

No. 8547

RESOLUTION CONCERNING A COORDINATED CHURCH-WIDE RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF OLDER PERSONS

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, we are faced with projections of dramatic growth in the number of older persons in our society within the next thirty years,

1. The population 65 years or older is projected by the United States Government to increase from 11.2% to 20% by the year 2020.
2. Statistics reveal that the proportion of our population over age 85 is growing even faster than the over 65 group.
3. It is estimated that the over 85 age group, which has the greatest number who are limited by chronic conditions, will increase by 1.4 million persons before the year 2000, and

WHEREAS, at any one time, all institutions for older persons serve less than 5% of the age 65 and over population and more than 95% of such older persons remain in other chosen places of residency and often require special concern and services, and

WHEREAS, this growth in our elderly population has an impact on society by:

1. Placing an ever growing tax burden on workers, which contributes to negative attitudes on the part of the young toward the old.
2. Placing continually greater demands on the Social Security system, health care programs, pension systems, and the resources of older persons and their families, at a time when government support is inadequate to meet the needs of those with limited resources.
3. Calling upon all persons to provide support systems in their home, the church and community to assist older persons and their families, and

WHEREAS, there are many indications that we are a graying Church, in that conservative estimates place 26% of our Christian Church membership in the over 65 category and observations of many congregations at worship would place their percentage at 50% or higher, and

WHEREAS, a conference of representatives of the General Units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting on January 16, 1985, addressed this issue and concluded that:

1. The needs and concerns of older persons are great and encompass a broad range of issues that cut across the traditional structures of the Church, and
2. There is an urgency to develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to serving older persons in the Church.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, August 2-7, 1985, calls for:

1. A recognition of the concerns of older persons as a vital aspect of the renewal of the Church in the years ahead.
2. The Task Force on Renewal and Structural Reform, to:
 - a. Study the impact of an aging society on the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and if their findings agree with the concerns raised in this resolution;
 - b. Make recommendations as to ways the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) can coordinate the planning and programming for older persons, which may include the formation of a committee of appropriate persons to determine what action is needed.
3. Congregations, regions, institutions, and general units to make appropriate responses to ministry with the aging.