

Northeast Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Mid-America



Northeast Area Center for Ministry

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Visit the NE Area website:
www.nearea.org

TO: Pastors and Board Chairs of NE Area Churches

FROM: Dr. Kris Tenny-Brittian, Area Minister

RE: Six Measures of Congregational Growth

DATE: January 5, 2011

Congregational “growth” can be measured both quantitatively (numerically) and qualitatively. Our annual *Yearbook* reports measure *quantitative* growth. We know, however, the importance of measuring qualitative factors that indicate a congregation’s ability to, and engagement in, transformational ministries (those ministries that allow for people to be transformed within the congregation so they can be part of transforming their social networks, communities, and the world).

As part of the NE Area’s *Reach and Serve Plan*, we are committed to helping congregations measure their growth and, as such, their (*and* the Area’s) ministry effectiveness. To do that, beginning this year we will be measuring congregational growth in six areas:

1) Spiritual Growth

Measured by worship attendance (*Yearbook*) and enrollment in classes and/or groups for discipleship and spiritual growth

2) Evangelism

Measured by baptisms: under 18 years old, over 18 years old

3) Stewardship

Measured financially per capita (*Yearbook*)

4) Mission

Measured by mission giving per capita (*Yearbook*) and by the percentage of people involved in hands-on mission through or beyond the local church

5) Unity

Measured by the extent to which congregational members and participants know and are in agreement about the direction of the church

6) Reputation in the community

Measured by how well the “neighborhood” knows the congregation

To help us measure our growth from year to year, we are attaching the following:

Measuring Congregational Growth

January 5, 2011

Page –Two–

- a) *An Annual Congregational Growth Report Form*. Please return it to our office as soon as possible, preferably by April 15. The following will provide the information you'll need for items 4 and 5.
- b) *The Congregational Questionnaire* for use with your congregation. We suggest you ask people to complete it either before or immediately following the worship service (perhaps during the prelude or postlude), collecting it immediately. Another alternative is to include it in the bulletin and collect it during the offering or after the worship service.
- c) *The Congregational Response Worksheet* that will help you tabulate the responses to the *Congregational Questionnaire*.
- d) *The Community Questionnaire* that details how two or more people from your congregation can learn what your “neighbors” think about you. You can make this as easy or as extensive as you'd like. Ask at least ten people in the community, though: they may be those who live within a few blocks of the church or people who are eating lunch at a restaurant near the church. (And don't worry if they don't know about your church; it may be an indicator you have a little PR work to do.)

As always, please call either Leslie or me should you have any questions or concerns. I hate to add more work to you (and I write this letter remembering my own days as a pastor and how I might respond to a request like this), but I am committed to the effectiveness of the Area's ministries and how we can best reach and serve you to make your ministries stronger and more effective, too. Measuring our growth and sharing our stories of people touched by the Church are the only way I know to do that. I'll look forward to receiving your Growth Report, to hearing your stories, and to the opportunity to come and visit with you or your Board in the coming months and years to share and learn together.

Graciously, kris t-b

NE AREA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF MID-AMERICA
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH REPORT
FOR JANUARY – DECEMBER, 2010

FOR _____ CHRISTIAN CHURCH

COMPLETED BY: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE NE AREA OFFICE BY APRIL 15, 2011
P.O. Box 10230; COLUMBIA, MO 65205

1. Spiritual Growth

- a. Attendance in classes and groups for prayer, spiritual growth, and discipleship _____
- b. Number of classes _____
- c. Number of members involved on a consistent basis _____
- d. Number of “guests” involved on a consistent basis _____

2. Evangelism

- a. Youth baptisms (those 18 and younger) _____
- b. Adult baptisms (those over 18 years of age) _____

3. Mission

- a. Number of people involved in hands-on mission through/with your congregation _____
- b. Number of people involved in hands-on mission beyond your congregation _____

4. Unity (*complete attached*)

- a. Number of respondents _____
- b. Largest responding age group _____

TOTALS 5s: 4s: 3s: 2s: 1s:

5. Reputation in the community (*complete attached*)

- a. Number of respondents _____
- b. Number of positive key words _____
- c. Number of negative key words _____

CONGREGATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tell us when you were born:

Before 1940

1940-1955

1956-1971

1972-1987

After 1988

Please check the box that represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use the "do not know" box only if absolutely necessary.

1. If asked, I could roughly state for visitors and non-members our church's *Mission*.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

2. If asked, I could summarize in my own words our church's *Vision*.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

3. If asked, I could roughly state for visitors and non-members our church's *Values*.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

4. I have a sense of excitement about the future of our church.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

5. I have a clear understanding of the goals for our church.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

6. Our church feels like a network of individuals and age groups with the same goals, but with different expressions.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

7. Opportunities for our congregation to come together are highly valued in our church.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

8. Though we are a network of individuals and age groups, we have a unified identity in the community.

Strongly Agree

Moderately

Slightly

Disagree

Do Not Know

Growth in Unity: Measuring Oneness¹

RESPONSE WORKSHEET

Please tell us when you were born:

Before 1940
1940-1955
1956-1971
1972-1987
After 1988

Please check the box that represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use the "do not know" box only if absolutely necessary.

AGREEMENT THAT STATEMENT DESCRIBES YOU

1. If asked, I could roughly state for visitors and non-members our church's *Mission*.

5
Strongly Agree
4
Moderately
3
Slightly
2
Disagree
1
Do Not Know

2. If asked, I could summarize in my own words our church's *Vision*.

5
Strongly Agree
4
Moderately
3
Slightly
2
Disagree
1
Do Not Know

3. If asked, I could roughly state for visitors and non-members our church's *Values*.

5
Strongly Agree
4
Moderately
3
Slightly
2
Disagree
1
Do Not Know

4. I have a sense of excitement about the future of our church.

5
Strongly Agree
4
Moderately
3
Slightly
2
Disagree
1
Do Not Know

5. I have a clear understanding of the goals for our church.

5
Strongly Agree
4
Moderately
3
Slightly
2
Disagree
1
Do Not Know

¹ Adapted from Bob Whitesel & Kent R. Hunter, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000).

6. Our church feels like a network of individuals and age groups with the same goals, but with different expressions.

5	4	3	2	1
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Do Not Know</i>

7. Opportunities for our congregation to come together are highly valued in our church.

5	4	3	2	1
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Do Not Know</i>

8. Though we are a network of individuals and age groups, we have a unified identity in the community.

5	4	3	2	1
<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Do Not Know</i>

TALLYING RESULTS (add all your responses)

	5s	4s	3s	2s	1s
Question 1					
Question 2					
Question 3					
Question 4					
Question 5					
Question 6					
Question 7					
Question 8					
TOTALS	5s:	4s:	3s:	2s:	1s:

Growth in Favor: Community Awareness²

RESPONSE GUIDE AND WORKSHEET

This Questionnaire can be completed in one or more neighborhoods around your church by two or more people in your congregation. We'd suggest one person ask the questions and the other record the responses

"Hi! My name is _____ and I'm conducting a short survey for _____ Church. Would you mind if I asked you a few short questions?"

If "Yes," continue.

If "No," conclude by saying, "Thank you for your consideration. Have a good day!"

AGE GROUPS

We are undertaking a study of different generations in our community. Were you born:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before 1940	1940-1955	1956-1971	1972-1987	After 1988

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Are you aware of _____ Christian Church in this neighborhood?

If "Yes," continue to Question 2.

If "No," conclude the interview by saying, "That concludes our interview. Thank you for your time. Have a good day!"

2. How would you describe this church to a friend?

3. In general, do you have a positive, negative, or undecided view of this church?

4. What advice could you give this church so it could more effectively help people in your age group?

5. Are you currently actively involved in a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious house of worship?

² Adapted from Bob Whitesel & Kent R. Hunter, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000).

CONCLUSION

“Thank you for your time. Your advice will help _____ Christian Church better address the needs of people in our community. Thank you. Have a good day!”

TALLYING RESULTS

1. Interviewers tabulate their surveys by writing down short phrases that summarize the responses they receive (see *Column “A” below for examples*).
2. Interviewers note the key words in the responses (see *Column “B” below*).

A: Question Responses	B: Key Words
Friendly church with a good youth program	Friendly Youth Program
Music is important	Music
Involved in a food shelf, Habitat for Humanity, and a women’s shelter	Food shelf Habitat for Humanity Women’s Shelter
After school care for school age children, with a youth choir	Kid’s Club Youth Choir

3. Interviews rank the “key words” in order of frequency.
4. All interviewers come together and compare their results, looking for common responses and key words.
5. Interviewers compile a combined list of key words and phrases that describe, in order of frequency, the perspective people have about the congregation.
 - Classify the key words into two groups: positive and negative
 - List the top 10 positive and negative key words
6. Compare the positive and negative lists annually, working to overcome negative community image and increase the positive.