

No. 9920

(Operational Business Item)

NEW CONGREGATION ESTABLISHMENT (NCE)

ADOPTED by the General Assembly

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was born out of a desire to be faithful to the word of God, including the great commission of Jesus when he said, "Go and make disciples...." Our ancestors heard that call and allowed themselves to be used by God. At the dawn of the twentieth century they were establishing approximately 300 new faith communities each year.

At the 1989 General Assembly, our Church set a goal of starting 200 new congregations by the end of this decade. We have fallen short; however, we have had 149 starts as of this Assembly. The New Congregation Establishment (NCE) office, working in partnership with regions, areas and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is hopeful that the spirit of the Lord flowing through our Church will energize us to be used by Him as we continue the task of making disciples. The general office of NCE will help regions/areas strengthen the establishment of new church starts as well as support their pastors and staff through training, financial aid, resourcing and prayer.

We now stand at the dawn of yet another century. Our task is still to "Go and make disciples...." If our Church is to remain faithful to *that* mandate, and that is our hope, then we must accept the challenges and opportunities that are opening up to us to reach out to the vast mission field of unchurched persons in our communities and the world.

We are resolving two concerns that the NCE ministry has had: congregational support for starting new communities of faith and a lack of funds for these new communities. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has called a group of persons committed to making the mandate of Jesus a reality by "investing in new communities of faith." On June 1, 1998 the NCE ministry called into being the office of "Vision Builders!," and the Reverend Deborah R. Thompson assumed the leadership as Director.

Vision Builders!, the promotional and development arm of New Congregation Establishment, is cultivating a network of region/area builders' clubs seeking pledges and major gifts for NCE from individuals. It is our hope to have a core of Vision Builders! in each congregation providing support in every way for evangelism and new congregation establishment. Twelve regions and areas are participating in the first phase of the Vision Builders! Club Network. They are: Alabama/Northwest Florida, Arkansas, Central Rocky Mountain, the Coastal Plains Area of the

Christian Church in the Southwest, Kansas, Mid-America, Northwest, Ohio, Pacific Southwest, Pennsylvania, the Trinity Brazos Area of the Christian Church in the Southwest and Virginia.

Vision Builders! is working with the Christian Church Foundation (CCF) and Board of Church Extension's (BCE's) development office on a planned giving program. Another program of Vision Builders! known as "Linkages," will help link congregations and regions/areas in capital campaigns with those new congregations and regions/areas with capital needs.

Moreover, an exciting piece of the Vision Builders! ministry is the call extended to volunteers across our denomination to help construct the first worship unit of Disciples congregations.

The Reverend Vertie Powers was called as Director of New Congregation Establishment September 1, 1998. The General Board mandated ministry of NCE continues to be funded in small measure by Basic Mission Finance (BMF) with greater funding coming from individuals, regions/areas and general units. Administrative oversight continues to be provided by Board of Church Extension.

The call for the establishment of new faith communities remains clear as we enter the new millennium and beyond. We have been given power from on high to launch out into the deep and let God's light shine through us, "so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

WHEREAS, we the members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) acknowledge and reaffirm our call to extend the kingdom of God by establishing new congregations; and

WHEREAS, we identified the New Congregation Establishment ministry as one of the mission imperatives of the Church, as stated in Resolution 9523 approved by the 1995 General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the 1997 General Assembly approved Resolution 9722, calling into being the promotional and development arm of NCE now known as Vision Builders!, which will provide funding to turn our dreams of new faith communities into realities; and

WHEREAS, in this decade, we have started 149 new congregations within 29 regions and areas of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): 122 of the 149 are still involved in active ministries, and of these 122, 14 are African-American, 21 are American-Asian, 37 are Caucasian, 2 are Haitian, 40 are Hispanic, 6 are Multi-Cultural and 2 are Native-American; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) prayerfully guided by the Holy Spirit and Scripture will continue to allow the Lord of the harvest to direct our efforts in establishing new congregations;

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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, as members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), will become actively involved in carrying out the great commission in our congregations and in starting new communities of faith by becoming spirited Vision Builders! visionaries.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, October 8-12, 1999, celebrates and recognizes the following congregations, which have been established and/or received since the 1997 Denver General Assembly.

Alabama/NW Florida	Helena, AL	Grace Christian Church
Arkansas	Lowell, AR	Millwood Christian Church
Capital Area	Silver Spring, MD	Whosoever Will Christian Church
Georgia	Cherry Log, GA	Cherry Log Christian Church
	Duluth, GA	Chattahoochee Christian Church
	Gainesville, GA	Spirit of Joy Christian Church
Indiana	Indianapolis, IN	Christ the King Christian Church
Kentucky	Lexington, KY	Capilla Cristiana
Oklahoma	Langley, OK	South Grand Lake Christian Church
	Oklahoma City, OK	Iglesia Cristiana de Capitol Hill
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA	Primera Iglesia Cristiana
		Discipulous de Cristo de Filadelfia
	Millersville, PA	Disciples United Community CH
	Pittsburgh, PA	Open Arms Christian Church
Northeastern	Newark, NJ	Eglise Evangelique Ebenezer
	Uniondale, NY	Evangelical Crusade of Uniondale
South Carolina	Fairfax, SC	United Love
	Summerville, SC	Deliverance Christian Church
Southwest	Garland, TX	First Chinese Christian Church
	Dallas, (Stevens Park) TX	Iglesia Cristiana Hispanic
	Dallas, TX	Iglesia Cristiana
	Farmington, NM	United Christian Church
	Fort Worth, TX	Angel of Hope Christian Church