

No. 8520

RESOLUTION CONCERNING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, domestic violence is an epidemic public health problem that threatens the fabric of family life in our society; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that one half of all married women are beaten at least once by their husbands, and FBI statistics reveal that a woman is beaten every eighteen (18) seconds*; and

WHEREAS, estimates on child abuse range from 1 million to 4 million cases each year with two thousand children dying each year from abuse inflicted by a parent or caretaker - (estimates based on statistics available from the American Humane Association in Denver, Colorado); and

WHEREAS, in a Massachusetts study of abuse of elderly persons residing in non-institutionalized settings revealed that one out of every ten elderly persons living with a member of the family had been subjected to abuse. Most of the victims were women between the ages of 60 and 80, and 73% of them had obvious physical symptoms of neglect or abuse**; and

WHEREAS, our faith tradition calls us to be advocates on behalf of the victims of violence, to side with those who suffer, and to create hope that suffering and terror will end; and

WHEREAS, the church is called upon to be with those who suffer, to educate its people to the causes, symptoms, and presence of domestic violence within 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, recognize its responsibility to help prevent domestic violence as it concerns the elderly, spouses, children, and others in the household; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Regional Minister and the General Minister and President encourage clergy and laity to become educated in the issues of domestic violence and its prevention through continuing education events nationally and locally; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that congregations and individuals be encouraged to support community agencies seeking to eliminate both causes and problems related to domestic violence, including but not limited to: counseling agencies, therapy groups for abused and abusive spouses, shelters for abused family members, and consciousness raising groups for clergy and laity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) through the Division of Homeland Ministries, the Division of Higher Education, and the National Benevolent Association provide information on domestic violence and the church's response; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) urge congregations to continue to increase their spiritual support and financial involvement in Basic Mission Finance and other outreach programs so these efforts to combat domestic violence will continue.

* [Murray W. Straus, "Wife Beating: How Common and Why", *Victimology: An International Journal*, Vol. 2, 1977-78, No. 3-4, pp. 443-458]

**[Pei N. Chen; et al, "Elderly Abuse in Domestic Settings: A Pilot Study", *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, Vol. 4 (1), Fall, 1981, pp. 5-8]