

The Eighteenth General Synod further affirms the belief that God, in Jesus Christ, embraces the world through reconciliation, "breaking down the dividing walls of hostility (Ephesians 2:14)," thus gracing us with courage and hope in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

These dividing walls in American society are evermore exacerbated by the segregation of communities, resulting from institutional racism and the increasing injustice of classism. This growing pattern of racial and economic isolation in our society is substantial and growing. It affects not only the equity and quality of life for poor people, but it also hinders all people from celebrating the diversity of God as demonstrated in the diversity of God's people. This trend must be arrested.

We affirm the vision that each child be given the opportunity to develop as did God's unique child who "grew big and strong and full of wisdom" (Luke 2:40), in order to become a full partner in a multicultural, multiracial world. They must be freed from the socio-economic oppressions that permeate our society. Quality, integrated public education can begin this process.

10. PROPOSAL FOR ACTION "IN SUPPORT OF QUALITY, INTEGRATED EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS"

The Moderator asked Ms. Gibson to continue with her report. Ms. Gibson commented that the Proposal for Action "In Support of Quality, Integrated Education for All Children in Public Schools" places the responsibility for quality education on the whole church for there to be effective action.

The Rev. Ronald Hutcheson (WNI) moved to amend the Proposal for Action "In Support of Quality, Integrated Education for All Children in Public Schools, and the amendment was sustained as below."

91-GS-57 The Eighteenth General Synod amends the Proposal for Action "In Support of Quality, Integrated Education for All Children in Public Schools" between the 4th and 5th sections under "Therefore be it resolved" to read "To insure the delivery, by school district, of full educational services to children in their boundaries without permanent residential registration i.e. those on the streets, in shelters and in transitional housing."

91-GS-58 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Proposal for Action "In Support of Quality, Integrated Education for All Children in Public Schools," as amended.

PROPOSAL FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF QUALITY, INTEGRATED EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ has adopted the Pronouncement "Quality, Integrated Education for All Children in Our Public Schools," and since Education is a priority of the United Church of Christ, we acknowledge painfully that poor children - a disproportionate number of whom are children of color - do not receive an education equal to that available to other children; we are called to take action to correct this injustice and to work for the day when all public schools will offer all children the quality of education which will enable them to participate as equals in the creation of the just and peaceful society for which we work and pray.

THEREFORE, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon all local churches, conferences, national instrumentalities, and other bodies:

to address within their local communities the issue of quality, integrated public education for all children, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, handicapping conditions, family income level, or neighborhood residence;

to work against the developing re-segregation of our public schools, and to take legal actions as necessary to combat segregation;

to advocate for educational funding that will provide appropriate resources for each student in all public schools;

to work with secular and ecumenical agencies to protect and strengthen public education as a bulwark of democracy and as a way into full participation in our society for all children;

to insure the delivery, by school district, of full educational services to children in their boundaries without permanent residential registration, i.e. those on the streets, in shelters, and in transitional housing;

to advocate for school-based health clinics to serve children whose families are without adequate health care;

to encourage the use of public schools as major and accessible centers of community life, offering before and after school care to children with working parents, literacy and high school equivalency preparation to adults, and summer programs which affirm the pleasures of reading for neighborhood children and their families.

The Eighteenth General Synod calls upon:

local United Church of Christ congregations to encourage participation by their members in school elections, activities, programs, and festivals, to celebrate yearly the educational achievements of teachers, administrators, and school children; as well as to encourage, assist and educate parents on the value of multicultural education for all children.

conferences to advocate on the state level for legislation that assures equitable funding and quality, integrated educational opportunities for all public school districts and for the children and educational programs in them. To accomplish this we urge conferences to form public education committees to work on all issues related to quality integrated education;

the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to recommend and/or publish materials, and provide resource personnel to help people in our churches reaffirm our traditional support for public education and come to a critical examination of educational programs and policies; to promote both adult, youth, and intergenerational literacy and reading programs; and to support programs of public school and church cooperation aimed at helping public school children achieve success;

the Coordinating Center for Women to inform the churches of the many opportunities for men and women for professional and volunteer outreach to children and other learners;

the Commission for Racial Justice to address the relationship of cultural, psycho-social, economic, racial, and ethnic conditions which deprive all children of their opportunity to be educated in a multicultural environment;

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the Office of Communication to publish articles and reports in United Church News and other UCC publications which highlight initiatives made by local churches, conferences, and instrumentalities in support of quality integrated education for all children;

the Office for Church in Society, in collaboration with instrumentalities, conferences, and churches, to advocate for legislation that promotes and strengthens the public schools and the literacy of our general population.

IMPLEMENTING BODY

The Board for Homeland Ministries shall be the body responsible for coordinating and reporting on the development and implementation of strategies and programs of the above directional statements and goals in consultation with other aforementioned bodies.

Subject to the availability of funds.

11. PROPOSED PRONOUNCEMENT "SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN THE CHURCH"

The Moderator called on Rev. Robert Inglis to give the report of Committee Two. He invited Rev. Robert Witham (NH) to offer a few comments on the importance of the Proposed Pronouncement "Sexual Harassment and Abuse in the Church" to the total church. He said it is a serious problem and must be stopped. After discussion the General Synod acted.

91-GS-59 Voted: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Pronouncement "Sexual Harassment and Abuse in the Church."

PRONOUNCEMENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

SUMMARY

This pronouncement declares that sexual harassment and abuse in every setting of the church must be ended. The community of faith is diminished and the whole church suffers when this behavior occurs or is allowed to continue unchallenged. This pronouncement calls the whole church to practice repentance and justice. It calls the church to be responsible for maintaining a work place free from sexual harassment, a place of safety for all its members, employees and volunteers. It calls the church to maintain the integrity of the pastoral relationship, and asserts that sexual contact or behavior in the pastoral relationship is unethical, unprofessional and abusive and will not be tolerated in the United Church of Christ. It calls for justice in every setting of the church to bring into being the community of faith born out of God's liberating love.

DEFINITIONS

The Legal and Ethical Climate

(Material in this section adapted from Sexual Abuse and Harassment: Definitions, published by the Commission on Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, November 1990.)

As our church and society struggle to disentangle healthy sex-

ual interaction from coercive and abusive sexuality, it is important for the church to struggle with the increasing number of precise distinctions of law and ethics which are arising for addressing abusive sexuality. These definitions are offered to help the church to be more fully prepared to respond with pastoral compassion and prophetic justice to the situations we encounter.

Sexual Harassment. In 1980 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission declared sexual harassment to be illegal and issued the following definition:

- (1) unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when
- (2) submission to or rejection of that conduct is used as a factor in decisions affecting an individual's employment or education, or
- (3) that conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or education, or creating an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment for work or education.

Though sexual harassment often refers to a work or school environment, in some states, sexual harassment codes also include education, housing, public accommodations or public services.

Sexual harassment that falls under part two of the definition is often called "quid pro quo" harassment because inappropriate sexual behavior is requested, expected or demanded in exchange for some benefit, such as a passing grade in a class, keeping a job, receiving a favorable employee appraisal or promotion, or retaining housing.

Part three of the definition, often called "subtle sexual harassment," is often harder to understand. But an offensive, hostile or intimidating environment is no less illegal and no less intolerable.

Sexual Exploitation by a Counseling Professional. This is a relatively new category in our legal and ethical environment. New civil or criminal statutes have been enacted in such states as Minnesota, Wyoming, Colorado, California, Florida, Illinois and North Dakota. It includes any sexual contact between a therapist/counselor and a client, including pastoral counselors and everyone who works in the name of the church. In most of the states whose legal codes now include this abuse, consent is not a defense. A complaint of sexual exploitation must be based on a counseling relationship with the alleged offender.

Regardless of the legal variations, sexual contact between a counselor and a client is a grave breach of professional ethics. The Ethical Standards of the American Psychological Association states that "sexual intimacies with clients are unethical." The code of ethics of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors asserts that "pastoral counselors do not engage in sexual misconduct with their clients."

In this pronouncement, sexual exploitation by a counseling professional is referred to as abuse of the pastoral role, pastoral or professional misconduct or occasionally as sexual misconduct.

Sexual Abuse/Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Malfeasance. These are broad terms, often used to summarize the whole range of