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**Folder Title:**

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

**Stack:**

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# Church World Service

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

March 22, 2000



Sandra Thurman  
Director  
Office of National AIDS Policy  
736 Jackson Place  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Thurman:

I am writing today for several purposes. Earlier this year our office convened a Religious Leaders Consultation on Policy Priorities. One of the five priority areas identified was the AIDS crisis in Africa. The Executive Board of the NCCCUSA has subsequently affirmed these priorities – the resolution is attached.

As part of my work I serve as the Chair of the Policy Committee for Jubilee 2000/USA. I also convene a faith-based coalition called Faith Action for People-Centered Development. Through those communities I have been both following the issue of possibly using debt relief for HIV/AIDS response initiatives in benefiting countries, and in educating myself and colleagues about the AIDS pandemic.

We just held a forum co-sponsored by Faith Action, the International Center for Research on Women and the Global AIDS Action Network to introduce staff in our various communities to the issue and provide an overview of upcoming legislation. As part of that session we were able to show Rory Kennedy's moving documentary, "Epidemic Africa." Many of us were interested in obtaining copies of this video, and I understand that it is available through your office. Among other things, Church World Service coordinates a video library that provides such resources free of charge to churches across the country. I would love to get some copies of this video for them, and would like to be able to inform my other colleagues about the best way to obtain this video for their own networks. Any information that you might be able to provide would be greatly appreciated.

These same organizations have just convened a meeting with staff from several Congressional offices that have introduced legislation relating to prevention and mitigation of AIDS. I am now writing in part to see it might be possible for us to set up a meeting with you to discuss the global AIDS pandemic and possibilities for action. You can contact me at 202-544-2350, or by e-mail: [lisaw@nccusa.org](mailto:lisaw@nccusa.org).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely

Lisa Wright  
Acting Director

# **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE USA**

## **2000-2001 NCCC Public Witness Priorities**

**February 29, 2000**

**WHEREAS** the National Council of Churches in the USA (NCCCUSA) convened a Religious Leadership Consultation on Policy Priorities January 12-14, 2000 in Washington, DC that brought together participants from program agencies, social policy offices, and Washington offices of NCCCUSA member communions; state ecumenical and interfaith agencies, and NCCC/CWSW program staff;

**and,**

**WHEREAS** through a process of conversation and consultation that considered many of the following factors, this assembly recommended five areas for policy priority for 2000;

**and,**

**WHEREAS** millions of poor people in highly indebted countries are prevented from enjoying an equitable share in the fruits of the earth and cannot live in dignity nor meet their family's basic needs because debt repayment has stifled economic development; and high levels of debt divert scarce resources from health care, education, clean water and other socially beneficial programs to make debt service payments, and the poorest in these indebted societies are most hurt by this diversion of their governments' resources;

**and,**

**WHEREAS** every day in the US an average of 87 people die as a result of gun wounds, and people who receive government housing assistance are twice as likely as those in the general population to be victims of gun violence, where in the nation's 100 largest public housing communities, one person is killed each day by gunfire;

**and,**

**WHEREAS** even with the modest increase being proposed of increasing the minimum wage by \$1 over the coming two years, individuals that must support families on this income will still be living at or below the poverty level even if they are employed full time; as a result many communities are now promoting payment of a "living wage" on the basis that people who work full time to support

their families should earn enough to maintain their incomes above the poverty level;

and,

**WHEREAS** despite the booming economy, in many communities emergency feeding programs are seeing an increased demand that they cannot meet, and working Americans continue to go hungry in order to meet housing or other expenses;

and,

**WHEREAS** although Africans represent only 12% of the global population, they account for 80% of deaths caused by AIDS; of the 33.4 million persons living with HIV/AIDS, 22.5 million live in sub-Saharan Africa; although Africa accounts for more than 69% of worldwide AIDS cases, African governments only have \$20 per person per year on health care; and by 2010, it is projected that more than 40 million African children will become orphans due to AIDS;

therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Executive Board of the NCCCUSA affirms as public policy priorities for the NCCCUSA for 2000:

- Jubilee 2000 (debt cancellation)
- Gun Violence
- Minimum Wage/Living Wage
- the Hunger Relief Act
- the AIDS crisis, especially in Africa;

and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Executive Board recommends that the member communions of the NCCCUSA also consider these five areas as priority concerns for public witness and that the NCCCUSA work/address these priority issues in partnership and collaboration with its member communions and other national, local/regional and international partners. The NCCCUSA will continue to consult with its member communions and other partners regarding policy priorities for 2001 and subsequent years.