

## **No. 9535**

### **(Sense-of-the Assembly Resolution)**

#### **EMERGENCY RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHT OF CHURCHES IN GUATEMALA TO CARRY OUT THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN MINISTRY**

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

WHEREAS, on June 23, 1995, Pastor Manuel Saquic from the Kaqchiquel Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala, leader of the human rights group that contributed to the dissolution of the Rural Patrols and the Military Commission's office in the region, was abducted, tortured and assassinated; and

WHEREAS, on July 10, 1995, a new written threat announced that Pastor Saquic was the first on a list of twenty-four persons to be eliminated; and a message sent to the Kaqchiquel Presbytery office in Chimaltenango, dated August 7, contained death threats against other prominent church leaders, including the Rev. Vitalino Similox, executive secretary of the Conference of Evangelical Churches in Guatemala (CIEDEG), Margarita Similox, president of the Kaqchiquel Presbytery, and the Rev. Lucio Martinez, pastor of that Presbytery; and

WHEREAS, witnesses have pointed out the person responsible for the assassination of Pastor Saquic and subsequent threats; and

WHEREAS, no arrest has been made, thus continuing the impunity and cover-up of persons involved in brutal violations of human rights in Guatemala; and

WHEREAS, in the recent IV Ecumenical Encounter on Peace in Guatemala (September 10-14, 1995), the Guatemalan government's insufficient political will to resolve the continuous abuses and violations against citizens was clearly shown; and

WHEREAS, on October 5, 1995, the "Aurora 8 de Octubre" community of returned refugees was brutally attacked by an army patrol, leaving eleven persons dead (including two children) and thirty injured, half of these critically; and

WHEREAS, as it was communicated personally to members of a Disciples/UCC delegation that visited Guatemala, August 28-31, 1995, the CIEDEG, the Disciples/UCC partner in Guatemala, has requested the solidarity and accompaniment of churches in the United States and Canada in support of their ministry to witness in service to human needs, and to combat human rights violations in that country;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada:

- 1) Request that the General Minister and President send the following messages:

- To the Conference of Evangelical Churches of Guatemala (CIEDEG) and to the Presbytery of Kaqchiquel of the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala, manifesting support and solidarity for their courageous ministry in defense of the right to life.

- To the president of Guatemala, Lic. Ramiro de Leon Carpio and to the U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors in Guatemala, expressing great concern about the massacre in Aurora, and requesting that they demand a full investigation.

- To the Ambassadors of Spain, Venezuela, Colombia, Norway, Sweden (observers of the Peace Process), expressing concern about the increasing violence and impunity that exists in Guatemala.

- To Dr. Leonardo Franco and the Mission of the United Nations in Guatemala (MINUGUA), expressing recognition and appreciation for their important and delicate work of protection of human rights and life in that country.

2) Urge members of Disciples congregations to join the prayer vigil of CIEDEG's member churches, every Friday at 2:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time); and to write letters to the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, expressing concern for the continuous violence against the poor in Guatemala, and insisting that those responsible for these tragic events be brought to justice.