

*continued***No. 9116****(Operational Business Item)****A REVIEW OF THE PREMISE AND STRUCTURES OF MISSION
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)**

WHEREAS, the global mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and its antecedents emerged some 150 years ago out of a sense of faithful response to our Lord's Great Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) continues even today to seek ways by which a faithful response to the gospel of Jesus Christ might be pursued; and

WHEREAS, the historic vision of global mission for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been inherently characterized by the Euro-North American cultural, political, economic and religious context; and

WHEREAS, through the sacrificial efforts of countless missionaries, churches and various service institutions have been established in both the Third World and the minority communities of the United States; and

WHEREAS, these communities in the Third World and in the United States have been radically transformed in their relationship with the West and the majority community in the United States by the cataclysmic events of the past 150 years; and

WHEREAS, over 75% of the world's population and 54% of the world's Christians are non-white, poor, powerless and growing more and more conscious that their poverty is being externally exploited and sustained by the powerful of the world; and

WHEREAS, Third World and minority Christians and women are evolving new theological perceptions of what it means to be a Christian and a church in the context of their own poverty, powerlessness, and oppression; and

WHEREAS, this awareness of their imposed poverty and powerlessness and their new theological perceptions now raise serious questions concerning the relevance of predominantly white, male, Western traditional theological concepts, structures of ecumenism, as well as models of socio-economic development and models for ministry for Third World and minority community churches in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), although having made significant policy changes across the years towards the Third World, the minority communities and women and having drawn up a new statement of mission several years ago continues primarily to pursue its global mission on the basis of the premise and the same institutional structures which informed its work when it began its missionary efforts 150 years ago; and

WHEREAS, continued faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ now demands both that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) acknowledge that the majority of Christians live today in a world radically different from the world-context in which the missionary effort of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was first begun and that the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) listen responsively to the new theological perceptions of the Third World, minority Christians in this country, women, the disabled, the homosexual community today;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 25-30, 1991, appoint a commission to study the current premise and structures of mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada in the light of the present historical situation for a period of two years and to recommend to the 1993 General Assembly, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada and subsequently, to the Church at large, a new theological, economic, cultural, and ecumenical premise and structures of mission upon which a transformed vision of how the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada can be more faithful to our Lord's Great Commission at this time in history; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this be done with the advice, wisdom and direct participation of representatives of Third World churches, with whom we have a fraternal and ecumenical relationship, and with representatives of minority communities, women, youth, the disabled, and the homosexual community here in the United States.

United Christian Church, Levittown, Pennsylvania

(Cost for a commission of a dozen people meeting twice a year for two years could approach \$16,000)

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly NOT ADOPT business item No. 9116 for the following reasons:

Various structures within the church are already struggling with the issues raised in this resolution. In addition, the Task Force on Renewal and Structural Reform is involved in examining the church's structure. This resolution creates an unnecessary new commission, which would not assist in the work already in place on the church's structure. (Debate time 12 minutes)

Financial implications include cost of four meetings, which may well exceed \$16,000 because of number and location of representatives. The Commission on Finance expresses appreciation to the submitters for including a cost estimate.
