

Suggested title: Report of the Study of Ministry Commission

Resolution: NEW

Financial Implications: None

Sponsoring Agency: General Board of Discipleship

A petition to the 2008 General Conference:

WHEREAS, the 2004 General Conference established a four-year commission for the study of ministry, the purpose of which was to theologically discuss and clearly define the ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church;

WHEREAS, the Study of Ministry Commission has sought to fulfill its purpose by provoking conversations within the whole church through an exploration of the scriptural, theological, ecclesial and practical groundings that define our distinct ministries within our common Christian relationship through baptism; and

WHEREAS, an examination of the results of these conversations within central and annual conferences, boards of ordained ministry, focus groups, gatherings of the orders of deacons and elders, and the fellowships of local pastors has revealed diversity of opinion and conflicting views on the ordering of ministry; and

WHEREAS, the theological foundations and the consequent practices of ministry within The United Methodist Church reflect fundamental differences in the ecclesiologies of our predecessor denominations that are Anglican, Catholic, Reformed, Pietist, Orthodox, and Evangelical; and these differences have not been adequately addressed through the processes of merger and union; and

WHEREAS, the need for ongoing study and dialogue has become increasingly apparent in order to fully include in these ministry conversations voices from the central conferences, the ecumenical church, and the cultural and ethnic communities that make up The United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, the four-year life cycle of the commissions that have been established by General Conference to address the unfinished agenda for the ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church have proven to be insufficient for the completion of a task of such significance; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has prepared a study document on ministry in The United Methodist Church which includes a vision for an ordering of ministry that addresses historical and contemporary issues related to ecclesiology, ordination, and conference membership,

***Therefore, be it resolved* that the 2008 General Conference receive the work of the Study of Ministry Commission and refer its report, “Minutes of Several Conversations,” to the church for ongoing study and conversation through the 2009–2012 quadrennium for the purpose of clarifying the vision and building consensus for the ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church.**

***Be it further resolved* that the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the General Board of Discipleship and the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns prepare a study guide for ongoing study and dialogue based on the Commission's report and recommended vision which will provide a process that will engage the lay members of the church, the orders of deacons and elders, the fellowships of local pastors, the bishops and cabinets, the boards of ordained ministry, the central conferences, and the ethnic constituencies in conversations on the ordering of ministry in The United Methodist Church.**

For additional text of this petition go to: www.GBOD.org/gc2008