

13. THE RIGHT OF LGBT PERSONS TO ADOPT AND RAISE CHILDREN

Moderator Robertson called upon Ms. Sue Artt, Chairperson of Committee Nine to present the resolution “The Right of LBGT Persons to Adopt and Raise Children.”

Ms. Artt moved the adoption of the resolution, as amended, and recommended approval. She then spoke to the resolution.

Following discussion, Mr. Andrew Warner (WISC) moved to amend the resolution by adding the following language: “Be it further resolved that all UCC health and human services agencies are encouraged to honor the rights of LBGT persons to adopt.”

11-GS-42 VOTED: The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the amendment to the resolution by adding the following language: “Be it further resolved that all United Church of Christ health and human services agencies are encouraged to honor the rights of LBGT persons to adopt.”

Mr. Spencer Bowles (RM) moved to close debate. The motion was seconded.

11-GS-43 VOTED: The Twenty-eighth General Synod votes to close debate on the resolution, as amended.

11-GS-44 VOTED: The Twenty-eighth General Synod adopts the resolution “The Right of LBGT Persons to Adopt and Raise Children,” as amended.

THE RIGHT OF LGBT PERSONS TO ADOPT AND RAISE CHILDREN

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of children in the United States have little hope of adoption, and are moved from foster home to foster home until they finally age out of the system; and

WHEREAS, many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals and couples are willing and able to provide the stability, nurture and love that all children need in order to grow into emotionally healthy adults; and

WHEREAS, both the American Psychological Association and the American Medical Association have determined that gender identity and sexual orientation do not hinder a person’s capacity to be a good parent; and

WHEREAS, a child whose primary legal parent dies or is incapacitated may in many jurisdictions be removed from the second parent and become a ward of the state; and

WHEREAS, co-parent adoption entitles children to essential benefits, including Social Security, child support, health insurance, inheritance rights and a continuing relationship with one parent in the event of the separation or death of the other parent; and

WHEREAS, LGBT children in the foster-care system need responsible and supportive role models;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, call on the United Church of Christ in all of its settings to defend the rights of all children to have loving parents without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on all states to evaluate prospective adoptive parents on the basis of their individual character and ability to parent, not on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, and to grant second-parent or joint adoptions when it is in the child's best interests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all United Church of Christ health and human services agencies are encouraged to honor the rights of LBGT persons to adopt; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests Justice and Witness Ministries to communicate this resolution to local, state and national legislators, urging them to support the rights of all children to have a loving parent or parents without regard to the parent's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

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.

14. OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION PRESENTATION

Mr. Robertson spoke about the work, reported in the Stillspeaking Magazine, of Maxwell and Richard Brooks from China Grove United Church of Christ in North Carolina. Maxwell and Richard made a cross-country tour discovering how our gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission are Changing Lives! The Brooks brothers presented a video of their year-long journey and thanked everyone for supporting Our Church's Wider Mission. They invited everyone to log onto their website www.twinmaps.com for more information.

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Robertson called on Ms. Edith Guffey for announcements.

There is a mistake in the program book, and tonight's worship will take place in the plenary hall. DVD's will be available of all worship services, speeches, and Suncoast Saturday events.

If you have lost something, check in the General Synod office.

Conference Ministers are to collect the electronic keypads following the conclusion of General Synod and turn them in to the General Synod office in Room 3.

Participants for tonight's worship should meet following this plenary session.

If you are a Committee Chairperson, please be ready for your report as we are moving through work quickly.