

## **A PRUDENTIAL RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>**

### **ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWMENT FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

- 1 **BE IT RESOLVED, that the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ**  
2 **recommend to its Board of Directors that an endowment for the purpose of focusing**  
3 **on youth and young adult ministries, including the option of a staff position for**  
4 **youth and young adult ministries be established.**

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<sup>1</sup> Prudential Resolution presented to the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ by the Board of Directors at the recommendation of the Vital Growth and Spiritual Discernment Mission Area Teams.

**BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION:** The great commission commands us to “go and make disciples of all peoples” (Matt 28:19). Throughout scripture, youth have changed the world, from the boy David who slayed the Giant, to the boy prophets Elijah and Jeremiah, the most honored of women—the young Mary, and (by today’s standards) the young adult Jesus who changed the world at the age of 30.

Paul encourages Timothy, that though he is young he is called to ministry, Paul also encourages the church to listen to the youthful minister. Indeed throughout scripture, youth and young adults have been discipled and have then led the people of God to change the world. In order for there to be a future, we must support the youth and young adults of today.

As Jesus said when others would have sent the kids away, “let the little children come to me, for such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Establishing a full time position for youth and young adult ministries supports the reality that youth have a vibrant role to play not only in our local congregations, but also in our conference, nation and world.

It is time for us to focus our energy and resources on raising up our own Davids and Marys, time for the youth and young adults to arise like Elijah and hear the call of God that draws them beyond social events into their own ministry.

**SUPPORTIVE STATEMENT:** In a twittering, texting, gaming culture where electronics are the means of socialization, less and less youth are attending events, going to camp, and meeting weekly in church groups. Youth directors develop programs only to find a small portion actually attending.

As youth groups have shrunk, the momentum and critical mass that creates a sense of “group” in a “youth group” has been lost. A church many times ends up doing a big event for only a few and being only a few they don’t draw a crowd. There are few youth groups in larger churches, which due to mass-appeal have a greater chance at successful projects and events.

However, a majority of our churches struggle to maintain a dynamic youth group and many lose track of young adults once they leave high school.

We need to unite and work together, unite resources, share in united projects, events, camping events, campus ministry, and mission trips wherein the small might become the mighty.

However, such organization takes more time than most volunteers can offer, for this reason we recommend to the Board of Directors of the Conference that an endowment for youth and young adult ministries, including the possibility of a full time staff position for youth and young adults be established.

A staff person for youth and young adults can help organize events that unite youth groups or gatherings of young adults in a town, region or conference, plan and organize camps, mission trips and special events. This staff person could be called upon to organize and aid in the efforts of local youth ministers and volunteers.

In an economy that has been in flux, struggled and suffered, it is essential ministry to maintain staffing that focuses specifically on our present and future: our youth and young adults.

Too easily our positions dealing with youth and young adults are set aside, as churches elect to keep a solo pastor and “let go” the youth minister.

An endowment would help secure youth and young adult ministry as a priority within the conference and in turn would anchor the greatest need of the conference, its sustainable future: youth and young adults.

An endowment could be created by fundraising, but more immediately, it is recommended that interest on moneys which have come in, and/or will come in, from various assets once associated with youth and young adult ministries, be used in part (if not whole) to establish an endowment that continues the original intent of those assets.

**Summary:** There is a conference wide concern expressed by individuals, churches, all six associations, conference leadership and conference staff for the future of our youth and young adults.

Youth and young adults are recognized in scripture as having a major part of God’s ministry in this earth.

Youth and young adults are a vital part of any present and future and we are called to make disciples of all peoples who share in that future.

Youth groups in our local churches need support in organizing events, gatherings, camps, and creating critical mass for success.

The Michigan Conference does not have a full time staff member dedicated to youth and young adult ministries and volunteers and local ministers are not able to manage the coordination of association, conference or national youth events or young adult gatherings.

There is difficulty in maintaining a budget for the costs associated with a full time staff position for youth and young adult ministry and there are funds available now and in the future from assets once associated with youth and young adult ministries.

**Implementation:** This resolution would be implemented by the Michigan Conference Board of Directors.

**Budgetary Implications:** There is little impact on the budget of the conference for this resolution.

An endowment of 2 to 2 1/2 million dollars would be needed to ensure an ongoing ministry with youth and young adults, including a full-time staff position. The Conference received approximately \$600,000 from the Bows Lake property. The 2012 budget includes interest from the Bows Lake property sale which is still owed to the conference from VISION. Any income from the sale of the Talahi property would take time to accrue interest. Using the interest from these properties would still likely be short of our needs, so other fund-raising would be needed. There could be enough income to help a strong group attend National Youth Event in 2012 and to gather our young adults. It would be 2013 before full implementation could be realized.