RESOLUTION CONCERNING RACIALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE AGAINST ASIANS IN THE U.S.A.

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

In recent years there has been an increase in racially motivated violence directed against Asians in the United States of America (USA). The most publicized incident was the murder in 1982 of Vincent Chin, a Detroit Chinese American. He was clubbed to death by two men, an unemployed auto worker and his stepson, who shouted racial epithets at him and accused him of causing unemployment in the American auto industry. The judicial disposition of this case in which the two men received a sentence of three years' probation and a $3,000 fine caused an uproar among Asian Americans and others throughout the country.

This is only one of a growing number of incidents. Incidents of racially motivated muggings, beatings, armed assaults, shootings, verbal abuse and vandalism have been reported in Boston, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Dallas and a number of California cities.

- Thong Sou Kaseume, a Laotian in Fort Dodge, Iowa, was assaulted with a knife by an unemployed young person who mistook Kaseume for a Japanese. The assailant was sentenced to write an essay on Laotian culture. He was given no imprisonment, probation or fine.
- In Green Bay, Wisconsin, members of the Hmong community have been the target of shootings, egg throwing and vandalism of their automobiles.
- In San Leandro, California, a Ku Klux Klan cross was burned on the lawn of a Filipino household. The family moved in fear of their lives, while city officials dismissed this as a non-racially motivated prank.
- In Davis, California, harassment of Vietnamese high school students by some of their white classmates resulted in the stabbing death of Thong Hy Hyung. Around the same time white students on the campus of Davis University were burned the White Students Union.

Besides direct physical violence there has been an increase in other forms of anti-Asian agitation, for example, racist and anti-foreign bumper stickers such as "I'd rather eat worms than drive a Japanese car," "Real Americans buy American," and "Unemployment made in Japan."

Much of the agitation results from an upheaval in the American economy. The country is changing from a manufacturing economy to a service economy with important developments in high technology fields. As part of this restructuring, manufacturing enterprises are being transferred to developing countries in order to take advantage of cheaper labor sources. When such economic displacement occurs, those whose labor situation has been disrupted often resort to scapegoating - blaming others for their problems.

While economic scapegoating is certainly an important cause of the increase in violence and discrimination against Asians in the USA, it is not the only factor. The American experience in Indochina is another. Southeast Asian refugees are often the targets of resentment among other Americans, and the more critical viewpoint which emerged in the Vietnam War. Rather than considering the more critical viewpoint, many find it simpler to blame individual Southeast Asians.

Finally, racism is a cause of anti-Asian discrimination and violence. Contemporary American attitudes toward Asians have been shaped by decades of misperceptions, stereotypes and notions of cultural and political superiority. There have been some gains in race relations and civil rights in recent years, but the ability of the USA to be racially just and pluralistic is being put to the test again. With immigration patterns shifting to include more and more non-white, non-European immigrants, the country's racial/ethnic face is changing. It appears that many Americans are troubled by this. Some find the changes so threatening that they respond with hostility and violence. The violence directed against Asians is not merely an aberration in an otherwise just and pluralistic society, but is rather the symptomatic eruption of deeper problems.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has sought to deal with these issues of justice in society, most recently by its action in the Anaheim General Assembly in 1981. Affirming once again that "the struggle against racism cannot be optional for Christians," the General Assembly urged that "congregations study materials on racism and participate in intensified programs of education, giving emphasis to a historical understanding of the oppression of persons of color in the U.S. and the eradication of racism wherever it exists." (Resolution 81.22 Concerning Racism). Thus it is appro
riate that the church be informed of this recently emerging trend of events. The media coverage has begun to pass in this awareness: the U.S. Civil Rights Commission is studying the matter. In December 1984 an ecumenically sponsored Consultation on Racially Motivated Violence Towards addressing the problem.

Awareness of the problem is of utmost importance. Often when such incidents are reported, their racially motivated character is not included as part of the reporting. This omission results in the loss of the distinguishing nature of those incidents as statistically significant data. When this is the case, there is a lack of figures to report. This too often leads to the mistaken conclusion that there is no problem.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting August 2-7, 1985, in Des Moines, Iowa,

1. Reaffirm its opposition to racially motivated violence in any form, and call upon all Disciples to witness against this sin;

2. Request the Division of Homeland Ministries to bring the issue of racially motivated violence against Asians and Pacific Islanders to the attention of the general units, regions and congregations;

3. Urge the various manifestations of the church to cooperate in monitoring such acts of violence and in reporting them to the DHM;

4. Request the DHM to provide resources to enable congregations, districts and regions, to become better informed and share their experiences that relate to the problem of racially motivated violence against Asians and Pacific Islanders;

5. Urge all Disciples to work cooperatively with the various local, regional and national efforts to monitor, analyze and solve the problems of racially motivated violence.