19-GS-4 Action Team

Report Submitted By: Emma Brewer-Wallin, Ministry Committee Chair

At the first UCCB meeting of the Biennium, in October 2019, the Ministry Committee held a joint meeting with the Conference Ministers who serve on the Board to discuss the Action Team resolution. In its adopted form, this resolution asked UCCB and CCM to work together to determine the best method of evaluating Christian mission and witness as carried out by General Synod. At that meeting, the Committee and Conference Ministers agreed that adding questions to an existing survey about General Synod, which the Governance Committee was planning, would be the most direct method of assessing preferences around Resolutions of Witness.

Because that survey was being conducted by the Governance Committee (where this chair is also a member), the follow-up work was primarily conducted by Governance. In response to questions asked about Resolutions of Witness, the Governance Committee recommended, and the UCCB adopted, “Implementation Conversations” that will expand the opportunities for the church to live out the justice commitments made by General Synod.

Following GS33, further evaluation is recommended to consider the efficacy of the Implementation Conversations and whether additional listening and recommendations are needed.
The following resolution was approved by the delegates at a plenary of the Thirty-Second General Synod.

**Establishing an Action Team to Conduct a Listening Campaign and Bring Recommendations on the Future of Christian Witness at General Synod**

A Prudential Resolution

Whereas Resolutions of Witness are a means for the General Synod of the United Church of Christ to speak to the Church and to the world on matters moral, ethical, or religious, from a place of Christian conviction;

Whereas the polity of the United Church of Christ is such that General Synod may urge, call upon, or ask the varied settings primarily encountered – that is, the Local Church, the Association, and the Conference – to abide by the aspirations of a Resolution of Witness, the entity of General Synod has no Constitutional authority to do anything more;

Whereas God calls us to tremendous and abundant things, and so the missional priorities of the wider church does not infringe upon the autonomy of the local churches’ works of mercy and justice, nor does the discernment of General Synod interfere with the adjudication of the Holy Spirit leading the varied settings of the United Church of Christ to specific acts of mission and witness;

Whereas the attendees of General Synod, whether Delegates or Visitors, collectively hold tremendous power, as they are organizers, activists, and community leaders in their various settings and have the capacity to bear and launch the mission of the wider church, as determined by General Synod, in their local settings;

Whereas the material deprivation and moral crises of our communities and world require powerful responses, and in a time such as this, there is a need for Christian witness in the form of concerted action that goes beyond declarations of our Christian conviction;

Whereas deeper engagement with the charge to discern the mission of the United Church of Christ requires more fully knowing one another as followers of Christ, learning from one another as leaders in our various settings, and trusting one another as the body of the Church;

Whereas General Synod is a body of over 700 voting members of the United Church of Christ, and the work and ministry of General Synod is ongoing; additionally, General Synod is an event that marks the moment of transition between bienniums, and as such, it is both the genesis and culmination of the symbiotic, relational, and covenantal life cycle of the wider church;

Therefore be it resolved that the Thirty-second General Synod create a listening campaign throughout the denomination in all of its expressions including for example, youth and other HUGS (historically under-represented groups), to ask how the various settings most energetically and thoroughly carry out Christian mission and witness, and prayerfully listen to the concerns of
the Church, formulating the eventual recommendation about the future form of General Synod’s Christian witness.

Be it resolved that the UCC Board in consultation with the Council of Conference Ministers consider an effective implementation plan for this listening campaign, to be reported to and by General Synod 33.

**FUNDING**

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