GA-1336
(Operational, Policy and Organizational)
AMENDMENTS TO THE DESIGN
OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Adopted by the General Board

WHEREAS, the Governance Committee of the General Board shall submit recommendations useful for the development of the life, mission, work and organization of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);¹ and

WHEREAS, the Governance Committee shall review The Design and other governance documents for suggested changes and modifications;² and

WHEREAS, the Governance Committee met during the 2013 General Board to fulfill these duties and responsibilities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Orlando, Florida, July 13-17, 2013 approve the following amendments to The Design.³

³ Paragraph 48c shall be filled in accordance with paragraph 64 of The Design. A further explanation is available in the additional background section.
AMENDMENTS:

(New) 42. Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held every second year at a time and place to be fixed by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the General Board. The General Board shall maintain an appropriate process for making such a recommendation. Under extraordinary circumstances the General Board may call special meetings of the General Assembly.

(old) 42. Regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be held every second year at a time and place to be fixed by the General Assembly. Under extraordinary circumstances the General Board may call special meetings of the General Assembly.

(New) 43. The General Assembly shall have such committees as it may deem necessary, including Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall serve as the business committee during the General Assembly and Assembly Program and Arrangements Committee. Committee membership where the election procedures are not further defined by The Design or the Special Rules of the General Assembly shall be elected by the Administrative Committee and reported to the General Board.

(Old) 43. The General Assembly shall have such committees as it may deem necessary, including but not limited to Credentials Committee, which shall certify that voting representatives have been properly accredited; Committee on Reference and Counsel, which shall serve as the business committee during the General Assembly; Assembly Program and Arrangements Committee; and Assembly Time and Place Committee. These committees shall be elected by the General Board on the recommendation of the Administrative Committee.

48. Non-salaried officers of the General Assembly. The non-salaried officers of the General Assembly shall be a Moderator, a **Moderator-Elect**, a First Vice Moderator, a Second Vice Moderator, and such other officers as the General Assembly may from time to time determine. These officers shall be nominated by the General Nominating Committee and elected by the General Assembly for terms of two years, unless otherwise noted.

a. The Moderator shall preside at the sessions of the General Assembly, the General Board, and the Administrative Committee, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies.

b. The Vice Moderators shall assist the Moderator in presiding at the sessions of the General Assembly, the General Board, and the Administrative Committee, and shall assume such other responsibilities as may be assigned by these bodies.

(NEW) c. The **Moderator-Elect** shall serve for two-years and then serve as Moderator for two-years. The **Moderator-Elect** shall assume other responsibilities as may be assigned by the General Board or Administrative Committee.

d. The Moderator and Vice Moderators shall include at least one woman, one man, one lay leader and one minister with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These officers shall take office upon the adjournment of the regular meeting of the General Assembly in which they are elected, and shall hold office through the next regular meeting or until their successors have been elected and installed.
56. The General Board shall consist of members elected for terms of four years. Such elected members shall include laymen, laywomen, and ministers with standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), not more than one-half nor less than one-third of whom shall be ministers. They shall be elected in the following manner:

a. The General Nominating Committee shall nominate, with attention to the full diversity of the church, and the General Assembly shall elect 17 members representing congregations, at least two of whom are between the ages of 18 and 23 at the time of election.

b. The governing body of each Region shall elect one of its members to serve on the General Board.

c. The governing body of each General Ministry shall elect one if its members to serve on the General Board.

d. The governing bodies of the National Bi-Lingual Hispanic Fellowship, North American Pacific Asian Disciples, and the National Convocation shall each elect one of its members to serve on the General Board.

The following shall be members *ex officio*: the Moderators; General Minister and President; two ecumenical members, each from a different North American communion; and the former General Minister and Presidents. The following shall be members *ex officio* without vote: the Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, the Chief Administrative Officer of each general ministry; each regional minister; two Chief Administrative Officers of institutions of higher education designated by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries as representatives of liberal arts education and seminary education.

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d. The governing bodies of the National Bi-Lingual Hispanic Fellowship, North American Pacific Asian Disciples, and the National Convocation shall each elect one of its members to serve on the General Board.

The following shall be members *ex officio*: the Moderators; General Minister and President; two ecumenical members, each from a different North American communion; the former General Minister and Presidents; and the immediate past moderator. The following shall be members *ex officio* without vote: the Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, the Chief Administrative Officer of each general ministry; each regional minister; two Chief Administrative Officers of institutions of higher education designated by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries as representatives of liberal arts education and seminary education.
Terms on the General Board begin and end at the close of the General Assembly. Elected members of the General Board who have served two full consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election until one biennium has elapsed.

Members of the General Board shall begin their terms of service at the beginning of the General Board meeting following their election to the General Board and shall serve until their successors have been elected and qualified. Elected members of the General Board who have served two full consecutive terms shall not be eligible for re-election until one biennium has elapsed.

The General Board shall appoint committees as necessary to facilitate the work of the General Board. General Board committees, when used, will be assigned to reinforce the wholeness of the General Board's job and so as never to interfere with interaction between the General Board and its constituencies.

- General Board committees ordinarily will assist the board by preparing policy alternatives and implications for board deliberation.
- General Board committees may not speak or act for the General Board except when formally given such authority for specific and time-limited purposes.
- The General Board shall maintain Standing Rules that guide and govern its work as assigned in The Design.

The General Board committees are to avoid over-identification with organizational parts rather than the whole. Therefore, a General Board committee that has helped the board create policy on a topic will not be used to monitor organizational performance on that same topic.

General Board committees will be used sparingly and ordinarily in an ad hoc capacity. This policy applies to any group that is formed by General Board action, whether or not it is called a committee and regardless of whether the group includes General Board members.

There shall be an Administrative Committee of the General board elected by the General Board. This Administrative Committee shall consist of 21 persons; 9 members from the voting membership of the General Board; 5 members as ex-officio (The General Minister and President; the Moderator; the Moderator-elect; and the 2 Vice Moderators of the General Assembly); and 7 members as ex-officio without vote (the Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian of the General Assembly; 2 representative from the Council of General Ministries; and 2 representative from the College of Regional Ministers.)
President; the Moderator; and the 2 Vice Moderators of the General Assembly): and 7 members as ex-officio without vote (the Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian of the General Assembly; 2 representative from the Council of General Ministries; and 2 representative from the College of Regional Ministers.)

RECOGNIZED MINISTRY PARTNERS

74. The Administrative Committee may recommend to the General Board relationships of ministry partners and other organizations whose mission and ministry support the overall mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The General Assembly, as coordinated by the Office of the General Minister and President and the Ministry Partner’s sponsor(s), shall appropriately celebrate newly recognized ministry partners.

75. A ministry desiring such recognition shall request such a relationship through an appropriate general ministry. Each General Ministry shall establish evaluation criteria for recommending ministry partners to the Administrative Committee, but shall include at a minimum action by the General Ministry’s governing board.

76. The Administrative Committee shall maintain the criteria by which Ministry Partners are evaluated for recognition beyond the process of a sponsoring General Ministry.

77. The plans and activities of such an organization will be reported to the General Board through the sponsoring general ministry. A review of such reports and the action of the General Board shall be included in the report of the General Board to the General Assembly. Ministry partners failing to report for three consecutive board meetings will be removed from status as a Recognized Ministry Partner.

78. The contact information for the ministry partners shall be listed with the sponsoring ministry of the Year Book and Directory.

OLD
RELATIONSHIPS OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
74. The General Assembly, upon recommendation of the General Board, may recognize relationships of other organizations with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

75. The relationship of such an organization shall be determined with reference to its purpose and function, and normally shall be through a general ministry. A request for such a relationship shall be referred to an appropriate general ministry for negotiation of the basis of relationship.

76. The plans and activities of such an organization may be reported to the General Board through the general ministry with which it is related. A review of such reports and the action of the General Board shall be included in the report of the General Board to the General Assembly.

77. Where relationship through a general ministry is not appropriate or possible, the relationship may be through the Office of the General Minister and President.
Additional Background:
Paragraphs 42 and 43 allow for the General Board to maintain the process, currently The General Assembly Committee, by which the time and place is fixed for each assembly. This previously was an ad hoc committee of the General Assembly. It is now a working committee of the General Board. Final vote of the time and place of the assembly remains with the General Assembly.

Paragraph 48c adds the position Moderator-Elect. The General Board conducted a review and evaluation of why and how often we gather as the General Assembly. The evaluation indicated that there is a steep learning curve as Moderator and that an introductory period, rather than a period of serving after one’s term as moderator, would be more effective. If approved, the moderator-elect would be selected in accordance with Paragraph 64 of The Design. Paragraph 64 indicates that all vacancies are filled by the Administrative Committee and ratified by the General Assembly at its next meeting. The General Nominating Committee will recommend a moderator-elect to the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee will elect the person, forwarding the name to the 2015 Assembly. The 2015 Assembly will ratify the election. This person would then serve as moderator from 2015-2017.

Paragraph 56 removes the past-moderator from the ex-officio list on the General Board. This shall take effect following the 2015 General Assembly.

Paragraph 57 changes the terms of general board members to the terms of the moderators. Currently, the Moderator Team, Administrative Committee and General Board have different beginning and ending cycles, resulting in a 3 out of 4 meetings in a biennium the Administrative Committee has change members. This will time all terms on the General Board, Administrative Committee and Moderator Team to the General Assembly.

Paragraph 59 modifies The Design allowing the General Board to be a working board. Under the old model, the General Board was to use committees sparingly, frequently appointing task groups to work on its behalf. Now the General Board is a working board, organizing itself in committees that continue the work of the board between meetings.

Paragraph 60 changes the membership of the Administrative Committee from 20 to 21 adding the Moderator-elect.

Paragraphs 74-78 clarify the process by which a ministry partner of the church receives official status. This eliminates the category of “other organizations” in the Yearbook, which were simply listed for informational purposes. The new process provides for greater accountability by the ministry partners and a means for removal. Currently, there is not a process to remove a ministry that is recognized by the General Assembly, even if the ministry chooses to no longer report to the General Board, General Assembly or its sponsoring ministry.