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Looking at the Bottom of the Well — The U.C.C. Debates the Lordship of Christ

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The United Church of Christ is set to debate the Lordship of Christ as it meets for its General Synod starting July 1. The issue arose when a group of UCC members proposed a “prudential resolution” intended to put the denomination on the record in support of the Lordship and deity of Christ.

The resolution begins with a rather striking declaration. “The greatest issue facing our denomination is whether or not to acknowledge the Lordship and divinity of Jesus, which is the most basic of all Christian teachings. A pastor or church cannot deny the divinity of Jesus and claim to be Christian. Our status as a Christian denomination and our loyalty to Jesus as Lord needs [*sic.*] to be clarified since it is well known that there are UCC pastors and churches that do not adhere to the Lordship and divinity of Jesus, so much so in fact that the UCC is often referred to as ‘Unitarians Considering Christ.’”

The resolution proceeds to remind the denomination that the UCC Constitution states that the body “claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers.” Accordingly, the resolution “provides an opportunity for General Synod to unashamedly, unabashedly proclaim that the UCC is a Christian denomination where Jesus is Lord.”

Believe it or not, the resolution has attracted significant opposition, and some observers do not expect it to pass. Consider this reaction from a New Jersey pastor: “Religiously speaking, it sounds like apple pie,” commented Rev. Raymond Kostulias of the First Congregational Church of Park Ridge. Nevertheless, he’s not a supporter of the statement. He described the resolution as having “a judgmental quality to it that implies very strongly that those who do not agree with us are condemned or damned or hopeless — and that’s exactly the thing that UCC is against.”

Well, Rev. Kostulias, that’s what the Apostles and the early church called the defining line between orthodoxy and heresy — between genuine faith and a false gospel. A denomination that cannot stand together in affirming the Lordship and deity of Jesus Christ is a denomination that has set itself against Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church. Where is Athanasius when you need him?

CHECK THE SOURCES: [The United Church of Christ is a Denomination Where Jesus is Lord](#), text of proposed resolution; John Chadwick, [Denomination Debates Declaration of Jesus’ Divinity](#), North Jersey Media Group [combined Web site of *The Record* and the *Herald News* of Bergen and Passaic counties in New Jersey], June 15, 2005. A UCC seminarian has contributed a weblog article to the debate. See the Weblog of [Chuck Currie](#).

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