

Life as our priorities. An abused child knows no peace. Child abuse often stems from disintegration in the family. As committed Christians we cannot turn away from our responsibility to these abused children.

This crime against youth is growing in epidemic proportions. A report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect shows the following statistics:

416,033 substantiated cases in 1976; 516,142 in 1977; 614,291 in 1978; 711,142 in 1979; and 788,844 in 1980.

Many factors in our society have a bearing on this important concern. Economic influences, stress factors, mental-emotional health, social isolation, alcohol-drug abuse, the changes in the family, and the growing acceptance of violence-related sexual activities contribute to this problem. Children daily become run-aways, turning to prostitution, child pornography, alcohol and suicide because life at home has become unbearable.

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ is called to minister to the needs of all people; and

WHEREAS, Jesus calls us to be responsible for what we do and do not do in his name, saying, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these, my children, you did it unto me"; and

WHEREAS, it is a known and documented fact that one out of every four children in the United States is a victim of physical, sexual, or mental abuse or neglect, or exploited through child pornography and prostitution; and

WHEREAS, a clinical case study of incest victims reveals long-term damage, leaving them with deep, unhealed emotional scars, who see themselves as socially "branded" or "marked"; and

WHEREAS, many members of the United Church of Christ at large are not aware that this problem exists in every community, both urban and rural, nor that the problem occurs in all economic and social strata; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has affirmed its calling to minister to the needs of the world; help make human life more human; seek justice and liberation for all, reflecting God's loving purpose for the world;

THEREFORE, the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Commits itself to raising the consciousness of members of local churches, Associations, Conferences, and national boards and agencies of the United Church of Christ, in regard to the issue of child abuse as exploitation of youth in our communities and the families of our churches.

Requests the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Commission for Racial Justice and the Office for Church in Society to provide resources for study to help local church members become aware of this issue; and to encourage active participation by local church members in efforts to alleviate this problem.

Requests the Office for Church in Society to provide leadership in legislative settings where laws and policy concerning child abuse and exploitation of youth are at issue.

Requests that information concerning child abuse and neglect be shared through publications of the United Church of Christ for the widest possible circulation.

19. RESOLUTION ON CONCERN ABOUT THE MORAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING

Ms. Cope referred the delegates to Advance Materials V, pages 138-140, to the Section report, moved the adoption of the Resolution on Concerns About the Moral and Ethical Implications of Genetic Engineering, and called on Richard Mann (IS), Chairperson of the small group that considered this resolution, to speak to the motion. There was discussion. A motion to terminate debate was adopted, and it was

83 GS 76 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution on Concern About the Moral and Ethical Implications of Genetic Engineering.

RESOLUTION ON CONCERN ABOUT THE MORAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING

Summary:

This resolution expresses concern about the moral and ethical considerations raised by the rapid growth of knowledge and technology in the field of genetic engineering. It calls for appropriate instrumentalities to make relevant information available and for the members of the United Church of Christ to gather within their churches to study this subject.

Background:

Definition: Genetic Engineering is a system of scientific procedures and techniques for the purposeful modification of the hereditary apparatus of living organisms.

During the past two decades, our knowledge of genetic mechanisms has been doubling every 2½ years. Such a rapid growth has prohibited extensive screening of new procedures and techniques of genetic engineering for possible harmful or long-term side effects. Thus, application of genetic engineering techniques entails certain, not yet completely defined, degrees of risk.

The scientific community has recognized the significant potential for the applications of genetic engineering to alter the gene patterns of the entire biosphere. Since 1975, the research community, in cooperation with the National Institutes of Health, has sought to identify the benefits and risks of the planned modification of genetic patterns and has established a set of advisory guidelines for the conduct of both research and applications of genetic engineering methods.

The rapid advance of genetic engineering research persuades us that important ethical choices regarding its implementation are not very far off. Current application of genetic engineering involves such diverse subject areas as: agriculture, animal husbandry, pharmaceutical development and manufacturing, prenatal screening for human genetic linked diseases, preventive and curative medicine. These applications are the initial results of early research in genetic engineering. Current projections indicate many more advanced uses of these techniques in the very near future. To be ready to make these choices in a wise manner, we must be knowledgeable about the implications of our decisions.

Biblical and Theological Rationale:

Humankind is blessed by its creator with a questioning mind and creative nature. ". . . as co-creator and co-

revealer with God, he has to take into his hands to transform it (nature) in accordance with his goal to grow in his capacity to reciprocate love and to discern what enhances human dignity and what blocks it." (Bernard Haring, *Manipulation, Ethical Boundaries of Medical, Behavioral, and Genetic Manipulation*, p. 64.)

The question of limits of this call to co-creation is also dependent on the use of knowledge. Wisdom moderates where knowledge presses only for greatest potential understanding. Wisdom encourages the appropriate use and limits of knowledge.

"I am wisdom, and I have insight; I have knowledge and sound judgment." (Prov. 8:12 TEV)

In genetic engineering, we face knowledge increasing in quantum leaps—we seek the wisdom to act responsibly as Christians with wisdom born of God to use the knowledge responsibly.

"For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, . . ." (Prov. 2:6-7 RSV)

We ask for continued dialogue with scientists, researchers and regulatory agencies, to add to the decisions that have creative outcomes for generations ahead.

WHEREAS, scientific knowledge and technology in the field of genetic engineering has developed and continues to develop more rapidly than general understanding of this subject and its moral and ethical implications; and

WHEREAS, genetic engineering has a potential to affect all creation for good or for harm;

THEREFORE, the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the members of the United Church of Christ to gather within their churches for a disciplined study of the topic of genetic engineering and the accompanying moral-ethical questions and decisions that will be necessitated by future discoveries and implication.

The Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests the Office for Church in Society and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to coordinate their efforts in order to maintain a flow of information from the scientific community and government regulatory bodies to the membership of the United Church of Christ on the subject of possible long-term side effects of genetic engineering in order to promote responsible moral-ethical and theological choices as the necessity for such arises, and to bring together scientists, theologians and laypersons to study the moral-ethical-theological implications and report to the Fifteenth General Synod.

20. RESOLUTION ON HOSPICE CARE

Ms. Cope referred the delegates to Advance Materials V, pages 169-170, to Advance Materials VI, pages 12-13, to the Section report, moved the adoption of the Resolution on Hospice Care, and called on Shannon Clarkson (CT), Chairperson of the small group that considered this resolution, to speak to the motion. Ms. Clarkson indicated that the documents in the Advance Materials had been combined into a single resolution to be discussed and adopted. There was discussion.

The Moderator recognized Curtis Ackley (PCS) who moved to amend the motion by adding a new #5 to the resolution section to read "Recognizes the special need for members of the helping professions to serve as primary caregivers and for expert support to volunteers in the hospice movement." The Moderator indicated that time had expired for the report of this section and called for a vote on the amendment and the main motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion to amend was lost. It was

83 GS 77 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution on Hospice Care.

RESOLUTION ON HOSPICE CARE

WHEREAS, in the events of Holy Week, our Lord was, in part, teaching his followers how to face death with integrity and hope; and

WHEREAS, Jesus confronted his own death in a realistic and clear-eyed way, and began preparing his disciples for its coming well before going to Jerusalem; and in the story of Holy Week, we can find many of the elements of a "good death"; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ Policy Statement on Aging adopted by the Twelfth General Synod in 1979 emphasized the fact that the increase in Americans living far into old age is dramatic, and that our continuing ministry with a sizable group of frail elderly will grow; and

WHEREAS, the church has ever sought to be a source for care and solace, and our church a long-standing history of care for the aged through retirement homes and nursing facilities for the frail elderly, and

WHEREAS, hospice care is a more humane way of caring for the terminally ill than the impersonal treatment prevalent in many hospitals and can be more cost effective; and

WHEREAS, hospice care is a program, ideally carried out in the home, which provides nursing, medical and spiritual care for persons facing imminent and inevitable death, and includes support and counseling for the families before the death as well as after,

THEREFORE, the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

Affirms the growing hospice movement in the USA by urging members of the United Church of Christ family to become involved in this movement and by encouraging and supporting those who are providing hospice care for the terminally ill and their families.

Urges the United Church of Christ Instrumentalities and related seminaries, medical schools and colleges to participate in the development of a theology which understands death as part of life and care for the dying as an integral part of the Christian mandate to love and care for all persons.

Encourages members of the health care professions, especially those related to United Church of Christ affiliated health care institutions to enlist their involvement in and support of the hospice concept.

Encourages the training of clergy and laity for ministry with the terminally ill and their families.

Urges the applicable entities of the United Church of