

NO. 1122
(OPERATIONAL, POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL ITEM)

PREVENTING SEXUAL ABUSE AND MINISTERING TO ITS VICTIMS

WHEREAS, the act of the sexual abuser is illegal, sinful and inconsistent with the love of God as revealed in Jesus; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the church respond compassionately, comprehensively and effectively to victims; and

WHEREAS, we, as the body of Christ in the world, have a responsibility to minister to all those who suffer; and

WHEREAS, in order to prevent sexual abuse, we must acknowledge that some clergy and other church leaders have abused their power and authority to violate boundaries and engaged in inappropriate sexual behaviors and relationships;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that all expressions of the church – congregations, regions, and general ministries - nurture the spiritual wholeness of victims of sexual abuse and provide avenues for healing and reconciliation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Assembly acknowledges that each situation requires individualized care and response as the church seeks to walk with victims of abuse on their journey of healing; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 9-13, 2011 in Nashville, Tennessee, calls all expressions of the church to:

- minister to all those who have suffered from sexual abuse
- stand in solidarity with all victims
- provide sexual abuse prevention education for children and adults
- adapt church space and plan transportation to reduce the privacy that can permit sexual misconduct to occur
- adopt misconduct prevention policies that provide a structure for investigation, action, and follow-up on complaints of sexual misconduct
- employ psychological testing, require criminal background checks and boundary training for candidates for the Order of Ministry
- require criminal background checks and sexual abuse prevention education for all paid and volunteer staff

General Commission on Ministry