

The Executive Council recommends this resolution be sent to a committee of the General Synod.

A JUSTICE TOWN HALL GATHERING
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED NO ACTION
GENERAL SYNOD VOTED TO POSTPONE ACTION INDEFINITELY
A Prudential Resolution

Submitted by; Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries

“For I the Lord love justice.” (Isaiah 61:8a)

Background

The Bible identifies Yahweh as a God of justice that loves justice. The United Church of Christ has, through the years, championed many issues of justice, but in its national setting is currently faced with daunting financial challenges which have diminished the number of staff working on justice issues even though the issues of justice are as pressing today as at any time in the history of the United States. For the United Church of Christ to truly be a “justice” church, it has to mobilize as many of its members as possible to build a coordinated effort to work at the issues of justice, in spite of the financial difficulties we are facing.

Theological and Biblical Foundations

One theologian wrote, “The most important thing I think we can observe is that Old Testament justice always has a vision of community in mind like the one articulated in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 30. Central to the right ordering of competing interests is ‘the vision.’ And, of course, central to the vision is right relationship with God.” Justice is not charity. Justice in the Old Testament had a close relationship to righteousness. The Prophet Amos says, “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:24) It is just one of the forty pairings of righteousness and justice that are found in the Hebrew Bible. (Genesis 18:19, 1 Kings 10:9, 2 Chronicles 9:8, Job 29:14, 37:23, Psalms 33:5, 72:1, 2, 89:14, 97:2, 99:4, 106:3, Proverbs 1:3, 2:9, 8:20, 21:3, Ecclesiastes 3:16, Isaiah 1:21, 27, 5:7, 16, 9:7, 16:5, 28:17, 32:1, 16, 33:5, 56:1, 59:9, 14, Jeremiah 9:24, 22:3, 15, 23:5, 33:15, Ezekiel 45:9, Hosea 2:19, Amos 5:7, 24, 6:12. See also Deuteronomy 16:19, 32:4, Job 8:3, 34:17, Psalms 37:28, 30, 82:3, 94:15, 112:5-6, 140:12-13, 146:7—8, Proverbs 18:5, 21:15, 29:26-27, Ecclesiastes 5:8, Isaiah 10:2, 59:15-16, Jeremiah 4:2, Ezekiel 18:8-9, Habakkuk 1:4, Zephaniah 3:5.)

The Resolution

WHEREAS, the purpose and mission of Justice and Witness Ministries shall be to enable and encourage local Churches, Associations, Conferences, and the national expressions of the United Church of Christ to engage in God’s mission globally by direct action for the integrity of creation, justice, and peace.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that General Synod 27 establishes a town hall gathering of justice advocates within the United Church of Christ one day before the beginning of each General Synod at the site of the General Synod;

That the participants at this town hall gathering of justice advocates, which include both delegates and non-delegates to the General Synod, will put together a two-year justice platform for the United Church of Christ to strive for;

That during the year prior to the General Synod, the justice advocates in the conferences and regions will develop justice platforms that will be brought to the General Synod;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the planning for this town hall gathering of justice advocates will be done jointly by: 1) staff of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ (JWM), 2) the Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM), 3) the program committee of the JWM board of directors, and 4) the Urban Ministry network.

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 work with the Office of General Ministries and the Administrator of the General Synod to implement this resolution.