

RESOLUTION TO BE AN OPEN & AFFIRMING CONFERENCE

Resolution Background Information

Submitted by members of the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns, Minnesota Chapter.

*Only the “Be It Resolved” statements were voted upon by the Annual Meeting.
The Intent, Background and Whereas sections were neither voted upon nor approved.*

INTENT

The intent of this resolution is to deepen the commitment of the Minnesota Conference to live out an Open and Affirming witness to the other settings of the United Church of Christ and to the broader community of Minnesota. Our intent is also to provide clarification regarding the current declaration of the Minnesota Conference UCC as Open and Affirming (ONA). The Conference has been recognized by the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns as Open and Affirming since 1988 based on the non-discrimination policy passed by the 1988 Minnesota Conference Annual Meeting. Since a non-discrimination policy by itself would no longer be sufficient for an Open and Affirming declaration, the submitters of this resolution seek this more formal declaration.

BACKGROUND

The following Resolution was passed at the 1988 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, Duluth Minnesota:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ encourages local churches, Associations and organizations of the Minnesota Conference to study the issue of discrimination in local church employment, volunteer service and membership policies with regard to sexual orientation and encourages local churches, Associations, and organizations of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ to consider adopting a non-discrimination policy and to consider covenanting together to be open and affirming of persons of lesbian and gay orientation within the faith community.

WHEREAS Jesus Christ teaches us to love one another (John 15:17), and;

WHEREAS the Minnesota Conference passed a Resolution “Concerning Non-Discrimination in Sexual Orientation” at its 1988 Annual Meeting which, in addition to its language regarding non-discrimination, “encourages local churches, Associations and organizations of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ...to consider covenanting together to be open and affirming...;”

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Resolution Passed June 10, 2007
by the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference
United Church of Christ

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the annual meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, declare the Minnesota Conference to be Open and Affirming (ONA) of all persons, specifically including those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, in all aspects of its administrative, program and worship life. We covenant with God and one another to extend welcome and Christian fellowship to all followers and seekers of Christ without fear, prejudice or discrimination in regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, race, age, ethnicity, nationality, physical, mental or emotional condition, educational, financial situation, biblical or theological interpretation, or any other circumstance that has historically been a barrier to full life, participation, membership, mission, work and ministry in the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ. We embrace all persons as equal partners in the Body of Christ with unlimited access to every opportunity of service to God, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ will continue a committed, prayerful and respectful dialogue with one another. Recognizing that the local church autonomy is central to our covenant, this resolution does not attempt to speak for the individuals or congregations of the Minnesota Conference. We covenant with God and one another to seek God's guidance for greater biblical and theological understanding of important issues, including those relating to human sexuality and gender, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ continues to encourage its member churches to study and be in conversation about human sexuality, the sacredness of all relationships, the gifts of different gender identities, and other aspects of concern, and in light of that study, in covenant with God and one another, prayerfully consider adopting an Open and Affirming statement and full inclusion similar to that of the Conference and of the UCC General Synod (1985), and finally;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ reaches this decision not because of what its members individually and separately are, but rather because of what its members, in covenant with God and one another, struggle to be: a Body of Christ "in which there is no dissension, but where members may have the same care for one another, so that if one member suffers, all suffer together with it, and if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."
(1 Corinthians 12:25-27)