

ignated single adults ministry as a need;
THEREFORE, the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms the contributions and leadership potential of single adults within the United Church of Christ;

Encourages local churches, associations, and conferences to utilize the talents and skills which single adults bring to the whole mission of the United Church of Christ;

Urges associations and/or conferences to identify the needs of single adults and to coordinate a ministry among single adults;

Urges the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to lend support and to encourage the exploration and development of ways to meet the needs felt by single adults; and

Urges the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to serve as a clearing house for ideas and resources for single adults.

10. RESOLUTION ON A STATEMENT OF FAITH

Mrs. Ross moved the adoption of the Resolution on a Statement of Faith.

The Moderator recognized Ms. Alida Millham (NH) who moved to amend the motion by substituting a resolution for the original resolution. It was

81-GS-78 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts the substitute resolution on A Statement of Faith.

RESOLUTION ON A STATEMENT OF FAITH

WHEREAS, the Executive Council has requested the President of the Church, through the Consultation on Church Union and other world communions to explore the joint development of a new Statement of Faith;

The Thirteenth General Synod requests the Executive Council to continue work as expeditiously as possible on the collaborative development of a new Statement of Faith; to the end that the United Church of Christ respond faithfully and sensitively to the heartfelt need for a theologically sound and inclusive expression of our faith today.

The Executive Council, in cooperation with the Office of Church Life and Leadership, identify an interim revision of the Statement of Faith for use in the United Church of Christ in celebration of its Twenty-fifth Anniversary; and

That the Executive Council report to the Fourteenth General Synod a plan for the development and completion of a new Statement of Faith. This plan will reflect:

1. A time line for the project to be completed.
2. Appropriate theological background and study.

11. REPORT OF SECTION A — RESOLUTION ON VIOLENCE IN RELATION TO WOMEN

The Moderator recognized the Rev. Robert L. Haertig (WASH), Chairperson for a continuation of the Section report. Mr. Haertig called on Joyce Harmon (ME), Chairperson of the small group that considered the

Resolution on Violence in Relation to Women, who moved the adoption of the resolution as revised. There was discussion, and it was

81-GS-79 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Resolution on Violence in Relation to Women.

RESOLUTION ON VIOLENCE IN RELATION TO WOMEN

Introduction

Violence and the fear of violence in American society is a fact that affects us all. But we are just beginning to recognize the widespread prevalence of violence in relation to women and children in American homes and on the streets. By the most conservative estimates, more than 1,000,000 children are abused each year; at least 2,000 of them will die annually as a result. Almost 2,000,000 American women are beaten each year, one every eighteen seconds. About one-fourth of the approximately 20,000 people murdered each year in the United States are killed by a family member, usually a spouse.

Further, incidents of rape, child neglect, marital rape, incest and psychological abuse — forms of violence that are more difficult to count because they are so infrequently reported — are phenomena which none of us can escape. Many of our friends, relatives, and acquaintances have been the victims of such violence — even though the painful story usually goes untold.

Theological Basis for Concern

Persons created in the image of God are not intended to be victimized by violence and abuse, especially as it occurs in the family. An understanding of the profound significance of the sacredness of God's creation in human persons underlies any theological response to violence in relation to women and children.

A God whose creation is called good and who promises abundance of life intends that persons live together free from the fear and the suffering of physical and sexual abuse.

Unfortunately, this fear and suffering are all too common experiences for God's people. The theological source of the suffering of such violence is the alienation from God and self which allows a person to batter a spouse or a child, to sexually abuse a family member, or to sexually assault a stranger. The consequences of the alienation are felt most painfully by the victim of the abuse; the spouse, child or parent who is beaten or abused knows the physical, emotional and spiritual pain which result from the alienated action of the one who abuses. The pain is magnified when the abuse occurs in the family; it is even more devastating than an attack by a stranger. It is a violation not only of one's body and soul but it is also a violation of a covenant, an expectation that within a family relationship, there can be peace, trust, and intimacy. These are all lost when violence and abuse occur. This is a kind of experience that the psalmist was familiar with:

"My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling

come upon me and horror overwhelms me . . . It is not an enemy who taunts me — then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me — then I could hide from him. But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to hold sweet converse together, with God's house we walked in fellowship." Psalms 55:4-5 (RSV)

The place where one expects to find sanctuary from the violence on American streets, is in fact for many people, another place of violence.

Rationale

Members of the United Church of Christ, its conferences, associations, local churches and national bodies can have a significant impact on both the cause and effect of violence in relation to women in American society:

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is deeply concerned about the violence done to women and to children in American society;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is committed to support the health and well-being of persons who live within families;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ believes that the local church can provide sanctuary from the many forms of physical and sexual violence experienced by women and others in American society through healing actions of support for victims, and public policy education and advocacy;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ recognizes that the climate of violence involving women is an urgent and present reality in our society;

THEREFORE, the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to draft a major pronouncement and proposals for action on *Violence in Relation to Women* for the consideration of the 14th General Synod, and to be in consultation with the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, the Office for Church In Society, and the Commission for Racial Justice in preparation of the pronouncement and proposals.

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon local churches, associations and conferences to study the issue; to raise consciousness about it; to minister with sensitivity to victims of violence through support of existing shelters and agencies; to engage in public policy advocacy for adequate funding of such shelters and agencies.

12. RESOLUTION ON ALTERNATIVES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Mr. Haertig called on William L. Nagy (ILL), Chairperson of the small group that considered the resolution on Alternatives in Criminal Justice. Mr. Nagy indicated that the resolution as proposed is a consolidation of two resolutions: Resolution on Program of Criminal Indebtedness and a Resolution on Alternatives to the Expansion of Jails and Prisons. He moved the adoption of the resolution.

It was

81-GS-80 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Resolution on Alternatives in Criminal Justice.

RESOLUTION ON ALTERNATIVES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WHEREAS, previous General Synods have expressed concern with the failure of the criminal justice systems in the United States declaring their opposition to the death penalty (G.S. 9, 11, and 12) and calling for a moratorium on construction of new prisons and jails; and

WHEREAS, 1981 is the tenth anniversary of the Attica prison rebellion; and whereas General Synod 13 is meeting in New York; and

WHEREAS, as neither New York State nor any other state has constructively addressed the injustices of prison life nor the related issues of inequity and discrimination in criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, alternatives to incarceration (such as restitution) are less costly, more humane, and more effective than imprisonment in helping both victims and offenders; and

WHEREAS, our understanding of the Christian faith takes seriously the call to redemptive love, mercy and the sanctity of life; and

WHEREAS, the resumption of executions in this country has raised legal and moral questions about the ability of the state to administer such punishment justly and consistently; and

WHEREAS, we grieve for the victims of violent crimes and their families and seek means of dealing with criminal offenses, which do not increase the total violence in our society;

THEREFORE, The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for legislation to establish programs including restitution, which require perpetrators of crimes to compensate their victims and/or families of their victims, and requests the Commission for Racial Justice to participate in the work of the National Alliance to Reduce Imprisonment.

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for an immediate moratorium on executions and for the development of alternative programs, which include persons convicted of capital crimes.

13. RECOGNITION OF THE REV. RALPH P. LEY

The Moderator indicated that a number of the important leaders of the United Church of Christ are retiring this year. Among them is the Rev. Ralph P. Ley, Conference Minister of the Wisconsin Conference, who not only has served long and well in that Conference but also has given great service to the United Church of Christ with his work as a member of many boards and committees.

14. REPORT OF SECTION C — RESOLUTION ON SUPPORT FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO WAR

The moderator recognized the Rev. John Fortt (NY),