

THE RIGHT TO EARN A LIVING
A Resolution approved by General Synod XI (1977)

WHEREAS, Our nation is experiencing chronic unemployment which falls most heavily on minorities, youth, older people and women;

WHEREAS, The Mounting costs of continuous unemployment (in terms of work hours irretrievably lost and reduced tax revenues, and in terms of unemployment compensation and other social welfare programs, and increased crime) are becoming intolerable;

WHEREAS, The personal anxiety and rejection experienced by the unemployed, together with their economic loss, often cause broken marriages, separated families and abandoned neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, The fear of unemployment produces social envy and hostility between the employed and the unemployed, the well-to-do and the recipients of public assistance, white workers and black workers, old and young, men and women; rural and urban.

WHEREAS, Complex patterns of contemporary unemployment reflect dynamic social changes that include a mobile population; the unprecedented influx of women and surging numbers of young people into the workforce, and thus require innovative approaches for effective solutions;
WHEREAS, Prolonged unemployment destroys the independence needed for political participation, obviates the gains achieved in the long struggles for civil rights, the results in the emergence of a permanent underclass in the society;

WHEREAS, The threat of inflation, increased costs and scarcity of fuels and limits to growth in production caution against simplistic solutions to unemployment;

WHEREAS, The scriptures tell us that God created man and woman in God's image, that is, to be able to respond to God in the very activities of their life together and of their work;

WHEREAS, Human dignity rests upon God's purpose for every human life, which means that all persons without regard to rank or accomplishment have a right of access to the land, tools, and resources necessary to achieve sufficient remuneration to provide for themselves and their dependents;

WHEREAS, Our nation's affirmation of the creator-endowed inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are virtually denied to persons excluded from gainful employment, and equality of opportunity becomes meaningless where jobs are not available, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Eleventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirm the God-given right of all persons to useful and remunerative work, together with the responsibility to provide for themselves and their dependents, and that it therefore also do the following;

1. Call on all Americans to recognize this right and this responsibility and to reflect on their meaning and implications for the future of the family, neighborhood, city, countryside and nation.
2. Call on the federal, state, and local governments together with industry, business, labor and the unemployed to formulate and implement policies and programs to achieve full employment.
3. Call on all congregations, associations, conferences, and agencies of the church to commit themselves to prayer and bible study, discussion and action which will raise the principles of this pronouncement to consciousness and implementation; and sponsor seminars, workshops and conferences to actively engage representatives of government, industry, business, labor, the unemployed, agriculture and civic groups in cooperative development of forms of work that will be viable in the future.
4. Instruct the Executive Council to make these principles and the working out of their implications a high concern (top priority) of the denomination.
5. Instruct the Executive Council to implement this priority by:
 - A. Requesting the Board for Homeland Ministries to administer the program envisioned by the General Synod and to appoint an advisory committee representative of other instrumentalities and agencies of the church building the Office for Church in Society, the Office of Church Life and Leadership, the Commission on Racial Justice, and representatives of the broader society;
 - B. Allocating \$100,000* annually for the biennium to carry out the program;
 - C. Requesting the Board for Homeland Ministries report in the Twelfth General Synod,, on the work accomplished by the churches, associations, Conferences and agencies.
6. Instruct the president of the United Church of Christ to communicate this pronouncement to the President of the United States, in person, and also to communicate it to the Congress, to the National Council of Churches and its member communions.
7. Request each conference to communicate this pronouncement to its federal, state and local elected officials.