

No. 0314

(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

RESOLUTION ON AN APOLOGY FOR THE SIN OF SLAVERY

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

Background Information

In its April 2001 meeting the General Board passed a resolution addressing the sin of slavery. This act of confession was a powerful moment for those who were gathered there. However, by our rules it came too late to be included as a resolution for the 2001 General Assembly.

The Regional Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Pennsylvania proposed a resolution for the 2003 General Assembly apologizing for the sin of slavery. The General Board is grateful for the resolution, yet believes that its original 2001 resolution should come to this Assembly as essentially unfinished business. We therefore offer this prior act of repentance as a substitute resolution.

WHEREAS, we fervently believe in the essential dignity and worth of every human being; and

WHEREAS, we believe God loves every person as a dear and precious child; and

WHEREAS, any act or attitude or institution which diminishes any person's divinely-intended right to a full, free, productive and peaceful life is clearly contrary to the will of God; and

WHEREAS, the institution of slavery is unquestionably evil and abhorrent to God; and

WHEREAS, many religious communities in the United States, including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), failed to work or speak against the institution of slavery in the United States, a wicked apathy which permitted and resulted in untold suffering among the African people kidnapped by evil people and sold to Americans to labor without compensation and often subjected to inhuman persecutions by their white owners; and

WHEREAS, the effects of these injustices have continued to subject the descendants of those Africans to an endlessly continuing mindset which perpetuates the unfair, unjust and sinful system of prejudice and racism; and

WHEREAS, Christ has called the church to be an instrument of his reconciliation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina October 17-21, 2003, confesses the corporate guilt we all share for these evils, and heartily begs the forgiveness of God and of all God's children whose lives have been damaged or limited by these sins.

We further pledge and promise that we will earnestly seek through words and deeds, as individual Christians and corporately, to demonstrate our sorrow by committing ourselves to lives of continuing humility, healing and love toward all those who still bear the wounds of the continuous and grievous effects of this historic evil.