

## No. 0320

(Operational Business Item)

### IMMIGRATION, MINISTRY AND HISPANIC PASTORS

**ADOPTED** by the General Assembly

**WHEREAS**, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada was founded largely by immigrants, such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell; and

**WHEREAS**, the US Census estimates that 36 million Hispanic Americans live in the country, comprising 12.7 percent of the population. The growth of the Hispanic community has been astounding, increasing by almost 30 millions in forty years and becoming the largest minority group in the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, it is estimated that a third of all Hispanic Americans were born in the US and in its territories, such as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. The remaining two-thirds are immigrants who must comply with strict requirements in order to become legal residents; and

**WHEREAS**, in the aftermath of the sad events of September 11, 2001, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) became part of the Department of Homeland Security. The security concerns have further complicated the immigration processes for all foreign nationals; and

**WHEREAS**, although our denomination has planted over fifty new Hispanic congregations during the last ten years, during the same period our church has only produced sixteen ordained Hispanic ministers and currently we only have eight Hispanic seminarians; and

**WHEREAS**, one of the main goals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is to become an anti-racist, pro-reconciliation church; and

**WHEREAS**, the vision that guides our denomination calls for the establishment of a thousand new congregations by 2020, many of which will serve the Hispanic community;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that, insofar as it does not weaken our overseas partner churches, the General Assembly supports the recruitment of immigrant Hispanic ministers who may help us to revitalize existing congregations and establish new ones; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly calls upon the different regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to support the recruitment of qualified Hispanic ministers in cooperation with our partner churches in Latin American and the Caribbean and in collaboration with the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and the Division of Overseas Ministries, as one means toward remedying the shortfall of Hispanic pastors; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Refugee and Immigration Ministries office of Disciples Home Missions (DHM) and the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries make available to all Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) regions and Hispanic congregations bilingual resources about religious-worker immigration processes.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that DHM's Office of Christian Vocation and the Division of Higher Education be intentional in the development and search for Hispanic pastoral leadership in the United States and Canada, networking with the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and with Church Extension's New Church Ministries Office to facilitate pastoral support; and that search efforts to secure Hispanic pastoral leadership beyond the United States and Canada be conducted in collaboration with the Division of Overseas Ministries.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly affirms the ministry of those Disciple ministers who came to our nation as immigrants and who serve faithfully our congregations.