



Questions Considered

- ◆ What is the **definition of "mission field?"**
- ◆ What are the **characteristics we have in common** in all three conferences?
- ◆ What are the **unique differences** in each Conference?
- ◆ What are the **common strengths** each Conference brings to impact the Mission Field?
- ◆ What are the **common challenges** we share in reaching out to the Mission Field?
- ◆ How might we **organize around our Mission Field** (including how to shift the focus of our churches from inward to outward)?

Conference Information*

	Kansas East	Kansas West	Nebraska
Churches	324	364	382
Clergy	447	376	260 +
Laity	72,120	88,000	79,000
Districts	5	6	6

** Information taken from Conference Web Sites or NE slides*

State Similarities

	Kansas	Nebraska
Land Area Sq. Miles	81,815	76,872
No. of Counties	105	93
Population (2005)	2,744,687	1,758,797
State Flower	Sunflower	Goldenrod
State Bird	Meadowlark	Meadowlark
State Tree	Cottonwood	Cottonwood

2000 Census Statistics

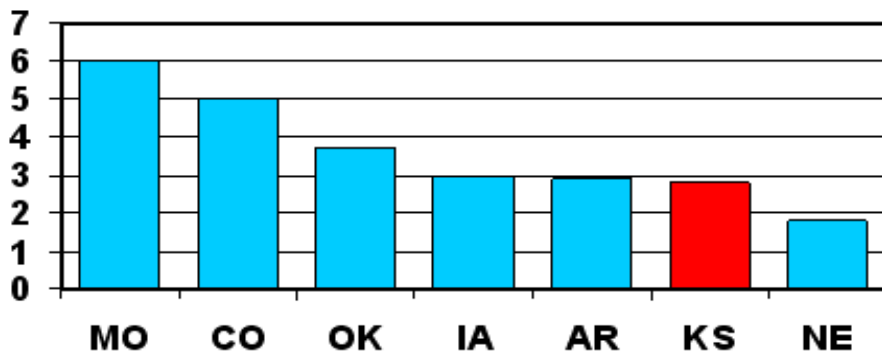
	Kansas	Nebraska
Rank	2,688,418 (32)	1,711,263 (38)
Male	1,328,474 (49.4%)	843,351 (49.3%)
Female	1,359,944 (50.6%)	867,912 (50.7%)
White	2,313,944 (86.1%)	1,533,261 (89.6%)
Black	154,198 (5.7%)	68,541 (4.0%)
American Indian	24,936 (0.9%)	14,896 (0.9%)
Asian	46,806 (1.7%)	21,931 (1.3%)

Census Statistics cont.

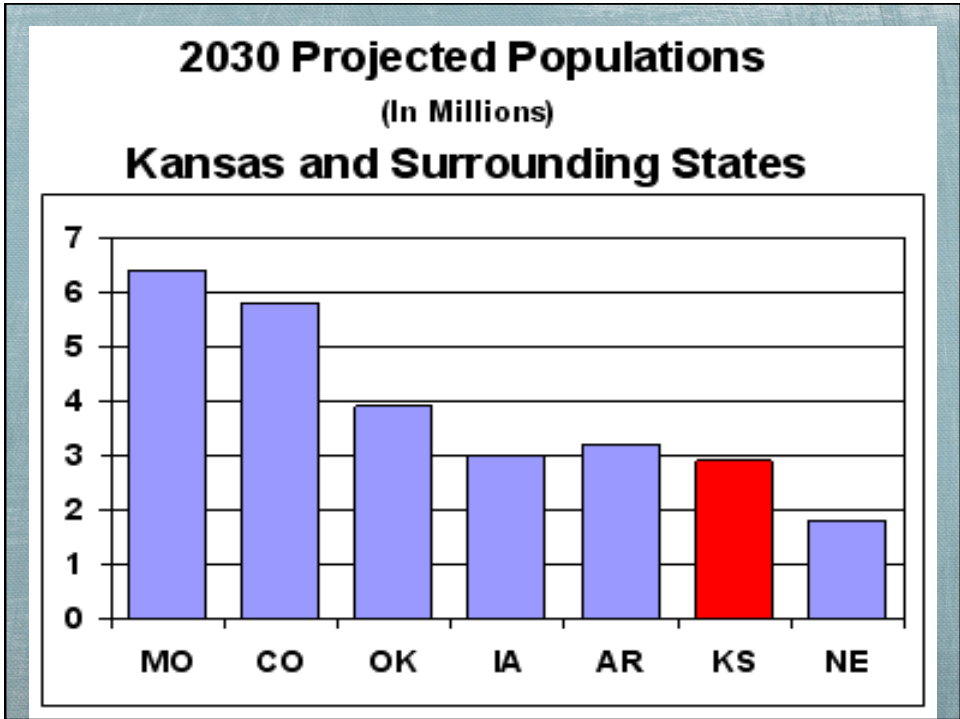
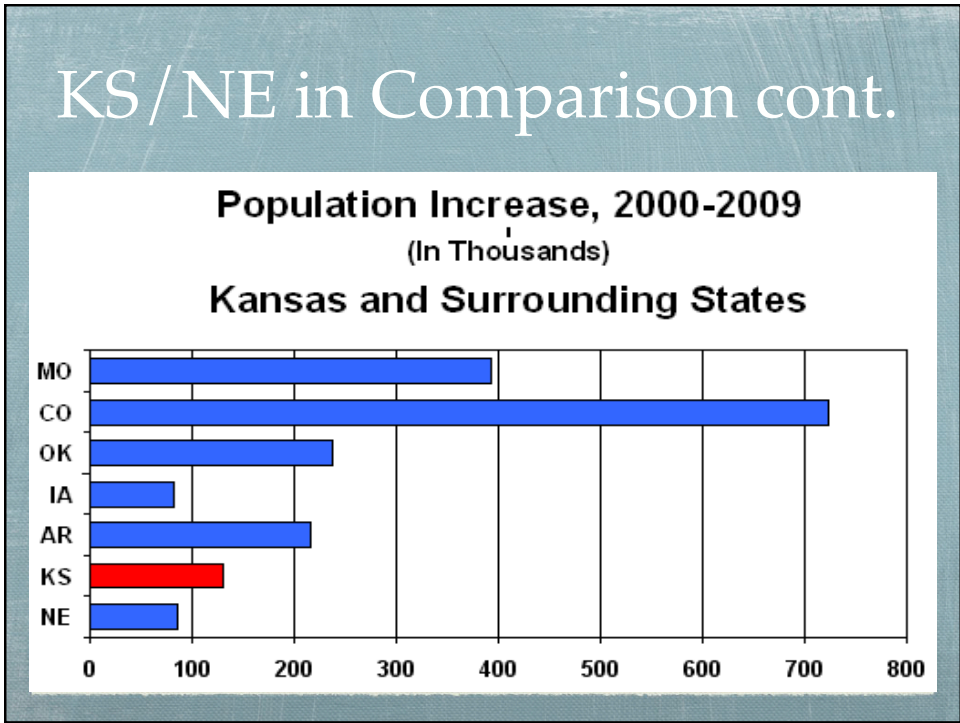
	Kansas	Nebraska
Other race	90,725 (3.4%)	47,845 (2.8%)
Two or more races	56,496 (2.1%)	23,953 (1.4%)
Hispanic/Latino	188,252 (7.0%)	94,425 (5.5%)
Pop.18 and over	73.5	73.7
65 and over	13.3	13.6
Median age	35.2	35.3

KS/NE in Comparison

**2009 Population Estimates
(in millions)
Kansas and Surrounding States**



KS/NE in Comparison cont.



Demographic and Econometric Comparisons U.S., Kansas, Nebraska and Surrounding States

(Listed in Order of Estimated 2009 Population)

Data Characteristic	USA	MO	CO	OK	IA	AR	KS	NE
Population - Percent Change 2000-2009	9.1%	7.0%	16.8%	6.9%	2.8%	8.1%	4.8%	5.0%
Percent Population Foreign Born	12.5%	3.5%	10.1%	5.0%	3.9%	4.0%	6.0%	5.6%
Percent - Spanish is spoken at home	12.2%	2.6%	12.1%	5.4%	3.5%	4.5%	6.6%	5.9%
Median Annual Household Income *	\$52.2	\$46.4	\$56.6	\$42.5	\$48.6	\$39.1	\$49.2	\$49.2
Average Per Capita Annual Income *	\$27.5	\$24.8	\$30.1	\$23.0	\$25.2	\$21.3	\$26.0	\$25.1
Percent Families below Fed. Pov. Lvl.	9.6%	9.7%	8.3%	12.0%	9.6%	13.2%	8.0%	7.5%

* Amount in 1,000s

(US Census Bureau ACS 3 Year Estimates, 2006-2008), June, 2010.

Demographic and Econometric Comparisons , continued

Data Characteristic	USA	MO	CO	OK	IA	AR	KS	NE
Mean Travel Time to Work (in minutes)	25.3	23.4	24.2	20.6	18.3	21.0	18.8	17.7
Median Age	36.7	37.5	35.6	36.1	38.0	37.1	36.2	36.2
Percent Residents Age 65 and older	12.6%	13.5%	10.2%	13.3%	14.7%	14.0%	13.0%	13.3%
Percent Residents Age Birth to age 14	20.3%	19.9%	20.5%	20.6%	19.5%	20.4%	20.7%	20.8%
Percent of Racial-Ethnic Diversity *	34.9%	18.2%	29.3%	29.2%	10.2%	24.9%	20.1%	16.5%
Percent Hispanic or Latino origin	15.1%	3.1%	19.9%	7.4%	4.0%	5.3%	8.8%	7.6%

* Total Percent of Population other than "Non Hispanic, White Alone".

(US Census Bureau ACS 3 Year Estimates, 2006-2008), June, 2010.

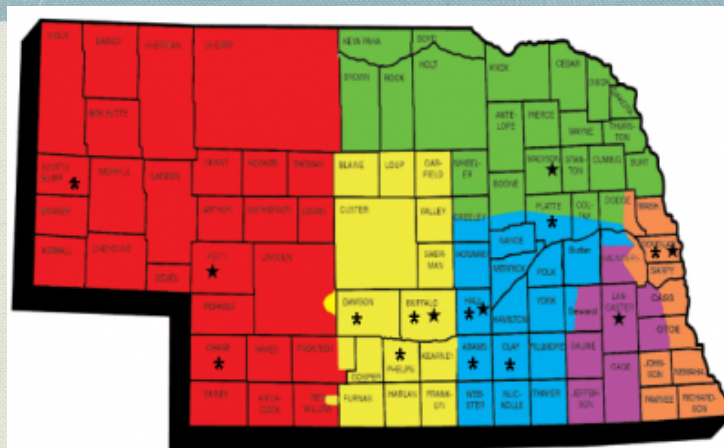
Kansas East - 5 Districts Kansas West - 6 Districts



Sunflower State; Jayhawk State

From a Sioux word meaning “people of the south wind”

Nebraska - Six Districts



Cornhusker State; Beef State

From an Oto Indian word meaning “flat water”

Mission Field - Definition

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

“... And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8b

“Go into all the world ...”

Mark 16:15

Mission Field - Conferences



The **Kansas East Conference's** mission is to connect and empower people and churches in living out the Gospel's call to invite, nurture, equip and send forth disciples of Jesus Christ.



“As we make disciples of Jesus Christ, the **Kansas West Conference** calls God's people to *invite* through radical hospitality, *excite* for intentional faith-sharing and *unite* in risk-taking mission for the transformation of the world.”



The mission of the **Nebraska Annual Conference** is: Making Disciples, Making a Difference.

(Language in Vision and Value Statements includes similar words of Kansas Conferences.)

Mission Field - definition

Condensed and Combined Thoughts of Team

Locally: The Mission Field includes the neighbors of the local church, persons in Nebraska and Kansas areas who are not yet disciples of Jesus Christ or currently part of a faith community, including those persons in the context of the local church who are living in physical or spiritual poverty.

Globally: The Mission Field is both individually and collectively the neighborhood, community, city, states, nation and world (and in some cases cyber-space) . . . wherever we are in the world we should be engaged in making disciples to transform the world.

Common Characteristics

Team Responses were grouped in the following areas.

- ◆ Spiritual
- ◆ Historical
- ◆ Geographical
- ◆ Population
- ◆ Cultural
- ◆ Organizational

Spiritual

The common mission of the UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We understand that our world is in need of love and transformation.

We celebrate the ministries of local churches in a variety of setting and contexts.

Historical/Geographical

- ◆ Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854.
- ◆ Circuit riding elders and lay ministers.
- ◆ Churches meeting in homes and public buildings.
- ◆ Common geography, climate and largely agriculturally-based economy.
- ◆ Common understanding of the value of land and water as precious natural resources and impact of climate changes.
- ◆ Sparsely populated areas with long distances between churches.
- ◆ Geographically composed of urban/rural/town and county congregations

Population

- ◆ Primary rural with few centralized metropolitan areas; similar population distribution pattern of greater population in the east; largest metropolitan area on states' eastern border.
- ◆ Awareness of continued eastward shift of population with problems and opportunities that this presents.
- ◆ Each state has one large urban city where majority of state population is located.
- ◆ Rural areas experiencing declining population; some urban areas experiencing blight.

Population cont.

- ◆ Increasing immigrant populations and changing communities.
- ◆ Approximately 5% population change in last decade.
- ◆ Approximately 13% of population over 65.
- ◆ Approximately 21% in age range of birth to 14.
- ◆ Approximately 8% is Hispanic or of Latino origin.

Cultural / Values / Society

- ◆ Similar cultural/sociological factors that shape and impact how we view our communities and world around us.
- ◆ Common Midwestern/Great Plains values of hard work, honesty, practicality and clear value of the importance of helping your neighbor.
- ◆ Similar values regarding work ethics, safe communities, and importance of families and education.
- ◆ Shared concerns about morals, values, institutions, politics, churches and our nation.

Culture etc. cont.

- ◆ In both states, median annual household income is approximately \$49,000.
- ◆ Average per Capital Income about \$25,000-\$26,000.
- ◆ Approximately 6% of families below Federal Poverty level
- ◆ Median Age about 36.
- ◆ And we all like turkey on wheat sandwiches . . . at least our team does.

Organizational / Conference

- ◆ Each Conference has approximately equal numbers of UM.
- ◆ Each has approximately same number of districts (NE-6, KW-6, KE-5).
- ◆ Similar breakdown in size of our congregations.
- ◆ 77-80% of our churches have less than 100 attending; 18-20% between 101-400; 2-3% have average attendance of 400+.
- ◆ All have churches trending downward, with KE buoyed by the UM Church of the Resurrection.

CONSENSUS



We have more
SIMILARITIES
than
Differences!

Unique Differences

- ◆ Both KS Conferences have a higher percentage of ethnic minorities than NE (though all lower than national average).
- ◆ KS Conferences appears to have more highly developed Hispanic/Latino Ministry.
- ◆ NE has an active Hispanic Ministry through new Community Center in Missouri River District in Omaha, and in Grand Island, Lexington, and Imperial, Nebraska.
- ◆ NE has most diverse history of Episcopal leadership with African-American Bishops, Hispanic Bishop and a woman as Bishop.

Unique Differences cont.

- ◆ NE has always been lead by a bishop with only one Episcopal area.
- ◆ KS East has more convenient air travel (Kansas City Airport).
- ◆ KS West has the more comfortable Episcopal residence.
- ◆ KS East has unique congregation with Church of the Resurrection which affords leadership resources.
- ◆ KS East has an internet based ministry.
- ◆ Different staffing priorities and programs, and ways of viewing structure and policies within our conferences/ churches, i.e., youth protection program, missions, etc.

Unique Differences cont.

- ◆ NE has a staff person who focuses on Peace and Justice, and also one who focuses on Leadership Development.
- ◆ Politically different systems (unicameral legislature in NE) and varying degrees of “moderation” in political and theological thinking.
- ◆ Rural/urban differences, as well as small church/large church differences (though probably not unique to any one conference or state).
- ◆ May be cultural differences in how our conferences function and what each conference values.

CONSENSUS



We need to acknowledge and accept that differences in our conference and in our churches exist, but that these can be honored and celebrated rather than be considered as barriers to the future!

Common Strengths

- ◆ Sharpened awareness of the mission of the church.
- ◆ Attention to leadership development among clergy, and an emphasis on covenant for evaluating clergy and congregational performance.
- ◆ Strong lay leadership (and strong work ethics) with a commitment to the church.
- ◆ Solid and committed leaders at all levels within the conference and churches, who are not afraid to tackle big issues and face challenges.

Common Strengths cont.

- ◆ A commitment to our common purpose, to do “whatever it takes” to transform the world even with adversity; a generosity to share successes and failures, what works and what doesn’t.
- ◆ A commitment to “sit at the table” and attempt to reach consensus even with personal disagreement.
- ◆ Leadership willing to think, look and plan “outside the box” and to embrace change when it is understood, but not to change for “change’s sake.”
- ◆ Willingness to look at the big picture and to think adaptively.

Common Strengths cont.

- ◆ We are grounded in prayer, possess a Spirit of collegiality and compatibility, with respect for each other and our neighbor.
- ◆ We have a common love of the Lord and the connectional United Methodist Church.
- ◆ We individually and as the body of Christ serving in the context of the church and the Conference possess unique strengths that can bolster the work of other churches and each one of the three conferences.

Common Strengths cont.

- ◆ We share the gift of Wesleyan theology and polity to share with the mission field.
- ◆ We share core views and values in all three conferences which include God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, inclusiveness, scripture, reason, experience, tradition, community, social holiness, personal piety, vision for the mission field, vital faith, connection with one another, radical hospitality, heart-warming worship, mission and justice and generosity.

CONSENSUS



If we are able to name and capitalize on our strengths and individually and collectively admit that we are not strong in everything then we can build upon the various strengths and have a more vital group of individuals, churches and conferences in total.

Common Challenges

- ◆ Challenge of a negative perception of the church by young persons (according to Barna).
- ◆ Raising up younger, more diverse, and excellent clergy leadership.
- ◆ Communicating care and providing support for dying churches in dying communities.
- ◆ Population shifts and geographic areas of declining populations.
- ◆ Making the church/mission field relevant by meeting ministry needs of persons in the community/mission field.

Challenges cont.

- ◆ Meeting ministry needs of persons of a particular demographic/cultural background.
- ◆ Language/cultural barriers.
- ◆ Making the church/mission field relevant by meeting ministry needs of persons in the community.
- ◆ An aging church/mission field.
- ◆ Reaching the “Un-churched.”
- ◆ Lack of Openness to change.
- ◆ Dealing with persons/institutions resistant to change.

Challenges cont.

- ◆ Declining financial resources while being committed to providing clergy leadership in all areas of conference.
- ◆ Adequate resources (human/dollars) to meet varying ministry needs particularly in areas of population decline.
- ◆ Aging population and rural population decline brings challenges in lack of resources, technology (internet) and isolation.
- ◆ Challenge of meeting people “where they are” and moving them to outside the walls of church, community & structures.
- ◆ Moving some churches from functioning as “clubs” for the benefit of “members” to looking outward to serve.

Challenges cont.

- ◆ Discerning the most effective pastoral leadership for small membership churches.
- ◆ Changing the focus of the local church from surviving and saving the institutional to reaching out to the mission field.
- ◆ Dealing with the “naysayers” and “we’ve always done it this way” folks.
- ◆ Bringing the church into the 21st century of technology, and balancing the concerns of some about “conforming to the world.”

CONSENSUS



Common *characteristics*,
common *strengths* and
even the *differences*
bring the three conferences
together in a *unique connection*
to meet the common *challenges*.

Organize - Mission Field

- ◆ Shift resources from educational and fellowship events that bear no fruit in developing new disciples to coordinate congregation vitality initiatives that will do such things as:
 - ◆ Develop clergy leadership that is outwardly focused.
 - ◆ Provide coaching and consulting for both clergy and laity by persons who have demonstrated capacity in growing churches.
 - ◆ Institute a program of anonymous “church visitors” to give each congregation a report on how their hospitality and worship are perceived by newcomers.

Organize cont.

- ◆ Reward growing churches through the apportionment system in more visible ways than appearing to require more from them as they grow (basis other than membership).
- ◆ Promote and have churches report events such as “The Church Has Left the Building.”
- ◆ Shift more resources toward starting new congregations.
- ◆ Consider offering opportunity for selected congregations to be organized according to “affinity groups” they could attract or have strongest ability to minister to and with.
- ◆ Educate and motivate: a cadre’ of effective leaders is essential.

Organize cont.

- ◆ Grouping around mission field types rather than geography.
- ◆ Bring together churches with similar strengths and opportunities for mutual edification and support.
- ◆ Think creatively about specific needs of each segment (context) of the local population and strategize local church ministry to reach out to those segments, i.e., children in poverty, college students, baby boomers, single parents, ethnic groups, etc.
- ◆ Share information, share programs, share leadership!
- ◆ Discover ways to appeal to laity “boomers” to use their experiences and expertise on the “Mission Field.”

Organize cont.

- ◆ Truly become connectional in all aspects of our ministries and recognize that we (our three conferences) are connected to the larger ministry of the global United Methodist Church.
- ◆ We must discover ways that we can truly become outwardly and globally focused on the mission field . . . and then celebrate one with another.
- ◆ Recognize that this will not happen overnight, but on a more gradual basis, and that we must proceed with a level of persistence and cannot waiver.

CONSENSUS




The Nebraska-Kansas transition offers an ideal opportunity for visioning relative to a shift of focus of our churches (and our Conferences) from inward to outward.

It is a beginning to implement ideas to make it a reality.

 Kansas East Conference
of The United Methodist Church



NEXT STEPS ?

 Kansas West Conference
of The United Methodist Church