

SUNDAY EVENING

97-GS-17 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Toward A New Vision Of Giving."

RESOLUTION ATOWARD A NEW VISION OF GIVING®

WHEREAS, our Christian faith calls us to name, proclaim and live out our radical belief that giving helps us to grow in God's image as called for in Christian Faith, Personal Stewardship, and Economic Sharing, a pronouncement of the Eighteenth General Synod, United Church of Christ;

WHEREAS, the theological expression that undergirds this vision of giving and receiving in the United Church of Christ challenges us to claim God's gift of discipleship;

WHEREAS, the church, Acreated by God for mission, lives its vocation only when it is engaged in mission® (UCC Missio Dei Paper, Committee on Structure, 1993);

WHEREAS, the relationships that bind all members of the United Church of Christ in a community of faith strengthen each part of the church and the whole church; and

WHEREAS, through resources such as, Many Stewards- Offerings: Multicultural Wisdom and Practice, we learn much from others and ourselves about the nature of giving and its relationship to all settings of the church;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod calls on individuals and every setting of the United Church of Christ to live as disciples of Jesus, witnessing to a faithful use of money;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod calls on the pastors and leaders of the United Church of Christ to nurture stewards with new vigor, aware of and enriched by many approaches to giving that often are based in:

- C differing denominational heritages,
- C varieties of racial and ethnic cultures,
- C differing generational perspectives and lifestyles, and
- C different ways of giving in partner churches globally;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod calls on all settings of the United Church of Christ to invite giving by articulating and claiming a clear vision of how each setting engages in God's mission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod calls upon congregations, associations, conferences, national ministries and institutions related to the church to be well focused in their invitation to give, to share the stories that more closely connect the giver with the face of mission, to be prompt in thanking givers, and to be accountable for the use of money given;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod directs the Stewardship Council to introduce and test, in partnership with conferences, the concept of giving through a special mission opportunities catalog, based upon appropriate guidelines, looking at initial results after two years. The use of such a catalog throughout the church would be done with Executive Council approval;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod directs the Stewardship Council, in partnership with the All-Church Offerings Committee of the Executive Council, to redesign the current All-Church Offerings and Special Appeals with a view to making the new Special Mission Offerings easily promoted, widely inviting, consistent with new structural realities, and able to invite giving that enables special mission to be undertaken, while maintaining our priority on Our Church's Wider Mission (Basic Support), and allowing for local churches' special offerings. The re-design is to be completed by the spring of 1999 with approval of any changes, including the timeline for implementation, to be made by the General Synod in 1999;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod directs the Stewardship Council to work with several conferences in partnership to test a way of inviting individuals to give directly to our common ministry and mission through Our Church's Wider Mission. This testing shall last at least two years and any changes made as a result will be done with the approval of the Executive Council;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod directs the Stewardship Council to work with the seminaries of the United Church of Christ in developing a plan for renewed support of the seminaries in their work of theological education and the training of pastors and leaders for the church, based on the 1975 action of the Tenth General Synod;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod directs the Stewardship Council to continue to work on a comprehensive plan to invite the whole church to faithfully give and receive in ways that:

- Ⓒ faithfully engage in God's mission
- Ⓒ ensure the vitality of the church, with an interim report to the General Synod in 1999 and a final report for General Synod action in 2001; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that together, as a community of faith, the United Church of Christ commits itself to a new vision of giving, so that:

- Ⓒ our giving helps to connect us to one another, rather than divide us, and
- Ⓒ our giving connects us with God, with Jesus Christ who embodies God's mission, and with the Holy Spirit.

Subject to the availability of funds.