NO. 0925

(OPERATIONAL BUSINESS ITEM)

A CALL FOR ACTION
(PROVISIONAL)

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) honors the individuality and
diversity of its various members and expressions of church; is called by God throughout
its membership to be a movement for wholeness; and is called to address various issues
of a moral, ethical and/or justice nature; and

WHEREAS, the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) states:

37. The general representative body of the Christian Church (Disciples of
Christ) shall be the General Assembly. In all of its worship, deliberation,
and ministries, the General Assembly shall seek to manifest the
wholeness and unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) within
the one Body of Christ; and

WHEREAS, several methodologies have been tried over the last forty years to address
issues of a moral, ethical and/or justice nature with varying degrees of effectiveness,
often ending with contention and strife amid our own part of the Body of Christ rather
than fostering new growth in faith or witness; and

WHEREAS, the purposes of General Assembly resolutions have been misinterpreted and
misreported by members of media and the general public; and

WHEREAS, the act of voting on controversial issues has received more attention than
the process of learning about and discerning what God may be calling Disciples to do in
our various settings in response to various moral, ethical and/or justice issues; and

WHEREAS, an average of ten Sense of the Assembly resolutions have come for action
over the past two biennia, each allowing only a few speakers on either side of the issue
to speak for no more than three minutes prior to a vote of the Assembly, often
addressing the General Board’s recommendation regarding the original submission
itself, further limiting the actual discussion on a moral, ethical or justice issue; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform was
commissioned by the Administrative Committee of the General Board to consider the
effectiveness of Sense of the Assembly Resolutions; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform began this work
by asking the question “what does it mean to speak to, for and within the church and
society” and was empowered by the concept of partnership, accompaniment, and
critical presence; and
WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform defined a Call for Action as an invitation of the General Assembly to the Church for action on moral, ethical or justice issues that require urgent presence and witness by the Church in all of its expressions; and

WHEREAS, action may include prayer, study, reflection, discernment and response; those activities and roles will vary according to the context in which Disciples are called to serve, and

WHEREAS, all parts are necessary for the proper working of the body such that it builds itself up through love and is able to be effective in the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-16); and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform found Galatians 5 helpful as a test for how the Assembly could deal with these hard issues while in accord with the Spirit (5:22-23) as opposed to dealing with them in ways that foster sinful and broken human nature (5:20); and

WHEREAS, the Standing Committee on Renewal and Structural Reform knows that no solution will be perfect nor will it meet everyone’s needs, we also sense that it is a kairos moment to define a new way of addressing moral, ethical and/or justice issues at our General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Call for Action addresses the process for submission of issues; provides for the selection and adoption of up to four Calls to be submitted to the General Assembly by the General Board; suggests ways in which the General Assembly would engage more fully with the four issues over three days; and provides for a vote on whether each call for action would be sent from the General Assembly to the whole church for appropriate consideration and action; and

WHEREAS, paragraph 45 of The Design provides for the introduction of emergency items of business at a General Assembly;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the standing rules for the General Assembly regarding Items for Reflection and Action, Study Documents and Sense of the Assembly Resolutions be replaced with the following “Call for Action”; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this be considered provisional for the General Assembly meetings in 2011 and 2013, with evaluation by the General Board in 2012 and 2014 so that a decision on adoption or further adaptation can be presented to the General Assembly in 2015.

The General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly
ADOPT Business Item No. 0925. (Debate time: 24 minutes)