

"Resolution on deprogramming: Religious Liberty for Young People Too."

Adopted by
the Governing Board of
the National Council of Churches of Christ
on Feb 26 1974

"In this country, kidnapping a young person for ransom is a federal crime of utmost seriousness, but kidnapping such a person in order to change his or her religious beliefs and commitments has not thus far actuated federal authorities to invoke the statute. Grand juries have refused to indict and petit juries to convict persons charged with such acts, apparently because done at the behest of parents or other relatives and ostensibly for the good of the victim."

"The Governing Board of the NCC believes that religious liberty is one of the most precious rights of humankind, which is grossly violated by forcible abduction and protracted efforts to change a person's religious commitments by duress. Kidnapping for ransom is heinous indeed, but kidnapping to compel religious deconversion is equally criminal. It violates not only the letter and spirit of state and federal statutes but the world standard of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."