

R-82-07 A resolution on alcoholism, in response to the Bishop's Address

Whereas, the Rt. Rev. William G. Black, in the Bishop's Address to this Convention, has called us to be a responsible ministry in relation to the serious problems of alcoholism and other chemical dependency; and

Whereas, a General Convention Resolution of 1979 asked each Diocese to '...develop a written policy on Alcoholism, including guidelines which address the issues of education, prevention, intervention and treatment...'; and

Whereas, a Committee on Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency is now established, in accordance with an action of the 106th Convention of this Diocese, and is prepared to provide ongoing services to the Diocese; therefore

Be it resolved:

1) That the following statement be adopted as general Diocesan policy concerning intervention and treatment:

We believe that the Church, as a redemptive fellowship of Christian believers, must be sensitive to the need for exercising a healing ministry to the problem drinker or addict, and to members of his or her family. It is also a proper area of concern that the Church be prepared to give guidance to those confronted with the alcoholic and/or other chemically dependent person in whatever way.

We recognize alcoholism and other forms of chemical dependency as a treatable human disease which manifests itself in a three-fold impairment of body, mind and spirit. It is a major health concern of our society. The impact affects the family and others closely associated with the patient, along with the entire social fabric.

This Diocese seeks to enlist the support and cooperation of all of its people in a pastoral approach to this problem.

We believe that any clergy or lay employee of the Diocese or its parishes, fellowships or related institutions, and his or her family members, are deserving of pastoral intervention when it is determined that he or she is suffering from alcoholism.

We affirm that an integral component of treatment for alcoholism or other chemical dependence is protection of job and employment benefits and subsequent employability, except for one's continued refusal to accept help and treatment, or continued failure to respond to treatment.

We believe it is appropriate to observe strict confidentiality concerning intervention and treatment.

2) That consistent with this general policy, the Committee on Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency be instructed (a) to develop detailed Procedures for Rehabilitation of Alcoholic Clergy, in close collaboration with the Bishop and Diocesan Council; and (b) to publicize such Procedures once they are approved by Diocesan Council and the Bishop.

3) That the following statement be adopted as general Diocesan policy concerning education and prevention:

Clergy and others responsible for Christian education are requested to establish educational programs which will increase general knowledge concerning alcoholism and drug abuse; make known resources and help available to chemically dependent persons, their families, employers and friends; and encourage responsible decision-making and increased public awareness.

Clergy and vestries are requested, through the use of tract racks, libraries and other means, to make available pamphlets and literature on alcoholism/chemical dependency.

The clergy of the Diocese are urged to take advantage of available training opportunities, in order to become increasingly conversant with alcoholism and other chemical dependency.

Clergy are requested to become knowledgeable concerning local alcoholism and drug abuse services and resources, and to make use of them in their counseling and pastoral work.

All church persons are requested to give whatever cooperation they may to efforts such as: industrial alcoholism and drug abuse programs, commonly known as Employee Assistance Programs; programs available throughout the State of Ohio to reduce the tragedies that result from driving while intoxicated; programs of the various local and county agencies and councils on alcoholism and chemical dependency.

Clergy and vestries are encouraged, whenever possible, to further their assistance to Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon and Alateen, as well as to similar support groups for other chemical abusers.

It shall be the responsibility of the Committee on Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency to provide from time to time information and other assistance necessary to implement these guidelines.

That Diocesan Council, in consultation with the Committee, be asked to adopt guidelines for the use of alcoholic beverages at Diocesan functions, and to refer and recommend similar guidelines to the Regions and parishes.

That budgeting for the work of the Committee on Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency be included within the normal budget-building process of the Diocese, for the year 1984 and subsequently.

That the Committee be instructed to report to the parishes from time to time on its work in progress, and to make a written report to the next Diocesan Convention.