

Continued

No. 9136

**REPORT AND STATEMENT OF CONCERN  
AMERICAN ASIAN DISCIPLES**

**RECEIVED by the General Assembly**

American Asian Disciples (AAD) is a membership constituency organization composed of members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) whose racial and national heritage is Asian. AAD is related to the church through the Division of Homeland Ministries. It is the intention of AAD to offer a supportive network to Disciples of Asian ancestry, monitor the progress of the church in including Asian Americans within its life and offer recommendations for that inclusion through the channels of the church.

AAD attempts to fulfill its purpose through a periodic newsletter, fellowship gatherings at sessions of the General Assembly, participation in the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Inclusiveness and Empowerment and communications from its Executive Council to the administrative and plenary bodies of the church.

In October, 1989, the Division of Homeland Ministries (DHM) sponsored an "Asian Ministries Consultation." The consultation brought together a representative group of Disciples of Asian origin with selected leaders of the church to provide an arena for hearing one another's concerns, aspirations and commitments. The consultation made proposals that would, in the estimation of the AAD Executive Council, challenge general units and regions in their work with American Asians in the decade of the 90s.

The Asian American population increased from 3.8 million to 6.9 million between 1980 and 1989. Nearly three quarters of the increase can be attributed to immigration. A recent study entitled, "Asian Americans: Americas' Fastest Growing Minority Group," states, "This phenomenal growth is likely to continue in the 1990s because growing Asian American numbers allow increased immigration on the basis of family reunification . . ." and preference is given, "to work skills needed by US business." Disciples currently have ten congregations with predominately Asian membership. The massive presence indicated in the study is a clear call to mission for Disciples.

AAD submits this report and statement of concern to the General Assembly to highlight its desire for the implementation of proposals generated during the consultation.

**1. Developing ministerial leadership:** Ministering to and with American Asians requires consideration of the great diversity that exists among Asian groups including the diversity inherent in immigrant, second and third generation populations.

**a. Recruitment:** AAD believes that a strategy for recruitment of American Asian students for ministerial study is essential. Recruitment can be aided by regular promotion of the Kagiwada Scholarship Fund for American Asian ministerial students.

**b. Standing:** There is a need to facilitate recognition and standing of foreign trained leadership. Among the immigrant population are a number of pastors with many years experience and great skill in ministry within their cultural group. Frequently, however, the educational standard within their culture and church is not the same as the standing requirements of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). AAD calls on Regional Commissions on the Ministry to recognize the skills of immigrant pastors and make appropriate adjustments in standing requirements for them. Regional Commissions on the Ministry need to have American Asians serving on them to facilitate sensitivity to the issues involved in this matter.

**2. Establishing New Congregations:** The consultation called for the creation of ten new American Asian congregations during the decade of the 90's. There are ongoing plans to develop Korean congregations in Nashville, Los Angeles, Northern California and Chicago. We know that more can be done through coordinated and well planned efforts of the Division of Homeland Ministries, the Board of Church Extension, and regions. We continue to believe that it is realistic to anticipate beginning ten new American Asian congregations in this decade.

**3. Adopting and Connecting American Asian Congregations:** Development of new congregations of immigrant Asian Christians is part of the phenomenon of rapid growth of the American Asian population. Many of these congregations do not have any denominational affiliation. While not all such congregations desire affiliation, many do. There is a clear need for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to articulate a strategy for relating to these congregations. The consultation called for adopting 40 congregations in the decade of the 90's. We believe that this is a realistic goal.

4. **American Asian Representation on Boards of the Church:** The consultation called for increased American Asian representation on Boards of the church. AAD is convinced that American Asians will not be able to participate fully in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) until broadly represented on the decision making boards and structures of the church. The AAD Executive Council supports the General Nominating Committee call for an end to "lump-sum ethnicity" and would welcome a specific goal for American Asian representation.
5. **American Asian Staff in the Division of Homeland Ministries:** The consultation called for an Asian heritage person to be added to the DHM staff. Participation in decision making and program development and implementation is essential. It is apparent to AAD that vision and proposals will remain flawed if there is not a staff person of American Asian origin, preferably Korean, in the Division of Homeland Ministries.