

No. 9141

(Item for Reflection and Research)

CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND MINISTRY**BACKGROUND**

A resolution, "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry," was presented as an Operational Business Item. The resolution resolved that the General Assembly ask "regional commissions on ministry to do whatever necessary to make policies rejecting the ordination of professed and practicing homosexuals, lesbians, or bi-sexuals...and that this be done with appropriate compassion and concern for those persons who are adversely affected by this decision."

The following congregations submitted the original resolution "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry:"

McKernan Christian Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
 Shady Grove Christian Church, Opelika, Alabama
 Mount Vernon Christian Church, Monroe, Georgia
 Antioch Christian Church, Watkinsville, Georgia
 Jonathan Creek Christian Church, Sullivan, Illinois
 First Christian Church, Burrton, Kansas
 Grandview Christian Church, Kansas City, Kansas
 Macksville Christian Church, Macksville, Kansas
 First Christian Church, Overbrook, Kansas
 Oakland Christian Church, Topeka, Kansas
 First Christian Church, Appleton City, Missouri
 Drexel Christian Church, Drexel, Missouri
 First Christian Church, Nevada, Missouri
 First Christian Church, Tonkawa, Oklahoma
 First Christian Church, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania
 First Christian Church, Aiken, South Carolina
 First Christian Church, Crockett, Texas
 First Christian Church, Del Rio, Texas
 First Christian Church, Panhandle, Texas
 Riverside Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas
 Rockwood Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas
 Diamond Springs Christian Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia
 Union Mills Christian Church, New Sharon, Iowa
 Maple Avenue Christian Church, Crooksville, Ohio
 First Christian Church, Marion, Illinois
 Marion Christian Church, Marion, Kansas

In its considered and pastoral judgment, the Executive Committee of the General Board has classified the issue "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry" contained in the Operational Business Item as an Item for Reflection and Research.

The following statement is represented as the "Item for Reflection and Research";

The church is not of one mind on the question concerning homosexuals and ministry. It is believed that rather than a yes or no vote at this time, this is an issue which needs judicious and mature reflection and research in light of a church that is in deep conflict and in need of reconciliation. Involved are a number of connected issues such as principles of biblical interpretation, the definition of sin, the basis for making ethical decisions, the church's authority, Disciple polity, and the nature of ordination.

The church needs to reflect more deeply on the question of ordination of persons who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, studying the biblical foundations of human sexual expression, practice and lifestyle, informed by the fullest possible range of knowledge about human sexuality. The church must faithfully seek to discern the will of God concerning homosexuality and whether persons who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual shall automatically be disqualified as candidates for ordination.