

Keeping you informed of our mutual ministries

EXTENSION

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BOARD OF CHURCH EXTENSION OF DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

BCE Dinner Opens Hearts, Minds and Doors

It was an evening centered around one of the most crucial issues facing congregations today ... the importance of making church facilities accessible for all people. With nearly 600 people attending the Board of Church Extension General Assembly dinner in Denver, guests were challenged by keynote speaker Virginia Thornburgh, director, Religion and Disability Program for the National Organization on Disability in Washington, D.C.

Thornburgh, co-author of the book *That All May Worship*, encouraged congregations to welcome all people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities into the church. "In a church where people are treated with dignity and respect, pity is replaced with empowerment," she emphasized.

In a passionate plea to churches, she added, "God is calling us to remodel our minds and hearts as we remodel our sanctuaries. In doing so, we will be blessed in amazing ways."

According to Thornburgh, the National Organization on Disability promotes the acceptance and full participation in all aspects of life of America's 49 million men, women and children with physical, sensory or mental disabilities.

During the dinner, awards of recognition were presented to four individuals and one congregation in appreciation for their ongoing support of the ministries of Board of Church Extension of Disciples of Christ and the denominational program of New Congregation Establishment.

Awards of appreciation were given to William and Mae Nelson, Bellingham, Wash.; Esther King Davis, Milan, Tenn.; Jack Pecsok, Indianapolis, Ind.; and Central Christian Church in Decatur, Ill.

During the recognition of the Nelsons, Ellen Mitchell, assistant vice president for development, praised their commitment to the church and to BCE. The Nelsons are members of First Christian Church, Bellingham.

Esther King Davis was honored for making a significant gift to the New Congregation Establishment program. She is a member of First Christian Church in Milan.

(See "Dinner" page 2)



At the BCE General Assembly dinner in Denver, Virginia Thornburgh encouraged congregations to welcome all people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities into the church.

Dinner

(From page 1)

Dr. Sue Amyx, associate minister of Central Christian Church, Decatur, Ill., accepted an award of appreciation on behalf of her congregation for its significant gift to the denomination's ministry of New Congregation Establishment.

James L. Powell, president of BCE, stated, "Central Christian has a long commitment of support to ministries of the whole Church. This congregation and its leaders are renowned for their active involvement and participation in community, regional and general Church work."

Recognized for his professional skills and support was Jack Pecsok, a BCE consulting architect from Indianapolis. He was honored for his 27 years of service to the Board.

Pecsok has assisted a total of 265 congregations as they struggled to

solve building needs and discover solutions for accessibility. He is a member of First Christian Church in Noblesville.

Other dinner highlights included the premiere of the BCE video, "Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors." The video features nine Disciples congregations that have made their facilities and ministries more accepting and accessible for people with disabilities.

Accessibility Fund to be Created

Establishment of a new low interest loan fund for use by congregations renovating facilities to remove barriers to persons with disabilities was approved by the Board of Church Extension directors at their September board meeting in Indianapolis. The fund will become active once the balance reaches \$500,000.

"The Congregational Accessibility Fund is the appropriate next step for Church Extension as it seeks to assist congregations as they address a variety of accessibility issues," stated Ellen Mitchell, assistant vice president for development. "We are so pleased that already several donors have stepped forward to support this important effort," she added.

For information on ways that you can help this fund grow, contact Ellen Mitchell at 1-800-274-1883.



Jack Pecsok, a BCE consulting architect from Indianapolis, was honored for his 27 years of service to the Board. The presentation was made by Ellen L. Mitchell and James L. Powell.

New BCE Video Available

"Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors" is a new video produced by BCE. The ten minute video highlights nine Disciples congregations actively engaged in making their church more open and welcome to people with disabilities.

Also available is "Windows of Opportunity," a 14 minute video featuring the new vitality and vision of ministry of six congregations that BCE assisted in meeting their building and financial planning needs.

One free copy of each is available per congregation. To request a video, contact Susan Bennett, Board of Church Extension, 130 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204; phone 1-800-274-1883 or e-mail sbennett@bce.disciples.org

Building Highlights

Highlights of some of the hundreds of building projects you and Church Extension are helping through your gifts and investments

Loans totaling \$2.8 million were made recently to **Geist Christian Church, Indianapolis**. The congregation will dedicate a new 8,000 square foot sanctuary on November 30. The sanctuary features a 57' vertical ceiling and state of the art lighting and sound capabilities. A 28' stainless steel brushed Celtic cross, weighing 2,500 pounds, graces the outside of the sanctuary.



Geist Christian Church, Indianapolis

A portion of the BCE loans will also help finance a 14,000 square foot education unit, a new entryway and an additional parking area.

Worship attendance continues to increase with up to 60 visitors often participating on Sunday. Based upon current attendance patterns and trends, church leaders anticipate that worship attendance will increase to 600 following completion of the sanctuary.



There is a sign in the front of the building at **First Christian Church, Corvallis, Oregon**, that says, “Everyone is welcome here.” But what happens when people can’t get into the building because of architectural barriers?

The members decided that it was time to do something to make their facility more accessible. According to John Evans, senior minister, “Our facility gets a lot of traffic. We have three worship services, house the

community pastoral counseling center and we have over 90 community groups meeting here monthly.”

The congregation faced yet another challenge. They wanted to keep the historic value of the church but decided to fulfill new federal ADA standards. After nine years of long-range planning and three years of working on a master plan, the congregation added an elevator to the 72-year-old facility as well as accessible restrooms and a narthex that is open and welcoming to all.

Board of Church Extension provided a \$330,000 loan as well as fund raising leadership. The congregation raised nearly \$250,000 to help fund the massive renovation project.



“We’re breaking new ground!” That’s what Rev. George Reese, organizing pastor of **Tylersville Road Christian Church in Cincinnati**, proclaimed just a few months ago. After several years of worshipping in a local school, the congregation broke ground on their first unit, situated on 6.8 acres of land.

On April 27, church members gathered at the school; three police cruisers escorted them to the new site. The groundbreaking celebration began with a bagpipe playing “Amazing Grace” as a reminder of their Scottish Presbyterian roots. Nearly 300 Disciples gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony.

According to Reese, “The tremendous partnership of the New Church Committee of the region, all of the area Disciples congregations, Board of Church Extension and the New Congregation Establishment staff, have all worked to make this possible.”

Board of Church Extension provided an \$850,000 loan, as well as fund raising leadership. The congregation raised \$205,000 to help finance their first unit.

Investments Needed to Provide Building Loans

Want to help provide a positive experience? Help build a church? You can participate in providing quality space for effective ministry by becoming a partner with Board of Church Extension, by placing some of your invested funds with BCE at competitive rates of return. If you have funds in a local savings account or in CDs, consider allowing the funds to do double duty—a good return for you, while helping to fund church growth.

Does BCE need invested funds? Yes, and with good reason—one for which members of the Christian Church can celebrate. Congregations are starting, growing, expanding and creating accessible space at record

pace. Over the past two years alone, more than \$46 million in new loans have been approved by BCE to assist in the funding of more than 250 projects of congregations and regions. That represents nearly 7% of Disciples congregations in the past two years. Current projections are that the trend is likely to continue. So your help is needed for Church Extension to continue meeting the loan requests.

If you want more information about rates and terms for investment opportunities that can help growing congregations meet today's needs for ministry, call Elaine Barnett toll free at 1-800-274-1883; or e-mail invest@bce.disciples.org

Denver General Assembly 'Catches the Vision'

The 1995 General Assembly in Pittsburgh named New Congregation Establishment (NCE) as an important and primary mission of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), but it was in Denver at the 1997 General Assembly that everyone caught The Vision to:

- Engage the whole denomination in a study of Scripture as it relates to New Congregation Establishment

and a study of the Great Commission;

- Create a community of persons called Vision Builders to celebrate the power of Christ by investing in new faith communities;
- Encourage individuals to remember NCE in their estate planning through a program called The Elijah Legacy;
- Continue the development of alternative ways to start congregations through partnership efforts.

Along with this emphasis, NCE and BCE honored Esther King Davis, a laywoman from Tennessee, for both her vision for new congregations and her generosity as one who has made the largest single gift to date to the NCE ministry. As Jim Powell, president, shared at the BCE dinner in Denver, "Thank you, Esther Davis, for your powerful witness and example." Deborah Thompson, director of New Congregation Establishment, noted that Esther's vision has helped to strengthen the ministry of New Congregation Establishment for the entire Church.



Esther King Davis is honored for making the largest single gift to NCE. BCE President James L. Powell (left) and General Minister and President Richard L. Hamm congratulate Esther.

Life Insurance Can Increase Benefit of Giving

An often overlooked, but highly effective, means for charitable giving is through the use of life insurance. This method can make possible larger gifts than otherwise might be feasible—sometimes at no noticeable cost to the donor. Here are ways that you can use life insurance in your charitable giving plans:

- **Give a policy that you have “outgrown”**

You may own a policy that was purchased when your needs were very different than they are now. Perhaps it was a small endowment policy purchased by your parents; or one for the protection of a spouse, family or a business for which protection is no longer required. Whatever the reason, existing policies can be given to a charity, providing you with a tax deduction for the approximate cash surrender value. Such a gift excludes the policy from the donor’s estate, and therefore is not subject to estate taxes.

- **Give by purchasing a new policy**

Perhaps you want to make a really substantial gift, but are not economically ready to do so. You could purchase a policy for the amount you wish to give and name the charitable organization as the beneficiary. Alternately, you could purchase a policy for which the charity is both owner and beneficiary. By making annual gifts to cover the cost of the premium, you would receive a charitable deduction in the year paid.

- **Give by assigning your dividends**

Many life insurance policies return dividends to the policy holder each year. You could assign these dividends to a charity as an effective way to make regular gifts.

- **Give by designating a charity as a secondary or remainder beneficiary**

You may not have thought about

who will receive the proceeds of your life insurance if you should die after your beneficiaries. This could be a way of giving while protecting your loved ones during their lifetimes.

- **Give by naming a charity as residual beneficiary**

If you plan to use life insurance as a source of retirement income through annuity payments, you have the option of receiving payments for life or for a specified number of years. Although you may receive a slightly higher annual return from the life option, if you die soon afterward, the insurance company keeps what you otherwise might have received. You may want to consider the specified number of years payout and name a charity the residual beneficiary. What you don’t receive because of early death will be used for charitable purposes.

There are other ways that you can use life insurance to meet your charitable gift plans. A qualified life underwriter can give additional suggestions. Church Extension staff is also available to assist you.

Gift Annuities Provide Benefits

More and more individuals are finding that Charitable Gift Annuities provide:

- Guaranteed income for life
- Higher rates, and
- Charitable tax deductions in the year the agreement is made with partial tax-free income each year for the donor’s life expectancy.

Add to those benefits the fact that a Gift Annuity can be funded with cash, appreciated stock or other assets and it is no wonder BCE has received numerous calls about this life income arrangement.

Gift Annuities do provide benefits! Call Ellen Mitchell toll free at 1-800-274-1883 for more information.

Seminar Emphasizes Church Needs

Board of Church Extension continues to assist congregations with their emphasis upon estate planning through the Planned Giving and Wills Seminar service. The one hour seminars are provided without charge to Disciples congregations. The needs of establishing a will, updating a will and including charitable bequests are discussed with special emphasis on the needs of the local congregation.

As Mike Valentine, pastor of Bethany Christian Church in Roanoke, Va., shared, "Far too many times I have run into families who forgot to remember the church in their estate planning

and as a result left a void where a resource could have been utilized."

Following a BCE led seminar Valentine noted, "The seminar not only provided needed insight into the area of wills and estate planning but also prompted each of the participants to either develop or update their wills and promote what they had learned to the rest of the congregation. I couldn't have been more pleased."

If your church is interested in scheduling a Planned Giving and Wills Seminar, contact Ellen Mitchell at P. O. Box 7030, Indianapolis, IN 46207 or call toll free 1-800-274-1883 or send e-mail to emitchell@bce.disciples.org

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Ellen L. Mitchell, Editor
Assistant Vice President
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