

## **RECOMMENDATIONS IN REGARD TO THE HUMAN SEXUALITY STUDY**

[Adopted by the Eleventh General Synod, United Church of Christ, Washington, D.C., July 1-5, 1977. Vote: 490 Yes; 210 No (66% -34%)]

***Resolved*** that the Eleventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ:

1. Receives the report, “Human Sexuality: A Preliminary Study” with appreciation, and commends it to the congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ for study and response.
2. Reaffirms the present important ministries throughout the United Church of Christ and recommends the development of new liturgies, theology, and counseling services which enable the full participation and sharing of gifts of all persons: children, youth, older persons, nuclear families, those who live alone, or choose other lifestyles.
3. Calls upon the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to continue to provide leadership in developing resources concerning human sexuality for appropriate use by various age groups in local churches and to provide consultative services and training for Conferences, Associations and congregations who wish to sponsor programs concerned with human sexuality and family life.
4. Requests the UCC-related seminaries, Conferences and Instrumentalities to continue developing courses and resources through which clergy, seminary students, and laity may be prepared to minister in the area of human sexuality and to address related public policy issues.
5. Urges pastors, members, congregations, Conferences and Instrumentalities to support programs in which information about human sexuality can be made available through such major American institutions as elementary and secondary education, adult education, social welfare agencies, medical services, and the communications media.

6. Encourages the congregations of the United Church of Christ, assisted by Conferences and Instrumentalities, to study and experiment with liturgical rites to celebrate important events and passages in human experience (transitions, anniversaries, separations, and reunions) and relationships of commitment between persons. The Office for Church Life and Leadership and the Board for Homeland Ministries are asked to facilitate the sharing of such liturgical experience.
7. Calls upon the Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice, the Office of Communication, and the Conferences to develop and share model programs that can help local churches minister to and educate their communities about the components of sexual violence, including rape, marital violence, child abuse, abusive medical practices and domination and submission images in the media of relationships between women and men portrayed as exclusive expressions of human interaction.
8. Calls upon pastors, congregations, Conferences and Instrumentalities to address, in their own programs and in those of public and private agencies, the concerns for sexuality and lifestyle of persons who have physical or emotional handicaps, or who are retarded, elderly, or terminally ill. Because of its faithful ministry through care of the young, handicapped, retarded and aged, we urge the Council for Health and Welfare Services to encourage administrators and staff of member institutions to respect the needs for intimacy of adult persons served, and protect the rights of sexual expression as important to self-worth, affirmation of life, and avoidance of isolation.
9. Urges the Board for Homeland Ministries, the Commission for Racial Justice and the Office for Church in Society to work for the protection of persons threatened by coercive use of sterilization, medical treatment, experimental research, or the withholding of medical information, and to fully inform these persons of their rights under the law.
10. Calls upon pastors, members, congregations, Conferences and Instrumentalities to encourage the extension of contraceptive information and services by both public and

private agencies for all youth and adults as instrumental in preventing undesirable pregnancies and fostering responsible family planning.

11. Affirms the right of women to freedom of choice with regard to pregnancy expressed by the Eighth General Synod and interpreted as a Constitutional right in the January 22, 1973 decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court which remove the legal restrictions on medical termination of pregnancy through the second trimester. Pastors, members, congregations, Conferences, Instrumentalities and agencies are urged to resist in local communities or in legislative halls attempts to erode or negate the 1973 decisions of the Court and to respect and protect the First Amendment rights to differences of opinion and freedom from intimidation concerning the issue of abortion.

Deplores the June 29, 1977 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court and recent actions of the U.S. Congress that effectually deprive the poor of their Constitutional rights of choice to end or complete a pregnancy, while leaving the well-to-do in the full employment of such rights.

Calls upon UCC members, congregations, Associations, Conferences and Instrumentalities to assure that publicly supported hospitals provide medical services to women within their usual service area to exercise their Constitutional right to end or complete pregnancies; and to petition their State legislatures and the U.S. Congress to assure that the poor will be provided with medical services to exercise their Constitutional rights to end or complete pregnancies.

12. Calls upon Instrumentalities to address the economic structures which victimize women (and men) and explore such strategies as compensation for housework and child care, Social Security for homemakers, programs for displaced homemakers, insurance benefits for pregnancies, and quality day care.
13. Affirms the wide public attention being given to issues related to sexuality and sex roles, particularly as they affect women, but expresses concern regarding the need to

explore such issues as they affect men. The Eleventh General Synod urges the Board for Homeland Ministries, the Office for Church Life and Leadership, Conferences, Associations, and congregations to develop programs which take into account the needs, experiences and viewpoints of both males and females, and which encourage further understanding of sexual identity; the effects of sex role stereotyping and present economic, legal, political, and other societal conditions based upon gender.

14. Recommends to all Instrumentalities, agencies, Conferences, Associations, and congregations that language they use reflect both feminine and masculine metaphor about God, and draw upon the diverse metaphor of God represented in the Bible, in the Christian tradition and in contemporary experience.
15. Recognizes that diversity exists within the UCC about the meaning of ordination, the criteria for effective ministry, and the relevance of marital status, affectional or sexual preference or lifestyle to ordination and performance of ministry. It requests the congregations, Associations, and Conferences to address these issues seeking more full and common understanding of their implications. It requests the Office for Church Life and Leadership to develop resources to facilitate such understanding.
16. Urges congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Instrumentalities to work for the decriminalization of private sexual acts between consenting adults.
17. Urges that States legislatively recognize that traditional marriage is not the only stable living unit which is entitled to legal protection in regards to socio-economic rights and responsibilities.
18. Deplores and condemns the dehumanizing portrayals of women and men, the abuse of children, and the exploitation of sex in printed and electronic media of communication, recognizes the rights of adults to access to sexually explicit materials, and affirms that efforts toward change must recognize First Amendment principles.