

97-GS-16 VOTED: The Twenty-first General Synod adopts the Resolution "The Cloning of Mammalian Species."

RESOLUTION "THE CLONING OF MAMMALIAN SPECIES"

WHEREAS, the announcement in February, 1997, of the birth of Dolly, the cloned sheep, raises important ethical and theological questions; and

WHEREAS, Dolly's birth announcement drew to the attention of the general population the likelihood that human cloning technology will be developed within the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS, President Clinton and the National Bio-Ethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) have called for the opinions of religious leaders in preparing its Presidential Report; and

WHEREAS, President Clinton and the NBAC have called for a ban on the public funding of human cloning research, and the President has called for legislation prohibiting the public funding of human cloning research; and

WHEREAS, a ban on public funding of human cloning research (specifically pre-embryo research) will serve to reduce public discussion on the ethics of such research, because it would only then be carried out in private laboratories; and

WHEREAS, the cloning of and research on non-human mammalian species may be morally and theologically permissible, provided, that animals be treated humanely and that needless suffering is avoided; and

WHEREAS, the cloning of non-human mammalian species raises new concerns about a diminishing respect for these animals; and

WHEREAS, such results are in conflict with a stand taken by the Seventeenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Sixteenth and Seventeenth General Synods of the United Church of Christ have affirmed the importance of the church's role in religious and public debate on genetic engineering; and

WHEREAS, the ability to clone animals and the potential to clone humans raises profound theological and ethical questions; and

WHEREAS, the ability to clone animals and to potentially clone humans holds significant potential to create further forms of injustice in our world;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-first General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, the United Church Board for World Ministries, the Office for Church in Society, and other bodies as appropriate to provide leadership and resource materials for education and discussion about the theological and ethical issues at stake concerning human and non-human mammalian cloning and related areas, such as human pre-embryo research and human germ-line experimentation, through the following means: the continued financial and staff support of the United Church of Christ Ad Hoc Committee on Genetics; the production of resource materials for use by the church -- particularly for parish based educational programs; the development of policy recommendations for the denomination, ecumenical community, and state and national legislatures; and, to have the United Church of Christ Ad Hoc Committee on Genetics report back to the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ through the appropriate instrumentalities with a policy statement and proposal for action concerning the cloning of humans and non-human mammalian species; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to President William J. Clinton, the appropriate Congressional Committees, and the National Bio-ethics Advisory Commission.

Subject to the availability of funds.

IMPLEMENTATION: Implementing bodies are responsible for developing strategies and programs that will fulfill the vision and intent of this resolution.