

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

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.

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Ms. Vilma Thompson (MASS), a member of the Committee, offered an amendment to strike adding the last two friendly amendments that added the words "other covenanted relationships" in two places. She stated that this was discussed in Committee and it was felt that the previous General Synod adequately addressed other covenanted relationships and the Committee wanted to hold up marriage as one of the special relationships.

Rev. David Runnion-Bereford (NH) spoke indicating he was the author of the original resolution. He urged support of this most recent amendment to remove the two friendly amendments because as the Synod continues amending this resolution, it moves further and further away from the intent of those who sponsored the resolution which is to have this Synod encourage and affirm marriage in and of itself as a unique gift from God.

Delegates requested clarification asking if the motion pending was to remove "and covenanted relationships" out of the title and from the "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED?"

The Moderator reviewed the events stating the chair asked if the two prior amendments were friendly and it was indicated to the Moderator that they were friendly amendments. It now appears that they are not. Moderator Hood stated that these would now be treated as one amendment, so now the motion is to amend the resolution to include in those two places that had been previously accepted as friendly amendments the words "covenanted relationships."

The Moderator called for the vote on the amendments to add the words "covenanted relationships" to the title and to the "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED."

There being no discussion amendment, the Moderator called for a vote.

99-GS-69 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeats the amendment.

Moderator Hood asked for further discussion on the main motion.

Rev. Gary H. Marcy (PW) spoke against the motion stating two points. He is aware that the title is "Affirming and Strengthening Marriage" and that is incorrect as covenanted relationships and singleness is not marriage. He has watched the General Synod repeatedly keep issues together in resolutions and asked why the Synod cannot vote on just marriage between husband and wife.

Mr. Drew Carouthers (WIS) asked for a Point of Order. Mr. Carouthers believed there was confusion about the previous vote and he questioned the vote. The Moderator asked if the delegates understood they were voting whether or not the motion should be amended to add covenanted relationships. The delegates indicated they understood and the motion was defeated.

Moderator Hood noted the Committee was out of time and asked the Synod if they were ready to vote.

Mr. Nicholas L. Pence, Jr. (SOC) offered a friendly amendment to add between the first and second "WHEREAS" statements "WHEREAS, marriage is a covenant between two persons before God called to be in a loving, supportive and nurturing relationship." This was not accepted as a friendly amendment.

99-GS-70 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod defeated the amendment.

Rev. Homer E. Royer (PSE) called the question.

The Moderator called for the vote.

99-GS-71 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the Resolution "Affirming and Strengthening Marriage."

AFFIRMING AND STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE

WHEREAS the delegates of the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ "affirmed that the standard for sexual and relational behavior for members of the United Church of Christ is fidelity and integrity in marriage and other covenanted relationships, in singleness and in all relationships of life;" and

WHEREAS marriage is recognized as one important covenant in the faith and life of the church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod encourages the use of resources produced by the United Church of Christ and other resources that affirm and strengthen marriage and other covenanted relationships;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod encourages local churches to provide counsel and preparation for those seeking to be married; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Covenanted

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Ministry of the new structure, Local Church Ministries, continue development and promotion of resources and programs to these ends.

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

8. SCRIPTURE PROJECT PRESENTATION

Moderator Hood called for the Order of the Day and invited Rev. Leah F. Matthews (OHIO), Minister for Adult Education and Leadership for the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to report on the United Church of Christ Scripture Project.

Ms. Matthews reported that nearly 8,000 people representing over 800 churches had responded to the invitation to participate in the project. Participants were asked to read and study six Bible passages and fill out a response form. Four basic themes were revealed: providing Bible study was central to the project; the use of the Bible is very important to those who participated; the value of the community gathered in Bible study is central to faith nurture; deep appreciation that the national office facilitated a process where local churches were connected with one another and with the whole denomination in a common project.

9. HONORING RETIRING EXECUTIVES

The Moderator celebrated the ministries of four retiring executives of the Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ: Rev. Thomas E. Dipko, Executive Vice President of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries; Rev. David Y. Hirano, Executive Vice President of the United Church Board for World Ministries; Rev. William A. Hulteen, Jr., Executive Director and Minister for Church Life and Leadership; and Rev. Earl D. Miller, Steward and Executive Director of the Stewardship Council. The General Synod celebrated the work and years of service of these persons with a standing ovation.

10. FINAL BLESSED INTERRUPTION

Moderator Hood recognized Rev. Christopher R. Grundy (KO) to lead the final Blessed Interruption. Mr. Grundy thanked the General Synod for inviting him to participate and reported that he met a delegate last time he served at General Synod and they have since been married. The body joined in singing the song "For Such a Time as This."

The Moderator thanked Mr. Phil Porter, Mr. Grundy, and Ms. Valerie Tutson for their leadership of the

Blessed Interruptions throughout the General Synod. The delegates responded with applause.

11. REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Moderator announced to the delegates that the final report of the Credentials Committee will be included in the Minutes of the Twenty-second General Synod which will be mailed to delegates and Conferences.

The final report of the Credentials Committee is as follows: Delegates, 716; Associate Delegates and Honored Guests, 143; Business Committee, 44; Visitors, 970; General Synod Staff, 37; Staff, 255.

12. POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Rev. Robert T. Strommen rose to a Point of Personal Privilege asking that the issue of Global Warming which was postponed from Monday afternoon's plenary be addressed. Moderator Hood agreed that we had postponed that, as well as a group that had requested the opportunity to address the Synod. All this was dependent upon time in the agenda. She declared that time had been used and we needed to heed the Order of the Day. Rev. Strommen appealed the decision of the Moderator. The Moderator reminded delegates that a two-thirds majority would be required to alter the agenda and pointed out that work was left to be accomplished.

99-GS- 72 VOTED: The General Synod does not agree to set aside the Agenda for 10 minutes.

Rev. John H. Scott, III (CONN) called for a Division of the House.

The Moderator overruled the Call for Division and moved to the Order of the Day.

13. AMENITIES RESOLUTIONS

Moderator Hood called upon Ms. Iris M. Branch (CONN), Vice-Chair of the Executive Council, and Mr. E. Chris Montañó (SW), Chair of the Twenty-second General Synod Program and Planning Committee.

Mr. Montañó and Ms. Branch read the Amenities Resolutions, and moved the adoption of the Resolutions. The delegates expressed their affirmation for the Resolutions with a standing ovation.

99-GS-73 VOTED: The Twenty-second General Synod adopts the "Amenities Resolutions."