

NO. 0722
(SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY)
EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

WHEREAS, in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, we affirm the importance of life long learning for an ever changing and growing people of faith; and

WHEREAS, we remember that before creation, God brought wisdom forth (Prov. 8:22) and that wisdom has called to us through the ages to learn and grow. We remember that wisdom is part of the Word (Ecclesiastes 24:1); and

WHEREAS, we are challenged by the prophetic teaching of Jesus and remember that even after his confession of Jesus as the Christ, Peter still called him rabbi, or teacher (Mark 9:5); and

WHEREAS, we are called to study by the epistles that say "prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed (1st Peter 1:13);" and

WHEREAS, we face a future that is ever changing. We know that an understanding of whom we are as Christians and as a Church is key to facing that future; and

WHEREAS, we confess that: we have not always taken the time to teach our story.
we have not always made learning a priority.
we have shared sermons and lessons that lacked sufficient study.
we have talked about educational ministry as if it is only for
children and youth rather than a life long endeavor.
we have accepted easy answers rather than facing the difficult
questions of our faith and our calling.
Biblical illiteracy is a reality in multiple generations of the church.
we can and must take educational ministry more seriously; and

WHEREAS, Disciples tradition gives us the freedom to develop creative educational programs for all ages, allowing participants to explore the scriptures and experience God's presence with all their hearts, all their minds, and all their strength.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that to this end we commit to promoting life long learning, creating an environment of growth, and celebrating the marriage of faith and reason in Christ's Church, trusting that at its core, educational ministry will always lead us somewhere; and

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that we will look to Educational ministry to leads us into action and to worship. Through our study of scripture, exploration of our faith, and spiritual discipline
we will be led to acts of service,

we will be led to speak for justice,
we will be led to prayerful reflection,
we will be led to respond to the power of God through the depth of our worship; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that through our commitment to life long learning we will allow God to transform this church!

Background Information / Ways to Live Into This Vision

Congregations

Create a safe and welcoming place for all God's people to learn the stories of faith, and deepen their relationships with God.

Commit adequate resources of time, money and volunteers to teaching and life long learning

Support teachers and families through encouragement, training, curriculum, prayer, and pastoral support as they help the church grow closer to God through story and study.

Reach out to children and youth, not just for what they will be in the future, but for the gifts they already possess for ministry.

Encourage involvement in educational issues and justice concerns of children and youth in the community.

Take seriously the role of worship in teaching the story of our faith through our liturgy and message.

Open our doors to community programs and discussions

Expect more from ourselves while reaching out to a growing population of people who do not share our common story of faith.

Make involvement in educational ministry an expectation for church leaders.

Set measurable goals and high standards that guide teachers and leaders while serving as a challenge to the whole congregation.

Regions

Encourage clergy to be "resident theologians" and claim a teaching ministry

Promote events that provide training in educational ministry

Provide camp and conference ministries that teach the faith story, foster Disciple identity, develop the spiritual life of participants, and are led by mature people of faith.

Include workshops and leader training in the areas of spiritual growth, faith development, and educational ministry at Regional Assemblies.

Make Bible study and prayer central components to all Regional gatherings.

Treat the search and call process of Associate ministers and other educational staff with the same diligence as the Pastorate or Senior minister search and call process.

Include youth, and children when possible, in planning and leadership.

Increase the number of youth and young adults in the committee structure of the church.

Give special attention to the needs and schedules of educators when planning events

Recognize educators as an important demographic in the church when building committees, commissions, and other leadership groups so that issues of educational ministry will have a voice.

Create space for youth and children at all events.

Set measurable goals and high standards that guide clergy and lay leaders while serving as a challenge to local congregations.

General Units

Create space for youth and children at all events.

Include learning and personal growth opportunities at all General Church events.

Give special attention to the needs and schedules of educators when planning events

Provide creative educational & interactive material from each unit & ministry

-Week of compassion, Reconciliation, Overseas Ministry, CCU, etc.

Claim a ministry of "equipping the saints" through workshops, resource sharing, networking, and support curriculum written by Disciples for Disciples

Consider educational ministry as a primary path to addressing justice issues, helping the church understand communal and global issues, and the special needs of children, youth, and seniors.

Encourage General Assembly resolutions focused on education concerns.

Include people of all ages in the planning and leadership of events and increase the number of youth and young adults in the committee structure of the church.

Recognize educators as an important demographic in the church when building committees, commissions, and other leadership groups so that issues of educational ministry will have a voice.

Set measurable goals and high standards that guide ministries and leaders while serving as a challenge to the whole church.

Dry Ridge Christian Church, Dry Ridge, KY

First Christian Church, London, KY

Bethany Christian Church, Nicholasville, KY

Village Christian Church, Auburn, AL

Lawrenceburg Christian Church, Lawrenceburg, KY

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly
ADOPT Business Item No. 0722. (Debate time 12 minutes).