

RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING THE CONGREGATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS AND  
ORGANIZATIONS OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE TO DECLARE THEMSELVES  
OPEN AND AFFIRMING OF PERSONS  
REGARDLESS OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

WHEREAS, the Apostle Paul said that, as Christians, we are many members, but we are one body in Christ (Romans 12:4), and Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) without being judgmental (Matthew 7:1-2) nor disparaging of others (Luke 18:9-14); and

WHEREAS, recognizing that many persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation are already members of the church through baptism and confirmation and that these people have talents and gifts to offer the United Church of Christ, and that the UCC has historically affirmed a rich diversity in its theological and biblical perspectives; and

WHEREAS, the Tenth through the Fourteenth General Synods have adopted resolutions encouraging the inclusion, and affirming the human rights, of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons within the UCC; and

WHEREAS, many parts of the church have remained conspicuously silent despite the continuing injustice of institutionalized discrimination, instances of senseless violence and setbacks in civil rights protection by the Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, the church has often perpetuated discriminatory practices and has been unwilling to affirm the full humanness of clergy, laity and staff with lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation, who experience isolation, ostracism and fear of (or actual) loss of employment; and

WHEREAS, we are called by Christ's example to proclaim release to the captives and set at liberty the oppressed (Luke 4:18); and

WHEREAS, the Fifteenth General Synod resolved, by a 98% majority, to encourage "a policy of non-discrimination in employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation; encourage Associations, Conferences and all related organizations to adopt a similar policy; and encourage the congregations of the United Church of Christ to adopt a non-discrimination policy and a Covenant of Openness and Affirmation of persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation within the community of faith;" and

WHEREAS, such Conferences of the United Church of Christ as Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Northern California, Southern California, and Rocky Mountain, as well as the Chicago Metropolitan and New York Metro/Suffolk Area Associations have discerned the leading of God in the resolution of General Synod XV and have adopted such policies; and

WHEREAS, thirty seven congregations of the United Church of Christ have, as of 2/1/90, declared themselves Open and Affirming Congregations; and

WHEREAS, “At the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ reaffirmed its Christian and legal commitment to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity” and “it is the policy of the Ohio Conference and its five Associations to achieve equal employment opportunity” through its policy which “shall be administered without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, **sexual orientation** (emphasis added) or differing abilities”;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the members of the Ohio Conference, gathered in this 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, affirm the leading of God in the resolve of General Synod XV and encourage local churches, Associations and organizations of the Conference to study the issues of discrimination in local church employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation; and encourages local churches, Associations and organizations of the Conference to covenant together to be open and affirming and being pastorally sensitive to persons of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation, their families and friends, intentionally reaching out and welcoming them within the community of faith, affirming and recognizing in Christian love their personhood, standing with them against fear and discrimination and in advocating for justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Annual Meeting calls upon the Ohio Conference in all its structures and practices to acknowledge that it is indeed an Open and Affirming Conference, publicizing the same in such denominational media as United Church News, Keeping You Posted, and United Church Employment Opportunities, such actions to be coordinated and enabled jointly by the Coordinating Committee for Church and Ministry and the Conference Minister; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Departments of Church and Ministry in the Associations of the Conference are encouraged to study the issue of ordination and placement of clergy of lesbian, gay and bisexual orientation; to adopt a policy of non-discrimination; and to aid congregations in the process of declaring themselves open and affirming.

PASSED June 12, 1990

FOR:	262
AGAINST:	108
ABSTENTIONS:	32