

Title: Report of the Christian Church in Kansas (Disciples of Christ), Inc.

Origin: Paxton Jones, Regional Minister

The following is provided for information to the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Regional Staff:	Paxton Jones, Regional Minister	M-Cau
	Steven Martin, Associate Regional Minister	M-Cau
	Ken Marston, Associate Regional Minister	M-Cau
	Renee Bridwell, Associate Regional Minister	F-Cau
	Barb Runge, Disciples Women Coordinator (Contract)	F-Cau
	Susan White, Corporate Secretary	F-Cau

Number of Congregations: 97 and 3 in formation

Total Members: 28,835

States Included in Region: Kansas (except Johnson, Miami, and Wyandotte counties)

1. What are your long range planning goals and how are they integrated into the mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?

Our Regional Board adopted a Mission Statement in February 1999 which continues to guide all that we do. To wit: “Kansas Disciples, out of a passion for sharing the love of God, encourage, support and undergird one another as we grow spiritually, give freely, act kindly, in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ.” We live out that mission by striving “to help one another with our spiritual growth, development and direction; to listen to one another as we journey in the faith; to help one another build relationships and to develop leadership in order to work together effectively; to encourage one another to faithful stewardship of all our resources; to answer the call to discipleship and to fulfill the Great Commission; [and] to celebrate together in worship and the Lord’s Supper.” This is a long and cumbersome way of saying our mission and vision is “*Raising up Christian leaders for today and tomorrow!*”

The Kansas Region continues to be a leader in contributions to the Disciples Mission Fund, which increased for the third consecutive year in 2007, and to the other special funds that support the work of the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). DMF giving totaled \$607,507.11— eighth among all of the regions—while contributions to the Special Day Offerings were as follows: Easter, \$34,764.58; Pentecost, \$19,847.09; Thanksgiving, \$22,801.38; and Christmas, \$50,572.11. The Week of Compassion received \$109,894.18 in undesignated and designated gifts while reconciliation received another \$26,581.24 in similar contributions.¹

2. Knowing that the current priorities of the church are to start new congregations, transform existing congregations for mission, nurture leadership for these new and renewed congregations, and become an anti-racist/pro-reconciling church, what is the role of your ministry in fulfilling any of these priorities?

The regional church in Kansas is modeling transformation for its congregations by itself undergoing transformation. The Regional Board approved in concept a new organizational structure last October and is in the process of taking the necessary steps to implement its provisions, including major revisions to our Constitution and Bylaws, subject to final approval by our Regional Assembly next October in Manhattan, Kansas. This new design mandates the naming of “Priorities [to] directly address the purpose of the Christian Church in Kansas as expressed in [its] Constitution.” Therefore the Regional Assembly is being asked to adopt the following regional priorities upon which we will continue to focus our ministries: *1) new church, 2) revitalization, and 3) spirituality.*

Within the past year, the Kansas Region has recognized two new congregations in formation: Iglesia Discipulos de Cristo, a new Hispanic congregation in Garden City, pastored by Guillermo Reyes; and Breakthrough Community

¹ Kansas shares 57.5985% of its DMF income with the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) while retaining only 42.4015% for its own ministries. The Special Day, Week of Compassion and Reconciliation offerings are distributed in accordance with General Board guidelines.

Church, an African immigrant congregation in Wichita, pastored by Anthony Macari. Two additional church starts also are in the planning stages.

The most popular workshop during the regional church's Elders and Diaconate Seminar in January was Rick Morse's presentation on "New Beginnings," an assessment program sponsored by Church Extension designed for congregations which have experienced decline. Over half of the registered attendees for the seminar, representing 29 of our congregations, found hope in what "New Beginnings" has to offer; we anticipate many of the congregations represented will eventually apply to be part of the program.

The regional church annually sponsors a number of other outstanding leadership development events, including an *International Affairs Seminar* for older youth (22 youth and sponsors last year), retreats for *Disciples Women* (150 in two sessions), *Disciples Men* (36), and *Clergywomen* (18 in two events), and a *Spiritual Retreat* for the renewal of both clergy and laity (16). In addition, the regional church offers an exceptional *Outdoor Ministries* program that provides nurture and leadership training to hundreds of children, youth and adults (733 last year)—and a biennial *Youth Convention* that attracted 399 youth and sponsors last year from throughout the region and helped them identify ways to be renewed in faith and witness.

3. In what ways are you partnering with the other expressions of the Church and with other general ministries?

The Kansas and Central Rocky Mountain Regions are in conversation regarding the possibilities of working together to offer pro-reconciliation/anti-racism training within our respective areas.

The Region is in renewed conversations with representatives of Phillips Theological Seminary pertaining to the development of courses that can be taught at the Patsie Sweden Leadership Lodge at our Disciples Center at Camp Tawakoni.

The Region also enjoys ministry covenant agreements with the Tennyson Center for Children at the Colorado Christian Home in Denver and the Kansas Christian Home at Newton.

The regional church avidly supports the work of Week of Compassion and Volunteers in Mission both financially and by sponsoring work trip/mission experiences to Beaumont, Texas; Gulfport, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; Jamaica; and—oh, yes—a little place called Greensburg, Kansas, where we still host nearby mission stations in our congregations at Kinsley and Pratt.

4. How have you been involved in congregations to fulfill their mission and ministry?

The regional staff continues to provide consultation to congregations that are searching for pastoral leadership and to assist them in a variety of other areas, from managing conflict to envisioning new directions. The regional staff provides similar support to clergy in need.

5. The Administrative Committee/General Board would be interested in knowing what barriers you experience in carrying out your ministry as well as other information that is important as a matter of record for the church.

Although the general trend in charitable giving impacts us all, the Kansas Region ended its fiscal year with a positive balance for the second consecutive year. This was achieved through a combination of intense frugality and the generous stewardship of our congregations. We have not identified any other specific barriers.

6. Special Concerns of the Region

The Christian Church in Kansas clearly is in a period of transition. In addition to the examples cited above, Paxton Jones began as Regional Minister last May 1. Since then searches have been successfully conducted for two new associate regional ministers: Ken Marston joined the regional church staff in January and serves in the High Plains and Central Districts; Renee Bridwell joined the staff in March and serves in the South Central District.

Bob and Karen Frank-Plumlee, who shared one position as interim associate regional minister serving the South Central and Southeast Districts, have now re-retired. Rick Truitt, the acting associate regional minister serving the Central and High Plains Districts, has returned to his home in Colorado.

7. Other Items of Interest

Construction of an indoor chapel on the grounds of the Disciples Center at Camp Tawakoni awaits the finalization of the sale of the First Christian Church facilities in Wichita this spring. Phase 3 of development—the creation of a year-round Conference Center with private sleeping accommodations—is being proposed. Meanwhile, a marketing class at Kansas State University in Manhattan has undertaken the task of developing a business plan for the Disciples Center beyond its regular use for camps and conferences.

Our third Gala and Auction is scheduled for Saturday, November 8, at the Disciples Center. This fun-filled event annually draws about 250 individuals and last year raised \$31,921.85 after expenses with which to underwrite projects at the camp.

8. Financial Information, Concerns, and Reports of the Region

A. What type of accounting method do you use? Cash

B. Is a professional audit done annually on your books? Yes.

C. For the past three years with regard to your OPERATIONS BUDGET ONLY, please provide the following information:

	2007	2006	2005
Total Income	\$1,356,312.06	\$1,342,953.00	\$1,346,733.57
Total Expense	\$1,351,312.06	\$1,342,864.59	\$1,377,854.55
Surplus (Deficit)	\$5,000.00 ²	\$88.41	(\$31,120.98)

D. Currently, what is the total amount of Permanent Funds the Region has from which an Annual Draw of endowment income is used to support your operations and programming? What is that percentage of draw and how is it calculated.

The Kansas Region holds various trusts, endowments, quasi-endowments, term-endowments, restricted funds, etc., that in total were valued at \$5,014,663.94 at the end of 2007. A draw is budgeted for operations from the earnings of unrestricted reserves. That budgeted amount in 2007 was \$42,000 (less than 1%) of which only \$24,000 (less than 1/2 of 1%) was drawn. Earnings from a trust fund with an oil lease provided the 2007 operating budget with another \$66,912.72.

E. If your Region has had insufficient income or deficits in Part 6 C above, how has your Regional Board and Finance Committee been trying to balance your budgets (e.g. staff reductions, program cuts, larger draws from permanent funds, initiative postponements, new streams of income, etc.?)

The Christian Church in Kansas has been a good steward of its resources through the years. The occasional deficits have been covered with reserve funds.

F. What are the key financial issues and concerns currently facing your region's life and vitality?

The further development of the Disciples Center at Camp Tawakoni may require additional capital funds in future years.

² The actual year end balance in 2007 was \$26,123.32, but the bulk of the remainder was transferred into reserve fund accounts before the books were closed.