

No. 0313

(Operational Business Item)

ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

Background Information

Past General Assemblies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have spoken against domestic violence (8520 and 8116). The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was a participant in the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998, GA resolution 8936). Currently the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is participating in the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). Central to the goals of this Decade is a focus on ending violence against women.

Even though we acknowledge that men and boys also experience violence, nevertheless historically and to the present women and girls are more often targets. Quoting from the Beijing Platform for Action (the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women,) Unequal power relations between women and men have created circumstances in which women and girls are especially vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Violence against women has many forms: physical, psychological, sexual, spiritual, and emotional. Violence leaves wounds both visible and invisible. Types of violence include domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, sexual harassment, stalking, incest, child abuse, sexual slavery, media sexual exploitation, genital mutilation, and pornography.

WHEREAS, Christ calls each person, female and male, to full personhood. He further calls us to a mission of love and compassion toward all people, exemplified in his relationship with the woman at the well (John 4:7-26) and the woman about to be stoned (John 8:3-11). Scripture requires us to do justice and to love kindness as we walk humbly with God.

WHEREAS, the Church is too often complicit in the problem of violence against women silencing, ignoring, and indirectly accepting this violence. Moreover, the Church sometimes justifies its lack of action with biblical interpretations. The way in which issues of Church hierarchy are approached, the choice of words used in a worship service, and the ways in which scripture has sometimes been interpreted may all contribute to a culture in which violence against women is accepted.

WHEREAS, churches need to recognize that violence against women is a serious problem and a sin. We need both to end our silence and actively seek to end the violence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 17-21, 2003, urges congregations and regions to:

- „ Teach children, youth, and adults that girls and women are created and loved by God.
- „ Become a non-judgmental place of safety and support for women.
- „ Communicate verbally and visually information about local support resources and denominational resources such as the Disciples Home Missions poster *Is Someone Hurting You? Here are help and hope.*
- „ Provide education and training opportunities for congregational leaders.
- „ Encourage the United States Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and encourage church leaders, members, congregations, regions, and organizations to advocate for the ratification of CEDAW.
- „ Display in the building the Disciples Home Missions poster, *Is Someone Hurting You? Here are help and hope.*