

## 16. RESOLUTION "SELF-GOVERNANCE OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS"

Ms. Maxey presented the Resolution "Self-Governance of Native Hawaiians" and moved its adoption. She asked for a suspension of the rules to allow the Rev. Kaleo Patterson (HI) to speak for the resolution. The Moderator suspended the rules upon consensus of the delegates.

91-GS-28 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Self-Governance of Native Hawaiians."

### SELF-GOVERNANCE OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS

#### Theological and Biblical Basis

The belief that God delivers the oppressed is clear in Exodus 3:7-8, which asserts ". . . I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry . . . and I have come to deliver them . . . and bring them . . . to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey." Likewise, the Psalmist declares, the Lord ". . . has pity on the weak and the needy . . . and . . . from oppression and violence he redeems their life . . ." (Psalm 72:13-14).

By divine imperative, the prophets preached justice; and, by his unselfish life and sacrificial death on the Cross, Jesus Christ showed that God loves the oppressed. Thus, as the body of Christ, the Church engages in the struggle for justice and deliverance of the oppressed.

#### Rationale for Synod Action

In response to God's Word, and in obedience to Jesus Christ and affirming its Statement of Faith, the United Church of Christ, a Just Peace Church, works to free the oppressed.

The General Synod, our governing body, is a commendable example for the United Church of Christ members and others. Its instrumentalities side with today's oppressed; and, we trust it to do the same tomorrow as an expression of faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

#### References to Previous General Synod Policy on This Issue

Whereas, the Seventeenth General Synod, which adopted a "Hawaiian Homelands" Resolution, heard a pronouncement about the Westernizing and destruction of Pacific Island ways before Euro-American contact. It stated, "Hawaii was owned by God and the people were stewards of the land. Then, the Great Mahele (land distribution), a foreign idea of private land ownership, was introduced. The Kingdom of Hawaii enacted this system by Euro-American design and pressure. The same was true with the dethroning of Hawaii's last monarch Queen Liliuokalani. In both instances, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions missionary descendants were in-

involved. Unable to relate to this land system, native Hawaiians became dislocated strangers at home; and many still ache with pain stemming from the tragic overthrow." Previous General Synods have passed resolutions and a pronouncement in support of Native Americans whose experiences are similar to Native Hawaiians.

#### Background and Discussion

WHEREAS, the Congregational Church, a historic member of the United Church of Christ, sponsored and sent 100 missionaries to Hawaii between 1820 and 1850. Many times that Church has been rightly commended and credited for all the good works it did so related to converting many Hawaiians to Christianity;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has yet to acknowledge that some of its missionary descendants were party to an illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy in 1893. In fact, U.S. President Grover Cleveland, on December 18, 1893 said to Congress, ". . . The military occupation of Honolulu by the United States on the day mentioned was wholly without justification, either as an occupation by consent or as an occupation necessitated by dangers threatening American life and property;"

WHEREAS, there is a rising consciousness to reevaluate the circumstances surrounding the overthrow. And, with the coming of the hundredth anniversary of that said historic event for Hawaiians, an honest appraisal and acknowledgment of the Congregational missionaries' descendants' role in it should be made, because our Church needs to bring that matter to some appropriate closure;

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Conference UCC, at its 1990 annual meeting, enacted Resolution "Recognizing the Right to Self-Governance of Native Hawaiians." Through this means, the Hawaii Conference UCC is supporting the movement to correct injustices to native Hawaiians;

WHEREAS, in 1970 President Richard Nixon changed the existing U.S. policy toward America's native peoples by rejecting all past policies which had kept Native Americans wards of the government. He announced a national policy of self-determination of Indian tribes; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a history of granting indigenous people including American Indian, Eskimos, and Aleuts the inherent right of a self-determined governance and management of resources; and the Native Hawaiian has yet to be included among these.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod recognizes the inherent right of Native Hawaiians to self governance; and, pledges its support and solidarity in the name of Christ.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod urges the Hawaii State Legislature and the U. S. Congress to recognize the right of self-governance of Native Hawaiians; and we urge these governments to make available resources to support grassroots initiatives towards self-governance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod in recognition of our denomination's historical complicities in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, directs the office of the President of the U.C.C. to offer a public apology to the native Hawaiian people, and to initiate a proc-

ess of reconciliation between the United Church of Christ and native Hawaiians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod directs the Office for Church in Society to develop resources in collaboration with the Hawaii Conference UCC to enable churches and conferences to engage in study about the substance of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod also directs the Office for Church in Society to monitor and to follow up on this resolution, to report progress in UCC publications, and in collaboration with the Hawaii Conference UCC, to report to the Nineteenth General Synod.

AND FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED the Eighteenth General Synod shares this resolution and follow up study and report with other denominations in order to encourage their support of this initiative of Native Hawaiian self-governance.

Subject to the availability of funds.