

83 GS 84 VOTED: The Fourteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution on Alternatives to Incarceration for Non-Dangerous Crimes.

RESOLUTION ON ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION FOR NON-DANGEROUS CRIMES

WHEREAS Jesus presents us with a message of love and concern, exemplified by his caring not only for beggars and the sick, but also for tax collectors, who were assumed to be stealing from their people; and

WHEREAS our faith teaches us that healing of a community must involve restitution for the evil done, to restore shalom, peace in the community (Exodus 22:5-6); and

WHEREAS our criminal justice system generally does not permit the offender and victim in a non-dangerous crime the alternative to settle differences between themselves, but leaves the victim without recompense, and sentences the offender to a prison term so that neither victim nor offender receive justice, and wholeness is not restored, and injustice piles upon injustice, and

WHEREAS, some alternative to incarceration for non- dangerous crimes that includes restitution will offer some portion of justice to the victim, help reduce the overload of prison facilities and give the offender a way to be re- established as a part of the community;

THEREFORE, the Fourteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ supports increased use of restitution and mediation practices in order to allow victim and offender to face each other, and thereby, with the help of appropriate personnel, work out a reconciliation that will foster healing in the community; and

The Fourteenth General Synod supports greater use of community service, work release, educational release, furloughs, and other alternatives to prison; and calls upon the Commission for Racial Justice to develop strategies for Conferences and local churches to assist with implementation; and that this resolution be distributed by the Fourteenth General Synod to the governors of every state, to President Ronald Reagan, and to state legislatures.