

Leading Mission in the USA July 2015

Hope for the Future

As apostles, seventy, mission center leaders, priesthood, and members focus on Christ's mission, a great hope is emerging—that Community of Christ can live fully into our identity and calling as Community of Christ and become invitational, Christ-center communities of justice and peace.

The cause of Zion is deeply embedded in Community of Christ. This new way of leading mission in the USA calls us to “live, love, and share Zion” with our friends, colleagues, neighbors, and even strangers.

Essential Principles

- 1.) Focus on mission. Everyone from youngest to oldest becomes invitational and active supporters of Christ-centered communities of justice and peace.
- 2.) Focus on shared leadership. Everyone from pastors, self-sustaining mission center leaders, and apostles lead, sustain, and fund mission together.
- 3.) Focus on freeing all leaders for mission. This is about streamlining and reducing administrative burdens on self-sustaining leaders and increasing direct support to self-sustaining priesthood and disciples for missional opportunities.

1.) Focus on Mission in the USA Field

The USA Team of Apostles will share leadership and focus on providing Visionary and Strategic Leadership.

The USA Team of Presidents of Seventy will lead Witness and Invitation.

Five Mission Expansion Teams led by an apostle with Presidents of Seventy, full-time ministers, and self-sustaining leaders will provide support to congregations and mission centers in mission.

Each of the Mission Expansion Teams is linked to a mission initiative. All are interconnected, integrated, and collaborate to ensure that mission is holistically lived out in congregations and is the focus of all members and priesthood.

The plan for Leading Mission in the USA, which will be implemented January 1, 2016, was finalized based on feedback from leaders in the field and has received full support from the First Presidency and the World Church Leadership Council. As we live into a new way of leading mission, additional information will be shared through Herald articles and mission center gatherings.

Mission Expansion Teams

New Missional Expressions—Invite People to Christ

New Missional Expressions is how we experiment with new language, form, and expressions of Christ's centered community so we can reach people who describe themselves as "spiritual but not religious."

Enlisted seventy and invitational ministers will help individuals, priesthood, and congregations generously and naturally Invite People to Christ, share their witness, and extend unconditional hospitality to all people.

This team will also support new ministries being birthed by congregations and mission centers, as well as the planting of new congregations to reach targeted groups, such as young adults.

Two new positions on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

Compassionate Ministries—Abolish Poverty, End Suffering

Compassionate Ministries is how we end needless suffering. This mission expansion team will continue to build awareness of and support implementation of Open Table, a congregational process for abolishing poverty in neighborhoods, towns, and cities. Additionally, the team will facilitate the exchange of ideas from around the USA field of other ministries congregations and mission centers are using to actively engage in this mission initiative.

One new position on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

Expanding Diversity—Pursue Peace on Earth

Expanding Diversity is how we reach diverse cultures and become signal communities that reflect the diversity in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities.

This mission expansion team will focus on expanding diversity within the church and uplifting the Enduring Principles: Unity in Diversity, Worth of All Persons, and All Are Called. The team will help build bridges of understanding between diverse communities of people within the church and beyond.

This team will also support existing ministries, including Hispanic and African-American.

Two new positions on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

Disciple and Priesthood Formation—Develop Disciples to Serve

Disciple and Priesthood Formation is how we form and equip disciples for mission.

This mission expansion team will help develop and empower the best possible volunteer organization of self-sustained leaders and disciples. The team will build on the newly created and piloted priesthood courses and other international resources, such as worship and sermon helps.

The team will also gather and release grass-roots' resources that are aligned with the church's identity, message, mission, and beliefs and provide resource support for other mission expansion team efforts: New Missional Expressions, Expanding Diversity, Compassionate Ministries, and Congregational Revitalization.

Each apostle will be assigned to support disciple and priesthood formation in a specific geographic area called mission support areas. These areas are defined later in this article.

One new position on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

Congregational Revitalization—Experience Congregations in Mission

Congregational Revitalization is how we become invitational signal communities of justice and peace in a changing world.

The focus of this mission expansion team is to provide innovative approaches, tools, and support to help congregations live fully into their identity and calling as Community of Christ.

Through the Leading Congregations in Mission (LCM) field-based experiment, the US church learned a lot about developing quality resources in a virtual team environment. Those resources can be adapted for local and regional formational opportunities. Gifted field ministers and writers will be enlisted to create the next iteration of LCM as well as other approaches to support congregations in mission.

These resources and approaches will be designed for self-sustaining priesthood who serve as the primary leaders of mission and support in congregations.

One new position on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

2.) Focus on Shared Leadership for the USA Field

Shared-leadership will provide a consistent, collaborative approach for mission and administration across the United States, allowing for contextual implementation based on local needs:

- USA Apostles will collaboratively focus on visionary and strategic leadership. The team will share responsibility for collaborating to make significant decisions that impact the church in the United States. The team will establish mission and resource priorities in collaboration with field leaders.
- USA Apostles will be “yoked in mission” (Doctrine and Covenants 163: 5) with USA Presidents of Seventy to provide consistent invitational leadership and engage individuals, congregations, and mission centers in innovative ministries.
- USA Apostles will serve on mission expansion teams and travel throughout the United States to support congregations and mission centers in New Mission Expressions, Compassionate Ministries, Expanding Diversity, Disciple and Priesthood Formation, and Congregational Revitalization. Rather than one field having access to one apostle, one USA field has access to all five apostles.

- Presidents of Seventy will continue in shared leadership with quorums of seventy in existing geographical fields. Each quorum of Seventy will continue to have a quorum president, quorum officers, and apostolic support for seventy.

3.) Focus on Freeing Leaders for Mission

Mission and Administrative Support

The Mission and Administrative Support team is linked to the five mission expansion teams. By design this team streamlines administrative requirements of mission centers to ensure as many resources as possible can be focused on key strategies for mission.

The Mission and Administrative Support team is led by a new position, Bishop of the USA, who will meet with the USA Team of Apostles as an integral part of the Visionary and Strategic Leadership Team.

Mission and Administrative Support includes the #GenerosityUnder50 team which will focus on connecting disciples under 50 years of age with the mission of the church and helping them find their place in living, leading, and supporting mission. Two new positions on this team will be filled as part of Phase 2.

Mission and Administrative Support also includes the Administrative Support team and Mission Support team. The mission centers in the USA field are divided into six mission support areas. Each mission support area has a Mission Support Leader and two Administrative Support Ministers who will create collaborative, shared-leadership relationships with mission center presidents, financial officers, and other mission center and congregation leaders as well as with the mission expansion teams. The approved FY 2016 budget also includes some limited financial support for self-sustaining mission center officers.

An apostle will be associated with each Mission Support Leader. Mission Support Leaders will function with the delegated authority of their apostle. Each Administrative Support Minister will function with the delegated authority of the Presiding Bishopric. The administrative and fiduciary lines of authority are as follows:

- Administration
 - Pastor to Mission Center President
 - Mission Center President to Mission Support Leader
 - Mission Support Leader to USA Bishop
 - USA Bishop to Apostle for that Mission Support Area
- Fiduciary Responsibility
 - CFO to MCFO
 - MCFO to Administrative Support Minister
 - Administrative Support Minister to USA Bishop
 - USA Bishop to Presiding Bishop

Six Mission Support Areas in the USA Field

Mission Support Area 1

Bountiful	KY-IN
Brush Creek	Mid-Atlantic
Chesapeake	New England
Eastern Great Lakes	Western OH

Mission Support Area 2

Coastal Bend	Mid-South
Florida	Northwest Florida
Gulf	Rio Grande
Heart of Texas	South East

Mission Support Area 3

Central	Midlands
Far West	

Mission Support Area 4

Chicago	Michigan
Headwaters	Prairie Bluffs
Lamoni-Heartland	

Mission Support Area 5

Ark-LA-Tex	Gateway
Cedar/Nauvoo	Oklahoma
Central-MO	South Central States

Mission Support Area 6

Arizona	Sierra Pacific
Greater Pacific NW	Southern California
Inland	Southwest International
Rockies	

Twelve full-time Administrative Support Ministers will

- provide administrative and financial support, such as budget development, ongoing financial management, and bookkeeping oversight, to self-sustaining mission center financial officers
- give administrative and financial support to locally-funded or shared-funding staff, congregational bookkeepers, and campground board members
- serve as liaison with International Headquarters' support ministries, such as legal, fiscal, risk management, and membership records
- Travel to mission centers when timely physical response is needed

Six full-time Mission Support Leaders will

- provide leadership and foster collaborative relationships with mission center presidents
- develop, equip, and send priesthood as leaders of mission who serve with disciples in Christ's mission
- deliver resources and events to mission centers that focus on Christ's mission

Stepping Out in Faith

Our mission has always been lived out by faithful disciples who hear God's clarion call, are transformed by the presence of the Holy Spirit and step out in faith to follow Christ. As we intentionally and seriously commit our lives anew to Christ's Mission, the peaceable kingdom, even Zion, will be in our midst.