

General Board

Business Item # GB-10-0667

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
	Steve 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: 92 and 2 in formation

Total Members: 27,786

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

1. Information regarding how your region has fulfilled the regions’ primary purpose as stated in paragraph 20 of The Design¹.

The mission and witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kansas are being lived out in that we are intentionally “*Raising up Christian leaders for today and tomorrow!*” in new and innovative ways. Although we culminated a two-year re-visioning process with the approval of a new regional structure by our Regional Assembly in the fall of 2008, the reality is that even that envisioning already is dated. Realizing that the regional church no longer can effectively function as it “always” has, we are conducting more than a dozen listening conferences across the breadth of Kansas during which we are seeking to discover what ministries the regional church provides that our people value the most and how the regional church can better partner with their congregation in ministry.

Last year the regional church hosted its first “Relax, Refresh, Renew” retreat for clergy in the week following Easter Sunday; designed to allow our clergy to unwind and recharge after the hectic activities of Lent and Holy Week, it also offered them an opportunity to share informally with a renowned Disciple theologian Rick Lowery. This well-received event will be repeated again April 6-8 with two other Disciples of distinction as our guests, Bryan and Laurie Feille.

In addition, the TEAM² event [Transforming Everyone Around Ministry and Mission] last October—keynoted by Dick Hamm—offered fresh models for serving, bonding and learning as

¹ The primary purpose of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in regions is twofold: (1) to extend the ministry of Christ in mission, teaching, witness, and service among the people and social structures of the region; and (2) to establish, receive, and nurture congregations in the region, providing help, counsel, and pastoral care to members, ministers, and congregations in their mutual relationships, and relating them to the worldwide mission and witness of the whole church.

we explored new paths of Christian leadership. The nurture of congregations occurs through a variety of other avenues as well—including the work of regional church staff in the training and counseling of church leaders; regional youth and adult conferences, camps and retreats; workshops and retreats on spiritual formation and direction; and the use of the New Beginnings program by some of our congregations.

As a Global Mission Region whose Regional Minister participated in a recent immersion trip to the Dominican Republic and Haiti last February [and which has a number of congregations with direct missional ties to the latter], we have been greatly impacted by the deadly disaster our Haitian colleagues suffered and continue to endure from the earthquake on January 12. Special efforts are being made to re-establish our connections with our Mission Partners in Port-au-Prince—specifically CONASPEH and House of Hope.

Finally, while it should be noted that the Kansas Region continues to be a leader in contributions to the Disciples Mission Fund² and to the Special Offerings that support the work of the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2009 was a devastating year financially for the regional church. Our DMF giving from all sources decreased by \$63,351.36—forcing a reduction in our support staff, the freezing of all salaries and health care benefits, and the first adjustment in the percentage of DMF receipts shared with the larger church and retained by the regional church since 2006 ... despite having borrowed \$87,000 from our Permanent Fund reserves to keep us financially afloat. Urgent pleas to our congregations during the last part of the year were met with typical Kansas generosity; as a result, December's DMF offering was the largest monthly total in recent memory (\$64,943.20), enabling us to repay \$32,400 of our Permanent Fund loan. In addition, our Annual Fund receipts more than doubled last year to \$22,494.25 [though there were fewer givers]; the Christmas Offering was up \$8,086.19 (22.18%) over that of 2008; Designated Operating receipts increased slightly (less than \$700); and Designated District income was up by \$7,177.52 (20.48%).

2. How are you a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world?

The answer in part lies in the tidbits of information scattered above: By widely sharing a report of his trip to Haiti throughout the region, especially with those congregations that already had at least a tenuous tie there, a bond was strengthened with our global missionaries and mission partners there which perhaps empowered our earthquake relief efforts to be greater than they otherwise might have been—for we understand more fully now that what happens to one part of God's family affects us all.

By inviting individuals and congregations to work with the regional church leadership to reshape the future of the Region, we are publicly reaffirming that what is at stake is our **collective** future—not the future of some “other” entity with which they have no relationship for, again, what affects one part of God's family affects us all.

² Kansas now shares 55% of its DMF income with the whole Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) while retaining only 45% for its own ministries. The Special Day, Week of Compassion and Reconciliation offerings are distributed in accordance with General Board guidelines.

By networking congregations to share ministries—from DVD resources to combined VBS ventures, from yoked fellowship groups to the possibilities of yoked congregations—and targeting our new church starts to previously ignored ethnic groups, we are intentionally reminding them that, in the words of the Apostle Paul, “none of this ... was done in a corner” (Acts 26:26, NIV) and the Church is not the church in isolation.

By a renewed emphasis on spirituality, one of our three regional priorities [along with new church development and congregational revitalization], we’ve re-introduced a spiritual focus into all of our programs—including last fall’s youth convention, attended by 375 youth and sponsors, and next fall’s regional assembly—as a blatant reminder that we are in partnership with God in all of our endeavors.

All of the ministries outlined above are part of our efforts to help make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ, raising them up to be Christian leaders for today and tomorrow not only for the region but for the whole mission and witness of the Church.

3. 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:*

	2009	2008	2007
Total Income	\$1,308,049.74	\$1,342,364.33	\$1,356,312.06
Total Expense	<u>1,307,985.18</u>	<u>1,360,406.99</u>	<u>1,351,312.06</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	\$64.56 ³	(\$18,042.66)	\$5,000.00 ⁴

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., with a total value of \$4,521,080.18 at the end of 2009 (up \$701,803.49 [-18.38%] from the previous year-end total of \$3,819,276.69). A draw is budgeted for operations from the earnings of unrestricted reserves (\$1,166,745.37). In 2009 that budgeted amount was \$10,000. Earnings from a trust fund with an oil lease provided the 2009 operating budget with another \$40,149.41 (down \$31,405.47 [-43.89%] from the previous year).

³ As referenced above, we still owe \$54,600 to our Permanent Fund reserve account, the bulk of which must be repaid with interest.

⁴ The actual yearend balance in 2007 was \$26,123.32, but the bulk of the remainder was transferred into reserve fund accounts before the books were closed.