

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

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5 **The Disparity of Rights of Adoptees**
6 **To Access Birth Certificates for Adults**

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8 **A Resolution of Witness**

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10 **Submitted by the Connecticut Conference**

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13 **SUMMARY**

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15 Some states do not allow adult adoptees access to their birth certificates. Consequently adult
16 adoptees in those states are deprived of knowledge of their human story including ethnic
17 ancestry, and genetic information which can affect certain health care decisions. This resolution
18 both raises awareness of the issue and invites delegates from the applicable states to become
19 informed advocates for adult adoptees in their states.

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21 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL GROUNDING**

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23 Adult adoptees are our neighbors, and in some states face systemic discriminatory policies with
24 regard to access to their own histories. Whenever we work to ensure equality among citizens,
25 we both obey the commandment of Jesus to “love one another” and stand in the best of the
26 tradition of the United Church of Christ.

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28 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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30 **WHEREAS** justice, compassion and care are at the very heart of the life and ministry of Jesus,
31 extended to all without distinction; and

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33 **WHEREAS** our Biblical tradition proclaims this inclusiveness through the voice of the Apostle
34 Paul: “*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male*
35 *or female; for all of you are one in Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 3:28, NRSV); and

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37 **WHEREAS** national and conference settings of the United Church of Christ have repeatedly
38 addressed situations and structures of exclusion and injustice, encouraging equal justice, equal
39 civil rights, and equal standing before the law for all people, as a matter of moral witness; and

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41 **WHEREAS** adoptees unable to access their original birth certificates may be unable to gain
42 fuller knowledge of their medical histories and genetic information in order to make decisions
43 about their health care throughout their lives, including care needed to save their lives; and
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45 **WHEREAS** adoptees unable to access their original birth certificates may be unable to gain
46 fuller knowledge of their ancestry and ethnicity, denying them a basic part of their human story
47 and identity; and
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49 **WHEREAS** the laws of some states make distinctions in the rights between adopted and non-
50 adopted persons with regards to access to original birth information, (AK, KS, ME, NH, OR, &
51 AL grant adoptees full access, RI, TN, & IL grant access with minimal restrictions) therefore
52 adoptees are not treated equally under the law; and
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54 **WHEREAS** we affirm that providing for the physical, psychological, and emotional welfare of
55 all persons, adoptees and non-adoptees without distinction, is the moral obligation of a just and
56 compassionate society;
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58 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the delegates of the 31st General Synod of the
59 United Church of Christ, identify the difference in rights of adult adoptees as a human and civil
60 rights issue; and
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62 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that we, the delegates of the 31st General Synod of the United
63 Church of Christ pledge to carry this resolution to our respective congregations and Conferences
64 so that where applicable, congregation members may become informed and engaged advocates
65 for the rights of all persons to their original birth certificate.
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67 **FUNDING**
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69 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
70 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
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72 **IMPLEMENTATION**
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74 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the
75 United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.