

**Regional Board Retreat  
2/4/2023**

Meeting opened 10:06AM by John S: Went over agenda,

In Attendance: Courtney Setty, Keith Asaeli, Adria Patterson, James Vertreese, John Steinmetz, Ron Lewis, Marla Willis, Peggy Chandler, Anna Godsey, Lara Blackwood Pickrel, Jill Standley, Bill Rose-Heim, Mauricio Acosta, Rodolfo Adosta, Laura Phillips, Mary Lou Kegler, Kathy Harris via Zoom

BILL RH – book – Do I Stay Christian by Brian McLaren; 62% in KC area not involved in congregation or religious organization - what do we do with that when that many people are not interested in what you feel so passionately about? Opened up questions about that.

Peggy C - Meditation; adaptive change and challenges; shared her experiences of the Kansas Leadership Institute workshop and a brief video as to the difference to technical and adaptive leadership. There are 60 scholarships available for the KLC workshops to our region, you can apply for one at <https://docgeneralassembly.regfox.com/application-to-participate-in-the-kansas-leadership-center-workshop>

Gary Peluso-Verdend - guest speaker; presentation (<https://files.constantcontact.com/ea43e848501/f8be06e2-c43b-46f2-a9ad-4104cccc3071.pdf>) - Tulsa, OK via zoom, just retired from Phillips; on the 31st of Jan. "Situation of mainline churches; esp Disciples; what it is today and the country where the state it's in. Possibilities for what we should pay attention to these days." Been Disciple for 25 years. This is Gary's take - which is what he can most offer after 25 years. Personal and challengeable. Presentation and then questions ensued.

Gary's Presentation:

Intersection Transitions: Peril and Potential in the Wilderness; reference to Transitions in Organizations (Bridges) Difference in change and transition - ex: Change is temp drop from 60-0, transition is what happens in our brains while that change is happening; parallel journeys - transitional space/time

"Myth - deep story that taps a source of meaning that a people believes to be profoundly true. A bedrock truth. A truth about the meaning of life, about the meaning of people's origin, about the meaning of one's purpose in life. A myth may incorporate historical facts, but the facts serve the myth. One might say that myths absorb facts and alters the facts to serve the myth."

Evidence today that America's primary myth is ending - "The End of the Myth" by Great Grandin

End of the trail for the american Myth

- Aggressive Christian Nationalism
- Open white supremacy
- Old bigotries (like towards Jewish people)
- Eroding value of democracy - in government and in population; young people no longer believe democracy is a sustainable form of government
- Fears around immigration
- "Freedom"
- Critical race theory
- Reparations
- Tribal-national sovereignty
- Religious exemptions
- Mask and vaccine mandates
- The Big Lie and insurrection

Ending of Reformation-shaped understanding of church and imperial Christianity:

- Myth of christian culture
- Church as a gathering community that assembles in a designated space/building
- Attend weekly or more
- Propositional faith - and denominations - born from intra-Christian controversies
- Salvation comes through hearing
- Expectation that the culture and the government are hospitable ecologies for at least one kind of christianity

Religion and politics share an overlapping space in culture. Separation of church and state; but not a separation of religion and politics

1. Both tell stories (And they sometimes overlap)
2. Both talk about belonging
3. Moral Order - what do we owe to each other
4. Empowerment - how do we become what we are or say we want to be

Recommends the book: Anointed with Oil: How Christianity and Crude Made Modern America by Darren Dochuk

Where we are at if we add it up:

1. Highly conflicted status of equality in America's heart/spirit
2. Greed and racism that led to the civil war and to manifest destiny
3. 40 years of Christian right
4. The coming of a no racial majority nation
5. Ecological catastrophe

6. Worldwide conflicts over democracy and diversity
7. A disruptive era of great peril and great possibility

Problems for regional leaders due to this scenario:

- Abundance of property
  - Some with some without financial value
  - Some in the right and some in the wrong places
  - All with invested strong emotions by a group of persons - large or small
- Diminishing social ecology to support institutional religion
- Cultural polarization, some of it rooted in American Christianity
- Socialization of clergy
- The digital/virtual reality revolution
- David Holinger; in social matters, mainline churches moved too fast and too slow, from the perspectives of those who left
  - But the mainline also prepared many Christians to embrace progressive values in terms of the roles of women, immigration, LBGTQ acceptance

Religion As Obstacle; Religion as a resource,

What Leadership Can Do:

1. Promote curiosity rather than omniscience
2. Practice conversation rather than pronouncing dogma
3. Deliberately engage with “others” rather than enclosing ourselves in comfort circles
4. Fearlessly learn history rather than burying or whitewashing it
5. Retrieve and bolster practices of confession, repentance, making amends, and forgiveness

From my “Deeper Repair” blog: in order to get a more fundamental level of understanding address topics on this list:

1. Shame and guilt
2. Self-righteousness
3. Recognizing and disempowering God-substitutes
4. Fear, anxiety and death
5. Loneliness and aloneness
6. Anger and love
7. God and money
8. God, soil and food
9. Justice and love for yourself
10. Justice and love for intimate relationships
11. Justice and love for your family
12. Justice and love for your neighbors
13. Justice and love for your nation
14. Justice and love for others
15. Justice and love for creation

16. Speaking truth in love
17. Conflict, Brokenness, Penance, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation
18. God, Race and America

Break for LUNCH

12:45pm - John S, reconvened the retreat

1. Asked the question - anything important enough for us to consider?
2. Conversation around morning presentation - lists posted on wall of various observations and conversations
3. J presented focus areas for our region
4. Did things we discuss match with any of the focus areas?
  - a. Communication for conversation - 60 scholarships for KLC
  - b. What are we doing for others?
5. James Vertreese- Raised the question - how does Anti Racism etc manifest itself into the congregations. Shouldn't that stuff be real to the congregations in the region?
6. Communicated with what is most important - love, relationship, Jesus, etc.

1:50pm - John S shifted conversation to regional staff structure and discuss future needs

1. What staff do we have?
  - a. Office Manager/Administrator- Jessica
  - b. Financial Secretary - Paula Diehl (contract staff, one day a week, processes checks to be deposited, codes them, etc)
  - c. Regional Minister
  - d. Conversation around soliciting volunteers in our congregations to serve in ways the regional minister does
  - e. Put together task force to go through job descriptions and perhaps find ways to delegate to other people; Kathy H suggested perhaps the personnel committee could take that on
2. Here are the links to the staff duties reports: (also at: <https://www.kcdisciples.org/regional-board.html>)
  - a. [Office Manager & Office Manager/Admin Report](#)
  - b. [Contract 1/5 time Financial Secretary](#)
  - c. [Regional Minister](#)
3. Kathy H, Treasurer - Financial Update
  - a. Kathy H - waiting to present treasurer report until March. Met with Treasury Services, went over the statements, adjustments to be made and waiting for

those to come back. Modest losses in all three areas - Tall Oaks, Region and Ministry Innovation. They are meeting again in a week and a half and hoping to have that finalized. Have condensed reports at board meetings. Announced new member to the budget and finance committee - Laura Moore. By Feb. 15, January data will unlikely be available.

4. Lara BP - Tall Oaks Steering Committee - next meeting this Monday, meeting with James Box - the camp manager at Tall Oaks and Mike, the head of UCCR; the next meetings after that - end of February and two March meetings, inviting Bill Spangler Dunning who has done this in other regions, talking with camp managers of other DOC camps that talk about how they did turn things around. And then another meeting with camp managers of other camps not DOC. Reiterated in the most recent contract, can re up at 3 months
5. Conversation about what we got out of today and something to take back to the region:
  - a. The region continues to envision and be challenged by the same things that we are; we can find hope by reaching out to each other
  - b. Excitement to hear the challenges are adaptive and tough ones, and would like to take back what our vision is. Having a better understanding of vision and identity of the Disciples and challenge disciples to do that
  - c. We are hearing the spirit telling us to keep doing this together
  - d. Not being afraid to try and experiment with things
  - e. Gratitude to be a part of a denomination that isn't afraid of the big issues
  - f. We can join resources as far as needs, physically and mentally, etc
6. Laura P and Lara BP reiterated General Assembly is July 29-Aug 1, 2023 in Louisville, KY. Early bird deadline for registering is March 1. Lara spoke to youth mission in Louisville, etc in conjunction with the Assembly. Here is the link to General Assembly -  
<https://ga.disciples.org/resources/>. Every noon on Wednesday, Terri H Owens leads prayer for the entire church, open to everyone on Facebook. Here is the link for that -  
<https://www.facebook.com/terrihordowens>
  - Mauricio went through strides made on the new website! YAY! Thank you Mauricio!

Board Meeting in March is March 27, 2023, 6-8pm at Overland Park CC

BIII RH Closed with a reflection at 2:45pm