

1997

RESOLUTION: JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS FOR LESBIAN/GAY/BISEXUAL PERSONS;

WHEREAS, Those who are the Body of Christ are called to be in the world but not of the world (John 17); and

WHEREAS, The world continues to prove itself inhospitable, oppressive and often unsafe for lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons as evidenced by: the so-called, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy which has resulted in a higher rate of dismissal of lesbian/gay service personnel; the rise in anti-gay violence; the passage of the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which limits the benefits of marriage to mixed gender couples; and the defeat of the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1996 which would have offered limited protection from discrimination in employment; and

WHEREAS, The world's oppression of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons is heavily carried by young people in that one-third of all teen suicides are related to issues of sexual identity and fear of disclosure; and

WHEREAS, People of faith are called by both Hebrew and Christian scriptures to create justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8); and

WHEREAS, Martin Luther King, Jr. once described justice as "the correction of love's failure"; and

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ has committed itself to "work for civil liberties for homosexuals" (1976), and "declared ourselves to be Open and Affirming" (1989), as steps in the furthering of justice;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 130th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, reaffirm our historic commitment to justice and civil rights for all persons, including lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the churches, the departments/units of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to actively labor: 1) to prevent abridgement and erosion of justice and civil liberties for lesbian, gay and bisexual persons by working to defeat DOMA type legislation on state levels; and 2) to advance the civil rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons by supporting the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act which will be introduced in the 105th Congress by Senators Jeffords (R-VT), Kennedy (D-MA), Leiberman (D-CT), and Representatives Shays (R-CT) and Frank (D-MA); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the churches to create justice and love tenderly by providing opportunities for open, honest, and respectful discussion within their Christian Education departments and youth programs of issues pertaining to human sexuality, utilizing curricula such as "Created in God's Image" by the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be submitted, in proper form, to General Synod XXII of the United Church of Christ.