



9/26/2016

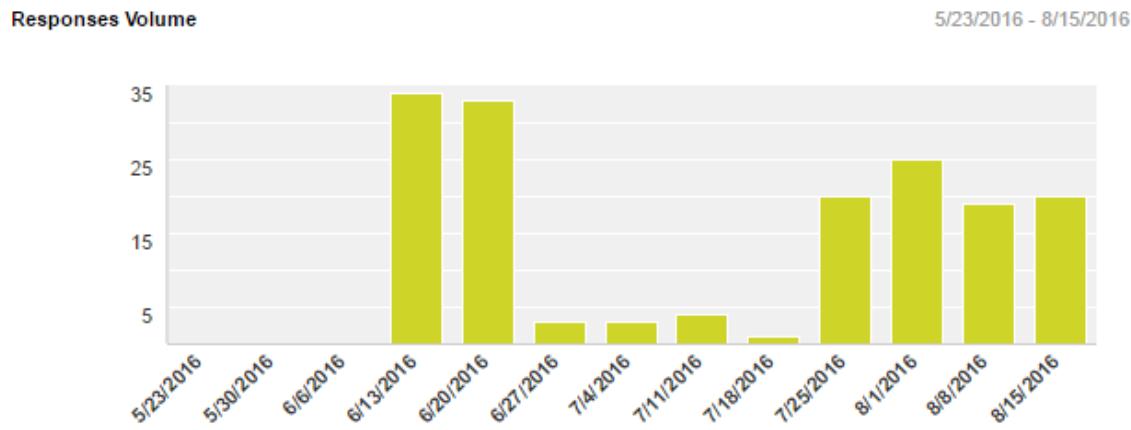
Congregational Survey Results

Greater Kansas City Region

Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation
Authored by: Rick Morse

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Over the summer months of 2016, the Greater Kansas City Region requested people in their churches to complete a survey to help in Regional planning. 162 people, representing various walks of church life participated in the survey.

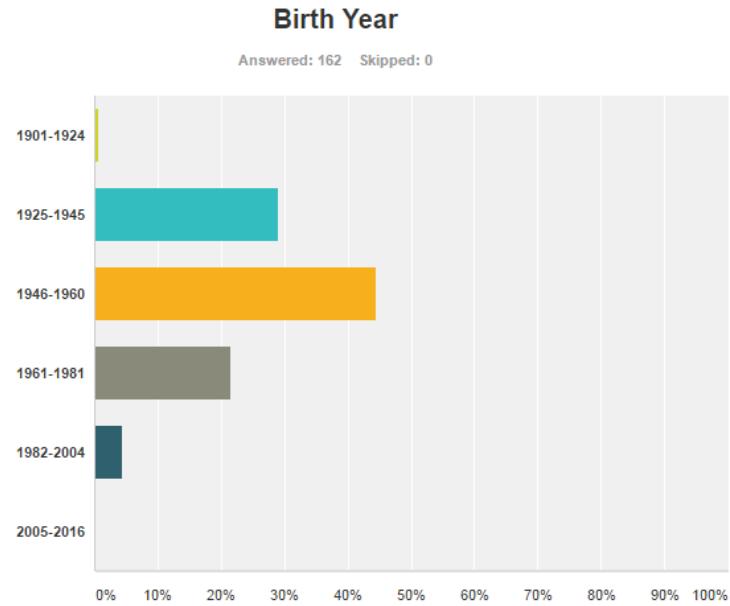


Included in the survey were participants who were fairly active in their churches. The word cloud below represents the roles they held (The larger the word, the more likely the person in that category)

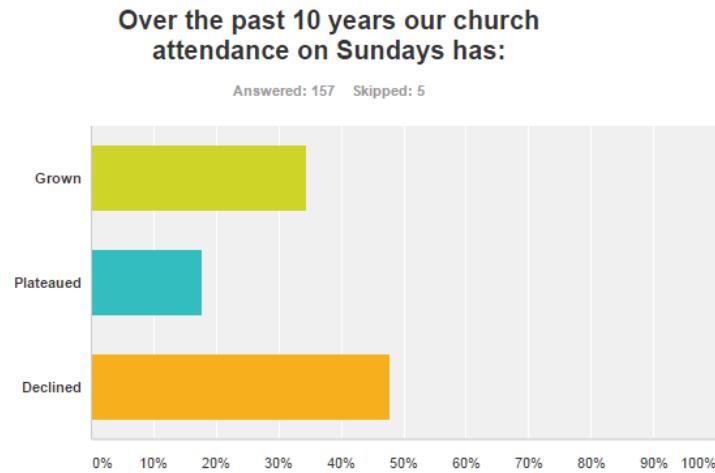
CWF Admin Music Lay Congregation
School Teacher Children's Ministry Volunteer
Attendee Regional Deacon Finance
Board Director Elder Leader Chair
Trustee Pastor Charter Member Church Convenor
Past Moderator Leadership Minister Coordinator
Treasurer

The participants in the survey were largely female (63%). The majority (73%) were Baby Boomers and Greatest generation, (meaning aged 56-91) which is likely reflective of leadership in most congregations today.

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The group skewed to healthier congregations with 34% of the congregations reporting they are currently growing. (Our data shows only about 25% of GKCR churches growing).



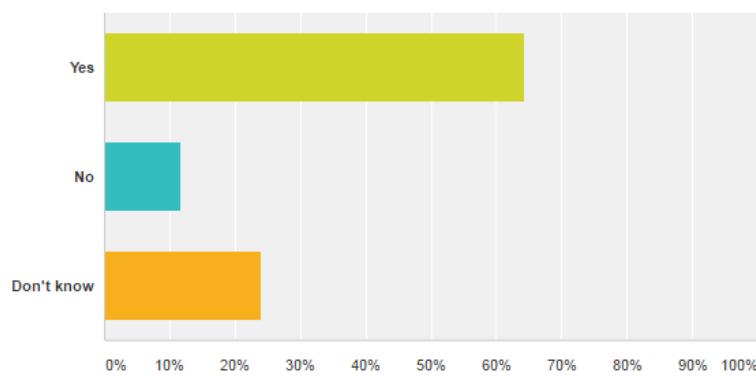
The survey requested input regarding participants feelings about regional services the church may or may not have participated in. *Note on each chart it states how many people skipped each question.*

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SEARCH AND CALL:

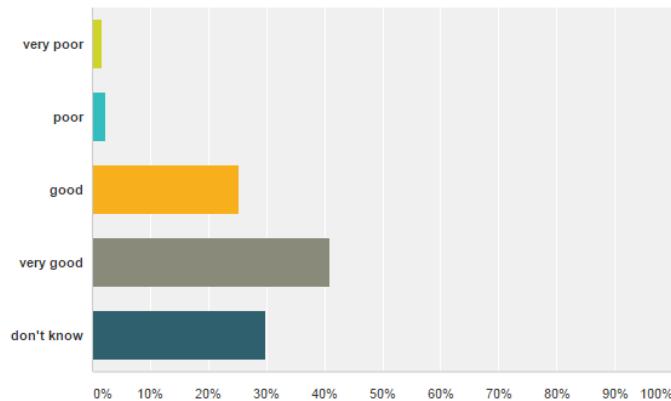
Our church has utilized the regional Search and Call process during our last search for a pastor.

Answered: 162 Skipped: 0



Our experience with Search and call was:

Answered: 127 Skipped: 35



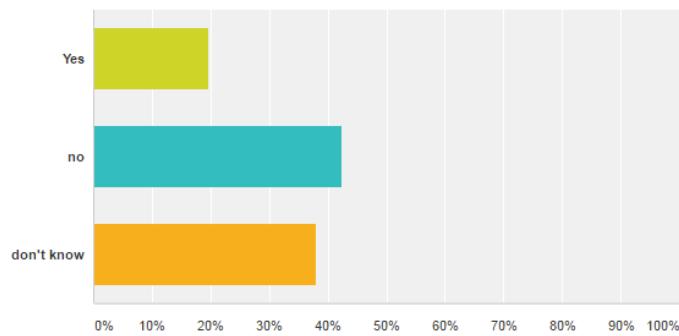
The charts indicate that there is good awareness about the church/region relationship during the search and call process. The experiences were mostly reported in very positive terms with the exception of 5 individuals who judged the process as poor/very poor.

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Conflict Management:

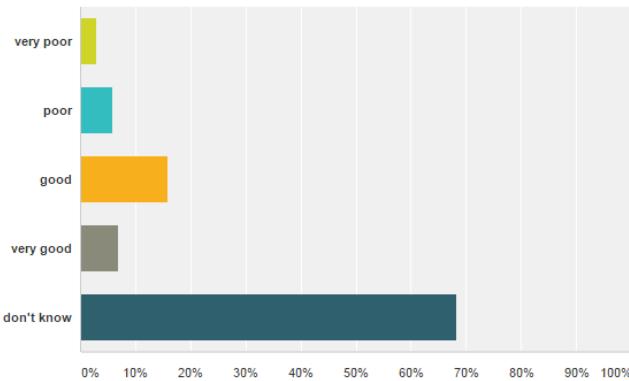
Our church has had conflict and received mediation from the Region.

Answered: 158 Skipped: 4



Our experience with mediation services by the region was:

Answered: 101 Skipped: 61



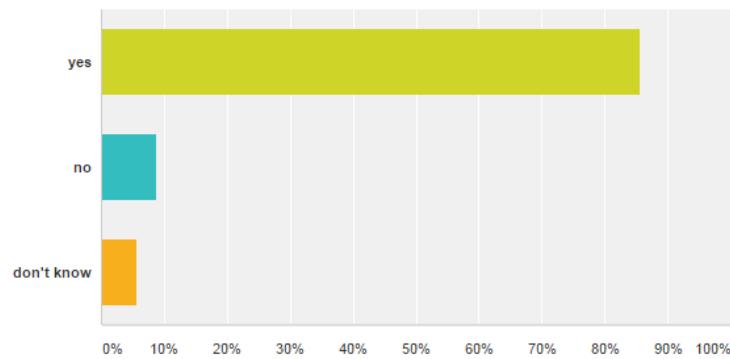
There is very little knowledge about conflict management work with the Region. Only 20% of respondents were aware of their church's engagement. 9 people reported the service was poor or very poor.

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Tall Oaks

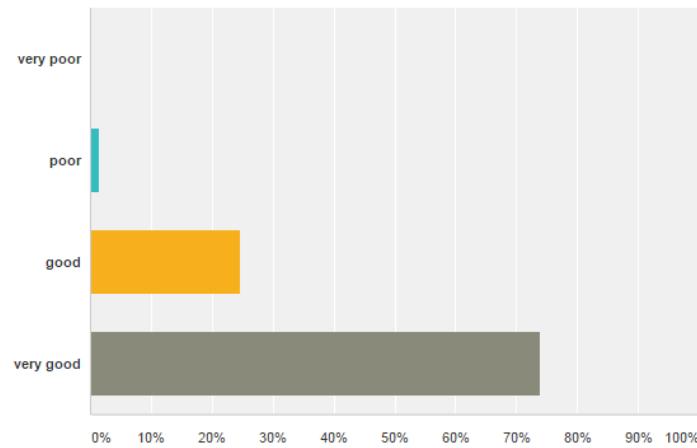
Our church sends people to Tall Oaks:

Answered: 160 Skipped: 2



Our overall experience with Tall Oaks is:

Answered: 138 Skipped: 24

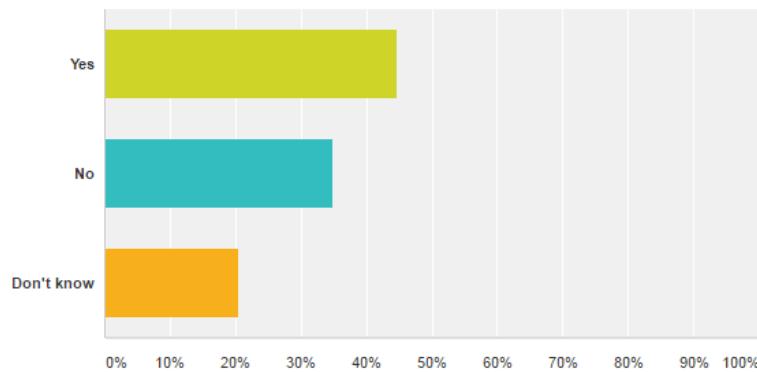


People in the region really love Tall Oaks. The vast majority report that their congregation utilizes their services, and 75% rate their experience there as Very Good. While many congregations send people to camp at Tall Oaks, a smaller number utilize the facility for congregational retreats (44%)

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Our church utilizes Tall Oaks for retreats

Answered: 161 Skipped: 1



We asked what barriers would hamper the church's use of Tall Oaks. There were 103 responses that for the most could be categorized as below. Many reported lack of knowledge by those who are planning retreats, or because of distance, they just don't think of it.

The writer of this report finds the distance argument funny when compared to the retreat locations of most regions. Overall people are very positive about Tall Oaks.

Barrier	Responses
Age of Congregants	13/103
Availability of dates	2/103
Distance	29/103
Expense	18/103

When asked how Tall Oaks might improve its facilities, 81 people (exactly half) had something to say.

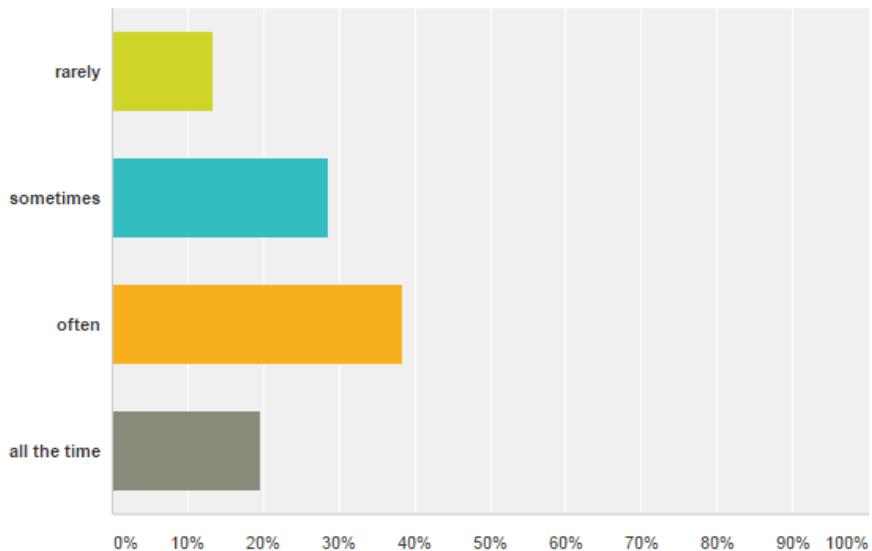
Ideas for Tall Oaks	Responses
Adult housing (building project)	4/81
Improve communication/information	7/81
More mid-year programming	12/81

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Senior programming mid-week	5/81
RV Parking	Spiritual development retreats

Our church financially supports Tall Oaks

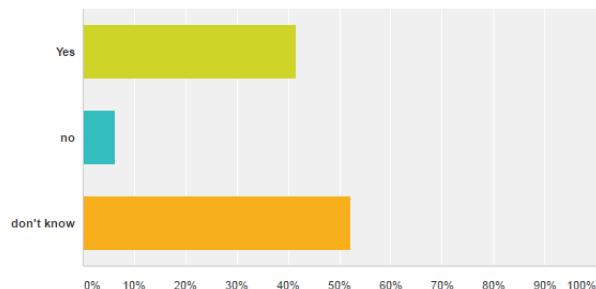
Answered: 143 Skipped: 19



RESOURCING

Our church has requested resources from the region like: demographics, legal resources, administrative resources.

Answered: 161 Skipped: 1



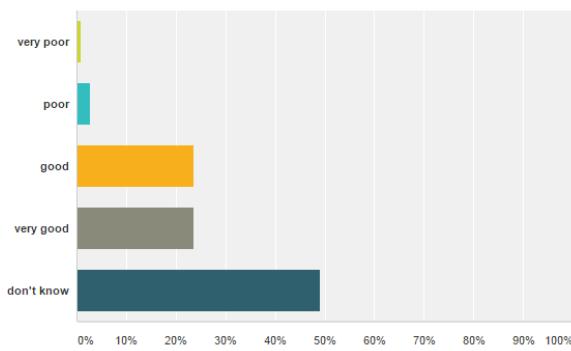
The majority of those surveyed did not know if their congregation had utilized the region for resources.

Of those reporting that they had requested resources, the responses were good.

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Our experience with resource requests has been:

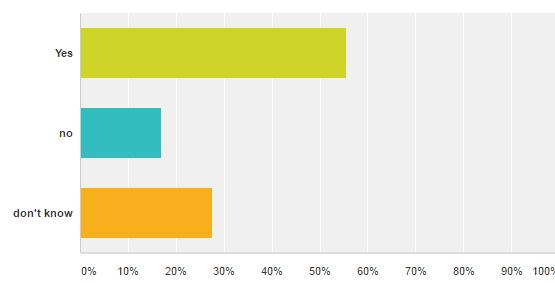
Answered: 114 Skipped: 48



CWF/CYF:

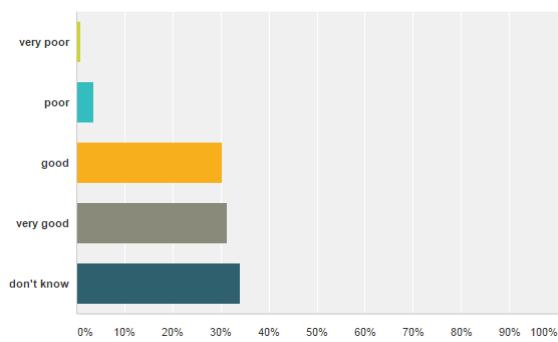
Our church engages in Regional CWF activities

Answered: 160 Skipped: 2



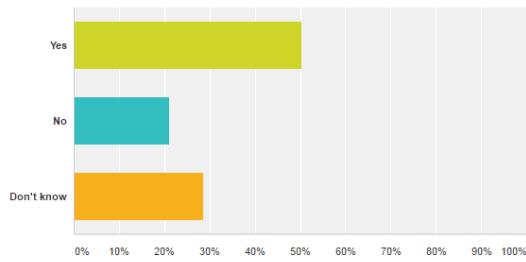
Our experience with Regional CWF activities has been:

Answered: 112 Skipped: 50



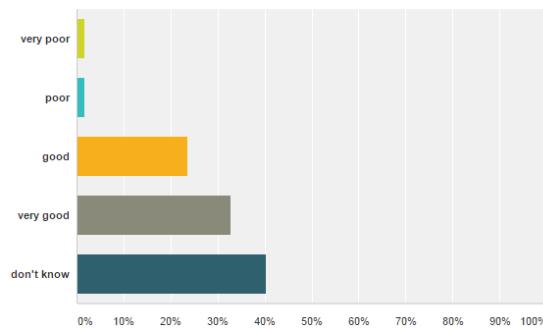
Our church youth have attended Regional CYF activities:

Answered: 161 Skipped: 1



Our experience with Regional CYF activities has been:

Answered: 119 Skipped: 43



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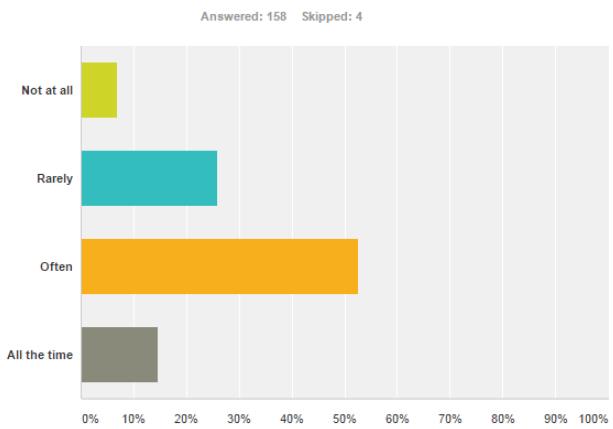
CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

The next section probed into how leadership functions in GKCR congregations.

About one-third of the congregations report little rotation in congregational leadership. This is a relative indicator of congregational health as it indicates stagnant growth, or an aging congregation.

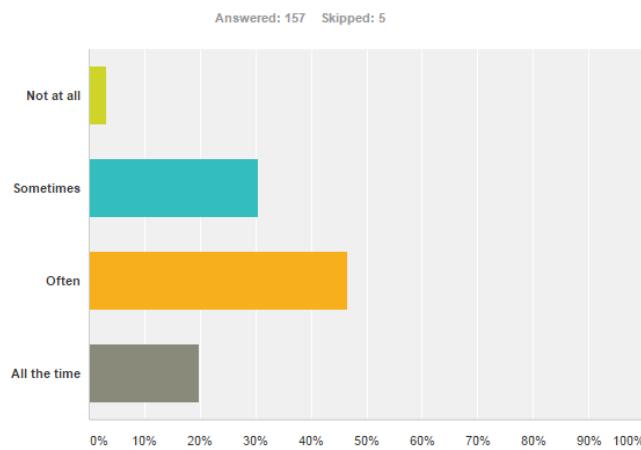
The second question was designed to check creativity. Again, about one-third of congregations report that they only sometimes make changes to the church

In my opinion our congregation does a great job of rotating new leaders into new roles.



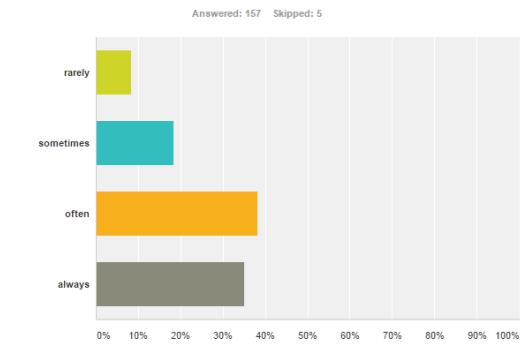
calendar.

In my opinion our church leaders are looking for the next best thing for our church instead of repeating the church calendar every year.



About one-quarter of reporting congregations state that their church is more focused on maintaining an institution rather than connecting people to God's mission. This means 75% are connecting with mission.

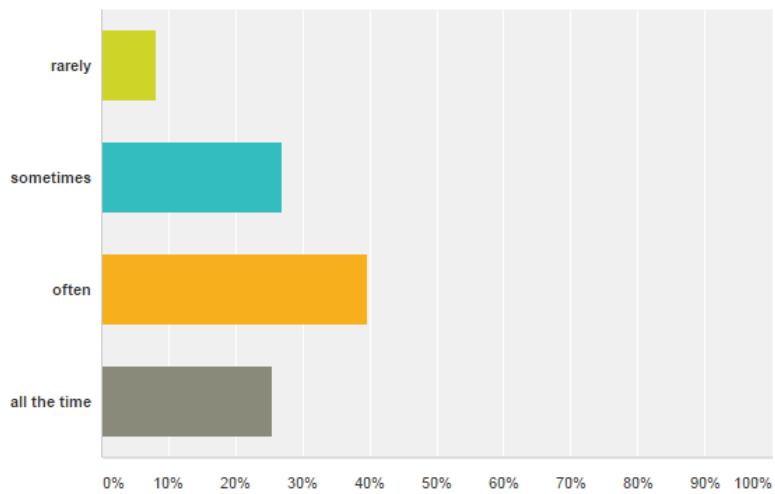
In my opinion our church leaders focus on connecting us to God's mission rather than maintaining an institution.



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In my opinion our church leaders are seeking resource to help them lead their church in this era of transition.

Answered: 149 Skipped: 13



One thing is inspiring is that 65% of the participants report that their church is seeking resources to help them grow as leaders. We must remember that survey participants usually lean heavy towards seeking outside help.

When asked what programs have benefited their church the open ended responses were:

DMA	3/71
The Journey	8/71
New Church Support	6/71
Regional Assembly	9/71
Search and Call	6/71
Youth/Cwf/other	6/71

It should be noted that 14 or the responses were programs in which Hope Partnership and the Region were in partnership and delivering.

The next open-ended question dealt with listing areas where leaders could use extra help. There were 76 responses, these were the categories that most of those response fell into:

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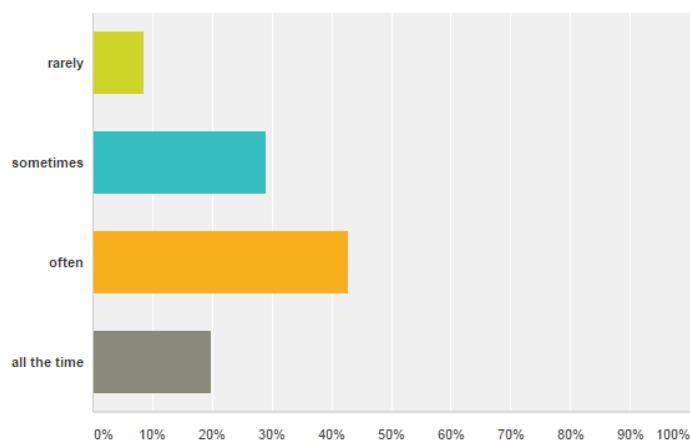
Children's programming	3/76
Communication/media	3/76
Evangelism/Church growth*	14/76
Finance/Stewardship	5/71
Leader Development	7/71

*The Evangelism/Church Growth category showed some disturbing trends in how leaders perceive their roles. Many of the comments were “Recruiting young families for our church” or “how get our pastor to grow the church”. These statements imply a greater need for leadership development to help congregations adapt for the future, rather than try to force people to join them.

The final question in this section dealt with leadership in the church, and their engagement with spiritual development. More than one-third of the congregations demonstrated that they lean on the pastor to do the heavy lifting on spiritual development in the congregation.

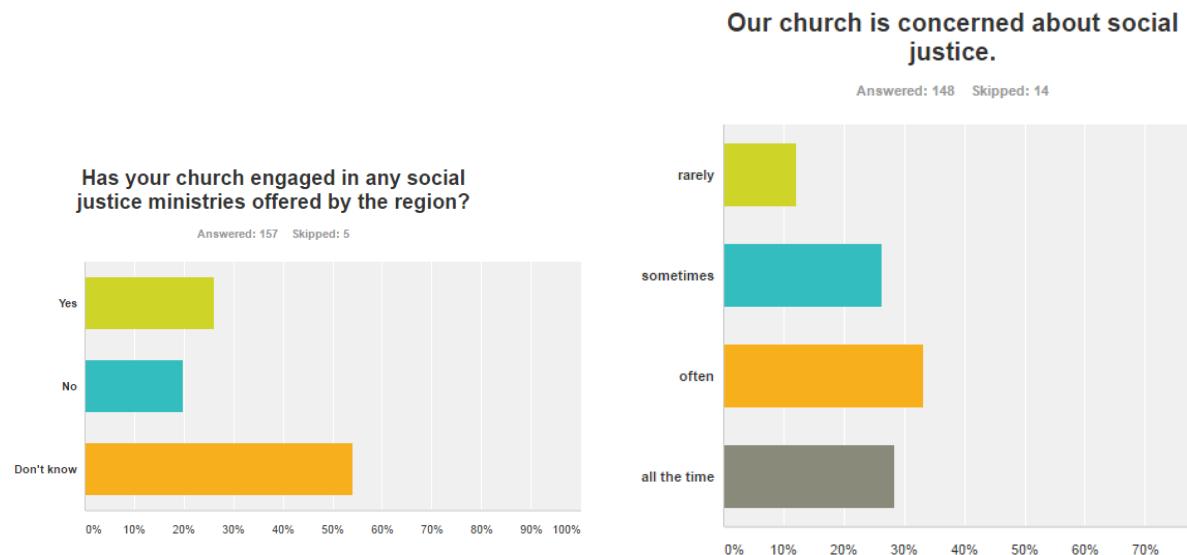
Our congregational leaders share equally with the pastor in the spiritual development of our participants.

Answered: 152 Skipped: 10

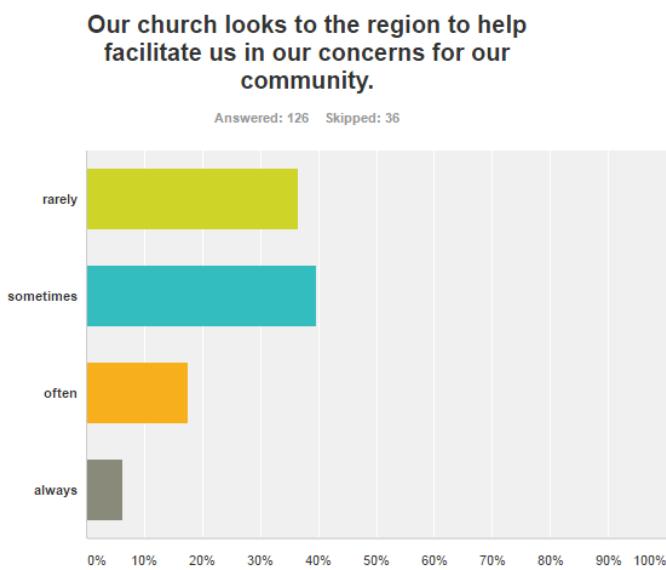


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SOCIAL JUSTICE:



Two questions probed the area of Social Justice. Only 23% of the survey participants indicated that they knew their church engaged in social justice calls by the region. The majority were unaware. On the local congregation level there was higher engagement. They rarely seek out the region for resourcing on issues in GKCR.

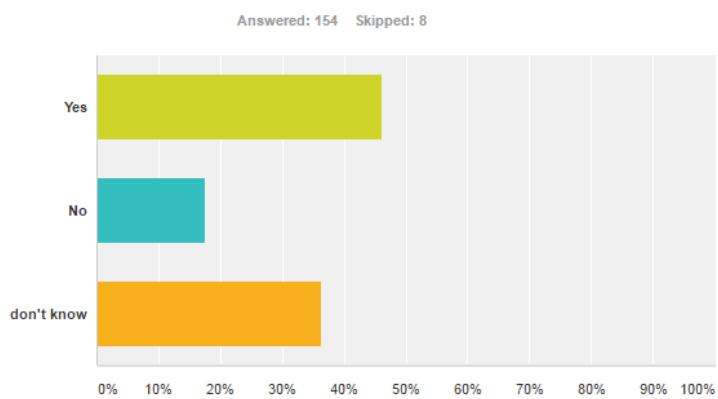


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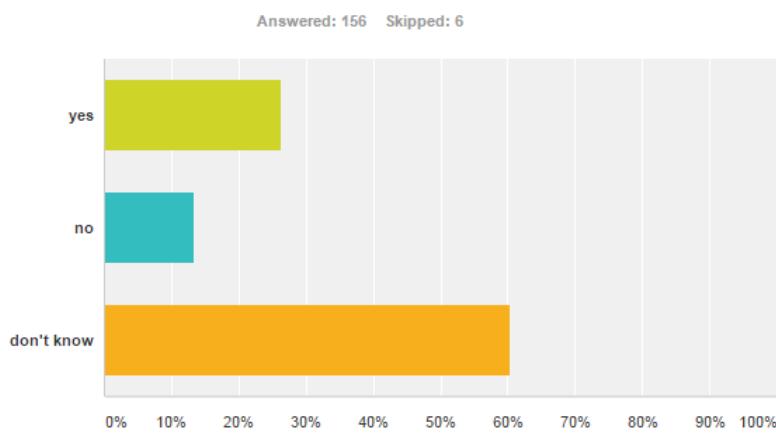
When asked in an open ended question about regional programs combating racism, only 28% of participants could name a single regional program related to combating racism in the region. Those that named resources did so by name, and with some enthusiasm.

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Our congregation is currently engaged in intentional transformation.

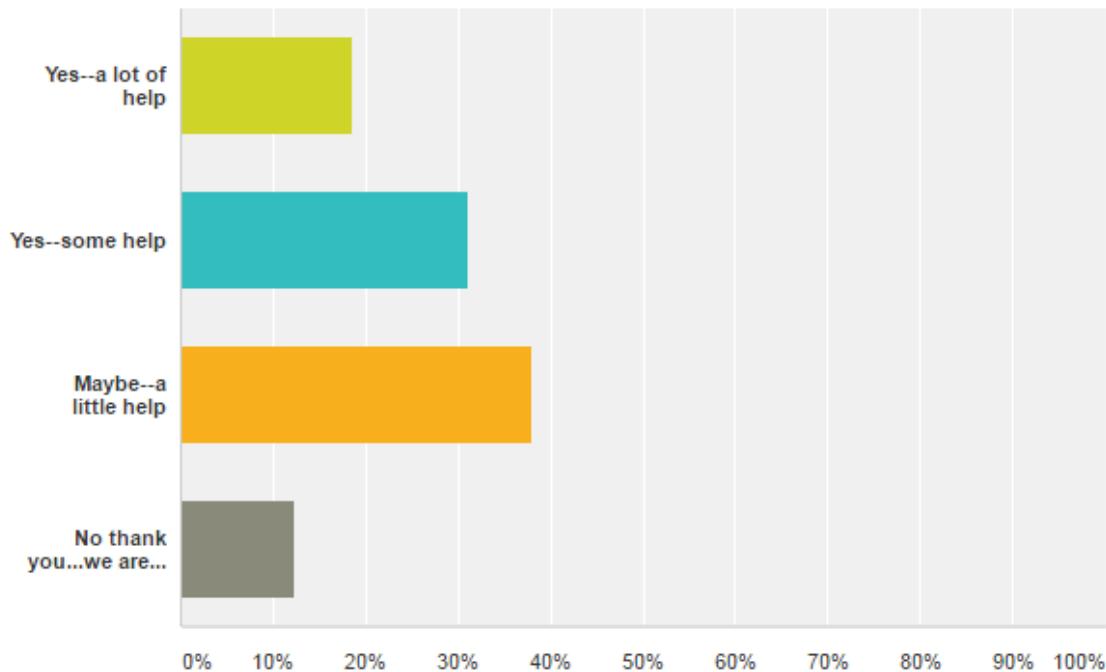


We have sought resources offered by the Region for transformation.



Our congregation needs developmental help.

Answered: 145 Skipped: 17



A large number of congregations reported that they are engaged in intentional transformation (46%).

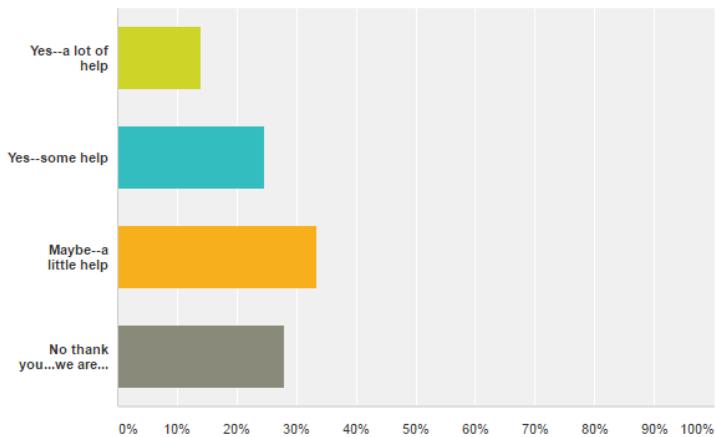
85% of the survey participants reported that they need some sort of help or resourcing for transformation. 25% reported engagement with regional transformation resources, but the vast majority report that they did not have knowledge of regional resources or whether their congregation was involved. The gap between those engaged, and those not knowing demonstrates an opportunity for regional programming at different levels of engagement.

When it comes to financial development, at least 40% of the respondents showed a desire for help in their development. A surprising 28% responded that they felt good about their congregation's financial development.

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Our congregation need help in financial development.

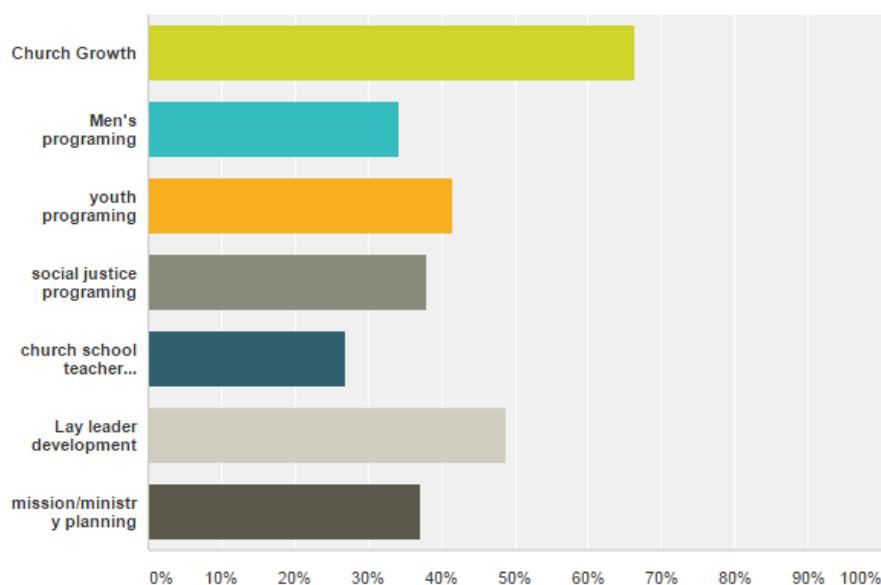
Answered: 150 Skipped: 12



When specifically asked about program resourcing the overwhelming need is in church growth, but the strength of the answers shows that just about any help in program development would be welcome.

Please note areas of program development you believe your church could benefit if the region provided resources:

Answered: 137 Skipped: 25



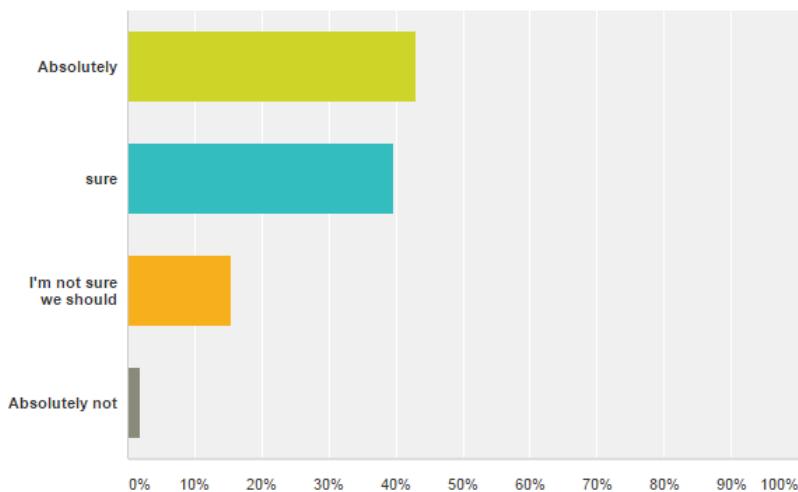
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NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT:

The Kansas City region has had a long reputation for robust new church development. In fact, it has been a leader in our denomination. The survey shows that it is an important part of the ethos of this region with only a few respondents showing any doubt.

It is important that the region be engaged in robust new church development.

Answered: 156 Skipped: 6

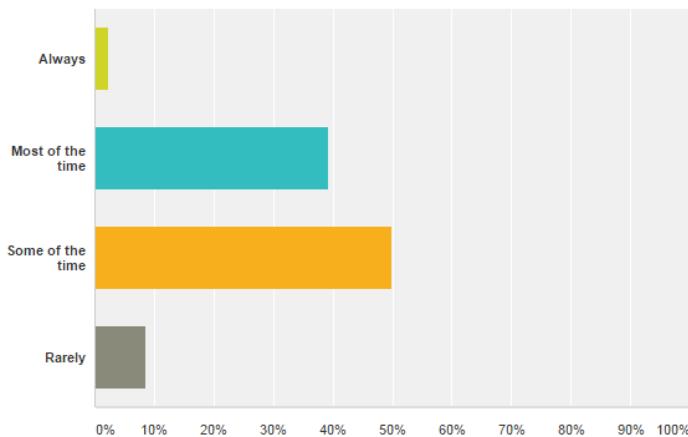


In evaluating church planting, respondents though were less enthusiastic. There is recognition that not all plants survive.

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The Regional church has been successful in church planting.

Answered: 130 Skipped: 32



REGIONAL ASSEMBLY:

Answer Choices	Responses
▼ I don't attend regional assembly.	65.79% 100
▼ I like to connect with other Disciples in our area.	22.37% 34
▼ I like to learn and hear more about what the Region and General Church is doing in the world.	24.34% 37
▼ I'm expected to be there	1.32% 2
▼ I like to hear and learn from other churches in our area.	19.74% 30
Total Respondents: 152	

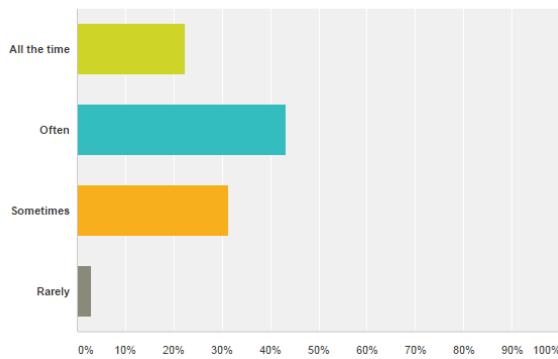
When asked about regional programs, Regional Assembly was mentioned frequently. There is high awareness of assembly, yet 65% report they do not attend. It appears that connecting with one another, and learning about the church's mission are high on their list of expectations.

The quality of Regional Assembly varies, but is often appreciated.

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Regional Assemblies are EXCELLENT!

Answered: 67 Skipped: 95



Has the Region ever considered? (open response)

- 1- Greater pastoral support
- 2- Holding rallies for Christians, Have a parade supporting God and the Christian Way, Have a 5 K run for God, be proactive in supporting Christian politicians, having a revival, with the theme, Let God Come Alive In Your Life, Have public baptisms, where anyone could come forward and have it done, advertise on billboards, in movie theaters, go door to door handing out flyers to come to church, hold a public prayer meeting and make it known
- 3- An all-area work day? Choose a few projects with varying levels of "work" so that aged people can participate as well, then schedule it for a certain day/time.
- 4- How are we drawing young families into Christian faith?
- 5- reinventing CWF
- 6- A Hispanic Ministries
- 7- A Biblical Institute in Spanish
- 8- Finding a way to overcome congregational "Lone Ranger" independence and work synergistically with nearby DOC congregations.
- 9- Dealing with home church movement--Coffee House
- 10- sponsoring a guest sermon/lecture series that would visit each church or area?
- 11- Instead of starting a new church, why not encourage the to attend established churches.
- 12- Combining struggling churches to have healthier churches like most other denominations

Of all the things the Region does, I think we can let go of...

- 1- Children's ministry
- 2- Graded Christian education
- 3- DMA
- 4- Taking money from poorer churches
- 5- Political agendas

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- 6- Hypocrisy
- 7- Board structure and Executive Committee structure (2)
- 8- Planting churches
- 9- Focus on social injustice
- 10- Search and call...let's do direct pulpit try-outs
- 11- Social justice. I refuse to attend a church that a youth minister gets arrested at a protest or has hash tags like #blueliesmatter.

The overall majority of response was in the category of "I don't know" or "I can't imagine giving anything up".

I think of all the things the Region does it should concentrate on:

Communication/networking	8/57
Church Development/(incl. mergers)	16/57
Clergy Development	6/57
Outreach/mission	3/57
Program Dev. (CWF etc)	4/57
Do not know	22/57

From this sample, people would like to see major engagement in congregational development. It appears that people look to the region to support congregations, rather than looking at ways in which the region can be a force for justice or mission.

One thing I'd like for the Regional Mission planning team to consider is...

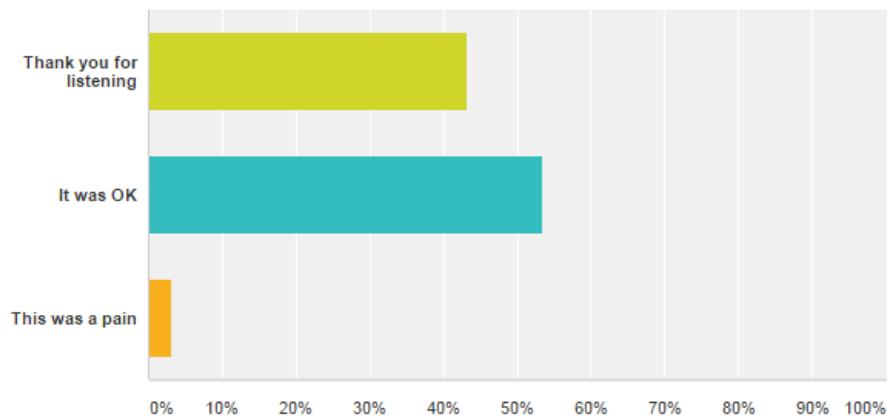
- Better communication
- an inter-church adult mission trip
- help struggling congregations
- A food pantry for north east Johnson County like Village Presbyterian has at 99th & Mission Rd.
- Holding clergy and congregations to a high standard is a good thing.
- How to equip older pastors for transformation into new ministry.
- Social & economic issues with congregations
- missions to poor countries
- missions to poor countries or any place that no one or little people know of the word of God.
- help countries where the prisoners need Bibles

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- Enhance interaction with the larger "Church"
- Why a leader like me is so unaware of the regional mission programs.
- increase (electronic) communication about mission opportunities both in Kansas City and outside our region
- Finding ways for churches to be relevant in millennial lives
- LGBTQ issues
- Discuss developing new mind sets that adapt to challenges faced by society
- taking care of the homeless, hungry and children in our immediate area
- don't forget that not everyone is connected to a computer, so don't assume that people will get the information when it is sent out in an email.
- Out-of-the-box Ministry models
- leveraging small congregations joint mission endeavors.
- Being visible to average church members
- How we can engage our congregational leadership in conversation about the regions work
- More men's activities.

I loved taking this survey

Answered: 155 Skipped: 7



CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1- People love Tall Oaks, and are proud of it. The perception is that it is a long ways away, and not as accessible for short term events. Programming for summer is pretty tight, but there may be opportunities with seniors for fall and spring training.
- 2- There is large interest in church development and growth. Regardless of the question, this response is evident in many places. There is keen awareness that

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most congregations are failing with younger generational groups. Unfortunately, thinking was rarely creative on this point other than trying to find ways to “recruit” young families into churches the way that they are. There is an opportunity to work with congregations and leaders in developing congregations. Perhaps some consideration can be given towards restructuring the congregational transformation position, and deepening a relationship with Hope?

- 3- People on numerous occasions wished they knew more about what the region has to offer congregations, or suggested that communication needs to be better. The region may wish to conduct a communications audit after we complete this process of planning so that the website and other tools will begin to form around the Region’s plan.
- 4- There is some desire to receive additional training by lay folks around traditional areas of church programming. (Men, Women, Youth, Seniors) There are also some churches in the region that could become a lead resource or incubator for helping other churches develop their programs. In addition, many of the smaller congregation may benefit in some joint activities towards these affinity groups.
- 5- New Church Development is deep in the ethos of this region. I was surprised though to see some responses in the survey that resented the development of new churches which indicates a better need for a case statement. Robust development of new Hispanic churches and nurturing those congregations appears to be important to some survey participants.
- 6- Business functions of the region are not highly valued. I think there is a desire to see regional decision making structures streamlined, with increased program activity. This seemed apparent in comments about Regional Assembly. No one stated that they wished for more business meetings. Restructuring the purpose of the Assembly for inspiration, networking, etc. may be desired.
- 7- Search and Call appears to be working well. In both this survey and the Clergy survey, the service is widely used by congregations. There seems to be little need for redesign of the process, with the exception of figuring out how to communicate better.
- 8- Overall, people seemed pleased with this region. Comments indicated they are enthusiastic about their new Regional Minister. The region displays an openness for change.

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