

RESOLUTION AGAINST BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

A resolution of witness

Submitted by the Central Atlantic Conference

Adopted by the 29th General Synod of the United Church of Christ, July 2, 2013

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ supports the right of students to attend schools that are safe and free from violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ encourages and expects all churches of the denomination to provide and enforce church policies to ensure the safety of all children and youth participating in church activities; and

WHEREAS, providing safe learning environments in all settings, be it churches, schools, sports complexes, etc., that ensure both the physical and emotional safety of students, and create the conditions necessary to foster success in all endeavors where children and youth are involved; and

WHEREAS, bullying is one of the more common and vicious ways by which such success is imperiled;

WHEREAS, bullying is any behavior that happens when someone is subjected to negative actions from one or more people and has a hard time defending him or herself. Moreover, bullying takes various forms: teasing, taunting or verbal abuse, punching, shoving and physical acts, spreading rumors, ganging up on others, or excluding someone from a group; and

WHEREAS, cyber-bullying occurs when a person uses the Internet, mobile phones, or other electronic devices to bully, the impact can be more long-lasting. Some examples of cyberbullying are: sending mean or threatening texts, e-mail, or instant messages; posting damaging pictures or hurtful messages online; tricking someone into revealing personal information and sending it to others; and creating websites to make fun of someone; and

WHEREAS, children ache to be considered a viable and vital part of their community and yearn to be treated with dignity; and

WHEREAS, some significantly effective practices are being developed around the country, increased collaboration among schools, churches, community service organizations, and civic clubs needs to be encouraged and those various entities need to be equipped to develop strategies to enhance their effectiveness in reducing bullying; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ supports communities that develop, implement and monitor policies and programs that address the prevention, intervention and elimination of violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages all Conferences of the United Church of Christ to work with a broad

spectrum of local community stakeholders, clergy, coaches, instructors, parents, staff, students and teachers, and to develop, implement, and monitor policies and programs that foster and support a positive learning climate free from violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination based on, but not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, language, national identity, political or theological perspectives, appearance, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, economic status or class.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for further education for all people in all settings of our church about the definition, causes and effects of bullying, so that we foster climates of greater safety, and so that we grow in our capacity to love our neighbors as ourselves in word and deed.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all settings to invest in, promote, and support comprehensive, coordinated, and collaborative strategies to prevent violence, harassment, bullying, and discrimination in places of learning so that all students have the opportunity to attend school, engage in the classroom, achieve academic success, and participate in other school activities.

FUNDING

Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.