

1 NO. 0915

2
3 (SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION)

4
5 AXIS OF FRIENDSHIP

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8 WHEREAS, Jesus called people to live in accordance with the Great Commandment to
9 love God and neighbor (Matt. 22:36-40), and exhorted his followers to love their enemies
10 (Matt. 5: 44). When we love our enemies, we create the possibility of their becoming our
11 friends. Jesus called his disciples his friends and urged them to risk everything for their
12 friends (John 15:12-17); and

13 WHEREAS, Paul taught that we are to “...live peaceably with all...” (Romans 12:18) and
14 to “...be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good...” (Romans 12:21) and in
15 accord with what our biblical heritage teaches, we must find solutions that respect human
16 rights and life, generate mutual respect and accountability, and lead to genuine peace in
17 the face of dangerous situations and hostile governments; and

18 WHEREAS, the word “axis” has long been used to identify pivotal places and moments
19 where the transformative and revelatory presence of sacred power touches life ,such as a
20 mountain, column of smoke or fire, steeple, minaret, pagoda, great tree, or person(e.g.,
21 *axis mundi*= turning point of the world) ;¹ and

22 WHEREAS, the September 11th tragedy in the United States brought an outpouring of
23 sympathy from all over the world. Throughout Europe, churches on September 12 rang
24 their bells as people held a minute of silence at noon. The world’s sympathy came from
25 places, as far off as Tehran, Iran, where thousands of Iranians lit candles and stood in
26 silence in the streets of the city in solidarity with the people of the United States;² and

27 WHEREAS, this spontaneous goodwill still has potential to be a transformative power
28 for interfaith and cross-cultural understanding throughout the world and among the
29 diverse peoples of the United States and Canada, an important axis of friendship. Such
30 friendship is a better and more lasting basis for both international cooperation against
31 terrorism and diplomatic means for solving international conflicts;

32 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church
33 (Disciples of Christ), meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 29-August 2, 2009, affirm its
34 commitment to diplomacy for resolving conflicts and urges the governments of the
35 United States and Canada to pursue the path of diplomacy and nonviolence; and

36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this General Assembly encourages congregations to
37 promote and work for an axis of friendship among the people of the United States and
38 Canada and other countries, in specific by embracing opportunities for citizen exchanges
39 offered by Global Ministries; and

¹ Mircea Eliade (tr. Philip Mairet), *Symbolism of the Centre' in Images and Symbols*, Princeton, 1991.

² See http://www.al-islam.org/dilp_statement.html#2, for a global summary of responses on Sept. 12, 2001.

40 FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly encourages congregations to celebrate
41 and participate in Axis of Friendship Day by:

- 42 1. Encouraging all its members to light a candle for the Axis of Friendship in their
43 windows on the evening of September 12 every year.
- 44 2. Holding special services of candle-lighting and peace in local churches.
- 45 3. Helping congregations celebrate the Axis of Friendship with festivals in their
46 local areas, based in promoting interfaith and cross-cultural understanding among
47 the many diverse nationalities, religions, and cultures found in our own
48 neighborhoods.
- 49 4. Requesting the Common Global Ministries staff to inform all our global partners
50 of this action and to explore with them possible similar commemoration(s).
- 51 5. Encouraging joint events and services that honor the Axis of Friendship with
52 other important commemorations of cross-cultural friendship and peace, such as
53 Light a Candle for Children.

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First Christian Church, Oakland, CA

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Park Avenue Christian Church, New York, NY

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