

1984

RESOLUTION: FOR A REVIEW OF THE "FAMILY WITH SERVICE NEEDS LAW"

WHEREAS, the scriptures affirm repeatedly that family relationships involve the deepest stirrings of the human heart; and

WHEREAS, our Lord referred to all who hear the Word of God and do it as being his family (Luke 8:21; parallels Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35), so that we are enjoined to love, support, and care for one another as part of the human family (see baptismal ceremony as one example); and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has declared Family Life to be a major area of concern in our day; and

WHEREAS, there is much suffering in families in Connecticut that have young people engaging in self-destructive behavior including incorrigibility, truancy, and running away (acts formerly classified as status offenses); and

WHEREAS, the Family With Service Needs Law of Connecticut which took effect in 1981 modified former constraints against truancy, incorrigibility, running away, and other actions formerly classified as status offenses, thereby making parents, community agencies, and civil authorities virtually powerless to stop such behavior; and

WHEREAS, in the State of Connecticut there are no separate mandatory residential treatment programs for non-criminal children committing acts formerly classified as status offenses, and only seven youth shelters:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference Board of Directors appoint a Task Force to study the problem of children who are incorrigible, truants, run-aways, or committing other acts formerly classified as status offenses; develop and send materials on this problem to churches for study; and recommend to the State legislature measures by which civil and community institutions can intervene more effectively to prevent this self-destructive behavior by youth, while at the same time cooperating with families to work towards wholesome behavior and family life in a non-judgmental spirit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that special attention be given by the Task Force to the Families With Service Needs Law, its achievements and especially the several continuing problems related to its enactment and to the absence of an adequate Youth Shelter system, and of mandatory residential treatment programs for youth who can be helped in no other way.