

WHEREAS, networks provide opportunities for education, fellowship and the sharing of information that will benefit not only the individuals but also their roles and participation in all areas of the life of the United Church of Christ;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ seeks to be on the leading edge of support for professionalism, education, and adequate compensation for workers;

WHEREAS, there is a need to raise the level of professionalism and support for all secretaries and support staff employed by the churches, conferences, agencies, and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod urges employers to provide the secretaries and support staff of local churches, associations, conferences, agencies, and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ, a fair salary, vacation, health insurance, and pension benefit package applicable to their circumstances;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod asks employers to encourage secretaries and support persons to participate in United Church of Christ networks and educational events;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod recommends that all churches, associations, conferences, instrumentalities, and other bodies of the United Church of Christ endorse and support this Resolution and the formation of a United Church of Christ Secretaries/Support Staff Network;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod asks the Executive Council to assign an agency or instrumentality to monitor and support this action.

4. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST OLDER CLERGY IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ms. Lausman presented the Resolution and recommended its adoption with two corrections - the inclusion of the word "older" which was omitted and a paragraph was added for the Office for Church Life and Leadership to deal with the problems of older clergy.

87-GS-108 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Discrimination Against Older Clergy in the United Church of Christ."

Discrimination Against Older Clergy in the United Church of Christ

Background

Discrimination against older persons in the job market is a widespread problem in our society. Many of our church members, finding themselves unemployed and over fifty, report finding employment opportunities closed to them in spite of qualifications. This is a serious personal and social problem today.

Discrimination against older clergy also exists within the Church. There are complaints about it from clergy of many denominations. One of our pastors, seeking a new position at age 60, was openly told by the chairperson of one search committee that he was turned down because of his age. The committee was looking for a younger pastor. Others report similar experiences. One sensitive and skilled pastor, aware of his own abilities and limitations, recognizing that the time had arrived when a change would be beneficial to the life of his congregation and to his own personal life, has met with rejection time after time. One interview he did have was dominated by a member of the search committee who openly and

repeatedly questioned whether a 55 year old clergyperson would have the stamina to lead the church. An association counselor was told by one search committee that they would consider no candidate over the age of 45! A conference minister, seeking to return to a parish pastorate, reported being rejected by search committees because of age. A national staff person recalled that "my father met age discrimination when he was in his late fifties and attempted to move to another parish." Another gifted senior pastor said he had given up trying to move and was waiting until age 62 when, assisted by modest retirement benefits, he would seek opportunities in interim ministry.

Stories of discrimination against older clergy are legion. The problem does exist in the United Church of Christ. Yet these people often bring mature judgment, valuable experience, and proven competence in ministry. Discrimination on account of age denies the church these valuable benefits. It also destroys the morale of some of our most valuable people - people who have given a lifetime of service and have, in that process, acquired wisdom, understanding, and skill they are called by God to share with the Church.

The concern of this Resolution is to address a need of the whole Church as well as of its clergy in the third of their active ministry-who are able and eager to give valuable service yet find themselves frustrated by blind prejudice widespread in both church and society.

Resolution

WHEREAS, discrimination against older people is a serious problem in both church and society in modern America;

WHEREAS, most, if not all, of the conferences and instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ have declared themselves to be equal opportunity employers;

WHEREAS, discrimination against older clergy exists with the United Church of Christ;

WHEREAS, this discrimination causes untold pain, frustration, and low morale among experienced clergy who have valuable experience, wisdom, and skill to share with congregations and with the Church at large;

WHEREAS, Conference ministers and national leadership are aware of the existence of discrimination against older clergy;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ appreciates and is concerned for its experienced clergy;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon conferences and instrumentalities of the Church as well as local congregations each to affirm its support of these veteran disciples of our Lord.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod calls upon the Office of Communication, the Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Office for Church in Society, the Board for Homeland Ministries, and other instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to use national Church communication resources, including United Church News, to join in calling attention to the sin of Ageism in Church and Society and to educate our Church people concerning the rich resources the Church has in clergy and other persons gifted with age and experience.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod calls upon the Office for Church Life and Leadership, the Office for Church in Society, the Office of Communication, the United Church News, and publications of the various conferences to address the problem of Ageism at all levels of the

Church's life with programs of consciousness raising and education with respect to the unique contributions the more experienced clergy have to give the Church.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General Synod requests the Office for Church Life and Leadership, in cooperation with conference and association ministers and placement personnel, to develop a program for training search committees at all levels of the Church to evaluate the needs of the local church or denominational office to be filled, to assess the unique and proven abilities of clergy of whatever age, and to interview candidates in a manner designed to call forth those positive qualities of maturity, competence, experience, and proven ability each has to offer.

5. PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Mr. David Stabenfeldt, Chairperson of Committee 17, presented the Resolution. "Peaceful Coexistence Between India and Pakistan" and recommended its adoption.

87-GS-109 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Peaceful Coexistence between India and Pakistan."

Peaceful Coexistence Between India and Pakistan

The Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests that the United Church Board for World Ministries study the issue of Peaceful Coexistence Between Pakistan and India, and that the United Church Board for World Ministries present the results of their findings and possible plans for action and implementation at the time of the Seventeenth General Synod in Ft. Worth, Texas.

6. REV. JAMES SMUCKER RECOGNIZED

The New York Conference recognized Rev. James Smucker, Conference Minister of New York. Mr. Smucker was scheduled to retire on September 30th. His compassion and leadership were cited.

7. RESOLUTION "AFFIRMATION OF ACTIONS OF FIFTEENTH GENERAL SYNOD REGARDING THE FARM CRISIS"

The Moderator called on Mr. Theodore Goble, Chairperson of Committee 27, to present the Resolution "Affirmation of the Action of the Fifteenth General Synod Regarding the Farm Crisis."

During discussion an amendment and an amendment to the amendment was made, but both were defeated.

87-GS-110 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Affirmation of Actions of the Fifteenth General Synod Regarding the Farm Crisis."

Affirmation of the Actions of the Fifteenth General Synod Regarding the Farm Crisis

WHEREAS, the Fifteenth General Synod of the UCC adopted a Pronouncement "The Crisis of People and the Land," and a Resolution "The Family Farm, which recommended action in four areas:

1. educational resources and programs;
2. involvement by churches and UCC instrumentalities;
3. public policy advocacy; and
4. national legislative actions; and

WHEREAS, the rural crisis continues to deepen, and extended efforts are essential;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Sixteenth General

Synod reaffirms the referenced Pronouncement "The Crisis of People and the Land" and the Resolution "The Family Farm" and requests the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to continue, and to increase its efforts to fulfill the objectives of the referenced Pronouncement and Resolution.

8. RECOGNITION OF THE CONFERENCES OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST INSURANCE ADVISORY BOARD

The Moderator called on Mr. Richard Riddoch, Chairperson of Committee 29, to present the Resolution "Recognition of the Conferences of the United Church of Christ Insurance Advisory Board." Mr. Riddoch recommended its adoption.

87-GS-111 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the following statement and instructs the Secretary of the Church to add it to the section in published editions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ which is entitled "General Synod Actions Related to National Bodies":

Conferences of the United Church of Christ Insurance Advisory Board

The Sixteenth General Synod recognizes the Conferences of the United Church of Christ Insurance Advisory Board as an organization established by participating conferences of the United Church of Christ. The Board is incorporated as a Non-profit Public Benefit Corporation under the laws of the State of California and has been granted Federal Income Tax Exemption by the Internal Revenue Service in a ruling dated February 6, 1986. It is governed through a Board of Directors elected at an Annual Meeting of Conference Ministers of member conferences.

9. MR. KENNETH P. STEWART RECOGNIZED

The Kansas-Oklahoma Conference recognized Mr. Kenneth Stewart, Moderator of the Sixteenth General Synod, expressing appreciation and commending him for his efforts.

10. RESOLUTION "SEXUALITY AND ABORTION: A FAITHFUL RESPONSE"

The Moderator called on Rev. Eleanor Morrison, Chairperson of Committee 16, who referred the body to Advance Materials III, page 8, for the Resolution "Sexuality and Abortion: A Faithful Response." Ms. Morrison recommended adoption of the Resolution with the following changes:

Under "Therefore be it Resolved," paragraph 2, line 3 substitute the words "before considering" for the words "as well as;" and add the word "or" on line 2 after the word child.

Also add a new Whereas after the fourth Whereas on p. 35. "Whereas, access to birth control is being jeopardized by decreased in Federal Funding for human services, including family planning programs; and certain groups continue their efforts to reverse the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973, which affirms the right to choose a safe and legal abortion; and;"

The Resolution was then put to a vote.

87-GS-112 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Sexuality and Abortion: A Faithful Response" as amended.

Sexuality and Abortion: A Faithful Response

WHEREAS, Scripture teaches that all human life is precious in God's sight and teaches the importance of personal moral freedom, and

WHEREAS, previous General Synods, beginning in 1971, have considered the theological and ethical implications of abortion, and have supported its legal availability, while recognizing its