

Query: Domestic Violence
1997 Annual Conference of the
Church of the Brethren

Whereas domestic violence is on the rise at an alarming rate in the United States, without regard to race, gender, socioeconomics, or religious community; and

Whereas an estimated three to four million American women are battered each year by their husbands or partners. (Stark, E. et al. "Wife Abuse in the Medical Setting: An Introduction for Health Personnel," Monograph Series No. 7 National Clearinghouse on Domestic Violence, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office); and,

Whereas research suggests that domestic violence results in more injuries that require medical treatment than rape, auto accidents, and muggings combined. (Stark, E. and Flitcraft, A. "Violence Among Intimates: An Epidemiological Review," in Haslett et al. (eds) Handbook of Family Violence); and,

Whereas the FBI reports that 50 percent of female homicide victims are killed by their husbands or partners, and 6 percent of male homicide victims are killed by their wives or partners (Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States," 1986); and,

Whereas domestic violence will occur at least once in two-thirds of all marriages, and during a six month time period following such an incident, approximately 32 percent of the women are victimized again (Roy M., ed. "The Abusive Partner," New York: Van Northrand Reinhold Co.) (Langan, P.A. and Innes, C.A. "Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, U.S. Department of Justice); and,

Whereas boys who witness their father's abuse of their mother are more likely to inflict severe violence as adults, and girls who witness maternal abuse are more likely to tolerate abuse as adults than girls who do not witness abuse. ("Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence," Harrisburg, PA., "Domestic Violence, General Information Booklet"); and,

Whereas careful research has been unable to find any statement by the Church of the Brethren, nor any study committee currently dealing with this issue.

Therefore we the members of the Hanover Church of the Brethren, meeting in council on October 18, 1995, voted to request the Southern Pennsylvania District, Church of the Brethren District Conference, meeting at New Fairview Church of the Brethren, York, Pa., on September 20-21, 1996, to petition the 1997 Annual Conference, meeting at Long Beach, Calif. on July 1 – 6, 1997: Should we, the Church of the Brethren, develop a position paper which speaks specifically to domestic violence?

Norman E. Laughman, Board Chair
Fay Swartz, Clerk

Action of the Southern Pennsylvania District Board: The District Board of Southern Pennsylvania, meeting in regular session on January 6, 1996, in the Meeting House of The Brethren Home, passed the query on to District Conference, which will meet in September 20 – 21, 1996, at the New Fairview Church of the Brethren, York, Pa.

Harvey S. Kline, Board Chair
Warren M. Eshbach, Secretary

Action of the Southern Pennsylvania District Conference: Passed on to Annual Conference, Church of the Brethren, by the Southern Pennsylvania District Conference, meeting September 20 -21, 1996, at the New Fairview Church of the Brethren, York, Pennsylvania.

Harold Yeager, Moderator
Donna Jones, Clerk

Action of the 1997 Annual Conference: Sandra Leach Bosserman, a Standing Committee member from the Missouri/Arkansas District, presented the recommendation from Standing Committee that the query be answered with the statement that the Church of the Brethren condemns all forms of domestic violence; and forwards a request to the Association of Brethren Caregivers that their staff suggest resources that encourage districts and congregations to address the concerns, including the prevention, of domestic abuse. *The delegate body adopted the recommendation of Standing Committee with one amendment to the recommendation that has been incorporated into the preceding text.*