

General Board

Business Item No. GB-08-0579

**TITLE:** Report of the Virginia Christian Missionary Society, dba/ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia

**ORIGIN:** George Lee Parker, Regional Minister and CEO

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

**Regional Staff:**

Alisha Bennett	Craig Springs Camp and Conference Center Manager
Amy Moore	Editor of the <i>Virginia Christian</i> – part time
Angela Kidd	Office Manager
Jerry Fuqua	Capital Campaign Director – part time
Josh Bell	Interim Associate Regional Minister for Youth and Outdoor Ministry – part time
Ken Burger	Executive Director, the Summit
Ray Gryder	Interim Director of Disciples Men’s Ministry – part time
Rita Rodenbaugh	Administrative Assistant
Stephanie McLemore	Associate Regional Minister
Sue Gordon	Office Assistant - ¾ time
Lee Parker	Regional Minister

**NUMBER OF CONGREGATIONS:** 155

**TOTAL MEMBERS:** 25,661

**STATES INCLUDED IN REGION:**

All of Virginia except counties contiguous with the District of Columbia, and one congregation in Eden North Carolina

**THE WORK OF THE REGION IN FULFILLING PARAGRAPH 20 OF THE DESIGN**

**Last fall over 115 women attended the Fall Women's Retreat** on the Book of Esther with Lisa Davidson of Lexington Theological Seminary. The Reverend Dr. Davidson is a native Virginian. Radford Christian Church is her home congregation.

**Five Virginia churches are participating in the New Beginnings** program with Church Extension. This was a natural development after last year's Regional Transformation Conference: Extreme Makeover-- Church Edition. This cluster of congregations is located in the eastern part of the region. Some exciting new vision and possibilities are coming from the meetings going on in the congregations as they digest the gathered information.

**CYF Conference** was revived in 2007. The attendance was small (27) compared to the numbers of high school youth in the Triple Camps. However, the energy and excitement far exceeded expectations of the Director and Counselors. Though the conference was a “new concept” for our Regional teens, for six high school students, this was their introduction to Craig Springs. The Conference structure and philosophy was created to challenge all participants to discern their understanding of being Christian – specifically members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – within the global community; as an integral part of a pluralistic Nation; as partners Ecumenically; and their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout the week the camp was visited by guest keynote speakers: Doug Smith, Stephanie McLemore, Lee Parker, and Grant Azdale; and included some “stump preaching” and a Cane Ridge picnic. The week was supported by the music, spiritual guidance, and leadership gifts of Andra Moran, from Vine Street CC, Nashville. On the last night, under the stars of God’s Creation, 8 teens and 2 adults gave their lives over to Christ and are discerning God’s Call for them in ministry. We are looking forward to 2008!

**We celebrate that eight women from the Piedmont District Convention** participated in the Leadership Apprentice Program, a leadership development program of the National Convocation and the Office of Disciples Women. A Regional Reconciliation grant funded this experience. Several of the participants had life changing experiences and one of the young women (and a friend from her congregation) will participate in the WAW Young Women's Edition in May.

**There is a concern for being prepared and preemptive.** Carl Zerwick of DHM met with representatives of the congregations of District Eight and District Seven to discuss prearranged Mission Stations before disaster. District Eight covers the congregations of the Tidewater Area of Virginia. The Tidewater is most likely to be adversely affected by hurricanes. District Seven is centered on Richmond and could be the closest staging area for first and second responders.

**The Renewal and Nurture Committee of the Region (Transformation Team)** with the assistance of an Oran Scott Foundation grant held a two day congregational transformation experience where Pablo Jimenez and Jim Powell were featured leaders. While not patterned on the Traveling the Good News Road event, ten of the team members attended that event and were to incorporate those learnings into the planning, design, and implementation of the transformation conference.

**The Region is continuing work with Dave Webb and Patsy Sweeden of Disciples Congregational Services** to provide assessment and prescriptive tools for congregations as they discern where they have been, where they are, and where they are going. This has been a large component of congregational transformation. Twelve congregations have used the services of Disciples Congregational Services thus far. Working with David Webb, these assessment tools have been developed by a Disciple for Disciple congregations. This has been helpful particularly in the area of theology and beliefs. The Region is exploring doing a through exploration of needs, objectives, and resources with the assistance and guidance of Disciples Congregational Services.

**Virginia Spring Women's events** continue to be reborn as SPA (Self-Care Prayer and Action) Days. Six events are held around the state and provide opportunities for encountering resources, direct communication, fellowship, mission, and leadership development. This spring our program is on Bible Building Blocks and will include small listening conferences on the future directions of Regional Ministry to Women in Virginia.

**Xuyen Dangers, DOM Missionary Partner from Laos and Vietnam** visited the Region last fall. She was a constant source of energy and optimism as she traveled throughout the Region visiting social workers, local congregations, women's groups and participating in two fall retreats. She spread the gospel message as she shared about her work with children and taught most of the region the "monkey song."

## **PARTICULAR HIGHLIGHTS AND/OR CHALLENGES IN THE REGION**

**We continue to celebrate being in our new facility.** We have been on Enterprise Drive for a year and a half and are blessed with enough space and facilities which constantly enrich our ministry. We are 100% accessible and are also able to provide office space for deployed DHM staff Kaye Edwards.

**We look forward to a June Regional Assembly** with speakers Bill Lee, Kay Northcutt, and Robert Welch. Our Assemblies are held at Lynchburg College.

**One of the Associate Regional Ministers has resigned** to accept another ministry position. The financial position of the Region has created an opportunity to be creative in how the particular tasks and ministries formally facilitated by this person are to be carried out. A number of contract positions have been created. These various contract positions are interim positions and are intended to provide time for assessment and planning for the how and what of future ministry.

**Five Contract Positions** have been created and filled to provide ongoing support for the ministries that were previously directed by a full time associate minister. While this will result in a reduction of expenditures it will also result in a decrease of staff availability to provide services.

**Along with the other Regions of SERF** we are part of the seeking of a fulltime Director of Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Ministries. The applicant should have significant experience in developing leadership and organizing communities for intentional and systemic change. We are seeking an individual who can build a broad-based, anti-racist movement within and among the SERF regions. The position requires a person who enjoys working as a team and understands racism as a constructed evil that can be deconstructed. The applicant should have knowledge of U.S. history from a minority perspective and strong written and verbal communication skills. The candidate should desire to work with individuals, congregations and regional structures within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and be willing to travel extensively throughout an eight state area. The salary and benefits are to be commensurate with fulltime pastors in the SERF area.

**REGIONAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

- A. What type of accounting method do you use?                      Accrual
- B. Is a professional audit done annually on your books?                      Yes
- C. For the last three years, with regard to your OPERATIONS BUDGET ONLY...these figures differ from last years report and are accurate according to the accounting firm that does the Region’s bookkeeping.

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Total Income	587,153.02	535,953	501,138	619,003	531,514
Total Expenses	635,433.38	631,953	595,799	647,586	566,829
Surplus (Deficit)	(48,330.36)	(96,424)	(94,661)	(28,583)	(35,315)

- 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 Region has no Permanent Funds but does have \$264,990.00 (as of 1-1-2007) invested with Christian Church Foundation.

The Region makes a quarterly withdrawal based on an annual calculation of a 5.5% draw based on a three year trailing average

- E. If your Region has had insufficient income of deficits in Part 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.)?

cuts in all areas of program expense  
reduction of paid staff and implementing contract positions for some services  
developing an annual fund  
promotion and stewardship education  
use of volunteer workers at Craig Springs  
invested assets have been used to cover operating deficits from 2003 to 2007

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

Reductions of staff

Reduction of services

The necessity of calculating and measuring all actions and programs on the basis of cost/productivity rather than need

Angst at the necessity of the Virginia Disciples Mission Fund