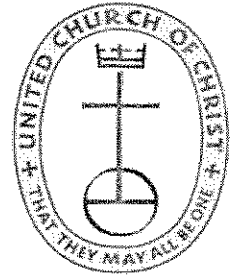


1
2 **RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE 2007 AS A SABBATH YEAR**
3 **(Resolution of Witness)**



4
5 **RESOLUTION**

6
7 **WHEREAS**, the Hebrew Scriptures contain a liberating, just vision of life in community,
8 governed by Sabbath cycles -- the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year; and

9
10 **WHEREAS**, these cycles are reminders of God's intent that all creatures enjoy fullness of life
11 and the abundance of God's world; and

12
13 **WHEREAS**, the Sabbath Year is at the heart of Moses' final instructions to the Hebrew people
14 before they enter the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 15:1-18); and

15
16 **WHEREAS**, Sabbath Year observance requires that every seven years debts are canceled and
17 those enslaved because of debts are freed, restoring equal relations among community members
18 and preventing exploitation in which the rich accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor; and

19
20 **WHEREAS**, Jubilee Year 2000 was proclaimed across the world as a way to live out God's call to
21 remove extreme debt and restore balance in creation and among peoples, and the Millennium
22 Development Goals of the UN were adopted widely as a means to achieve major poverty
23 reduction by the year 2015, and

24
25 **WHEREAS**, seven years later (2007) we are half way to the MDG goal year of 2015 and much
26 remains to be done as poverty has increased in Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, a call to
27 action in recognizing a Sabbath Year in 2007 is one way to continue earlier commitments to live
28 out the Jubilee promises for our time; and

29
30 **WHEREAS**, General Synods of the United Church of Christ, the national instrumentalities of
31 other denominations, World Council of Churches, and many other churches and organizations
32 have called for churches to restore right relationships by supporting the lifting of debt from
33 heavily indebted nations; and

34
35 **WHEREAS**, Jubilee USA Network is a coalition of non-governmental organizations, faith-based
36 organizations, and churches, including the United Church of Christ, whose work is
37 education about and advocacy for debt-cancellation for impoverished and heavily indebted
38 nations; and

39
40 **WHEREAS**, the JUBILEE Act (HR 2634) was re-introduced in the U.S. Congress in March
41 2007 calling for total cancellation of debt for every country which meets the UN Millennium
42 Development Goals; and

43
44 **WHEREAS**, as Christians, we are commended to reveal our love for God and neighbor by our
45 actions within the global family; and,

46
47 **WHEREAS**, Wangari Mathaai and Bishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize winners,
48 challenged churches and religious communities at the 2007 World Social Forum in Nairobi,
49 Kenya by asking "*Where is the voice of the church? You have the numbers and the money, so*
50 *why are you silent? The debt is immoral and unjust so let's raise our voices to cancel the debt!*"

52 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the delegates to General Synod Twenty-six recognize
53 and affirm 2007 as a "Sabbath Year," in response to the Biblical call to cancel debt without
54 conditionality and proclaim Jubilee for impoverished countries today;

55
56 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that member churches, and all settings, Associations,
57 Conferences, and National Ministries of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to
58 commemorate this Sabbath year and begin working towards Sabbath year 2014, by becoming
59 "Jubilee Congregations," a program based on four simple commitments:

- 60 1. Pray for a Jubilee for the world's poorest countries.
- 61 2. Provide a Jubilee contact person who will serve as a liaison between the congregation and
62 Jubilee USA.
- 63 3. Contribute one dollar per active member per year to Jubilee USA, the proceeds of a special
64 collection, or another amount to be determined by the congregation.
- 65 4. Advocate for debt cancellation by sending the equivalent of one letter per active member per
66 year to a member of Congress or the administration calling on them to "drop the debt."

67
68 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that churches and all settings, Associations, Conferences, and
69 National Ministries of the United Church of Christ be invited to make Jubilee Justice a
70 continuing part of the worship life of their congregation by holding a Jubilee Sunday service
71 each year and to commemorate the Sabbath Year by participating in Jubilee USA's rolling, 40
72 day fast for debt cancellation and an end to global poverty, which will take place from
73 September 6 – October 15, 2007; and

74
75 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the General Synod of the UCC encourage ethical
76 investment and business development throughout the continent. Further, that the GS charge the
77 rich world to recognize its moral duty and indeed their own best interests lie in helping their
78 African neighbors establish good governance and state economies.

79
80 **FUNDING**

81
82 Funding and implementation of this resolution is to be made in accordance with the mandates
83 and available funding of the affected agencies.

84
85 **IMPLEMENTATION**

86
87 Justice and Witness Ministries is requested to be the primary implementer of this resolution.