

## No. 8515

### RESOLUTION CONCERNING POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

The General Assembly did NOT ADOPT this resolution which says that "political resolutions" detract from the proclamation of the Gospel.

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#### BACKGROUND

There is an increasing tendency in the Church today to make pronouncements on complex political issues. This tendency is clearly evident in resolutions passed by the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in recent years. It is our conviction that political resolutions are damaging to the unity of the church, and that this trend towards political resolutions needs to be re-examined in the light of the mission of the Church as revealed in the New Testament.

In order to clarify what is meant by "political resolutions" we cite the following examples from the 1983 General Assembly in San Antonio.

1. Resolution 8324 - "Resolution Concerning Pacifism As A Way Of Life."  
While we believe in and support the idea of a peaceful world, many of us do not believe that pacifism is the best means to that end. While recognizing the right of others to promote pacifism, we feel it is important to recognize that this is a political question where opinions vary.
2. Resolution 8325 - "Resolution Concerning the Middle East Arms Race."  
We recognize the dangers present in the Middle East arms race, but the resolution is filled with opinions that do not represent the thinking of many Christians. We simply do not feel that the General Assembly should be making suggestions to the government of the United States regarding complex foreign policy issues.
3. Resolution 8328 - "Resolution Concerning Covert Action."  
We question the wisdom of a church group telling the President of the United States what he should or should not do in a covert manner. Again, opinions vary on what constitutes "covert action" and when and if such actions should be employed.
4. Resolution 8330 - "Resolution Concerning First Asylum In The United States."  
Again, we simply point out that the issue of political asylum is complex, and many Christians would not agree with the approach suggested in this resolution.
5. Resolution 8331 - "Substitute Resolution Concerning Statements On Nuclear War, Disarmament And Peace."  
Many Christians have questioned the wisdom of the Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on peace which is praised in this resolution. Again, opinions vary among Christians as to the best means to achieve peace on earth.
6. Resolution 8335 - "Resolution Concerning Peace-time Draft Registration And Conscientious Objectors."  
Again, this is an issue where Christian people are not in agreement. We question the wisdom of telling our government to end peace-time draft registration as if such action were clearly the right and moral thing to do.
7. Resolution 8349 - "Resolution Concerning United States Foreign Policy In Central America Countries."  
Again, we simply point out that this is a complex political issue with various opinions as to the best way for our government to relate to problems in Central America. We do not agree that a flat halt to all military aid in that region is necessarily the best option for the United States, or that this is the only Christian option.

Examples could be multiplied, but we trust the above will suffice to clarify what we mean by "political resolutions." We are convinced that the Church is mandated by the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to center its activity on the proclamation of the Gospel as revealed in the New Testament. We believe further that political resolutions detract from that objective, tending to alienate persons from our message who do not agree with our political positions. While we recognize the right of individual Christians to express their political opinions (and in fact we would encourage such activity) we question the wisdom of the General Assembly passing political resolutions which cannot possibly reflect the views of many persons who are a part of that Assembly. In view of these considerations we submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, there exist wide differences of opinion within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on political issues; and

WHEREAS, in the area of politics the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) historically has stressed freedom of opinion, thus allowing for a diversity of political views to exist within the Church; and

WHEREAS, political statements by the General Assembly are disruptive to the unity of the church; and

WHEREAS, it is doubtful that the General Assembly is qualified to evaluate complex political issues; and

WHEREAS, the primary business of the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into all the world and to every type of political system;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, August 2-7, 1985, consider carefully all resolutions submitted which are political in nature, keeping in mind both the unity of the Church and its purpose.

The Official Board  
First Christian Church  
Decatur, Illinois