No. 9141

(Item for Reflection and Research)

CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALS AND MINISTRY

BACKGROUND

A resolution, "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry," was presented as an Operational Business Item. The resolution resolved that the General Assembly ask "regional commissions on ministry to do whatever necessary to make policies rejecting the ordination of professed and practicing homosexuals, lesbians, or bi-sexuals...and that this be done with appropriate compassion and concern for those persons who are adversely affected by this decision."

The following congregations submitted the original resolution "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry:"

- McKernan Christian Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
- Shady Grove Christian Church, Opelika, Alabama
- Mount Vernon Christian Church, Monroe, Georgia
- Antioch Christian Church, Watkinsville, Georgia
- Jonathan Creek Christian Church, Sullivan, Illinois
- First Christian Church, Burriion, Kansas
- Grandview Christian Church, Kansas City, Kansas
- Macksville Christian Church, Macksville, Kansas
- First Christian Church, Overbrook, Kansas
- Oakland Christian Church, Topeka, Kansas
- First Christian Church, Appleton City, Missouri
- Drexel Christian Church, Drexel, Missouri
- First Christian Church, Nevada, Missouri
- First Christian Church, Tonkawa, Oklahoma
- First Christian Church, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania
- First Christian Church, Aiken, South Carolina
- First Christian Church, Crockett, Texas
- First Christian Church, Del Rio, Texas
- First Christian Church, Panhandle, Texas
- Riverside Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas
- Rockwood Christian Church, Fort Worth, Texas
- Diamond Springs Christian Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia
- Union Mills Christian Church, New Sharon, Iowa
- Maple Avenue Christian Church, Crooksville, Ohio
- First Christian Church, Marion, Illinois
- Marion Christian Church, Marion, Kansas

In its considered and pastoral judgment, the Executive Committee of the General Board has classified the issue "Concerning Homosexuals and Ministry" contained in the Operational Business Item as an Item for Reflection and Research.

The following statement is represented as the "Item for Reflection and Research":

The church is not of one mind on the question concerning homosexuals and ministry. It is believed that rather than a yes or no vote at this time, this is an issue which needs judicious and mature reflection and research in light of a church that is in deep conflict and in need of reconciliation. Involved are a number of connected issues such as principles of biblical interpretation, the definition of sin, the basis for making ethical decisions, the church's authority, Disciple polity, and the nature of ordination.

The church needs to reflect more deeply on the question of ordination of persons who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, studying the biblical foundations of human sexual expression, practice and lifestyle, informed by the fullest possible range of knowledge about human sexuality. The church must faithfully seek to discern the will of God concerning homosexuality and whether persons who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual shall automatically be disqualified as candidates for ordination.