



Primer  
For  
Resolutions  
And  
Affirmations  
2007

Connecticut Conference  
United Church of Christ

# Primer For Resolutions and Affirmations 2007

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## Guides For Resolutions And Affirmations

The resolution process is an exciting, creative venture! You have the chance to prepare your own resolution or affirmation for consideration by delegates at Annual Meeting Part II in the Fall, and to grapple with other issues raised by the churches of the Conference. Please note that resolutions and affirmations may be written on matters of moral, faith, social action, or educational concerns.

*“Within the United Church of Christ, the various expressions of the church relate to each other in a covenantal manner. Each expression of the church has responsibilities and rights in relation to the others, to the end that the whole church will seek God’s will and be faithful to God’s mission. Decisions are made in consultation and collaboration among the various parts of the structure. As members of the body of Christ, each expression of the church is called to honor and respect the work and ministry of each other part. Each expression of the church listens, hears, and carefully considers the advice, counsel, and requests of others. In this covenant, the various expressions of the United Church of Christ seek to walk together in all God’s ways.”*

*-Article III, The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*

### What Do Resolutions and Affirmations Do?

Resolutions and affirmations call attention to a religious or social issue by speaking on behalf of the delegates gathered at Annual Meeting Part II of the Conference at a particular time and place in history. They can summon Christians to understand a particular course of action; promote education or advocacy regarding certain kinds of needs; and/or address issues such as poverty, peace, the aged, Bible study and justice. Resolutions and affirmations help define who we are as the United Church of Christ in Connecticut. These statements provide important challenges and opportunities to discern God’s call and to engage in it.

### What Resolutions And Affirmations Do Not Do

They do not speak for the membership of the United Church of Christ in Connecticut. They do not speak for the churches or on behalf of them for the fellowship, nor do they require our churches to take specific action.

## What Are Resolutions And Affirmations?

Since the 1700’s, resolutions and affirmations in Connecticut have spoken to subjects as significant as our attitudes toward slavery, our feelings about war and the necessity for peacemaking, our attitude toward capital punishment, and advocacy for the poor. It is intriguing to note that whether our Congregational forebears were gathering at a ministers’ association (General Association), as an ecclesiastical society (The Missionary Society of Connecticut), or as a church (Connecticut Conference), they sought to address the problems of society from a Christian perspective. Resolutions and Affirmations have shaped and continue to shape who we are as the United Church of Christ in Connecticut.

The difference between a resolution and an affirmation can be understood as follows:

**A resolution** calls for action by a part of the Connecticut Conference, such as ministry teams and local churches. Such action might include promotion of a particular response to an issue or provision of educational opportunities.

**An affirmation** is a statement of our shared faith in regard to a particular topic or concern. That is, an affirmation articulates a common perspective: “This is who we are and what we believe.” By its nature, an affirmation is publicized in the ecclesiastical and secular realms as a faith-stance of the delegates to a particular Annual Meeting, with the hope that individuals through study and prayer will consider and adopt a similar perspective.

In summary, an affirmation shapes our common faith in words, and a resolution seeks to put our common faith into action. Both are equally valuable, for one describes who we are as a Christian body, and the other describes what we intend to do as a Christian body.

## **Sources Of Resolutions And Affirmations**

A resolution or an affirmation may originate from one of four places:

A local church, having approved the submission at a congregational meeting or at its executive body, will send the resolution or affirmation to the Resolutions Committee for processing. The clergy person or a subcommittee of the church cannot submit a resolution or affirmation.

An association of the Connecticut Conference, having approved the submission at a called meeting, will send the resolution or affirmation to the Resolutions Committee for processing. A clergy person or a subcommittee of the association cannot submit a resolution or affirmation.

Fifteen delegates from three or more associations may submit a resolution or affirmation to the Resolutions Committee for processing.

A recognized group (see page 5) of at least 10 persons from two or more associations may submit a resolution or affirmation to the Resolutions Committee for processing.

Any body presenting a resolution or affirmation may submit only one resolution or affirmation for consideration to an Annual Meeting.

## **The Journey For A Resolution Or Affirmation**

The Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ appoints a Resolutions Committee following the Annual Meeting.

An invitation will be sent to all the churches of the Conference in January, informing them of the opportunity to prepare resolutions or affirmations for presentation at the Annual Meeting. Resolutions or affirmations should be submitted to the Conference Office on or before May 1<sup>st</sup>.

There are two categories of resolutions and affirmations designated as Group A and Group B. Group A will consist of all resolutions and affirmations submitted by May 1<sup>st</sup> and heard by the Resolutions Committee. Resolutions and affirmations submitted between May 2<sup>nd</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> will be placed in Group B. These resolutions or affirmations should be a response to a compelling or urgent event, issue or concern that could not be adequately addressed before the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. The decision to bring Group B resolutions before the body assembled at the Annual Meeting resides with the Resolutions Committee. All Group A resolutions and affirmations will be presented, discussed and voted at the Annual Meeting before any Group B resolutions or affirmations.

Representatives from the churches or recognized groups submitting a resolution by the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline will be invited to meet with the Resolutions Committee to discuss and refine their work. Once submitted to the Committee, a resolution or affirmation becomes the responsibility of the Committee, which must remain true to the intent of the presenting body.

The Resolutions Committee, in June, will send copies of the resolutions and affirmations, which have been considered and put in final form, to all churches of the Conference to be distributed to their delegates to the Annual Meeting and they will be posted on the Connecticut Conference website. These are the Group A resolutions.

On the first day of the Annual Meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, there will be an opportunity for the delegates to attend a hearing on one or more of the resolutions or affirmations from Group A for discernment and understanding. The church or group sponsoring a resolution or affirmation must be represented at this hearing. The representatives must report to the Resolutions Committee on the first day of Annual Meeting. The representative must also be on the floor of the meeting when the actions are being considered. If no one from the church or sponsoring group is present for all of the above sessions, the resolution or affirmation will not be presented for action.

On the first day of the Annual Meeting, originators of the Group B resolutions or affirmations will meet with the Resolutions Committee. This will be a public hearing (with the exception that the sponsoring church or group must be present to share its thinking) and will be open to all at the Annual Meeting. The Resolutions Committee is responsible for the management of these hearings. The Group B resolutions will then be distributed to the delegates.

*The Resolutions Committee may return to the presenting body any resolution or affirmation that it considers repetitive of existing policy established by an Annual Meeting in the last ten years.* In the event the presenting group feels this ruling is unfair, they may appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

The Resolutions Committee will prepare a ballot and at a time designated in the Annual Meeting agenda, the delegates (without discussion) will vote to prioritize the resolutions and affirmations for action. For a resolution or affirmation to be on the prioritizing ballot, the Resolutions Committee must have reviewed it. Delegates will prioritize both groups of resolutions and affirmations. All resolutions and affirmations in Group A will be heard prior to the resolutions and affirmations in Group B. This procedure is intended to encourage early submission of resolutions and affirmations so that the churches have adequate opportunity to review these documents before the Annual Meeting of the Conference.

The resolutions and affirmations will be heard at times designated in the agenda and in the priority order established by the delegates.

The outcome of the resolutions and affirmations will be communicated to all local churches.

The Board of Directors will direct voted resolutions to the programs or persons named in the resolution and any resolutions or affirmations not acted upon to the Conference Minister for consideration.

## **Guidelines And Reminders**

To be in Group A, a resolution must be submitted by May 1<sup>st</sup>. To be in Group B, a resolution or affirmation must be submitted between May 2<sup>nd</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>.

If you wish help in the creation of the resolution or affirmation, you may contact the Resolutions Committee through the Connecticut Conference.

There must be a Biblical and theological rationale, including the biblical source and translation or version, as a preface to the actions required for the Conference or its agencies.

Representatives from the churches or groups offering resolutions or affirmations must be present to speak for the documents at the hearing and when the documents are presented for action by the Annual Meeting. If no representative is present the resolutions/affirmations will not be presented for action. Distribution of materials advocating support or defeat of an action may take place only outside the meeting room and away from the entrance to the meeting room.

The Conference will be kept informed of the way in which the resolutions or affirmations are handled in the following way: each person or group responsible for action from a resolution or affirmation will submit an interim report to the chair of the Resolutions Committee; a report on the progress of the resolutions will be included in the Annual Reports Book and the chair will give a report at the next Annual Meeting.

## **Procedure For Submitting A Resolution And Proposal For Action To General Synod**

If a church or group is seeking to submit a resolution to a General Synod with the approval of the Connecticut Conference, the following procedure must be followed.

A resolution to General Synod should travel to a Connecticut Conference Annual Meeting Part II as outlined in this Primer. A final "Therefore Be It Resolved" should indicate the intention for submission to a particular Synod. If passed by the Annual Meeting, the originating group should then re-draft the resolution in proper language for a Synod, to be submitted to the Conference Board of Directors by January 1<sup>st</sup> for their final approval. The Program Coordinator for Justice and Witness of the Connecticut Conference is willing to assist in redrafting a resolution or affirmation for General Synod.

## **Policy and Definition of Recognized Groups in the Connecticut Conference**

Recognized groups may submit one resolution or affirmation per year to the Annual Meeting Part II of the Conference. A Recognized Group must meet the following criteria:

The Board of Directors may certify a group as a Recognized Group if it represents a cause or concern that may not be effectively heard otherwise. A Recognized Group must be certified each year that it wishes to offer a resolution or affirmation.

A Recognized Group must consist of at least ten members of the United Church of Christ who are members of local churches from at least two associations.

Any request to be a Recognized Group at the Annual Meeting must be made in writing to the Board of Directors by February 1<sup>st</sup> for consideration at the next Board of Directors meeting. A current group membership list, including local church membership must accompany the request.

If a Recognized Group has no delegate, one member of the Recognized Group may then be designated as a voice without vote at an Annual Meeting.

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