

WHAT WILL THAT PARTNERSHIP ENTAIL?

- Joining with nine other congregations as a cluster of support to partner with a specific New Orleans congregation for a three-year period.
- Providing support through communication and prayer between pastors, leadership and other members of both congregations.
- Making an initial contribution of \$250 to \$1,000 (depending on the size of your church).
- Making an on-going monthly contribution to support your partner church and pastor and their work toward community redevelopment — we hope to have each cluster provide \$1,000/month for its partner church — meaning a commitment of an average of \$100/month, per church. We welcome all interested partners even if that level of giving is not feasible for your church.
- Supporting visits between your church and the New Orleans congregation.
- Other possible opportunities include: recruiting skilled members who can provide on-site technical support to the pastor / congregation in insurance claims, mortgage negotiations, Internal Revenue Service issues, and accounting; recruiting skilled members who can provide on-site technical support to the pastor / congregation for a restoration plan for the new facility such as architecture, finance, construction, and neighborhood development; providing volunteers and/or financial support for work teams to rebuild church facilities, parsonages, and homes; participating in community development training; helping pastors recreate personal theological libraries; and providing assistance in replacing hymnals, Sunday School, worship aids and other Christian Education materials.

HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Contact BPFNA Program Coordinator, LeDayne McLeese Polaski, to express your interest and to get more information. Call 704-521-6051 or e-mail ledayne@bpfna.org.

“Churches Supporting Churches is the definitive way to recreate the city for ordinary people — the people who make New Orleans, the people who make any city.”

— Rev. Dwight Webster,
New Orleans Pastor & CSC National Project Director

Churches
Supporting
Churches



*The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
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*Working in Partnership to
Restart, Repair and Rebuild
Churches to
Redevelop New Orleans*



**Baptist Peace Fellowship
of North America**

4800 Wedgewood Dr. • Charlotte, NC 28210
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Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

What happened in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina blew through?

A degree of almost unprecedented destruction — the razing of an entire city, the demolition of almost every system of support, the elimination of the very structures that make rebuilding possible.

What has happened in New Orleans since the initial storm?

A revelation of the remaining strength of the triple evils of poverty, racism, and militarism as the already-disempowered have suffered disproportionately and struggle still to have their voices heard.

What can happen in New Orleans now?

The creation of beloved community!

“Those who were expendable are now invisible, scattered all over the [United States], they are silent and powerless. [We must] work with integrity toward the just rebuilding of the Gulf Coast Region and the people who once did and will again call that place home.”

— Rev. Michael Livingston, NCC President

HOW? Churches Supporting Churches (CSC), a working group initiated by six denominations and three ecumenical movements and supported by the National Council of Churches USA, is working to recreate a city, a network of communities, from the ground up. CSC has identified twelve devastated neighborhoods of New Orleans and has committed to restart, repair, and rebuild three churches in each. The churches, all of which have a history of commitment to community development, are serving (even as they re-establish themselves) as anchors for the re-creation of all that makes community life possible. These congregations and their pastors are working to replace the structures and the support systems that will make it possible for more and more of the citizens of New Orleans to return home.

WHEN? Now! We have to act quickly. Already forces are at work to recreate a very different city — each time something is built on top of what was there before without concern for the needs and well-being of those who once lived there, we lose an opportunity to recreate community. Without ‘facts on the ground’, the dispossessed will have no political clout to reclaim their city. We must join CSC in the immediate rebuilding of the structures and systems that will allow the common people of New Orleans to re-enter their city, reclaim their land, re-inhabit their homes, and gather again what generations worked to create.

WHEN? For the long-term!

Even as we work quickly to shape the re-creation of the city, we must also commit to lasting partnerships for surely we all know that what is needed cannot be built without sustained effort.

“If we cannot address Katrina, we cannot address poverty in the world. This is our chance to prove that the Church can do something about poverty, that the Church is capable of addressing the needs of suffering people.”

— Dr. C.T. Vivian, CSC Chair

WHAT IS CSC DOING?

CSC has a three-fold strategy:

1. To strengthen the health and unity of the church pastors, their spouses and key lay leaders as they begin to return to New Orleans. These church leaders need to process the trauma and destruction of their churches and homes in order to be able to help others deal with reality as they return.

2. To rebuild the bricks and mortar and spiritual life of these congregations and to assist

the pastors and their members in being socially active agents for meeting present and returning peoples’ human needs in each community.

3. To expand the capacity of the African American Church in its historical role as the key agent for community. The churches involved are committed to social activism and community organization. Most have significant histories of dedication to community development and activism for social justice. The church leaders have committed themselves to on-going training in local and regional advocacy actions, leadership development, community organization and outreach, and community planning and development. The thirty-six churches are also committing to reach out to other churches – each CSC church in New Orleans will create partnerships of mutual support with five other New Orleans congregations and will title any funds received to those five congregations.

“CSC, concerned about the total hurricane devastation, sees this New Orleans project as a model for similar work in all areas of the Gulf Coast.”

— Dr. C.T. Vivian, CSC Chair

WHAT CAN MY CONGREGATION DO?

A key aspect of the work of CSC is creating partnerships between each of the thirty-six New Orleans congregations and a cluster of ten other congregations to assist in mobilizing spiritual, financial, and technical assistance resources for rebuilding and to create an effective advocacy network for the just rebuilding of the city. You can become one of a cluster of ten congregations committed to a three-year partnership with one New Orleans church working to rebuild itself and its neighborhood.

