No. 7766

RESOLUTION CONCERNING CAMPUS MINISTRY IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

APPROVED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, in the early 1800's there was almost no public education in the United States, and early Disciple leaders expressed their concern for learning by establishing dozens of church-related colleges and schools; and

WHEREAS, in our day two-thirds of students in higher education are enrolled in state-supported colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has joined with sister churches in many Regions to establish ecumenical ministries in higher education at major state colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, these ecumenical ministries are experiencing acute financial difficulties across the nation due to inflation and declining church support; and

WHEREAS, those Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) which have the nation's largest numbers of college and university students also have a responsibility to support ministries in higher education on behalf of the entire church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting at Kansas City, October 21-26, 1977, reaffirm the value and importance of ministries in higher education at state-supported colleges and universities and declare campus ministry a vital concern and an integral part of the church's mission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that those Regions which are the home of major educational enterprises that enroll hundreds of thousands of students are encouraged to continue and strengthen their support for ecumenical campus ministries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in establishing budgets for regions which contain large numbers of students in higher education, the need for substantial financial support for campus ministries shall be recognized in establishing the percentage of the outreach dollar which may be agreed upon in the negotiating conference in each region to carry on these ministries in behalf of the whole church.

No. 7767

RESOLUTION CONCERNING ENERGY

APPROVED by the General Assembly

Background Statement

I. *The Problem Area* Limited Resources

The energy crisis has forced us to recognize that fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) are finite and subject to exhaustion. While projections vary as to what resources of fossil fuels remain undiscovered, how much of these resources can be recovered and utilized, and how long they will last, the fact remains that there is a limit to them. Even before they become exhausted, they will become so scarce or difficult to secure that they will not be readily available to be used for the production of energy. Already, the world wide demand for fossil fuels increases annually at an alarming rate.

II. *The Judeo-Christian Perspective*

Persons in the Jewish-Christian heritage have special views and concerns about energy use and resources which relate to an understanding about life we customarily term "stewardship." This view is built upon convictions about the final ownership of life and our responsibilities in regard to this ownership.

The earth belongs to God. God creates it and asks us to share in the care of it. Each generation of human beings temporarily inhabits the planet earth, enjoying the privileges of its bounty for a relatively brief time. Then that privilege is passed to the generation that follows. Each generation is entrusted to extract from earth's resources what it needs, while remembering to conserve in order that those who follow will have the resources they in turn will need.

Stewardship involves more than relations among persons. God cares for the entire creation. Humankind was created from nature and is a part of nature, even though it enjoys a special role in sharing with God the care for nature. God is present in humankind *and* in every creature and created thing. What happens in the full realm of nature both affects humans in their relations with one another and affects those creatures and created things about which God cares.

Human beings can be co-nurturers with God, or they can abuse the planet and the creatures upon it, and in so doing rebel against God. The inward commitment of "stewardship" urges us to be co-nurturers of all nature.

Insofar as we are able to help decide the events of history and the use of resources, we are asked to remember particularly those for whom God has special concern. These are creatures and persons who are relatively weak and defenseless, those who suffer from the abuse and injustice of others. We are therefore to be particularly mindful of the disadvantaged: the poor, the weak, the afflicted, the young, the old, the prisoner, the enslaved. In summary, then, the understandings of faith which emerge from our Hebraic-Christian heritage and which guide our reflection on energy policy are:

A. The world is God's. We share in its care for a period, during which time we are to enjoy and use it, being mindful of certain reservations and obligations.
B. We are expected to share its resources with one another and with those not yet born.
C. We are asked to be particularly sensitive to the needs of the disadvantaged.
D. Our use is to be conditioned by our awareness that the realm of God's continuing care includes creatures of the earth and created things as well as persons.

III. *Social and Historical Considerations*

In addition to the perspectives gained from our Judeo-Christian heritage, there are important insights which we have discovered from our time and place in history.

A. *Cooperation in an Interdependent World.*

No nation can live to itself. The use of the planet's resources by any one nation affects the people of other nations, and frequently depends upon cooperative relationships with other nations. We are increasingly aware of the global dimensions of the use of resources, and of the need for global policies and patterns of cooperation which will support the principles of our Judeo-Christian perspective.

B. *The Increasing Burdens of the Poor.*

Already the rising prices for fossil fuels has fallen disproportionately hard on the poor in this nation and in Third World countries. People with low and fixed incomes do not have the funds to pay for increases in the cost of fuel or from the increased cost of food and clothing that results from the higher cost of oil and gas.

For Third World countries the increasing costs of energy causes renewed prospects of hunger. The recent advances in agriculture, alluded to as "the green revolution" have involved a dependency on oil as fuel for tractors and for other mechanized equipment, and on petroleum products used in fertilizer and pesticides.

Not only are Third World countries hard pressed in agricultural development, but many find themselves with sizable balance of payment deficits caused by the interaction of demand/supply in the world market. This makes it even more difficult for them to compete for fuel supplies in the world market.

Eighty percent of traded oil goes to industrialized countries. The ability of the highly industrialized countries to pay increasing energy prices pushes Third World countries from the market, although their need for fossil fuels is increasing.

C. *Extravagance of Fuel Use*

The abundance of low cost energy in the United States and other countries has enabled and encouraged wasteful practices. Inefficient heating, individualized transportation habits, and wasteful packaging are a few of the practices which are called into question.

It is possible to do what we now do while using much less fuel and much fewer things which require fuel to manufacture. It is also possible to go further and to alter life styles so as to conserve fuel without decreasing the pleasures and satisfactions of life.

Beyond these considerations, we need to ask whether or not our own usage of fuel should be reduced out of concern for other people in other places and times.

D. *Ecological Considerations:*

Events of recent years have alerted us to the serious consequences to the resources of the planet earth which have already been caused by human activities. Some technological activities can be conducted without permanent damage to the natural environment, others cannot. We have been negligent about making a clear determination about what sort of development ought to be permissible and what kind ought to be forbidden. The increased social use of the word "pollution" indicates that society is beginning to understand the dangers here involved. From the perspective of "stewardship" we are prompted to take a further step and to encourage thinking about the "care of the earth."

E. *The Good Possibility of Alternative Sources of Fuel*

The development of one kind of fuel leads to the growth of industry and technology attuned to the type of fuel involved, and to public knowledge and practice related to this fuel. Such understandable adjustments have led to an almost exclusive attention to and dependence upon non-renewable fossil fuels.

It is possible to develop technologies that involve forms of fuel that are widely available, renewable, and non-polluting. Such sources of energy include the sun, fuel crops, organic wastes, wind, waves and movements of ocean currents, and thermal gradients in oceans.

Research indicates possibilities for such development. Energy programs generally recognize such possibilities, but they have not yet been accompanied by significant budgets to research and develop such options.

F. *The Possibility of Alternative Styles of Fuel Delivery*

Research and practical experience demonstrate that it is feasible to have individual energy creating units that lessen measurably our dependence on centralized energy generation. Although production of energy in this fashion is contrary to our past practice, it opens possibilities for individuals, families, and small communities to exercise more control over the things which affect their lives. The development of inexpensive energy units for use in this country and in developing nations would have a helpful political effect.

G. *Lead Time*

The changing of a technological pattern and of social practice related to that pattern requires a considerable length of time. Habits of people grow out of past experience about the availability of certain kinds of resources at certain costs. Major changes in the nature, availability, and costs of resources results in dislocation and disorientation and cannot be done quickly.

It is necessary therefore to anticipate both a long term and an intermediate plan for solutions. This argues for a conservative use of present fossil fuel resources until alternative forms of energy become widely available and social practice adjusts to such energy supplies.

IV. *An Addressable Problem*

Although the energy problem alerts us to the possibility of ultimate threats to our existence on planet earth, such consequences are not inevitable. Nor, on the other hand can a simple solution be found through better engineering alone, a remedy sometimes alluded to as a "technological fix." The solution will require both new technology and better moral and social policies. The solution requires participation by persons like ourselves based on our convictions regarding life and its meaning.

We have the responsibility from the perspective of our faith to think through our own criteria for addressing the energy problem. This statement is intended to assist in that project.

V. *Criteria for Energy Decisions*

(1) All persons have a right to the amount of energy necessary to sustain life and to meet their basic needs.
(2) National energy policies must provide for justice and equity for members of our society, and give particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
(3) The issue of adequate income for the poor is an important issue on the national agenda, and should be appropriately dealt with. But this issue should not be used arbitrarily to veto energy conservation programs.
(4) Energy policy should be a matter for major public discussion, with the public having access to needed information, and with the public being included in policy determination.

(5) Constructive measures which are designed to alleviate the worldwide energy problem will require international cooperation.
(6) An international energy course should be sought that will not be prejudicial to the developing nations, one that may help to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor and that takes into account the diverse needs of peoples and nations.
(7) Tests of the validity of an energy program, in addition to its cost and its efficiency, must include the extent to which it conserves non-renewable resources and the effects which the program has on the environment.

VI. *Policies*

A. *Public Policy*

(1) Highest priority should be given to the development of renewable, non-polluting sources of energy.
(2) Energy technology which serves primarily local units and can be understood, monitored, and controlled by local residents, would be encouraged where feasible.
(3) A vigorous program of energy conservation (including resource conservation) is essential and should be undertaken immediately.
(4) The national government should design a broad and comprehensive energy program, making use of market mechanisms for achieving goals wherever possible.
(5) The energy crisis should not be a reason for lowering environmental standards.
(6) Licensing of the building of nuclear power plants should be discontinued until alternative sources of energy generation are thoroughly explored and the problems of nuclear generation are resolved.
(7) Private, federal, and international support should be enlisted for the development of energy generation technology appropriate for developing countries, technology that enables them to utilize non-polluting renewable resources. Access to such technology should be available to them on terms that maximize their development and their control.
(8) Church and citizen support should be given to government officials working for a national energy policy consonant with the faith and practice perspective here outlined.
(9) New energy technologies should be developed and distributed under competitive (i.e. non-monopolistic) conditions.

B. *Church and Personal Policy*

(1) Churches should educate their members on the relation of energy issues to the church's understanding of life's meaning and of "stewardship."
   a. Creating awareness of the seriousness of the energy problem,
   b. Making a clear statement on the religious and social issues involved from its perspective, and
   c. Modeling their own behavior so as to demonstrate their concern in their practice.
(2) Individuals as well as churches should engage in their own endeavors of creating awareness of the problem, witnessing to the considerations of morality and faith involved and changing their own behavior accordingly.
(3) Encouragement should be given to innovative voluntary efforts to adopt life styles that lead to a reduction in energy use and the recycling of energy-produced products.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, October 21-26, 1977, commend this statement on energy to the leaders and members of congregations, and to appropriate units of the church such as the Board of Church Extension and the Division of Homeland Ministries, for continued study, revision and implementation; and for use by Disciples who are members of task forces on energy, such as that of the National Council of Churches, as a representative statement from the Assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it be commended to leaders of the United States and Canada as expressing Assembly concern about faith and policy involved in the current energy crisis.