General Synod 20 Resolutions
United Church of Christ

Guns and Violence

Text of Resolution

WHEREAS evening news broadcasts across the nation carry one horror story after another - teachers and students shot, children selling guns, mass murder;

WHEREAS in 1992 handguns were used in the murders of 13 people in Australia, 33 in Britain, 36 in Sweden, 60 in Japan, 128 in Canada and 13,220 in the United States;

WHEREAS in 1991 there were 38,217 people killed by firearms in homicides, suicides and accidents in the United States, more than the total number of Americans killed in the Korean War;

WHEREAS in 1992 more people were killed by guns than in automobile accidents in several states, including Illinois and Maryland;

WHEREAS a new handgun is now produced every 20 seconds; every 14 minutes someone in America dies from a gunshot wound; a child or teenager commits suicide with a gun every six hours;

WHEREAS roughly 100,000 students are bringing guns to school every day in the United States;

WHEREAS our fascination with handguns, assault rifles, and other weapons designed to take human life reflects a deeper spiritual sickness in our cultural character, a sickness born of fear, mistrust, and the desire to dominate another;

WHEREAS gun idolatry is part of a culture of death, nurtured by the National Rifle Association (NRA), TV ratings, and an international arms industry;

WHEREAS Jesus once lamented over his own city, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem..., would that you knew the things that make for peace;”

WHEREAS Jesus, in whom we have come to know the gentle love of God, was himself the victim of a violent death and so turned us forever against the forces of violence that tempt us to seek annihilation of the enemy;

WHEREAS in proclaiming the resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we confess that God's saving love alone has the power to undo the forces of violence and death and heal our cultural wounds;

WHEREAS the time has come for religious leaders to call for repentance for the sin of violence and our idolatrous fascination with weapons, and to resolve to work with God's life-giving Spirit to restore hope to the victims of violence and our communities; and

WHEREAS the Seventh General Synod in 1969 called for licensing and testing of all gun owners, limiting ammunition sales to license owners and limiting all “handguns to persons whose occupation requires them to possess a handgun for self-protection;”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twentieth General Synod calls upon all United Church of Christ churches and members to engage in renewed spiritual reflection in order to better understand the roots of violence in our culture and to

"In Christ Strangers No More"

June/July 1995