RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE "DECADE OF DISCIPLING"

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

Deletions from the original text (as amended by the General Board) are indicated in italics with the word "Delete". Additions to the original text of resolutions (as amended by the General Board) are indicated in boldface type. In order to read a Business Item as originally submitted, read regular type and italics. In order to read a Business Item in the form submitted by the General Board for action, read regular type and boldface.

WHEREAS, God called the Hebrew nation into being and freed that nation from its slavery in Egypt that this people might show God's love to all the world, and

WHEREAS, Jesus sought to bring all persons into relationship with God and proclaimed his mission in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19, RSV), and

WHEREAS, Jesus commissioned his disciples with the words, "...all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20, RSV), and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been a part of this mission in all of its expressions for over 150 years, and

WHEREAS, evangelism has been a continuing priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) specifically designated in resolutions in each General Assembly meeting from August 15-20, 1969, in Seattle, Washington, through August 2-7, 1985, in Des Moines, Iowa, and

WHEREAS, there is a deep yearning for renewal and new life among many of the members and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) so that the will and purposes of God may be accomplished in a suffering, hurting, wounded world, and

WHEREAS, these yearnings have been expressed in a clergy poll including the general, regional, [DELETE: area, district,] and congregational manifestations of the church in which over 1,165 persons, 90.0 per cent of those responding indicated their desire for a "Decade of Discipling" to strengthen the whole church for mission, and

WHEREAS, there is a need for a larger vision, a deeper commitment, a spiritual seeking, a reconciling spirit, and a challenge to action that renewal and new life may occur in every individual Christian life and manifestation of the church: general, regional, [DELETE: area, district, organizational,] and congregational, and

WHEREAS, "a priority aimed at strengthening congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" was introduced by the Disciples general minister and president, endorsed by the Disciples Administrative Committee in its February 8-10, 1987, meeting and received by the General Board as a 12 year priority to be recommended to the General Assembly for adoption, and

WHEREAS, there is a recognition that at particular times in the life of the church there are greater needs in some areas of ministry than in others, so that all units, regions and congregations [DELETE: agencies, and organizations] might be strengthened to fulfill their ministries in the world in a significant way:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, October 16-21, 1987, designate the next 10 years [DELETE: 1990's] as a "Decade of Discipling" with the following emphases:

1. That the central priority of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) be to develop vital congregations as dynamic faith communities in prophetic, redemptive and reconciling ministries to the whole world [DELETE: for the decade of the 1990s be the renewal of congregational life] with major emphasis on evangelism, new church establishment and spiritual growth, with a specific goal that the church become a numerically growing church by the year 1995 and a spiritually growing church throughout the decade.

2. That each congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) review its ten-year history of numerical growth, set specific goals to become a numerically growing congregation by 1995, evaluate its numerical growth at the end of each church year, and challenge its leadership to be actively committed to an annual program of evangelism throughout the next decade. [DELETE: to participate in one evangelistic growth event or program each year during the decade,]
That each congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) review its spiritual life and programming, and set appropriate goals for strengthening the spiritual growth of the congregation including the deepening of worship, the formation of Bible study and prayer groups, and taking whatever other steps the congregation deems necessary to improve its spiritual dimension.

That the General Minister and President launch the priority by calling upon all manifestations of the church to be in a [DELETE: That the "Decade of Discipling" be launched with a churchwide] time of prayer and reconsecration as each moves to claim the priority as its own. On Pentecost Sunday 1988, [DELETE: calling upon] all persons in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are encouraged to recommit themselves to God through Jesus Christ, to the renewal of congregational life, and to the whole mission of the church.

That the regions [DELETE: areas, and districts] of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) continue intentionally to program and assist congregations in evangelistic [DELETE: numerical] and spiritual growth by providing staff assistance, resource materials, [DELETE: regional, area, and district growth] seminars, workshops, and [DELETE: programs]; such other assistance as may be requested by the congregations.

That the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) [DELETE: the National Evangelistic Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ);] and the Board of Church Extension will continue to work to strengthen in all ways possible leadership and resourcing in the areas of evangelistic renewal and new church establishment; and the National Evangelistic Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will continue to work to support all the manifestations of the church especially the Division of Homeland Ministries.

That all general units, regions, and congregations [DELETE: agencies, organizations, and ministries] of the church continue their vital involvement in the total mission of the church during the decade and that each of these manifestations [DELETE: units agencies and recognized organizations] of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) commit itself to promoting, encouraging, and undergirding the evangelistic [DELETE: numerical] and spiritual growth of the church through direct and indirect means that are appropriate. [DELETE: for each manifestation of the church.]

That the general minister and president challenge all general units, regions, congregations, and especially the Division of Homeland Ministries and the National Evangelistic Association, [DELETE: agencies, and organizations with recognized relationships with the] of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to develop specific goals and objectives within the church-wide planning process which will move the church to be an evangelistically growing church through the next decade with regular reports by the general minister and president on the church’s growth at each General Assembly. [DELETE: through the year 2001.]

[DELETE: 9. Be it further resolved that those units, agencies, and organizations with recognized relationships to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) committed to and responsible for areas of mission for the whole church be responsible for additional visioning, formulating specific programs, providing leadership, and ensuring implementation for the major emphasis of the decade subject to the appropriate reporting and decision-making channels of the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).]
Concluded