Statements of Witness and Alternate Perspective Reports

How the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) speaks — and allows multiple and diverse perspectives to speak more frequently

GA Business items

2.1. All business items to be considered by the General Assembly shall be submitted to or shall originate with the General Board.
2.2. Business items, as defined by Section 3 of these rules, may be submitted by the corporate body or the governing structure of any:
2.2.1. Congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.2. Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.3. Institution of higher education affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.4. General ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);
2.2.5. Recognized ministry partner of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); or
2.2.6. Organization with a recognized relationship with the general expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An organization affiliated with an expression of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) may submit items through the expression with which they are affiliated.

Classification of Business items

- Reports
- Operational, Policy, and Organizational Items
- **Statements of Witness**
- **Alternate Perspective Reports**, which express an interpretation that contrasts with a proposed Statement of Witness

Two Ways the General Assembly Engages in dialogue and witness



Statement of Witness

An expression of the General Assembly on a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, our nations, or the world.

Sections 3.3.1 – 3.3.4



Alternate Perspective Report

A theological and/or ethical interpretation that contrasts with the one found in a Statement of Witness.

Sections 7.1 – 7.8.1
No new business from the floor

Statements of Witness

Section 3.3

A Statement of Witness is an expression of the General Assembly concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, our nations, or the world. By adopting a Statement, the Assembly declares that the conviction or view expressed is based on Christian insights and is a part of witnessing to Jesus Christ. Statements are developed for the guidance of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in its work through its various ministries, for the consideration of the members and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and for a Christian witness to the world.

What Is a Statement of Witness?

An expression of the General Assembly concerning a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, our nations, or the world.

By adopting one, the Assembly declares the view is based on Christian insights and is part of witnessing to Jesus Christ.

Statements are developed…



For guidance

of the church in its work through its various ministries



For consideration

by members and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



For witness

as a Christian witness to the world

When a Statement Is Disqualified

A Statement of Witness is not eligible for consideration by the General Assembly if:

1

Repeated subject

A Statement on the same subject was considered in the previous four years — unless its content or circumstances are substantially different.

2

Self-promotion

It is of a self-congratulatory or promotional nature.

3

Questions others' faith

Its text brings into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.

4

Test of fellowship

It contains doctrinal statements used as a "test of fellowship." Doctrinal content is permitted if it implies no such test.

Who May Submit a Statement?

Due February 9, 2027

General Board

May originate

As many Statements of Witness as it deems necessary or advisable.

Eligible Entities

May submit

One

Any entity eligible to submit business items may submit no more than one Statement per General Assembly.

Key Submission Dates



Statements of Witness

Due

February 9, 2027

Last day to submit a Statement of Witness for consideration by the General Assembly.



Alternate Perspective Reports

Due

April 10, 2027

Last day to submit an Alternate Perspective Report to the Office of the General Minister and President.

Counting the Cost



Section 3.3.4

If it is relevant to their Statement of Witness, submitters are encouraged to document anticipated costs — through guidelines from the Office of the General Minister and President — to:

1. **Estimate the financial impact**

   Attach an estimate of the item's financial impact, if any, if it were adopted.

2. **Suggest how to underwrite it**

   Propose how any new expense could be funded.

Alternate Perspective Reports

Section 7

What Is an Alternate Perspective Report?

Expresses a theological and/or ethical interpretation that contrasts with the one found in the Statement of Witness.

Informs the General Assembly of the viewpoints found in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Who May Submit an APR?

Due April 10, 2027

Executive Committee

May originate

As many Alternate Perspective Reports as it deems necessary or advisable.

Eligible Entities

May submit

One

Any entity eligible to submit business items may submit no more than one APR per General Assembly.

Timeline Before the Assembly

120

days before

Statements of Witness forwarded by the General Board are made available across the church by the Office of the General Minister and President.

§ 7.2

90

days before

Deadline for Alternate Perspective Reports to be submitted to the Office of the General Minister and President. **Due April 10, 2027**

§ 7.4

60

days before

Executive Committee forwards up to two qualified APRs for each Statement of Witness to the General Assembly.

§ 7.6

Review, Notification and Appeal



Qualification

On the General Minister and President's recommendation, the Executive Committee decides whether each APR qualifies.



Substitution

It may submit one APR on behalf of the General Board to replace several APRs sharing the same perspective.



Notification

If an APR is disqualified or replaced, the submitter is notified with the Committee's rationale — and, for a congregation, the regional minister too.



Appeal

A dissatisfied submitter may appeal to the Executive Committee for reconsideration.

When an APR Is Disqualified

An Alternate Perspective Report is not eligible for consideration if:

Outside the tradition

It does not reflect the historical and/or contemporary witness, theology, and/or ethics of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Questions others' faith

It brings into question the Christian commitment of those who do not agree.

Test of fellowship

It contains doctrinal statements used as a "test of fellowship." Doctrinal content is permitted if it implies no such test.

From Committee to Assembly

2

Maximum qualified APRs forwarded for each Statement of Witness



The EC forwards not recommends

The Executive Committee makes no recommendation. Forwarding an APR does not mean it approves of it or urges that it be attached. (7.7)



Assembly may attach

The General Assembly may attach forwarded APRs to a Statement to show the diversity of interpretation in the church. (7.8)



Integral once attached

An attached APR becomes an integral part of the Statement and is included whenever the Statement is published. (7.8.1)

Side by Side

	Statement of Witness	Alternate Perspective Report
Purpose	Voices the Assembly's conviction on a moral, ethical, or religious matter	Presents a contrasting theological and/or ethical interpretation
Submissions considered by	General Board	Executive Committee
Submitters	Eligible entities — one per Assembly General Board – as many as advisable or necessary	Eligible entities — one per Assembly Executive Committee – as many as advisable or necessary
Disqualifiers	Questions others' Christian commitment; uses a "test of fellowship"	Questions others' Christian commitment; uses a "test of fellowship"
Disqualifiers	Same subject within four years; self-congratulatory or promotional	Falls outside the church's witness, theology, or ethics



Questions and Discussion

