

97-GS-43 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "Female Genital Mutilation."

RESOLUTION AFEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION®

WHEREAS, Jeremiah offers Biblical support that wisdom, strength, and money do not matter as much as kindness, justice, and equity;

WHEREAS, the "Good news of Jesus is violated if we ignore the pain of some of the most vulnerable children of this world." (Valerie Russell, UCC Office for Church in Society);

WHEREAS, there is no basis for Female Genital Mutilation in the Bible or the Koran, and it is not practiced in Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam;

WHEREAS, it is stated in Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children;

WHEREAS, genital mutilation has been inflicted on 80 to 100 million girls and young women (another 6000 added each day) in at least 26 African countries and some Asian countries;

WHEREAS, short term results include tetanus and septicemia; and long term results, chronic uterine infection, massive scars that hinder walking, hugely increased agony and danger during childbirth;

WHEREAS, the United Nations has labeled Female Genital Mutilation a violation of human rights;

WHEREAS, Canada has declared women fleeing genital mutilation have grounds for seeking asylum; and

WHEREAS, legislation to make mutilation illegal drags in Congress as the majority of legislators hesitate to "interfere with local customs;"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ joins with appropriate groups and legislators to urge Immigration officials (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and Board of Immigration Appeals to designate that female genital mutilation (FGM) be considered a type of extreme harm and a violation of human rights, and should qualify one for protection under the Refugee Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod encourages United Church of Christ members to urge legislators to apply 1% of all foreign aid (about \$100 million) to an international commission, led by those who have devoted themselves to struggling against female genital mutilation in their countries. The money would be used for field education and training of village leadership to end female genital mutilation.

Subject to the availability of funds.