

81-GS-80 VOTED: The Thirteenth General Synod adopts as revised the Resolution on Alternatives in Criminal Justice.

RESOLUTION ON ALTERNATIVES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

WHEREAS, previous General Synods have expressed concern with the failure of the criminal justice systems in the United States declaring their opposition to the death penalty (G.S. 9, 11, and 12) and calling for a moratorium on construction of new prisons and jails; and

WHEREAS, 1981 is the tenth anniversary of the Attica prison rebellion; and whereas General Synod 13 is meeting in New York; and

WHEREAS, as neither New York State nor any other state has constructively addressed the injustices of prison life nor the related issues of inequity and discrimination in criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, alternatives to incarceration (such as restitution) are less costly, more humane, and more effective than imprisonment in helping both victims and offenders; and

WHEREAS, our understanding of the Christian faith takes seriously the call to redemptive love, mercy and the sanctity of life; and

WHEREAS, the resumption of executions in this country has raised legal and moral questions about the ability of the state to administer such punishment justly and consistently; and

WHEREAS, we grieve for the victims of violent crimes and their families and seek means of dealing with criminal offenses, which do not increase the total violence in our society;

THEREFORE, The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for legislation to establish programs including restitution, which require perpetrators of crimes to compensate their victims and/or families of their victims, and requests the Commission for Racial Justice to participate in the work of the National Alliance to Reduce Imprisonment.

The Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls for an immediate moratorium on executions and for the development of alternative programs, which include persons convicted of capital crimes.