

Title: Report of Christian Church in Ohio

Origin: Dr. William H. Edwards, Regional Pastor and President (African-American, Male)

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

Regional Staff:

Rev. Stephen Bentley Regional Associate Pastor (Anglo, Male) Rev. Dr. LaTaunya M. Bynum Regional Associate Pastor (African-American Female)  
Rev. Dr. Brenda Webster Regional Program Minister (African-American Female)  
Duncan Draper, Treasurer (Anglo, Male)  
Joanne Arnold, Executive Assistant (Anglo, Female)  
Jennie Stoddart, Office Administrator (Anglo, Female)  
Rich Haines, Bookkeeper/Accountant (Anglo, Male)  
Sally Wears, Financial Clerk (Anglo, Female)  
Al Channell, Camp Christian Superintendent (Anglo, Male)  
Doris Woodson, Camp Christian Food Services (Anglo, Female)

Number of Congregations: 197

Total Members: 47,331

States included in Region: Ohio

Please answer the following questions:

**1. (par. 54.b.) What are your long range planning goals and how are they integrated into the mission and vision of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)?**

The Christian Church in Ohio's vision as a regional church is that we are:

*A covenant network of congregations in mission. We are the Body of Christ gifted and called in covenant together as Disciples of Christ to be centers of transformation on the new mission frontier of our own communities.*

We are organizing our work around three regional priorities that grow out of the vision:

Strengthening Relationships and Building Networks (True Community)  
Leadership Development (Deep Christian Spirituality)  
Congregational Transformation and Evangelism (Passion for Justice)

**2. (par 54.d.) 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 New Church Committee of the Christian Church in Ohio is beginning the second phase of our 2020 vision to add 50 new congregations in the Ohio region. We have began the first phase by supporting the beginning of eight congregations. These churches combine to have over 200 previously un-churched people worshipping with them each Sunday. However, just like many of your churches, the people present each week are not always the same mix of people. Combined they have ministries that are touching the lives of over 400 people!

These ministries include: Prison Ministry, domestic violence counseling, weekly radio ministry, women's Bible studies, immigration ministry, community evangelism, Sunday school classes for children and adults, music ministry, disciple leadership development programs, and after school children's programs. These new church planters and their churches are very busy making new disciples!

In 2007, Ohio began two regionally initiated new church plants in the Columbus area. This has included working in cooperation with the UCC New Church Development Committee for the area. The UCC has agreed to be a partner in planting a new African-American congregation in the north/northeast section of Columbus. A church planter has been called and has begun gathering a core group and networking in the target area. The other new church is a Hispanic congregation, currently nesting in a Disciple congregation in southwest Columbus. There will also be a Springboro new church undertaken by the congregations in Dayton Area (District 8) of the region.

Taking into consideration the complexity of Congregational Transformation and the diverse nature of the conditions and scenarios that congregations within the Christian Church in Ohio find themselves, the region's Congregational Transformation Ministry Team did not identify one single "cure all" approach. The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team is exploring and initiating ways that the Christian Church in Ohio can educate and train leaders, identify and utilize resources, and network congregations and leaders to share learning and experiences.

The Congregational Transformation Ministry Team of the region is working on several initiatives that currently are the focus of our work. First, we are planning and implementing region-wide events to cast the vision for transformation into the lives of local congregations and individual pastors in the regional church. The "Unbinding the Gospel" event held at Gender Road church on October 13<sup>th</sup> is such an event. Second, there is a covenant group of Teaching & Learning churches and their pastors, designed as a way to test aspects of the transformation journey in local settings. The team met with our partners to form a "Community of Learning" where gifts and needs can be shared. Our overall vision is to encourage and learn from innovation and creativity in transformational ministry for the benefit of the entire regional church. Third, a coaching initiative has begun, with formal training at Camp Christian this past spring. Coaching is an exciting way to draw out from within pastors and leaders the gifts and skills for transformation. We hope to build the network of coaches and offer the ministry of coaching to leaders and pastors in the Regional Church. We also hope to continue building networks and partnerships with pastors and lay leaders throughout the Regional Church, targeting congregations and pastors with potential for leadership in this area of ministry.

In the area of leadership development, the Christian Church begins with the Chi Rho age children. During the camp program every third year camper helps lead during evening vespers. Some of them are asked to serve as deacons and elders for our closing worship. CYF Conference continues this training and takes it to new levels having the Conference run by youth officers with the help of advisors and counselors. Seventeen youth officers attend a three day workshop where they are trained in Servant Leadership. Every other year the Christian Church in Ohio sponsors an International Affairs Seminar, where 45 young people travel to New York City and Washington DC to learn what it means to be Christian and active in the American political process as well as in global affairs.

The Ohio Disciples Men are working at reorganizing its leadership from a committee structure to a team structure. New leaders are mentored by the current leadership and they in turn mentor the leaders who come after them. The men have set a goal of taking 40 men to Oklahoma City for Sessions 2008 so they can come home and lead both regionally and locally.

Ohio Women's Ministries continues to work at providing quality leader development among women in the region through its "team ministry" concept. We will develop plans in the months ahead, to expand the participation of women in Ohio Women's Ministries events, and to identify and mentor young adult women for leadership in the region now and in the future.

The Ohio Reconciliation Commission remains committed to the wholeness of the Church and to the eradication of racism from the structures of the church. To that end, the first of two anti-racism training sessions geared toward congregations was held in the fall of 2007. Two congregations, one from Cincinnati and one from Cleveland, along with the anti-racism team, participated. The second of the congregational sessions will be held in the spring of 2008. While congregational training continues to take place, the Anti-Racism Team will also play a major role in promoting the 2008 Reconciliation.

**3. (par.25) In what ways are you partnering with the other expressions of the Church and with other general ministries?**

The Christian Church in Ohio is actively involved in the Northeast Inter-Regional Fellowship (NIRF), which includes the regions of the Capital Area, Canada, Michigan, Northeast and West Virginia. NIRF sponsored a training event for regional leaders on Leadership Development. The event was held in West Virginia at St. Paul Retreat Center and led by Dr. Deloris Carpenter.

The Christian Church in Ohio has been consulting with Christian Church Foundation in establishing a Development Committee. This ministry team will be developing a fund raising and development strategic plan to financially undergird the present and future ministries of our regional church.

The Christian Church in Ohio is an active and vital member of Ohio Council of Churches. Our regional church supports the work of the Council financially and through participation of members of our congregations in its programming.

**4. (par.20) How have you been involved in congregations to fulfill their mission and ministry?**

Regional Pastors facilitate and resource congregations in their relationships and networking with other congregations, the development of local leadership, and the spiritual transformation and faith sharing ministries in local communities. The Regional Pastors are a central contact point for congregations relating to the Regional Church, in partnership with the Regional Elders.

Regional Elders are a volunteer cadre of (mostly retired) experienced ministers who serve as an extension of Pastoral Staff in assigned Districts of the Region.

**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.**

**6. Special concerns of the region**

With the changes in the General Office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with regard to the Church Finance Council, the region's Outreach Ministry Team may very likely find itself doing additional work in 2008 in the preparation of materials to promote the special day offerings. We are expanding committee membership to help us with our work.

**7. Other items of interest**

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

**A. What type of accounting method do you use? \_\_\_\_\_ Cash     Accrual**

**B. Is a professional audit done annually on your books?  Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No  
If not, please explain.**

**C. For the last three years, with regard to your OPERATIONS BUDGET ONLY, Please provide the following information:**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>
Total Income	\$1,044,874	\$716,058	\$643,706
Total Expenses	\$1,093,745	\$752,284	\$668,927
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$48,87)	(\$36,226)	(\$25,221)

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

The Christian Church in Ohio Endowment Funds are governed by an investment policy adopted in July, 2000, amended in October, 2006. This provides for draws to use the moving average method of determining year to year spending. This is based on a five year moving average of the monthly portfolio market value with a budgeted lead of one year. The spending ratio allows up to a 5% draw based on these calculations from earnings.

**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.)?**

A Development Task Force has been formed and is preparing strategies for increasing gifting to the Region via endowments, trusts, and other contributions.

The Outreach Committee has commissioned a group of volunteers to serve as Mission Advocates whose primary goal is to interact with individual congregations and share information throughout the Region.

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

Participation rates of both congregational and members are key factors to improving the financial results of the Region. An ability to interpret more clearly the mission and vision of the Christian Church in Ohio will lead to more active involvement across our Region. Expanding our program offerings will also provide broader value to more members and increase attendance at our events.