

Continued

No. 9122**(Operational Business Item)****ESTABLISHMENT OF A "CHURCH VOCATIONS SUNDAY"
IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)****ADOPTED by the General Assembly**

WHEREAS, God calls all church members to ministry in the world, and within this whole ministry God calls some persons to particular church vocations... "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." (Ephesians 4:7, 11-13a); and

WHEREAS, Church vocations include besides the parish ministry a variety of tasks in many settings, some of which are: directors of Christian education, church musicians, church support staff, chaplains, pastoral counselors, community organizers, administrators and staff of health and service agencies, artists, writers, college and seminary teachers, camp and conference center directors, church business administrators, overseas and homeland mission personnel, and regional and general church personnel; and

WHEREAS, through the ages God has frequently extended the call to leadership and service in church vocations through the congregation; and

WHEREAS, the invitation to ministry by the Holy Spirit is most frequently issued to an individual through another faithful person or persons, such as parents, pastors, church school teachers; and

WHEREAS, the call to ministry has historically been affirmed and nurtured through the church (congregational, regional and/or general) which verifies the gifts and graces for leadership in the church; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is in critical need of leadership for the future as it anticipates that many of our clergy will reach retirement age in the next decade, while the church is pursuing the establishment of several new congregations which will require additional leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) must give attention to calling persons to church vocations, and the "Week of Ministry" observance has a wider focus than the calling of persons to ministry, the care and resourcing of ministerial candidates, or the ongoing education of persons about church vocations; and

WHEREAS, a "Church Vocations Sunday" could help local congregations, regions and the general units of the church to give attention to discerning the gifts and graces for church vocations, and encourage them to take new initiatives to call people to ministry; and

WHEREAS, a "Church Vocations Sunday" could serve to tell the stories about the church's servants; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a "Church Vocations Sunday" would provide the opportunity to inform and update the congregation and interested persons on current needs and changes in church vocations; and

WHEREAS, a "Church Vocations Sunday" would enable the church to focus, prepare, develop and utilize appropriate educational resources concerning church vocations; and

WHEREAS, the preparation for ministry generally exceeds the personal financial resources of ministerial candidates, an emphasis on church vocations could stimulate and challenge individuals and congregations to consider ways of supporting persons preparing for ministry;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 25-30, 1991, urge the Division of Homeland Ministries, through the Department of Ministry, and in consultation with the Pension Fund, the Division of Higher Education, and the Conference of Regional Ministers and Moderators, give careful consideration to the establishment of a specific Sunday in the church program calendar of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to be designated as "Church Vocations Sunday," to be celebrated annually, and that appropriate educational and liturgical resources be developed to assist congregations, regions and general units in the observance of the occasion; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be encouraged to focus worship, preaching and study to appropriately observe "Church Vocations Sunday;" and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission on Ministry in the regions promote "Church Vocations Sunday" observances and help make available educational resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ecumenical approaches, particularly involving the United Church of Christ, be utilized for the development of resources for the observance of "Church Vocations Sunday."