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## Resolutions – 1972 – 1985 – Violence in Our Society, A Summary

There were two resolutions adopted on violence in **1972 and 1985**. In 1994 the Beacon congregation asked the Annual Meeting to consider a resolution on violence in society. It was referred back to them to develop study materials for congregations. However, they did not pursue this.

The first resolution on violence was based on the need for an examination of the root causes of violence in order to develop practical measures to cope with it. Particularly this concerned the exploitation of individuals or groups or the denial of basic human rights,. The resolution developed out of a workshop held in Ottawa on “Violence in Our Society” in 1971. The following actions were proposed:

That members of local churches and fellowships:

- a. study the report of the workshop and select one or more specific situations existing in their own communities giving rise to serious individual or group concerns, and
- b. develop an understanding of the problems faced by police officers and assist in creating mutual confidence between the community and the police;

That local municipal authorities, provincial and federal justice departments in cooperation with police associations:

- a. require appropriate testing for applicants for police work,
- b. provide compulsory refresher and upgrading courses, and
- c. establish uniform principles and codes of behaviour to assist members of the police forces to cope with violence while still ensuring basic rights of citizens to engage in peaceful protests;

That the federal and provincial justice departments should:

- a. recommend amendment of legislation which gives undue protection to those who commit or threaten to commit acts of violence in domestic situations,
- b. develop more effective control of the sale and use of firearms and other dangerous weapons, and
- c. change the emphasis in the criminal field from retribution to rehabilitation.

The 1985 resolution dealt with violence on television and its impact on children and youth, and recommended both stringent regulation by all levels of government and the



dissemination of information on the harmful effects of watching such programming on all members of our congregations.

These two resolutions, although ostensibly on the same subject, do not address the same issues.

The first resolution could be used in responding to proposals related to domestic violence or gun control, although there is some question about whether a resolution adopted in 1972 could be said to represent present perspectives. In addition, there has been a great deal of public discussion and legal activity in both of these areas. The last part of the resolution echoes the continuing concern of our members about the need for prisons and other parts of the criminal justice system to focus on rehabilitation.

This summary is based on resolutions adopted in 1972 and 1985.