

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

(Disciples of Christ), The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Reformed Church in America, and in local interfaith networks;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ, in all its settings, reflect on what leads youth to a loss of hope and faith;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ministries and various settings of the United Church of Christ work to make the existence of open and affirming churches known to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youths; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the United Church of Christ in all its settings raise these issues with civil authorities, in their community and legislative settings, and with schools and families; and that the Office for Church in Society (or its successor body) facilitate these efforts and advocate in a similar fashion, to ensure that issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth suicide are adequately addressed in society at large.

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

5. CELEBRATION 2000

The Moderator called for a presentation on "Celebration 2000." Ms. Dorothy M. Lester, Office for Church Life and Leadership, spoke about "Celebration 2000" stating that it will be a time to recognize and honor our past and to celebrate the work of the future as the restructure actually happens. She invited the delegates to attend the June 22-25, 2000 event. The presentation was enhanced with a saxophone/piano jazz piece and ended with everyone singing "This Little Light of Mine."

6. RESOLUTION "MEN'S MINISTRY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST"

Moderator Hood called upon Rev. Dennis L. Frische-Mouri (IK), Chair of Committee Seven, to present the recommended actions from that Committee.

Mr. Frische-Mouri thanked the Indiana-Kentucky delegation and their youth delegation for their support. He directed the delegates to the tan packet, presented the Resolution "Men's Ministry in the United Church of Christ," and moved its adoption.

Mr. Frische-Mouri spoke to the resolution stating there was strong support for the original document and it was felt that there were a couple of issues which, if dealt with, would strengthen the resolution. The first change was to remove the name "brotherhood" from the original document and substitute "men's ministries" as the Committee felt that "brotherhood" was only one manifestation of the historical men's ministries of the United Church of Christ and that the term "men's ministries" might be more inclusive. The second change was in the "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED" where the phrase "seeking alternatives to relationships based on patriarchy and dominance" was added to recognize that in the past many men often defined themselves by patriarchal roles and moving it from the "WHEREAS" to the "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED." The Committee stands in affirmation of men's ministries throughout the United Church of Christ and lifts up the hope that men of our churches will find their spiritual journeys nurturing and life-giving.

Rev. Jean E. Rosewall (NOPL), a member of the Committee, stated the Committee was strongly interested and concerned that there be the opportunity for men's ministries. She stated that men's ministries should have similar resourcing that women's ministry has enjoyed, as well as the opportunity to utilize the resources amongst the men of our denomination to develop their program. Ms. Rosewall urged the passage of this resolution.

There being no one to speak in opposition, The Moderator called for the vote.

99-GS-68 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Men's Ministry in the United Church of Christ."

MEN'S MINISTRY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHEREAS, men and women are created in the image of God and endowed with personality, gender, race, culture, orientation and spiritual gifts for covenant relationships and service in church and society;

WHEREAS, since the mid-eighties there has been an increasing awareness of the need for men to find healthy ways to relate to one another, with women and with children;

WHEREAS, there is a need to support men as they seek growth in their relationship with God and to discover alternatives to relationships based on patriarchy and dominance;

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WHEREAS, there are fewer and fewer men taking active roles in our congregations and attending corporate worship and their presence seems to be a key to having a growing congregation;

WHEREAS, in the early 90's the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, under the leadership of Rev. Alan Johnson, convened meetings of concerned men, resulting in the "Silver Lake Challenge," which called for instrumentalities, conferences, associations and local churches to "join with us in [a] vision of healing and transformation of men and the celebration of their gifts for God's world;"

WHEREAS, there are remnants of a once thriving network of local and regionally-based men's groups, which operate without recognition or support from the national setting of the church. Many are desperate for resources and programming reflecting the core values of the United Church of Christ;

WHEREAS, the Consultation on Men's Ministry in the United Church of Christ, held October 9-10, 1998, by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, has outlined a men's ministry which includes Spiritual Formation, (helping men discover the movement of God in their lives through prayer, bible study, spiritual friendships), Community (finding "safe places" where men can be in solidarity with one another as crucial issues are addressed such as ending patterns of emotional and spiritual isolation; confronting racism, sexism, homophobia, and violence); and Service (supporting the various ministries of the church and especially connecting with children in general and mentoring younger men in particular); and

WHEREAS, there are important roles and tasks for the national setting of the United Church of Christ to fulfill in advancing this ministry, namely: articulating vision, serving as a clearinghouse of information and resources, equipping leaders, affirming and celebrating effective ministries, planning and organizing for men's ministries with conferences, associations and local churches;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its support for men's ministries in the United Church of Christ and encourages the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Covenanted Ministry of the new structure, Local Church Ministries, to continue efforts to support and resource ministries for and with men seeking alternatives to relationships based on patriarchy and dominance.

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

7. RESOLUTION "AFFIRMING AND STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE"

Mr. Frische-Mouri then directed the delegates' attention to the Resolution "Affirming and Strengthening Marriage." He thanked Rev. David Runion-Bareford (NH) for his thoughtful and helpful presentation. Mr. Frische-Mouri stated there was spirited discussion during the hearing portion and participants were open, kind, often impassioned as they shared stories, concerns and questions. During the deliberation it became apparent that while they wanted to affirm marriage the definition of marriage in the original resolution was exclusive of the position taken in the Twenty-first General Synod. It was the unanimous decision of the Committee to bring this substitute resolution to the Synod. Mr. Frische-Mouri moved the adoption of the substitute resolution.

Mr. Frische-Mouri spoke to the resolution stating the Committee's belief that this motion affirms marriage and as such maintains some of the spirit of the document received in the Program/Worship and Business Book. The Committee was also aware that the definition of marriage in the original resolution was limiting and exclusive and they were aware of the work of the Twenty-first General Synod. He stated the Committee crafted a resolution that would bring the Synod to a common ground, not middle ground. The Committee felt they emphasized the need to affirm both marriage and other covenanted relationships but also bore witness to the need for resources to help affirm and strengthen all such relationships.

Mr. Thomas McGrew (WIS) offered a friendly amendment at the end of the first "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED" add the following words "or enter into other covenanted relationships." Mr. Frische-Mouri accepted this as a friendly amendment.

Rev. Jeffrey P. Kistler (PNE) urged the defeat of this resolution as it was vague, and meant nothing more than was said at the previous General Synod. He said we have not found it in ourselves to affirm marriage as anything peculiar or unique so the resolution should be defeated.

Rev. Bruce G. Swanson (CAC) moved to amend the title of the resolution to read "Affirming Marriage and Covenanted Relations." Mr. Frische-Mouri accepted this as a friendly amendment.