

NBA Welcomes Rev. Darnell Fennell as Director of Social Entrepreneurship

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The National Benevolent Association (NBA) of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calls Rev. Darnell Fennell to serve as the new Director of Social Entrepreneurship, effective May 8, 2019.

Fennell has extensive nonprofit management experience and a track record of planning and leading initiatives that have consistently flourished. He is the founding and executive pastor of Just Love, a Disciples new church whose members are advancing intersectional justice in Houston, Texas.

While pastoring, he served as a faith community organizer for Faith in Texas (a PICO affiliate) and the Texas Freedom Network. As an organizer regional director, Fennell built relationships with clergy and congregations across many faiths, provided training, managed teams, and led congregations to action around racial, LGBTQ+, economic, and immigrant justice. He received his Master of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Houston.

"As a dreamer, I am excited to be a part of the NBA team because these are Disciples living into God's dream for the world," Fennell states. "I am one who dreams of a Church that lives out compassion, care, and justice, both in word and in deed, as I believe this a part of God's dream for the world. It brings me joy to be a part of this dream team, one that is open to exploring exciting and innovative ways of being the hands and feet of God in the world. In times like these, we need to be able to imagine new possibilities in the midst of difficult realities."

In this role, Fennell will support NBA's efforts to equip and support Disciples who are starting innovative, forward-leaning ministries of compassion and care in their own communities. This includes encouraging social entrepreneurship and administering the NBA Incubate Initiative. He will join Larry J. Morris, III, NBA Incubate Program Associate, in imagining and implementing an expansion of NBA's work with social entrepreneurs of faith while also maintaining the strong infrastructure of support already present in the Incubate Initiative.

"NBA is at a moment where we are looking to expand our work with Disciples social entrepreneurs who are starting ministries of care that are relevant and effective in

their communities,” says Rev. Rebecca Hale, NBA Executive Vice President. “We want to support these visionary leaders and the projects they are starting. Rev. Fennell brings significant experience and insight to this work, and we are so pleased to add him to the NBA program team and overall ministry.”

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these."