

WHEREAS, the Conference representatives who attended the regional meetings on Aging expressed a desire to increase programs and advocacy with and for the Aging.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ

1. encourages these agencies to expand efforts in this area;
2. directs the Executive Council to provide for the continuing work of the UCC Advisory Committee on Aging with particular emphasis on the recommendations of the Eleventh General Synod:
 - A. developing a continuing education program for UCC clergy and laity to enable ministry with and to the Aging;
 - B. developing experimental ministries with and to the isolated elderly who live in urban and rural areas;
 - C. developing a program to combat negative images of the aged in mass communication media;
3. encourages every UCC Conference, instrumentality, agency, association and local church to make resources available for the implementing of the Aging Priority.

8. OVERTURE: IN SUPPORT OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Ms. Stavenger referred the delegates to the Overture submitted by the Central Atlantic Conference as printed in Advance Materials, Section IV, page 10, and to the recommendation of the Executive Council in Advance Materials II, pages 34-35. She moved the adoption of the revised Overture, and called upon Ms. Susan Miele (CAL.S), a member of the Section, to speak to the Overture. Ms. Miele stated that the Overture contains the full text of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States followed by the actions of the Tenth and Eleventh General Synods and is a merger of the two proposals. There was discussion, and it was

79-GS-52 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod adopts as revised the Overture: In Support of the Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment:

IN SUPPORT OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The Full Text of the Proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

Section 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

WHEREAS, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a resolution urging ratification of the federal Equal Rights Amendment and voted the issue of Women in Church and Society the number one priority of the United Church of Christ, and

WHEREAS, the Eleventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a resolution directing that national meetings of the United Church of Christ be held only in states which have ratified the ERA, until March, 1979, and

WHEREAS, persons in our society, especially women, continue to suffer from discrimination on account of sex,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirms support for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by

1. recognizing and sharing the painful reality in which Conferences and local churches live in non-ratified states and the sense of temporary isolation created by the effort to ratify ERA.
2. urging all members, pastors, Associations and Conferences of the United Church of Christ to study and discuss the ERA and promote better public understanding of its meaning and purpose.
3. commending all members and agencies of the UCC for their past work in support of the ERA, calling on them to continue to provide resources for study and to strengthen their support for ERA ratification efforts in the states which have ratified the ERA.
4. asking that members, pastors, Associations, and Conferences in those states whose legislatures will consider rescission bills to act in support of upholding their states ratification vote.
5. urging that national meetings of the United Church of Christ be held only in ratified states until the ERA is ratified or until June, 1982, whichever is earlier.
6. urging the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries of the UCC to allocate additional staff resources to work in unratified states to better inform the church and other constituencies on the ERA, to increase the involvement of UCC members and to mobilize other groups to bring about the ratification of at least three more states before the extension expires in June of 1982.
7. directing that this action be conveyed to:
 - a. governors, state legislators, chambers of commerce, convention bureaus and other relevant bodies in those states which have not ratified the ERA, or in states considering rescission.
 - b. the church, secular press, and appropriate ecumenical coalitions working for ERA ratification.

9. RESOLUTION: THE CHURCH AND PERSONS WITH HANDICAPS

Ms. Stavenger referred the delegates to Advance Materials, Section II, pages 165-167, and to the Overtures submitted by the Ohio, Wisconsin, New York and Minnesota Conferences, and the Central Southeast Ohio Association, Advance Materials, Section III, page 29, and Section IV, pages 17, 18, 19, & 31. She moved the adoption of the Resolution and called on the Rev. Frederick Wenner (CAC), a member of the Section, to speak to the Resolution. Mr. Wenner recalled the action of the Eleventh General Synod in adopting a Pronouncement "The Church and Persons with Handicaps" and raised the question in presenting this resolution whether we will continue to be content to parade before ourselves our sisters and brothers with disabilities or whether we will fund a ministry of concern to and with persons with handicaps commensurate with its supposed priority status. There was discussion, and it was

79-GS—53 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod adopts the Resolution: The Church and Persons with Handicaps:

THE CHURCH AND PERSONS WITH HANDICAPS

WHEREAS, all persons at some time suffer from physical, emotional, mental and/or spiritual infirmities; we realize and affirm the truth inherent in Paul's statement that we "are the body of Christ and individually members of it" and "if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together;" and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ acknowledges with gratitude the many gifts of ministry from persons with handicaps; and

WHEREAS, attitudinal and physical barriers against persons with disabilities still exist in the church as well as in the general society; and

WHEREAS, national statistics reveal that a significant number (estimated at more than 10% by the U.S. Dept. of H.E.W.) of the general population experience some form of physical and mental impairment, and since most congregations do not see these people in their churches, it is obvious that persons with handicaps are hindered from full participation in the life of the church and community at large; and

WHEREAS, the Eleventh General Synod made the issue of people with disabilities one of its highest national priorities; and

WHEREAS, it is evident that more substantial national funds and staff time need to be made available to make the impact of this concern consistent with its high priority status, and

WHEREAS, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries recommends mobilizing the denomination for a full effort to work with and for persons with disabilities within both the church and society;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Twelfth General Synod:

- A. reaffirms the pronouncement of the Eleventh General Synod entitled "The Church and Persons with Handicaps" (77-GS-52),
- B. commends the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries for coordinating and providing fiscal support for the program; and also the United Church Board for World Ministries and the Office of Communication for their cooperation;
- C. directs the Executive Council to ensure substantial funding and sufficient staffing in the current biennium for an aggressive and effective approach to the needs of persons with disabilities within the United Church of Christ;
- D. directs that persons with handicaps be included in all affirmative action programs within the United Church of Christ;
- E. directs the Executive Council to allocate funds from Neighbors In Need and/or Family Thank Offerings for ministries to and with persons with handicaps as soon as possible;
- F. urges Conferences, Associations, and local churches to assess their responsibilities to persons with handicaps and seek ways to eliminate physical and attitudinal barriers which exclude and alienate them.

10. ELECTION PROCESS REVIEW

The Moderator recognized President Post who stated that following General Synod Twelve he will give leadership in a review of the policy, procedures, and management of the entire nominating and election procedures of the Church, and that while we are here at Synod and following, he intends to be a sensitive minister to persons who may have been hurt by mistakes and errors in the present process.

11. REPORT OF SECTION B—RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONCERN FOR REFUGEES

The Moderator recognized the Rev. John McFadden (CAC), Chairperson, for the report of Section B. Mr. McFadden referred the delegates to the original resolution in Advance Materials, Section V, page 18. He moved the adoption of a substitute resolution on Expressing Concern for Refugees, and called on the Rev. Martin E. Gibbs (CT) to speak to the Resolution. Mr. Gibbs said that the resolution speaks to the condition of refugees in general though the opening statement speaks specifically to a Southeast Asia situation and was the factor that led to the formation of the resolution. This resolution is an extension of the Synod action on Human Rights. There was discussion.

Mrs. Enid C. Johnson (FL) was recognized and moved to amend the resolution by the addition of a Whereas section to read: "Whereas the United Church of Christ has been concerned about refugees from many countries for many decades and many are also fleeing from nearby Haiti seeking asylum in our land." There was discussion and it was agreed to include this as part of the resolution. There were additional editorial changes, and it was:

79-GS-54 VOTED: The Twelfth General Synod adopts the Resolution Expressing Concern for Refugees as amended:

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING CONCERN FOR REFUGEES

WHEREAS, thousands of refugees are fleeing Southeast Asia, many by boat, and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has been concerned about refugees from many different countries for many decades and many are also fleeing from nearby Haiti seeking asylum in our land, and

WHEREAS, the responsibility for saving them is too large a burden for a few countries to bear alone, but is an obligation to be shared by the whole human family, and

WHEREAS, we are all sojourners and would be strangers no longer, and would welcome strangers into our midst, caring for and with them in the name of Jesus Christ;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the United States Department of State to initiate and support an international effort, through the United Nations to enable refugees to find homes and opportunity for life, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Twelfth General Synod supports legislation in the Congress of the United States to reform our immigration laws so as to make it possible for more refugees to immigrate, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge our churches to take advantage of all legal opportunities to sponsor