

1 NO. 0922

2
3 (OPERATIONAL BUSINESS ITEM)

4
5 **Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria**
6 **for the Ordering of Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**
7

8
9 WHEREAS, the contexts in which the church finds itself call for fresh attention to the
10 theological foundations and the practical protocols for the ordering of ministry; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) does not presently have a formal
13 denominational statement that seeks to state the theological foundations for our ordering
14 of ministry, as understood in light of our history and polity; and

15
16 WHEREAS, our ability to be clear about our understandings of the Christian Church
17 (Disciples of Christ) foundations for the ordering of ministry is crucial for conversations
18 with our ecumenical partners in the Body of Christ; and

19
20 WHEREAS, the present Licensed constituents of the Christian Church (Disciples of
21 Christ) through the *Nazareth Consensus* have responsibly explored with the larger church
22 the manner in which Licensed ministers

- 23 a) might be provided a track whereby those with adequate preparation could seek
24 Ordination; and
25 b) might be afforded more mobility for circulation in Search and Call; and
26 c) might be designated by a more Biblical nomenclature; and
27 d) might be valued as partners within the whole order of ministry; and
28

29 WHEREAS, a few Regions are already utilizing processes that allow for Ordination
30 without a full *Association of Theological Schools* (A.T.S.) accredited seminary
31 preparation; and

32
33 WHEREAS, a policy and procedure for ministerial credentialing is necessary to address
34 exceptional life situations, including the diverse needs of clergy in the many new church
35 starts we are celebrating in the life of this Communion; and

36
37 WHEREAS, the proposed policy:

- 38 ~ provides a theological foundation for the ordering of ministry that is specific to
39 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
40 ~ affords a necessary statement that will serve us well in our ecumenical
41 conversation with other Communion in the Body of Christ;
42 ~ responds in an appropriate manner to the *Nazareth Consensus* by:
43 a) designating non-Ordained clergy with the more Biblical nomenclature of
44 *Commissioned* rather than *Licensed*;
45 b) creating an Apprentice Track of preparation leading to Ordination without
46 a Master of Divinity degree;

- 47 c) affording mobility through Search and Call for Commissioned Ministers
48 who complete the Apprentice Track and are Ordained; and
49 d) strengthening the recognition of those who serve the church faithfully with
50 this preparation; and
51 ~ recognizes and expands upon those procedures instituted by Regions with
52 alternative paths to Ordination based upon the exceptional life situations,
53 communities, ministry settings, and cultural and ethnic contexts of their
54 ministry candidates;

55
56 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church
57 (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 29 to August 2, 2009, adopt
58 the document, *Theological Foundations and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of*
59 *Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, replacing the 1971 *Policies and*
60 *Criteria For The Order of Ministry* document, which was last revised by the General
61 Assembly in 2003; and

62
63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the church utilizes the next biennium, August 2009 to
64 August 2011 for a period of implementation. This ordering of ministry will become effective
65 August 1, 2011; and

66
67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Commission on Ministry convene a task
68 force to develop a template for an Apprentice Track program addressing the competencies in
69 section II. C. 2 of the document; and

70
71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that General Commission on Ministry will collaboratively
72 work with Regions to:

- 73 • develop their own Apprentice Track (AT) program or one in collaboration with
74 Regional Fellowships [cf. section II.C.3., footnote 12 of the document], theological
75 institutions or ecumenical partners;
- 76 • share their program design with other regions for networking, feedback and sharing
77 best practices;
- 78 • determine how work done in previous Licensed ministry continuing education applies
79 to the Apprentice Track;
- 80 • review the status of each current Licensed minister to determine which category of
81 Commissioned Minister is most appropriate; and
- 82 • revise as necessary any Regional policies to facilitate this transition; and

83
84 FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the present nomenclature be used for clergy until this
85 policy takes effect on August 1, 2011.

86
87
88

General Commission on Ministry