

Michigan Conference United Church of Christ

Guidelines Regarding Resolutions (5/15)

1 Introduction

1.1 Resolutions may be submitted for consideration at a Conference Meeting by a local church, an Association, three (3) voting delegates, a Mission Area Team of the Conference, or the Board of Directors.

1.2 These guidelines are intended to parallel and complement the resolutions process used by the General Synod.

1.3 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team will inform local churches and ordained ministers of the resolution process at least 120 calendar days prior to a Conference Meeting.

2 Definitions

2.1 A “witness” resolution is an expression of the Conference concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, the nation, or the world.

2.2 A “prudential” resolution establishes policy, institutes or revises structure or procedures, authorizes programs, approves directions, or mandates actions.

2.3 A “Hearing” is a dedicated meeting or session held during the Conference Meeting prior to the plenary session at which a resolution is to be considered.

3 Submission

3.1 Resolutions must be submitted to and received by the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team no later than seventy-five (75) calendar days before the Conference Meeting.

3.2 All resolutions shall be submitted in writing. The names of those submitting resolutions shall be identified on the resolutions. Resolutions should state clearly and concisely:

- (a) What position or action is contemplated?
- (b) Who is responsible for implementation?
- (c) The nature of any report-back expectations.

The wording should avoid conflicting, ambiguous, and inflammatory language. Resolutions must be no more than one (front and back) typed 8½ by 11 page, double-spaced, in 12 point easily readable font, with line numbers.

3.3 The resolution must include a compelling Biblical/theological rationale articulating why the author(s) believe(s) passage of the resolution by the Michigan Conference Annual Meeting is consistent with a divine imperative. The Biblical/theological rationale should be written so as to encourage study within local churches, and should include questions for reflection. The Biblical/theological rational may be up to one additional single-spaced typed 8½ by 11 page.

3.4 The resolution must include an accompanying supportive statement, not to exceed one 8½ by 11 single-spaced page. The accompanying statement should be typed on the back of the Biblical/theological rationale, and is for the purpose of providing helpful background information of

a non-Biblical/theological nature. This supportive statement is not considered a part of the resolution.

3.5 If the resolution refers to a congressional or legislative bill, a copy of that bill must be attached.

3.6 The text of a resolution, the Biblical/theological rationale, and the supportive statement shall not be written in a manner that brings into question the Christian commitment of those who disagree with the authors.

3.7 Resolutions not submitted in the above form shall be deemed out of order and returned to the authors.

3.8 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team will report all resolutions deemed out of order to the Board of Directors.

3.9 All resolutions must be mailed (postal or electronic) to the attention of the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team, care of the Michigan Conference United Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1006, East Lansing, MI 48826-1006. Conference@michucc.org

3.10 Resolutions forwarded from an Association should be mailed no later than fourteen (14) calendar days following that Association's Spring Meeting.

4 Resolutions Committee

4.1 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team shall receive all resolutions submitted for consideration.

4.2 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team may accept a resolution for consideration by the Conference Meeting, may edit a resolution for form and clarity (so long as the substance is not changed), may reject a resolution as out of order, or may ask for clarification/revision if within the required timing.

4.3 If more than one resolution is received taking essentially the same position on the same issue, the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team will seek to negotiate with the authors of the individual resolutions for the purpose of developing a single resolution acceptable for presentation.

4.4 If a resolution is deemed out of order, the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team will provide the author(s) with the reason(s) for the rejection in writing.

4.5 With respect to each resolution received, the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team shall determine if each should be considered a "witness" or a "prudential" resolution. In addition, the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area shall make a recommendation regarding whether a vote should be taken at the present or at a subsequent Conference Meeting, shall report financial implications as determined by the Business Manager, and shall attach a clear statement that implementation is subject to the availability of funds.

4.6 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team shall make the recommendations listed above to the Board of Directors at their summer meeting.

4.7 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team, after consultation with the Board of Directors, shall coordinate the transmission of all resolutions deemed to be in order to the delegates no less than thirty days before the Special or Annual Meeting.

4.8 Any resolution received by the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team after the deadline shall be referred to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors which shall review the content of the resolution and the context within which it is presented, and shall recommend the propriety of it being heard by the Conference Meeting. A majority vote of the Executive Committee is required.

4.9 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team shall review the resolutions process annually, making recommendations for improvements to the Board of Directors.

5 Hearing

5.1 At the Conference Meeting each resolution will be assigned by the Executive Committee to a Hearing. Related resolutions may be assigned to the same Hearing.

5.2 Twenty-five (25) delegates will be assigned to attend each Hearing. At least twenty-one (21) of the delegates shall be chosen at random. Up to four (4) may be selected by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in keeping with the Conference's commitment to inclusiveness.

5.3 The advanced materials for the Conference Meeting will indicate that delegates may be assigned to a Hearing.

5.4 Author(s) of resolutions will not be included among the delegates assigned to hear his/her/their resolution.

5.5 Presiding over a Hearing will be a trained neutral moderator named by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Assisting the neutral moderator will be a representative of the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team, named by the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team. Both shall enjoy voice with respect to matters of process, but not vote.

5.6 The author(s) of a resolution will be given voice for the first ten minutes of the Hearing for the purpose of introducing his/her/their resolution, and thereafter may speak only when asked a question for clarification by the moderator of the Hearing.

5.7 While Hearings are open to other delegates and visitors to the Conference Meeting, they will be granted voice only at the discretion of the moderator. Other delegates and visitors cannot vote.

5.8 Proper decorum shall be maintained throughout the consideration of each resolution. Public displays and comments questioning the Christian commitment or character of others are inappropriate both during debate and after voting.

5.9 At the Hearing any of the following actions may occur:

- 1) - A resolution may be accepted as is and recommended to the delegates for passage at plenary;
- 2) - A resolution may be amended and recommended to the delegates for passage as amended;
- 3) - Similar resolutions may be combined into a single new resolution;
- 4) - A resolution may be sent to the floor with a recommendation to table pending further study by the churches, by an appointed task group, by the Board, by a mission area team or by a committee;

5) - A resolution may be sent to the floor with a recommendation to send it directly to the appropriate body for implementation because it is repetitive of a previous action of the annual meeting; or

6) - A resolution may be sent to the floor with a recommendation to defeat.

6 Conference Meeting

6.1 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team, on behalf of the Board, will report all properly submitted resolutions to the Annual Meeting.

6.2 The Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team, on behalf of the Board, will report any resolutions received late or in an emergency situation, making recommendation regarding the propriety of them being considered at the Conference Meeting. A majority vote of the delegates shall be required for these resolutions to be addressed at the Conference Meeting.

6.3 The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will determine the order in which resolutions are presented on the floor of the Conference Meeting.

6.4 On the floor of the Conference Meeting the neutral moderator of each Hearing will read the “Therefore be it resolved” clauses of each resolution as determined by the Hearing, and the Hearing’s recommendation regarding an appropriate action by the Conference Meeting.

6.5 The chairperson of the Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team (or designee) will move each resolution based upon the outcome of the Hearing process. Debate will be limited to the “Therefore be it resolved” clauses, up to three pro arguments for the resolution’s passage, up to three con arguments against passage, and to pro and con arguments not previously identified at the Hearing and reported to the Conference Meeting by the neutral moderator. Public displays and comments questioning the Christian commitment of others are inappropriate both during debate and after voting. Subject to the will of the Conference Meeting, the moderator may impose specific time limits for consideration of each resolution.

6.7 Final voting on resolutions may also be defined in the standing rules. A two-thirds (2/3rd) majority is required for passage of a “witness” resolution. A simple majority is required for passage of a “prudential” resolution.

7 Implementation

At the meeting of Prophetic Integrity Mission Area Team following the Conference Meeting, a review of all passed resolutions will be held.

7.2 During the MAT review, an implementation plan will be developed. This plan should include resolution sponsors, Associations, the Board of Directors, and local churches. While PI-MAT is responsible for developing an implementation plan, PI-MAT must not be the sole entity charged with follow-up. The goal is to engage as many implementation collaborators as possible.

7.3 The implementation plan shall be reported to the Board of Directors for inclusion in Board minutes and for possible Board action.

7.4 A report of implementation shall be included with the PI-MAT report to the next Conference Meeting.