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For Immediate Release

## **Washington DC, Church Wins Fight Against Historic Landmark Designation The DC HPRB Voted 5 to 3 in Denying Designation at Hearing on 11/29/12**

(Washington, DC – December 22, 2012) - According to the link in the Washington Post [View Article on Washington Post.com](#), Bishop Clarence Groover Sr., pastor and founder of the Fisherman of Men Church and his jubilant congregation are still celebrating a great victory since the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board's (HPRB) announcement of its decision to deny the request by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A to grant historic status to the former York movie theater building erected in 1919 that has served this present community now as a church for the last more than 35 years. Church members opposed the request and argued that the building, which is located at Quebec Place and Georgia Avenue has no historic value.

At the November 29, 2012 hearing of the HPRB, Bishop Groover, many of his church members, a leading architect, the church attorney, and a number of professional and community supporters stood their ground in articulating their profound opposition to the proposed historic status of their church building. Following the Bishop's compelling oral presentation buttressed by the submission of several copies of his impressive 257 page fact-filled supporting document which included pledges of support from 60 D.C. churches, letters of support from area clergy and community leaders, and 81 online blogs from the community, and numerous signed petitions from local churches and their congregations in the District of Columbia, the HPRB voted down the proposal in a 5 to 3 decision agreeing with the Fisherman of Men Church that the age of a building is not sufficient reason to give it historic status.

Immediately following the hearing, the Washington Post reported in its online November 29, 2012 Post Local edition that Bishop Groover applauded the board's ruling, saying "The decision is really a thrill," as he left the hearing with a busload of members. "We didn't have permits for what we had planned. Now we can get the permits to build the canopy, signage and give the church a presence in the community." The Post also reported that Kent Boese, the secretary of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A who led the push for historic designation, left the hearing without comment.

The Current Periodical in its Wednesday, December 12, 2012 edition on page 3, reported that "This case has been especially tense and has attracted particular attention because of the racial overtones surrounding it – some leaders of the church, which is predominantly black, believe that white newcomers to the gentrifying neighborhood want to chase them out." The Fisherman of Men Church believe that an unwanted historic landmark will be an unnecessary substantial financial burden on the congregation as it seeks to complete its long planned renovation program over the next several years. A burden this onerous has the undesired potential to cause a congregation to abandon its presence in the neighborhood and seek alternative sites in the city or even outside of the city. The church refuses to permit this scenario to occur. ([View article in the Current Periodical](#))

Bishop Groover and the members of the Fisherman of Men Church thank God for his mercy and his grace in bringing this matter to such a favorable conclusion. They are truly grateful for the powerful broad-based ecumenical response from the many fellow clergy, congregations, friends and community supporters locally and, indeed, across the nation for their encouraging words and deeds. The leadership and congregation of the Fishermen of Men Church firmly believe that the success that this church has experienced in challenging this unwanted historic landmark designation can be helpful to other churches and religious organizations similarly challenged, and, consequently, Bishop Groover offers his assistance and extends an invitation to these organizations to contact him at [grooverc@msn.com](mailto:grooverc@msn.com). Beyond that, the Bishop and his members are convinced that the victory in this matter could not have been won without the Lord's blessing as requested in the sincere prayers of a great "cloud of witnesses" locally and across the nation whose collective spirit in celebration shouts "Let the church say 'Amen'."