



The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Northern California-Nevada

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What's the 'Region' and What Does it Have to Do With Me?

In 25 Words or Less (ok.... 160 words or less) tell me about "The Region"

The Region (or better, really, the Regional Church) is composed of the 60+ Disciples churches in northern California and Nevada who have covenanted with one another to do together what they could not do (or do much less well) separately. Ties of 150 years of history and service bind us together. The Regional Church is governed by a Regional Board of Directors, elected primarily by the geographic areas. Regional pastors -- currently Regional Minister-President Chuck Blaisdell and Regional Minister-Vice President Marty Williams -- are called by the Regional Church and are responsible to the Regional Board for their ministry. The Regional Minister-President employs support staff and other staff for the Regional Church in order to carry out its ministry as given to it by the Board of Directors. (All of this is described in the Regional Church's Bylaws, which is of course available to you on request)

So what's the "big idea" of the Region?

The essential functions of the Regional Church are these: **to be pastor to the pastors, and to be resources for the strengthening of congregational life.** All of our services and activities center around these two priorities.

That's pretty abstract. Can you focus it more?

The Regional Board has fashioned a "mission statement" for the Regional Church based on these "essential functions". Here's what it says: Our mission is....

Congregational Support and Renewal, through

Leadership development; evangelism; stewardship resources; camping ministries; family connections and fellowship.

Ministry Support, through

Pastoral care; ministerial recruitment, support, oversight, and accountability.

Transformation and Outreach, through

New church establishment; anti-racism initiatives; mission opportunities; justice advocacy; ecumenical and United Church of Christ partnership support opportunities

Faithful Administration, through

Personnel and Resources

In all these ways, the Regional Church extends a ministry of voice and presence to strengthen congregational life for mission. In particular, the Regional Pastors seek to offer wisdom and challenge to the church through, mentoring, modeling, preaching, teaching, and pastoral care.

Ministry costs money. How is the Regional Church's ministry financially supported?

The ministry of the Regional Church is funded primarily through the contributions of congregations in the Region to Basic Mission Finance. Churches give a portion of their budget and individuals give to the Special Day Offerings (Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) to Basic Mission Finance. Congregations are then invited to send those offerings to the Regional Church where they are then divided between the Region and the wider Disciples ministries; the Regional Board periodically decides what that division will be. Basic Mission Finance accounts for the largest percentage of our annual income; other sources of income include direct gifts to the Regional Church from congregations and individuals, some endowment income, bank interest, and a few minor miscellaneous income items. (If you like looking at spreadsheets, a copy of the Regional Church budget is always available to you). The budget is approved every year by the Regional Board, and the Board reviews financial statements at each of its meetings.



So What is that money used for? We know how a congregational budget “works”; how does the Regional Church spend the money that we contribute to its ministry?

A “snapshot” of how our Basic Mission Finance income, along with other income, is used would show this: The largest portion of the budget is for staff salaries -- the Regional Church staff is the “face” and the energy behind our pastoral care for pastors and our resourcing of congregations. The rest of our expenses are mostly for the kind of overhead that one expects — rent and other related costs, printing, mailing, phone. It is worth noting that our staff salaries, both for support staff and ministerial staff, are lower than the averages for other Regions. It is also worth noting that our “program staff” are part-time “contract” persons who are working for much, much less than “market value” because they love the ministry to which they have been called.

Program Staff? What’s that?

If you do a quick glance at the Regional Office letterhead, you’d think we are “flush” with staff. We have a “Program Assistant” for Camping and Youth Ministries, the “Study and Concerns” area (a program portfolio that works on social justice issues, reconciliation

ministries, ecumenical partnership opportunities, and bringing areas of special ‘study and concern’ to the attention of congregations), and a Director of the Capital Campaign. None of these folks is even close to full time; moreover, each of them is in reality volunteering a very large percentage of their time, given the very modest honoraria



Regional Church Website masthead www.ccncn.org

that they are given for this work! We are grateful for their dedication and support; it lets us do our ministry on your behalf in a more focused way. And while we’re on the topic, we have one full time support staff; one ½ time support staff, and one 1/8 time support staff. Again, our support staff work for very modest salaries and see their work as ministry.

Tell me about the Region’s camping program? Why is that important? How is it paid for? Why does it seem so expensive?

The camping program offered each summer (plus mid-winter weekend events for middle school and high school youth) is one of the most important ministries we do! There are many, many persons in our church who have had their faith ever more firmly rooted at Church Camp; there are many ministers who first knew and had reinforced a call to ministry through that experience. The Regional Church is committed to a quality camping program for these reasons and more. It’s important to note that registration fees do not cover the cost of the Regional Church’s camping program. If it were not for the fact that the

Region's campground, the Community of the Great Commission (an hour or so east of Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra), were rented to other non-profit groups most of the year, the Region could not have a campground and would be forced to use rental facilities which would increase the cost of registrations. At the same time, we are very aware that the cost of registrations (even though comparable to most mainline church's fees) are too high; part of what the Region's "Ministry for a New Millennium" Capital Campaign seeks to do is to create an fund an endowment whose earnings will lower the cost of camp registrations for every youth. No youth has ever been turned away for lack of funds; most congregations typically assist their youth and the Regional Church has some modest scholarship monies available. Our commitment to having quality staffing for our camping program bespeaks our commitment on your behalf to the fact that the youth are the future — and the present! — of God's church.

I sometimes hear about other Regional Church-sponsored activities. What's the purpose of the activities and events of the Regional Church.

This is our imperative: **To seek to strengthen congregational life for mission.** Therefore, for example, in the last two or three years the Regional Church has sponsored or co-sponsored at least three training events on evangelism. Evangelism and the starting of new churches is a priority; without that emphasis we are not being faithful to the Great Commission. Moreover, we have a commitment that the program at the Annual Meeting at Asilomar, and particularly workshops there, will be directly focused on ways and means that congregations can be strengthened and equipped and empowered for their ministries. This is just for starters....

In what other ways does the Regional Church seek to “strengthen congregational life for mission?”

A key element of the ministry of the Regional Church is that the Regional Pastors are first of all just that — pastors. And, just as with the pastor of any congregation, much of the work and time of the pastor will not be best understood under the rubric of “programs and activities.” Rather, the Regional Pastors, just as with a congregational pastor, spend 30-50% of their time calling (on pastors and lay leaders), being available for consultation with pastors and lay leaders, working with pastors and lay leaders on crises and conflict and opportunities, working with congregations on stewardship programs, working with congregational search committees who are seeking a pastor, orienting and training a congregation's Pastoral Relations Committee, etc., etc. This pastoral and resourcing ministry is hard to “measure,” but the availability to congregations and congregational pastors of Regional Pastors is a key element in our ministry that we do on your behalf. A

- WELCOME PAGE
- WHO WE ARE
- REGIONAL STAFF
- EMAIL CHUCK BLAISDELL
- CHUCK'S ARTICLES
- EMAIL MARTY WILLIAMS
- REGIONAL CALENDAR
- CONGREGATIONS
- DISCIPLE MEN
- REGIONAL CAMP (C.G.C.)
- REGIONAL BOARD REPORT
- REGIONAL RESOURCES
- GUEST BOOK
- RELATED WEB LINKS
- DISCIPLES ELECTRONIC VILLAGE
- DISCIPLES WEBSITE

*From the Regional Church's website
www.cncn.org*

couple of indices: The Regional Pastors each put in an excess of 35,000 miles per year in auto travel to churches to support and work with them. Or, another “measure” — last year the Regional Minister-President either read or wrote almost 10,000 emails related to work with our pastors and congregations.

I'm interested in knowing more, and about how I might play a part in the Regional Church's ministries!

There are a variety of committees and task groups that carry out our ministry; maybe you could serve in that way. Call and let's talk!

If you have an email address, you can ask to be subscribed to the regular emails from the Regional Minister-President that offer news, information about Regional Church activities and events, resources for strengthening your congregation, and prayer concerns. Send an email to Chuck Blaisdell at chuck@ccncn.org

Visit the Regional Church's website at www.ccncn.org Here you will find links to a variety of resources.

Call! Write! Fax! Have a question? Heard something that you want to check out? Your Regional Church staff is pretty accessible:

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A Ministry Made Possible by Your Gifts to Basic Mission Finance