

"Do Right, Seek Justice, Defend the Oppressed" Isaiah 1:17

Older Adults and others' human rights threatened

A call to churches to act for justice

We, the NBA Older Adult Ministries Working Group, call on individuals and congregations to speak out and take action for the rights of older adults and other groups whose rights are being threatened. The Church has an essential role in this critical time.

As the global population ages, the human rights and social justice issues surrounding aging become increasingly urgent. Older adults face numerous challenges in exercising their rights, often due to widespread stereotypes, stigmatization, and marginalization. These ageist attitudes result in discrimination, exclusion, and constraints on their autonomy and independence. Structural barriers, such as discriminatory laws, underfunding, and lack of accessibility, further hinder older adults' access to proper housing, work, learning opportunities, and essential services.

This restricts their ability to enjoy an adequate living standard and healthcare access, impacting their overall well-being. The effects of the pandemic are still devastating to those older adults suffering great loss, isolation, or depression. Moreover, older adults are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, and neglect, often remaining invisible due to isolation, insufficient data collection, and societal taboos. Mechanisms for prevention and accountability are frequently underdeveloped or absent.

To thrive, older adults must have access to necessary resources and services without discrimination based on race, gender, mental status, ability, or origin. Recognizing their dignity is essential. A social justice and human rights approach should focus on the following issues, among others:

1. Ensuring economic self-support to reduce dependency
2. Promoting **overall** self-sufficiency.
3. Preventing neglect and abuse.
4. Offering **accessible** community-based or home care options to avoid inappropriate institutionalization.
5. Providing **accessible** care options when institutionalization is necessary.

Take steps to ensure your voice is heard. You might begin by sharing this statement with leaders in your church and community, asking for discussion opportunities. Raise awareness and address the emerging crises in health, caregiving and faith issues, which cross generational and economic lines. Older Adult Ministries challenges churches to join us in developing specific strategies for ministering to the basic human rights of older adults.

Go to our webpages for resources: NBACares.org/OAM-Resources

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