

NEBRASKA CONFERENCE

19. RESOLUTIONS

LOCAL CHURCH PROTECTION POLICY

WHEREAS in 1998 there were three million reported incidents of child abuse and neglect reported in the United States¹; and

WHEREAS on average 3,000 children die each year from child abuse²; and males are sexually abused before the age of 18³; and

WHEREAS we know that it is likely that many more children and youth are abused but never report their abuse; and

WHEREAS it is probable that many of our local churches have members who have experienced abuse or who have been perpetrators of abuse; and

WHEREAS the church is called to be a safe sanctuary providing healing and protection for its members, especially the most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS many other organizations, like Girl and Boy Scouts of America, YMCA, school districts, Camp Fire Boys and Girls, 4-H, and more are currently screening their volunteers and requiring training in an effort to protect participants; and

WHEREAS in some regions of the nation Church Mutual Insurance Company is requiring that local churches have protection policies in place and procedures to screen and train both hired staff and volunteers for renewal of their insurance policy after July 1, 1999⁴; and

WHEREAS it is likely that Church Mutual Insurance Company in Nebraska will soon putting this same policy in place and other church insurance providers will quickly follow; and

WHEREAS ¶ 66C of the Social Principles (adopted by the 1996 General Conference) calls for the church to protect its children and youth; and

WHEREAS a resolution adopted by the 1996 General Conference calls for protection policies to be adopted on the local church, district, and conference level⁵; and

WHEREAS the Nebraska Conference already has a protection policy in place and resources available to help local churches develop their own policies, set up screening procedures and train those working with children and youth in their church;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 1999 Nebraska Annual Conference encourage all of its local churches to develop a local church protection policy before the 2000 session of the Nebraska Annual Conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that following Annual Conference in 2000 the church conference report which all local churches must fill out shall include a place for churches to mark that they have a protection policy in place and a date when they did training that year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nebraska Conference Staff be available for resourcing and training those in local churches working to develop protection policies. (It is suggested that each local church also contact its insurance company about this protection policy.)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nebraska Conference be available as a “clearing house” for background checks for local churches by keeping the forms in the Conference Office to help ensure confidentiality.

¹ From the “Creating Safe Sanctuaries Workshop” sponsored by the General Committee on Finance and Administration, 3/5/99

² Joy Thornburg Melton. Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church (Nashville, Discipleship Resources, 1998) 15.

³ Ibid, 15.

⁴ “Creating Safe Sanctuaries Workshop,” 3/5/99

⁵ The 1996 Book of Resolutions (Nashville; The United Methodist Publishing House, 1996) 384-836. 1999 Conference Journal pg. 299