# U.S. RATIFICATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY A Resolution of Witness

## Submitted by the New Hampshire Conference and Southwest Conference

## **SUMMARY**

This resolution calls upon the United Church of Christ and its congregations to petition the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The U.N. General Assembly adopted the CTBT in 1996. Under Article 1, the obligations of this treaty include:

1. Each State Party undertakes not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control.

2. Each State Party undertakes, furthermore, to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.

As of December 17, 2010, 182 nation states have signed the CTBT; 153, including Russia, have ratified. Of the 44 that must ratify the treaty for it to enter into force, 41 have signed and 35 have ratified. The United States has signed the treaty but not ratified.

In 1997, President Clinton sent the CTBT to the Senate. In October 1999, the Senate rejected ratification: 48 for, 51 against, 1 present. President Obama has requested the Senate support its ratification. It will be heard through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In 1985, General Synod 15 voted that the UCC become a Just Peace Church. Included in the Just Peace Pronouncement is the following: "We declare our opposition to all weapons of mass destruction. All nations should:

- 1. declare that they will never use such weapons,
- 2. cease immediately the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons,
- 3. begin dismantling these arsenals, and
- 4. while the process of dismantling is going on, negotiate comprehensive treaties banning all such future weapons by any nation."

In 1993, General Synod 19 called for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban. (This was prior to the CTBT, which opened for signature in 1996.)

## BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

God's Shalom is the blessing of all creation, and God declared all creation to be good. (Genesis 1:31) Nuclear weapons, by their very existence and purpose, pose an imminent threat to all creation. God seeks our partnership in sustaining the world, not destroying it.

Jesus Christ declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew

5:9) Through Christ, God has called us to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), that we might be builders of the beloved community and resisters of those forces that divide, destroy, and perpetuate human enmity.

Knowing that true security comes only from seeking first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33), Jesus Christ sought the well-being of others while showing little concern for his own personal security. Thus, he declared, "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." (Mark 8:35)

#### **RESOLUTION**

Whereas, the United States holds the largest arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and is, in fact, the only country to have used them against another; and

Whereas, the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the United States Senate would be a major step forward in global efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and pursue nuclear disarmament; and

Whereas, at the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, the United States made the commitment to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as one of the thirteen steps towards nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament; and

Whereas, at the heart of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is the obligation "not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion" as well as a rigorous verification regime; and

Whereas, the time is long past for the United States to take leadership in calling for the comprehensive, unequivocal, and verifiable ban on all nuclear weapons testing;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages its members, congregations, and various settings to call on the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as one of its most important foreign policy priorities in Congress.

## **FUNDING**

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

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Justice and Witness Ministries is requested to implement this resolution.