

A Resolution to Laugh with Abraham and Sarah (General Conference Mennonite Church, 1992)

Abraham and Sarah laughed in disbelief when God told Abraham that Sarah would bear a child in her old age (see Genesis 17 and 18). Giving birth in adverse circumstances (such as when one is old or when budgets are depleted) may seem impossible, but we can each be part of giving birth to new churches and small groups where people can find new life in Christ. While we may feel like laughing in disbelief, let us renew ourselves in prayer and allow God to do a new thing through us.

Therefore, we resolve:

1. that the General Conference Mennonite Church, together with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and area conferences, give birth to 50 new churches by the year 2001;
2. that the General Conference Mennonite Church provide staffing in church planting to enable the fulfillment of this vision, to be implemented when funding for such staffing is committed;
3. that we call on each established congregation to consider birthing a new church or adopting a congregation in cooperation with its area conference, the Commission on Home Ministries /Congregational Resources Board, and the Mennonite Church;
4. that these new churches be truly Anabaptist in outlook, modeling the peace, justice, and service that comes through a knowledge of Jesus Christ;
5. that we encourage all congregations to "birth" one or more of the following: (1) a Call to Peacemaking group, (2) a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker or group, (3) care/outreach groups (as described in the third-year L.I.F.E. [Living in Faithful Evangelism] curriculum);
6. that we further call area conferences in their church-planting efforts to continue to build a "many peoples church" for world mission;
7. that we call each U.S. area conference mission committee to target at least one metropolitan area for special attention in evangelism and church development, recognizing that in Canada many of our churches are already in urban centers;
8. that in 2001, at the General Conference Mennonite sessions, we celebrate the birth of these new churches/groups and joyfully laugh with Abraham and Sarah as we thank our Creator for bringing new life among us.

Adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church, July 25, 1992, at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The resolution emerged from the General Conference Mennonite Church Commission on Home Ministries and the Northern District Home Missions Committee. The Northern District was one of the district conferences of the General Conference Mennonite Church located primarily in the northern states of Montana, North and South Dakota and Minnesota as well as Nebraska.