

97-GS-34 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution AWelfare Reform.®

RESOLUTION AWELFARE REFORM®

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PWRA), commonly known as the ?1996 Welfare Reform Act®, over the next five years threatens millions of children and their families with poverty and homelessness--particularly mentally and developmentally challenged children, children of legally resident immigrants, and victims of domestic violence;

WHEREAS, state, federal, regional and local governments are increasingly calling upon the private and religious sectors to collaborate in accomplishing the positive goals of this welfare reform and to provide ministries of mercy and support to persons adversely affected;

WHEREAS, we, as responsible Christian citizens, need to be educated about the implications of this Act and become active advocates on behalf of children and others such as legal immigrants, disabled persons, and victims of domestic violence whose needs are not being adequately addressed by this Act;

WHEREAS, we need to know what the states, counties and cities in which we live are doing in response to this Act; and

WHEREAS, it is our Christian calling, as the church of Jesus Christ and as persons, to respond to the suffering, poverty, hunger, illness and violence created by the implementation of this Act;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ views the passage of the 1996 PWRA as unconscionable and calls upon its local churches, associations, conferences, and instrumentalities to become informed about the ministry challenges created by the implementation of the 1996 PWRA and to engage in such ministries of service in the name of Christ, affirming that we are all children of God, including:

- consciousness-raising education of church and the citizenry;
- personal support and encouragement of persons who are or have been receiving public assistance as they move into the work force;
- child care for working parents (for all work shifts);
- interim transportation to and from work and child care;
- supplemental emergency financing for goods and services;
- job training and job placement;
- legislative advocacy to accomplish further needed and corrective reforms;
- active involvement in economic development;
- advocacy for those seeking to establish or retain legal benefits; and
- working with food banks, local food pantries, hunger coalitions, and Bread for the World to eliminate hunger;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Office for Church in Society, local churches, associations, conferences and seminaries to research and share information, ministry models and strategies to show how church members and churches can and do respond to these ministry challenges and to complement, supplement and improve what is otherwise being done in the public, private and religious sectors of our society; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod requests the Office for Church and Society and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to monitor the implementation of this resolution throughout the church and to submit a report to the Twenty-second General Synod in 1999.

Subject to availability of funds.