

RESOLUTION ON "RECOMMITMENT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN LIGHT OF RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISIONS"

WHEREAS Jesus, in defining his mission and ministry, stated as recorded in Luke 4:18-19 (NRSV), "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor;"

WHEREAS as the United Church of Christ, we take Jesus' mission and ministry as our mission and ministry as a church;

WHEREAS Affirmative Action is a process and/or practice to remedy past and continuing discrimination;

WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has from its inception demonstrated our commitment to Affirmative Action as embodied in resolutions from General Synods 11' 12, 13, 15, 16, 17;

WHEREAS Affirmative Action programs and processes have provided a successful beginning in addressing discrimination based on racial/ethnic status, gender, age or disability; such discrimination has not been remedied; and

WHEREAS there have been efforts to dismantle Affirmative Action programs across the nation, as evidenced by recent Supreme Court decisions and, accordingly, in keeping herewith;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod declares its recommitment to the goals and objectives of AFFIRMATIVE ACTION programs and processes within and without the church;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls upon the President of the United Church of Christ:

to demonstrate its reaffirmation to justice within the UCC work population by expeditiously calling an Assistant to the President for Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, who has demonstrated commitment to the principles of Affirmative Action and who will be called at an equitable salary level commensurate with experience, in accordance with previous General Synod Resolutions;

to further demonstrate the recommitment to justice in the work place within the United Church of Christ by expeditiously reconvening the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee with an appropriate level of funding;

to expand the mandate of the Affirmative Action Committee to include theological reflection, advocacy and education with respect to reaffirmation of Affirmative Action as a legitimate means to remedy past wrongs of discrimination within the church;

to convey to the Congress of the United States through letters, personal testimony and conversation that Affirmative Action laws should in fact be strengthened rather than dismantled;

to draft a PASTORAL LETTER to the churches of the United Church of Christ, concerning the issue of recommitment to Affirmative Action as a legitimate means to remedy the affects of past injustices respecting discrimination in the work force and that the same be published widely through all means available including, but not limited to, United Church News; letters to the conferences, to the boards and directors of the instrumentalities, to the Committee of Instrumentality Executives, to the members of the Executive Council; and through other appropriate means; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twentieth General synod, calls upon the Commission For Racial Justice, The office For Church In Society, The Coordinating Center For Women and the United Church Board For Homeland Ministries:

to expeditiously convene an AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ADVOCACY STRATEGY COMMITTEE composed of staff, volunteers, representatives from each ethnic caucus and persons with disabilities to discern ways to provide resources to the Congress and other appropriate bodies to assist in its reaffirmation of Affirmative Action as a legitimate, compassionate and just means to remedy past wrongs of discrimination within the society;

to host, within the next biennium, a NATIONAL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRATEGY CONFERENCE to develop strategies for promoting the reaffirmation of Affirmative Action and justice which will shape and impact the public discourse on the reaffirmation of Affirmative Action as a legitimate means to remedy past and continuing injustices of discrimination; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod encourages the conferences, associations and local congregations of the United Church of Christ to reaffirm our commitment to Affirmative Action and justice, to actively participate in national and local Affirmative Action initiatives (e.g. opposing the California Civil Rights Initiative), to advocate for Affirmative Action among legislators and other government officials, and to work for models of advocacy that impact the public discourse in favor of a diverse work force.

Subject to the availability of funds.