

NO. 0727
(OPERATIONAL BUSINESS ITEM)
FUNDING FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRY

BACKGROUND

In 1999 the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) embraced the 20/20 Vision that proclaimed four Mission Imperatives that would guide our church's ministry through the first two decades of the new millennium.

The Mission Imperatives gave us a four-fold thrust:

- Becoming an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church
- The formation of 1,000 new congregations by 2020
- The transformation of 1,000 current congregations by 2020
- The calling and forming of new leaders and the continuing re-forming of current leaders

Efforts toward becoming an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church had already begun and were almost immediately expanded. The funding for this imperative has come from the Reconciliation Offerings and is heavily dependent upon committed volunteers.

We celebrate the great success and new life in the area of starting 1,000 new churches by 2020. To date, nearly 500 new congregations have been formed. Funding for this effort has been underwritten by the Pentecost offering and Church Extension. Church Extension has provided leadership for this priority.

The transformation of 1,000 existing congregations by 2020 has been going on, but received a great boost in 2004 when Disciple Home Missions and the College of Regional Ministers decided to pool their efforts to spread the movement across the whole church. This is the most recent of the Mission Imperatives to be widely embraced. What funding support the imperative has received has come from individuals, congregations, regions, and other partners.

Leadership for this imperative has come from a diverse group of interested persons including pastors of congregations involved in congregational transformation, staff persons from Disciples Home Missions, Division of Overseas Ministries, Church Extension, and the College of Regional Ministers. An organized effort to nurture this imperative came when 17 persons came together on January 24-26, 2005 to plan a conference on congregational transformation. This team received funding from the College of Regional Ministers, an Oreon E. Scott Foundation grant, Disciples Home Missions, Division of Overseas Ministries, Church Extension and Brite Divinity School. Additional support for the planning came from the individual team members who volunteered many hours of work and some who paid their own expenses both to the planning meeting and the event in Texas.

The team became known as the "Transformation Planning Team." Disciples Home Missions provided a place to house the work and devoted staff time and administrative support as well as

some monetary support. This work was done with the vision that a Conference on Congregational Transformation would undergird for the whole church the vision and task of transforming 1,000 congregations by 2020.

Journeying the Good News Road, A Conference on Congregational Transformation occurred January 18 - 20, 2006, in Arlington, Texas, with participants coming from thirty-two of the thirty-three regions; and

WHEREAS, we understand ourselves to be a covenant people and believe that every congregation, Region and General Ministry should together seek transformation and new life in Christ; and

WHEREAS, we understand that it is our responsibility and vision to invite all people into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and it is through vital, healthy congregations that this takes place; and

WHEREAS, many partners have come together to provide resources and leadership for the church and have accomplished these tasks through grants and allocations from a variety of groups within the church. "*Journeying the Good News Road*" has been a part of a positive movement toward the priority for congregational transformation, but it is only a beginning. There is much work going on and much more that needs to be done; and

WHEREAS, directed funding for the church wide priorities to transform 1000 congregations has not been developed; and

WHEREAS, directed funding is in place for other priorities; and

WHEREAS, we are a people who embrace the abundance of a gracious God and we believe that the Spirit of God will increase the resources available for the transforming ministry of the whole church, as we keep faith with God's call for us to be renewed and changed (Romans 12:1-2);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Minister and President use such vehicles as available to the office to develop adequate funding for the church's ministry of congregational transformation; and

FURTHERMORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a plan be in place as soon as possible but not later than December 31, 2008; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a special offering be taken during General Assembly meeting at Ft. Worth, Texas, July 21-25, 2007, for congregational transformation.

First Christian Church, Vincennes, IN
Faith Christian Church, Omaha, NE
First Christian Church, Edwardsville, IL
United Christian Church, Livermore, CA
Christian Church in Northern California-Nevada Transformation Team

The General Board recommends that the General Assembly
ADOPT Business Item No. 0727. (Debate time 12 minutes).