

No. 0127

(Sense-of- the- Assembly)

**RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC OF HIV/AIDS
ON THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA**

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, since the early 1980s, when the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome was first identified, this disease has risen to become the most devastating scourge of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the many encouraging signs on the horizons of medical science and technology, and despite the long way that human society has come in terms of education about and treatment of HIV/AIDS, this disease rages on in epidemic and pandemic proportions on the continent of Africa; and

WHEREAS, brothers and sisters on the African continent are dying from HIV/AIDS at the rate of approximately 5500 per day (a figure that is projected to reach 13,000 daily by 2010) and 71% of the AIDS cases in the world are in Africa (Africa has only about 10% of the world's population), and there are 12.1 million African Children now considered to be "AIDS orphans" and 10 people in Africa are infected by the virus every minute; (Source: UNAIDS – Fall, 2000 Report on AIDS in Africa)

WHEREAS, in spite of great strides in improved healthcare in African nations, HIV/AIDS continues to cause high infant and child mortality rates and decreased life expectancy for adults; and

WHEREAS, the burden of foreign debt on many African countries has made it impossible to allocate any significant portion of the economy to adequate health care, hospitals, treatment, and education in the face of AIDS; and

WHEREAS, the cost of medicines for HIV/AIDS and the opportunistic diseases they enable is very high in most countries worldwide and almost prohibitively costly in most African nations; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in General Assembly in 1987 (GA Resolution 8774) and 1989 (GA Resolution 8922) declared its passionate concern and support for all who are victims of HIV/AIDS and the opportunistic diseases it enables; and

WHEREAS, hidden and forgotten emergencies in Africa have been lifted up by the Division of Overseas Ministries, the Africa Office and by Week of Compassion as urgent concerns; and

WHEREAS, we, as a faith community, are called upon to follow Jesus Christ to respond to those who are suffering in our world community;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Kansas City, MO, July 13-17, 2001, affirm all efforts to address this issue and encourage greater financial support from the whole church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly call upon the appropriate general ministries of the church to provide information to local churches and regions on how to respond to the AIDS crisis in Africa and how congregations may further assist this response; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Minister and President convey to the President of the United States, the Congress of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada and the Parliament of Canada, leaders and governmental bodies in African nations, as well as other appropriate governmental bodies, the concern of the church about the AIDS crisis in Africa; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in keeping with the General Assembly's action in 1999 to support foreign debt relief in economically disadvantaged countries, that congregations be encouraged to advocate for and support any executive or legislative action aimed at unconditional cancellation of economic debt of African nations whose economies are overburdened by debt and compounded by the effects of the AIDS crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that General Minister and President, the Division of Overseas Ministries, Regional Ministers, and congregants convey to the appropriate executive or legislative bodies their advocacy and support of the implementation of international trade regulations that help to reduce the prohibitively high cost and increase the availability of HIV/AIDS treatment drugs in areas where they are desperately needed; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the General Assembly meeting in Kansas City, MO, July 13-17, calls upon the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to engage in meaningful and prayerful dialogue with our partner churches on the African continent and to actively seek to raise the consciousness, awareness, and concern of the global religious community in its efforts to ease the pain and suffering caused by this terrible affliction to the human family.