

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
CHURCHES SUPPORTING CHURCHES RESPONSE TO KATRINA  
CSC PASTORS INSTITUTE SERIES - TRAUMA AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY  
JUNE 2006

Introduction

This describes a series of two-day CSC-Pastors Institutes (CSC-PI) focused on thirty-six New Orleans pastors and families and then on financial aspects of reconstruction, leadership development and technical assistance for spiritual and physical reconstruction. We seek funding to support these institutes and to provide monthly pre-sabbatical stipends and travel costs for these pastors to unite to re-establish their congregations.

This is part of the Churches Supporting Churches (CSC) Response to Katrina. CSC is concerned about the total Gulf Coast and this as the model for work in all of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. CSC includes the Bishop for Louisiana and Mississippi African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Friends Service Committee, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Church of the Brethren, Every Church a Peace Church, Mennonite Church USA, National Council of Churches, Presbyterian Church, USA and the Progressive National Baptist Convention represented by their First Vice President.

This Churches Supporting Churches (CSC) National Working Group is a strategy for comprehensive assistance with thirty-six African America congregations in twelve areas of New Orleans where Katrina destroyed or seriously damaged their facilities to “Restart, Reopen, Repair or Rebuild the Churches in order for them to be agents for Community Development and to recreate their Community”. The **Strategy** includes strengthening the capacities of the pastors and their families, a **Formula** for the relevant distribution of potential resources to re-build the “bricks and mortar” and spiritual life of these congregations in partnership with 360 national congregations (ten @) over three years, and to develop a **Plan** for re-creation of their neighborhoods and communities. A national advocacy program is planned for economic and racial justice by the participating congregations. Enclosed is a partial list of the first NOLA congregations.

Historic Role of African-American Churches

John J. DiIulio, Jr. is Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania, and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and the Manhattan Institute. He served in 2001 as the first director White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

DiIulio’s research has established that almost 75% of black, urban churches engage in significant community outreach programs, contributing billions of dollars per year to the “social capital” of America’s cities through a myriad of programs, from after-school and mentoring programs to community development corporations and neighborhood revitalization projects. Black Americans are in many ways the most religious people in America: Some 82% of blacks (versus 67 percent of whites) are church members; 82% (versus 55% of whites) say that religion is “very important in their life.” In their book,

*The Black Church in the African-American Experience*, Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya surveyed 1,900 black ministers and more than 2,100 black churches. They conclude that black churches are more socially active in their communities than white churches, and tend to participate in a greater range of community programs.

The religious faith of Black Americans is as vital today as it was in 1899 when W.E.B. Dubois observed that “the [Black] church has become a center of social intercourse to a degree unknown in white churches....Consequently all movements for social betterment are apt to center in the churches.” Central to DiJulio’s research is the notion that black churches support their members and their communities in time of trauma and dislocation, a fact borne out by the nation’s post-Katrina experience, where we have witnessed the largest “transfer of capital” in black church history, as churches from around the nation came to the aid of their sisters and brothers in the Gulf region.

### Proposed CSC-Pastors Institute Program Series

The first Pastors Institute will provide program, food and lodging and travel expenses for the thirty-six pastors and their spouses to participate in the Churches Supporting Churches Pastoral Retreat Series including the CSC National Working Group. The purpose of the first retreat, scheduled for June 28-30 is to help process the trauma and destruction of their churches and homes in order to help their members and local community leader’s deal with the Katrina reality as they return. The June Strategies for Trauma Awareness Resilience (STAR) program is with a team of African American specialists in pastoral care. STAR was established for pastors by Church World Service and Eastern Mennonite University in response to 9/11. STAR originally paid for all travel and tuition expenses however now it is tuition based or a modest fee for service. STAR is excited to be involved in the plan and we hope to have them lead the fourth monthly Pastors Institute on Justice and Peace-building in relation to community development.

Continuation subsidized CSC-Pastors Institutes are designed to address issues of re-preparation of their capacity to be effective in their future ministry and leading the rebuilding their communities. The goal is for monthly two-day Pastor Institutes in conjunction with CSC regular meetings with the National Working Group and NOLA leadership. We’ve asked the first thirty-six CSC NOLA congregations to designate a 5-10 person leadership-teams from their congregation to be trained in community development and community organization and to be participants in these “Pastors Institutes”.

The projected monthly CSC-Pastors Institutes (after the June Pastor/Spouse retreat) could include the 36 core CSC-NOLA Pastors, 180 other pastors (five @) adopted by their congregations, and depending on the topics 180-360 community development team leaders. This is designed to establish a critical mass of approximately five hundred trained Faith-based NOLA leadership working on the same page for the future of their community! At the June 28-30 gathering the initial six month calendar for the regular meeting and CSC Pastor Institutes will be scheduled.

The second CSC-Pastors Institute will focus on financial and development issues and technical assistance. This two-day session with finance, banking, insurance and legal

specialists will bring together some interested firms and individuals willing to provide this type of technical assistance with this group of pastors. The CSC views this as a leadership education and capacity building event for the pastors and not the discussion of contracts or design of projects and partnerships. The other monthly two-day institutes will cover a wide range of financial and development literacy topics bringing in architects, bankers, community developers, insurance specialists and public advocacy specialists in conjunction with CSC monthly meetings to help pastors deal with the forms, procedures and strategy for re-development of their groups and communities.

Third in the series is on Habitat for Humanity to inform the pastors on the design of a 100 home Habitat plan for the immediate neighborhoods around these thirty-six Churches. Habitat has raised a significant funds for this for this and we are confident the National Council of Churches can help facilitate this process. This could mean an immediate initiative for 3,600 homes on land designated or owned by local church/ community members. In the Habitat model local members could volunteer as well as members from the 360 national partner congregations. The concept of an interim home for the returning pastor and returning members next to the congregation is a possibility for the thirty-six congregations. Habitat-NOLA is willing to discuss these possibilities.

Fourth is on nonviolence, justice and community building. The issues in the aftermath of The Katrina catastrophe exposed again the evils of poverty, and racial injustice in this region and throughout the US identified by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. nearly four decades ago. This Kingian Legacy is the context to address the moral and practical challenges to address these conditions. We need conceptual and organizational skills to wage the upcoming long term struggle for economic and racial justice.

Churches Supporting Churches supports an even longer series of CSC-Pastors Institutes to extend and expand the development capacities of these leaders and their congregations. This includes training on implementation programs of local NOLA congregations distributing Church World Service (CWS) emergency return provisions for returning congregation and other community people. The CWS has indicated they will help develop such provision packets to support the Katrina Gulf Coast congregations' ministries and solicit CWS congregations to support the program. The CSC-NOLA pastors and congregations are identifying their priority needs and CSC National Working Group will use this as a road-map to raise national support. At the June 28-30 Pastors Institute an initial calendar will be created for the first six months of Pastors Institutes.

### Conclusion

We know the restoration of these strategic congregations and re-creation of their neighborhoods and communities begins with their immediate personal needs as pastors and restoration of their congregations. We are hopeful that your resources will be available to provide support and assistance for the vision. We need your help.

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