

1990

RESOLUTION: EQUAL JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS

WHEREAS, The parable of the Good Samaritan raises the neglected plight of the victim of crime and presents the moral imperative to "prove neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers" (Luke 10:29-37); and

WHEREAS, We recognize that the admonition of Jesus, "When he saw him, he had compassion ... and bound up his wounds ... and took care of him ... Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:33-37), must stand equally along side his admonition "I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25:36); and

WHEREAS, The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ (since its 1973 Resolution, "Reform of the Court System") has been aroused to support reform of the court system and penal institutions, thereby advocating the protection and assurance of criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, Violent criminal acts leave in their wake a massive, long-term impairment of the happiness and well-being of victims and their families, for which they need extended spiritual and temporal support;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, recognize that the Conference's efforts in the direction of criminal justice must incorporate an enhanced recognition of the needs and interests of victims and their families; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request the Department of Church in Society to respond to these unmet needs caused by victimization by:

(1) Taking measures to raise the consciousness of our United Church of Christ congregations as to the effect which victimization has on individuals and families and the need to support a criminal justice process that provides restitution to them and works to prevent future victimizations; and

(2) Providing materials and resources for the education of clergy and laity whose ministries of compassion and understanding lead victimized survivors toward rehabilitation and recovery; and

(3) Urging congregations to celebrate National Victims' Rights Week (4th week in April) with special services, memorials, and acts of compassion; and

(4) Continuing to seek reform of the judicial system through legislative involvements in such a way that protects the rights of the accused and the victim, improves access to the criminal justice system for victims and survivors of crime, and enhances recognition of their needs and interests.