "Resolutions don't go anywhere on the local level anyway." She said there may be some truth in those comments. She invited all to gratitude and to offer thanks as a people who have been voted into existence to be reckoned with by God's resolve to welcome in Jesus Christ and offered a resolution:

WHEREAS, we know Christ;  
WHEREAS, the Spirit moves us to love Him;  
WHEREAS, by God's grace we share His mission;  
WHEREAS, we hold that treasure in clay jars;  
WHEREAS, we believe, God help our unbelief;  
THEREFORE let us be resolved.

Moderator Hood thanked Ms. Luti and Mr. Jackson at the conclusion of the reflection.

### 20. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RECESS

Moderator Hood called on Ms. Edith A. Guffey, General Synod Administrator, for announcements. Following announcements Moderator Hood declared the Tenth Plenary of the Twenty-second General Synod to be complete and in recess until 2:30 this afternoon.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON

United Church of Christ Musicians Network Workshop in Chicago next summer.

Rev. Bruce T. Salter (ILL) asked if people really believe that the Synod planners listen to ordinary folk and said that they did. After the last General Synod he expressed frustration over the colored packets, as he is not able to differentiate different colors. This year the packets were labeled with letters, as well as colors, and that has helped him. He thanked the church for its commitment to be accessible to all people. He challenged the local churches to be accessible also.

Rev. David K. Kaupu (HI) celebrated that Kanaaua Hou-Siloama Church, the Church of New Canaan and Healing, recently received recognition for their declaring themselves to be Open and Affirming.

Rev. Philip E. Campbell (RM) in the spirit of Purim, at such a time as this, invoked the God who laughs and accepted the challenge of neighboring conferences to arrive at the next Synod by horseback and stated they will be using resources found readily along the way and recommend their use to the Synod. . .disposable cowboy hats, one size fits all and found in leading restrooms everywhere.

At the conclusion of Speak Out! the Moderator thanked Rev. Richard O. Sparrow for his work as the coordinator of the Speak Out! process.

### 3. RESOLUTION "VIOLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS" (continued)

Moderator Hood called upon Ms. Gynii Gilliam (MASS), the Chairperson of Committee One, to continue the report of that Committee and the Resolution "Violence in our Schools." The Moderator asked for further discussion of the main motion.

Mr. Zack Deal (MASS) spoke as a teacher in favor of the resolution, sharing his experiences in the schools. He challenged everyone not to be complacent.

Rev. Philip E. Campbell (RM) proposed an amendment to the fourth point, deleting the words "of children and youth." He spoke to the amendment, saying that access to firearms is not just a youth issue.

Moderator Hood stated this was not accepted as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Campbell spoke to his amendment stating that he supports the reduction in access of children and youth to firearms, but our school campuses, our world will only be save when access to firearms is reduced for

anyone, firearms designed primarily for person-on-person violence, is not only a youth access issue but an access issue for anyone who would use firearms primarily for person-on-person violence.

Discussion continued with delegates speaking both for and against the amendment.

99-GS-65 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeats the amendment.

The Moderator called the attention of the delegates to the main motion.

Mr. Jason Henderson (NH) spoke in favor of the resolution because it speaks to things that are necessary to the whole process. He stated this resolution calls for more than discussion, investigation, legislature, good-natured lip service and posting the Ten Commandments in the Schools. It calls for each and every one of us to stop the violence and teach agape.

There being no further discussion, Moderator Hood called for the vote.

99-GS-66 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the resolution "Violence in Our Schools-Beginning an Ending" as amended.

### VIOLENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS - BEGINNING AN ENDING

WHEREAS, the most recent example of youth violence in the schools occurred at Littleton, Colorado's Columbine High School which resulted in the death of 14 students and a teacher, the injury and disability of over 20 other students and trauma to an entire school and community;

WHEREAS, in response to school violence and the Columbine tragedy we are moved by the pastoral message of Rev. Paul H. Sherry, President of the United Church of Christ, who summons us to action: "Our children, all of us, need and deserve to live and mature in a world devoid of the ugliness of violence and death. Even as we grieve, let us all recommit to help build that world;"

WHEREAS, the following are warning signs about youth gun violence in California:

- The number one cause of death for youth in 49 states is automobile accidents, but, in California the number one cause of youth death is gun violence,

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON

- There are 18 times more gun dealers in California than there are McDonald's,
- There are more restrictions on teddy bears in California than there are on guns;

WHEREAS, guns seem too accessible to children and youth who, lacking the motivation and skills for nonviolent conflict resolution, seem quick to use firearms in situations of personal conflict; and

WHEREAS, firearms are lethally effective tools of violence and are romanticized by a gun culture supported by "entertainment" and fantasy marketed to children and youth;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

- Calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings to study causes of youth violence and to increase awareness of and resistance to the violence in schools rooted in the extension of cultural attitudes which stereotype, judge, marginalize, and exclude other people.
- Requests the Local Churches, Associations and Conferences of the United Church of Christ, and all United Church of Christ-sponsored camps and youth events to help families, children and youth to understand their differences, expand their range of tolerance for others, resist the influences of violent content in media and entertainment, explore appropriate ways of dealing with anger and frustration and consider the violent effects of loneliness, isolation and persecution.
- Calls upon the United Church of Christ in all its settings to raise the issue of youth violence ecumenically, particularly with, but not limited to, our partner churches, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Reformed Church in America; and in local interfaith networks; and
- Urges Conferences to call upon state and local governments to enact and enforce laws and policies that secure school campuses from firearms and reduce the access of children and youth to firearms designed primarily for person-on-person violence.
- Calls upon Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the national offices, specifically the Justice and Witness Ministries, to implement and support programs to identify companies whose

advertising dollars promote violence and degradation in the media so that the faith community, as a vehicle for positive change, can be in contact with those companies regarding their advertising practices; and

- Calls upon all the investment instruments of the United Church of Christ to identify companies that support a culture of violence, particularly with guns, and to review our investment policies to ensure that United Church of Christ investment policies promote peace and respect for all life.
- Calls upon individual Local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the national setting, particularly the Justice and Witness Ministry to support and implement programs to train children and youth in skills of non-violent conflict resolution, awareness of and resistance to the effects of violence in fantasy and entertainment, and skills for the counseling and mentoring of peers, including the desire and ability to move as agents of reconciliation among campus groups.

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

The Moderator asked for a moment of Moderator Privilege and asked Rev. Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa, the Executive Director of the Office for Church in Society, to lead the Synod in a time of prayer about the violence in our schools.

#### **4. RESOLUTION "PREVENTION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER YOUTH SUICIDE"**

Moderator Hood called on Ms. Gilliam to present the second item of business for Committee One.

Ms. Gilliam assisted the delegates in locating the resolution and noted that along with the many delegates, visitors and staff, many youth and young adults came to the Friday hearings to voice their opinions on this issue. She reviewed changes to the original document and moved the adoption of the resolution "Prevention of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Suicide."

The Moderator stated this Committee had exhausted its time but the delegates agreed to an extension of time.

Ms. Gilliam spoke briefly to the resolution stating that the Committee as individuals and as a group recognized and discussed the need to address all youth suicide but