CONCERNING THE REOPENING OF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN CUBA,
ENDING THE U.S. EMBARGO AGAINST THE ISLAND, AND PROMOTING A
CONSTRUCTIVE RELATION BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada,
and the United Church of Christ in the United States, are in partnership with the
Christian Pentecostal Church of Cuba, Cuban Council of Churches, Evangelical
Seminary of Theology, and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center through our
shared Global Ministries; and

WHEREAS, this resolution from an experience of deep and honest dialogue between
Christian women in Cuba and Disciples women from the U.S. during the 2018 Woman-
to-Woman Worldwide pilgrimage to Cuba who share a faith in the God of Peace and
embrace a Spirit of mutual accompaniment and solidarity; and

WHEREAS, Christian women from the U.S. embrace and uphold the testimonies of our
Cuban sisters as they share with us their stories from their daily lives, the pains and
sorrows resulting from outdated U.S. policies, their desire for just relations between our
countries, and their dreams and hopes that, as women of faith and as citizens of the
U.S., we may convey their pains, sorrows, to our elected officials; and

WHEREAS, as women of faith, we jointly raise our voices, prophetic and pastoral, in
pain and hope, with the expectation that our shared voices may become one single
voice advocating for justice, reconciliation, and peace; and

WHEREAS, as women of faith, we share our voices with the gathered assembly and
ask everyone to join our voices, becoming one voice of peace and justice with us; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. government has rigidly maintained an economic, commercial, and
financial embargo against Cuba since 1960, which prohibits the sale of merchandise,
industrial materials, medicines, food, and other necessary goods; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. embargo has historically caused and continues to cause serious
difficulties to Cuba’s continued industrial and commercial development, and has
resulted in suffering for Cuban citizens, especially children and the elderly; and
WHEREAS, on many occasions in an ecumenical expression of anguished outcry from the Cuban churches, in December 1991, and most recently in October 2018 during the Disciples Woman-to-Woman Worldwide pilgrimage to Cuba, our church partners in Cuba, as well as church leaders, and lay persons, have asked that we convey to the U.S. government the pain and suffering that the U.S. policies have caused in their lives during the last five decades; and

WHEREAS, the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution every year since 1992, condemning the ongoing impact of the embargo ($130 billion over six decades) and declaring it in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law and the U.S. government has repeatedly and steadfastly voted against the resolution¹; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted a Sense-of-the-Assembly resolution concerning the embargo during the General Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri, July 15-20, 1993; and called for the easing of economic restrictions against Cuba through a joint letter in 1998 with the United Church of Christ to the U.S. Senate; and through the decades religious leaders, such as Pope John Paul II (1979) and Patriarch Bartholomew (2004), have called for an end to the embargo;² and

WHEREAS, recent polls conducted by U.S. media found that a majority of people in the U.S. support both the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries and want to see the U.S. end the decades-long economic blockade³; and

WHEREAS, a humanitarian crisis has resulted from the current U.S. administration’s decision to downgrade the U.S. Embassy in Havana, resulting in extreme hardship to Cuban citizens who currently: 1) must travel outside of Cuba to another Latin American country to secure a visa to visit family in the U.S.; 2) incur travel expenses beyond the means of the average Cuban citizen in order to apply for a visa; 3) travel through another country without the guarantee of receiving a visa from the U.S. government;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, July 20-24, 2019, urge its U.S. members to contact members of the U.S. Congress to express support for the lifting of travel restrictions to Cuba, to allow business and trade with Cuba, to allow for direct trading of medicine and food, to ease travel restrictions, and take other steps to end the embargo against Cuba; and

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_embargo_against_Cuba
³ http://time.com/4265990/americans-support-cuba-poll/
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada and other General Ministries leaders, such as the Global Ministries Co-Executives and the Area Executive for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Executives of Disciples Women’s Ministries, urge President Trump and members of the U.S. Congress to end the embargo and normalize trade and full diplomatic relations with Cuba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that congregations and individuals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be urged to learn about the embargo and U.S./Cuba relations, and engage in people-to-people pilgrimages and other educational and advocacy efforts in their local communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as a “movement for wholeness in a fragmented world,” members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada enter into dialogue, with mutual respect, within our churches and our communities, affirming and recognizing the humanity of our brothers and sisters in Cuba, regardless of our government’s stance, calling our elected officials to a position that reflects civilized solutions for Cuba/U.S. relations; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Minister and President convey to all the ecumenical partners in Cuba the desire of this Assembly to end the embargo, and the spirit of love and solidarity expressed through this resolution.

Disciples Women

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly ADOPT GA-1927. (Discussion Time: 12 minutes)