

1 The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this proposed resolution be sent  
2 to a Committee of the General Synod.

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5 **ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN IN HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS**

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7 **A Resolution of Witness**

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9 **Submitted by Bluegrass United Church of Christ, Lexington KY, Indiana-Kentucky**  
10 **Conference, Christ Evangelical United Church of Christ, Louisville KY, Indiana-Kentucky**  
11 **Conference, St. John's United Church of Christ, Louisville KY, Indiana-Kentucky**  
12 **Conference,**  
13 **Church of the Savior United Church of Christ, Knoxville TN, Southeast Conference,**  
14 **Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad CA, California-Nevada Southern Conference**  
15 **and**  
16 **First Congregational Church of Riverside CA, California-Nevada Southern Conference**  
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19 **SUMMARY**

20 This resolution calls for parents and guardians to reject corporal punishment and use other  
21 methods to train children. It also calls for state and local governments to prohibit corporal  
22 punishment in schools and child-caring facilities.

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24 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

25 Though some verses in Proverbs are used to justify or even mandate corporal punishment of  
26 children, some biblical scholars point out that they were intended to apply only to adolescent  
27 boys being educated for adult responsibilities. Christians should look for guidance to the words  
28 and actions of Jesus, which consistently uphold the human dignity of the voiceless and  
29 marginalized including children. Jesus taught children with love and tenderness and never  
30 recommended striking them.

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32 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

33 Whereas Jesus called for society to honor children for “of such is the Kingdom of God,” Luke  
34 18:16

35 Whereas Jesus said that harming “the least of these my brethren” was an offense against Him,  
36 Matthew 25:40

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38 Whereas the United Church of Christ has approved the National Council of Churches’ *Social*  
39 *Creed for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, which states that “we honor the dignity of every person” as created in  
40 the divine image and therefore “commit ourselves to a culture of peace and freedom that  
41 embraces non-violence” and “nurtures character,”

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43 Whereas the United Church of Christ is committed to working for a “world safe for children”  
44 and “free from violence,” 95-GS-56 Resolution of Witness  
45

46 Whereas corporal punishment models aggressive behavior as a solution to conflict and sends a  
47 message that hitting smaller and weaker people is acceptable,  
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49 Whereas corporal punishment is degrading and traumatizing to children and often leads to  
50 physical injury,  
51

52 Whereas corporal punishment may produce short-term compliance but is subsequently less  
53 effective, leading frustrated caretakers to inflict more severe forms of punishment,  
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55 Whereas some research has associated corporal punishment with chronic depression and  
56 increased crime, violence, substance abuse, anxiety and aggression in children and adults,  
57

58 Whereas children must eventually develop their own conscience and self-discipline, which are  
59 fostered by a home environment of respect, trust, love and self-control,  
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61 Whereas schools and child-care centers should inspire children to enjoy learning and feel safe  
62 and affirmed,  
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64 Whereas corporal punishment in schools is disproportionately used on poor children, minorities,  
65 children with disabilities, and boys,  
66

67 Whereas 19 states, including Indiana and Kentucky, allow corporal punishment in schools and  
68 child care facilities,  
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70 Whereas in the 2013-2014 school year Indiana had 239 cases of corporal punishment and  
71 Kentucky had 823,  
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73 Whereas the Churches' Network for Non-violence, Global Initiative to End All Corporal  
74 Punishment of Children, United Methodist Church, and Presbyterian Church USA oppose  
75 corporal punishment,  
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77 Therefore be it resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls  
78 upon parents to use methods of discipline other than corporal punishment;  
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80 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls  
81 upon member churches to make resources available on Christian parenting without corporal  
82 punishment;  
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84 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for  
85 state and local governments to prohibit corporal punishment in school and child-caring facilities.  
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## 86 **FUNDING**

87 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall  
88 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.  
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## 90 **IMPLEMENTATION**

91 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the  
92 United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.