



The United Church of Canada General Council

GCE Capital Punishment: Position of the United Church (1984C1167)

True Document Date

October 31, 1984

WHEREAS the recent rash of killing of police officers has resulted in renewed calls for the return of capital punishment in Canada; and

WHEREAS we sympathize deeply with the hurt of families and colleagues of the victims of such crime; and

WHEREAS we believe that the taking of another life is not a faithful way to respond to that hurt; and

WHEREAS we believe that such taking of human life by the state as punishment has a brutalizing effect on society; and

WHEREAS there is no evidence that the threat of capital punishment would have prevented these killings or deter murder generally; and

WHEREAS The United Church of Canada has long opposed the use of capital punishment in Canada and supported its abolition because it is “contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ” (General Council statements 1956, 1960, 1966, and

1972); and

WHEREAS we also recognize our responsibility to preserve and protect the lives of those who work as police officers in the protection of society:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Executive of General Council of The United Church of Canada, meeting November 1984, affirm that it abhors the killing of any human being and emphatically declares its anger when the victim dies while serving as a protector of society. Further:

1. REAFFIRMS the position of The United Church of Canada in support of the continued abolition of capital punishment.
2. URGES the conferences, presbyteries, congregations and members of The United Church of Canada to stand in opposition to the return of the death penalty, and to communicate their positions to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Justice, the leaders of the opposition parties, and, in particular, their local member of parliament.
3. CALLS upon our government, policing authorities and other relevant bodies to take appropriate measures to better protect the lives of police including tighter gun control legislation, use of protective articles such as bullet-proof vests and improved police training.

Nov. 1986 ROP, p. 204

Nov. 1984, G.C. Exec., pp. 36-37

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