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NO. 0925

(OPERATIONAL BUSINESS ITEM)

**A CALL FOR ACTION
(PROVISIONAL)**

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) honors the individuality and diversity of its various members and expressions of church; is called by God throughout its membership to be a movement for wholeness; and is called to address various issues of a moral, ethical and/or justice nature; and

WHEREAS, the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) states:

37. The general representative body of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be the General Assembly. In all of its worship, deliberation, and ministries, the General Assembly shall seek to manifest the wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) within the one Body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, several methodologies have been tried over the last forty years to address issues of a moral, ethical and/or justice nature with varying degrees of effectiveness, often ending with contention and strife amid our own part of the Body of Christ rather than fostering new growth in faith or witness; and

WHEREAS, the purposes of General Assembly resolutions have been misinterpreted and misreported by members of media and the general public; and

WHEREAS, the act of voting on controversial issues has received more attention than the process of learning about and discerning what God may be calling Disciples to do in our various settings in response to various moral, ethical and/or justice issues; and

WHEREAS, an average of ten Sense of the Assembly resolutions have come for action over the past two biennia, each allowing only a few speakers on either side of the issue to speak for no more than three minutes prior to a vote of the Assembly, often addressing the General Board's recommendation regarding the original submission itself, further limiting the actual discussion on a moral, ethical or justice issue; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform was commissioned by the Administrative Committee of the General Board to consider the effectiveness of Sense of the Assembly Resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform began this work by asking the question "what does it mean to speak to, for and within the church and society" and was empowered by the concept of partnership, accompaniment, and critical presence; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform defined a Call for Action as an invitation of the General Assembly to the Church for action on moral,

50 ethical or justice issues that require urgent presence and witness by the Church in all of
51 its expressions; and

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53 WHEREAS, action may include prayer, study, reflection, discernment and response;
54 those activities and roles will vary according to the context in which Disciples are called
55 to serve, and

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57 WHEREAS, all parts are necessary for the proper working of the body such that it builds
58 itself up through love and is able to be effective in the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16);
59 and

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61 WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform found
62 Galatians 5 helpful as a test for how the Assembly could deal with these hard issues while
63 in accord with the Spirit (5:22-23) as opposed to dealing with them in ways that foster
64 sinful and broken human nature (5:20); and

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66 WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform knows that no
67 solution will be perfect nor will it meet everyone's needs, we also sense that it is a *kairos*
68 moment to define a new way of addressing moral, ethical and/or justice issues at our
69 General Assembly; and

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71 WHEREAS, the Call for Action addresses the process for submission of issues; provides
72 for the selection and adoption of up to four Calls to be submitted to the General
73 Assembly by the General Board; suggests ways in which the General Assembly would
74 engage more fully with the four issues over three days; and provides for a vote on
75 whether each call for action would be sent from the General Assembly to the whole
76 church for appropriate consideration and action; and

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78 WHEREAS, paragraph 45 of *The Design* provides for the introduction of emergency
79 items of business at a General Assembly;

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81 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the standing rules for the General Assembly
82 regarding Items for Reflection and Action, Study Documents and Sense of the Assembly
83 Resolutions be replaced with the following "Call for Action"; and

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85 FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this be considered provisional for the General
86 Assembly meetings in 2011 and 2013, with evaluation by the General Board in 2012 and
87 2014 so that a decision on adoption or further adaptation can be presented to the General
88 Assembly in 2015.

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The General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)