

GA-1928

A CALL TO SEE AND RESPOND TO THE CRISIS OF DOMESTIC AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Sense-of-the-Assembly

WHEREAS, John 10:10 states that Jesus came so that we “may have life and have it more abundantly,” something that victims of domestic and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV) are robbed of due to the abuse experience causing exponentially high rates of depression, despair, fear and trauma: and

WHEREAS, in 1985 the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Des Moines, IA, adopted [GA-8520](#) “Resolution Concerning Domestic Violence” calling the church to recognize “its responsibility to help prevent domestic violence.” While some steps have been taken to address DV/IPV over the last 34 years, we recognize that our work in this area has been insufficient; and

WHEREAS, DV/IPV are pandemic public health problems, which are multigenerational, cyclical, threatening the fabric of family life in society ([GA-8520](#)); and

WHEREAS, the myriad forms of violence are not exclusively physical, but include emotional, sexual, spiritual, and financial abuse, as well as manipulation, isolation, unequal power and control dynamics, threats and blame shifting among other forms, occurring across age, ethnic, gender and economic lines, among persons with disabilities, and among both heterosexual and same-sex couples¹; and

WHEREAS, the victims of DV/IPV may be found throughout our society, including our own church families; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, identifies itself as a “movement for wholeness in a fragmented world,” and is called to hear the inaudible cry of the abused, fragmented soul suffering in silence and in plain sight; and

WHEREAS, the response of the general, regional, and local churches to this epidemic crisis of faith and personal safety, is critical and directly impacts the ability to aid in the eradication around and inoculation against cyclical abuse for a new generation of Christians and current survivors; and

¹ “Intimate Partner Violence,” <https://www.apa.org/topics/violence/partner?item=1> ;
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/problem-canada.html>

WHEREAS, all persons who suffer trauma and abuse may not be able to find sanctuary in places of worship, and may even encounter those who seem to condone such violence;²

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, July 20-24, 2019, encourages the Church across all its expressions to recognize its responsibility to help prevent domestic violence as it concerns the elderly, spouses, intimate partners, children, and others in the household and the church ([GA-8520](#)); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a collective effort be made to create an ethos of safety, dignity, compassion, and empowerment across all its expressions to educate clergy and lay on the prevalence of DV/IPV, understanding that victims/survivors are in our churches and places of work, often hidden and unreported; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the Church are encouraged to identify, utilize, and support local community agencies seeking to eliminate the causes and effects related to DV/IPV and to provide multi-lingual information regarding local DV/IPV resources online, in common areas, and restrooms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General and Regional Commissions on Ministry and the College of Regional Ministers consider policies and procedures in regards to DV/IPV and explore opportunities for domestic violence prevention and trauma care training as part of continuing education for ordained and commissioned clergy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the Church encourage children and youth ministries and youth camps to incorporate healthy relationship workshops in an effort to raise the consciousness of children and youth, to include the importance of healthy boundaries, self-worth, and knowledge of age appropriate dating/relationship red flags, with parental permission³ and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the Church encourage the inclusion of a budget line item or special offering for providing support/scholarships for survivors of DV/IPV within the local congregation to attend educational opportunities (seminars, workshops, retreats, etc.); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the Church are encouraged to develop and implement: a process and procedure for addressing and supporting victims of DV/IPV within the church context; policies to ensure compliance with local, state and provincial mandatory reporting laws; and distinct healing practices for the abused and the abuser, ensuring anonymity when possible; and

² Ramsey, E. (2015, October 1). "Troubling Texts: Domestic Violence in the Bible" *Sojourners*.

Retrieved from

<https://sojo.net/articles/series/troubling-texts-domestic-violence-bible> ³

Format for youth workshop frameworks can be found at

<http://www.breakthecycle.org/sites/default/files/pdf/lina-curriculum-college.pdf>

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada encourage all expressions of the Church to continue to:

- 1) increase their spiritual support and efforts to shatter shame, stigma, and silence by preaching and teaching responsibly on the topic of domestic and intimate partner violence; 2) create safe and sanctuary spaces for abuse-specific pastoral care, compassionate conversation, and healing for vulnerable victims and survivors; 3) work together to dismantle a cultural landscape where domestic violence can thrive and hide.

These educational tools and process will offer hope and aid to those both inside and outside the church who suffer.

First Christian Church, Pomona, CA University
Church of Chicago, Chicago, IL Carrollton Christian
Church, Carrollton, KY Third Central United
Christian Church, Louisville, KY UrbanMission
(UCC/DOC), Pomona, CA

RESOURCE S

"5 Facts About Sexual and Domestic Violence in LGBTQ Communities | Joyful Heart

Foundation.” Accessed January 1, 2019. <http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/blog/5-facts-sexual-domestic-violence-lgbtq-communities>

“30 Shocking Domestic Violence Statistics That Remind Us It’s An Epidemic | HuffPost.” Accessed December 31, 2018. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/23/domestic-violence-statistics_n_5959776.html

“Child Abuse Statistics (& the Best Resources) | INVISIBLE CHILDREN.” Accessed January 1, 2019. <https://www.invisiblechildren.org/2017/12/29/child-abuse-statistics-the-best-resources/>

Elder Abuse.” Accessed January 1, 2019. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/elder-abuse>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2003. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipvbook-a.pdf>

“The Alarming Stats on Domestic Violence in Canada.” <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/problem-canada.html>

“Police Reported Family Violence Against Seniors.” <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14698/05-eng.htm>

“Gender Based-Violence (Violence Against Women and Children).” <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

**_ The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-1928.
(Discussion Time: 24 minutes)**