



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

April 5, 2016

Words of Counsel

For three years the church prayerfully studied the words of counsel given in 2013. The Holy Spirit confirms the church would be blessed by considering this counsel for inclusion in the Doctrine and Covenants. This document is offered humbly for that purpose as an expression of our cherished principle of Continuing Revelation.

While preparing the final document, I stayed open to more divine direction that might enhance the church's understanding now or in the future. Guidance refined some sentences. In several instances, it also added content for reasons known to God.

I also considered prayerfully what portions of the words of counsel applied specifically to when they were given and did not necessarily need to be in the Doctrine and Covenants. So some sentences have been removed. Those sentences either have fulfilled their purposes, or the concepts they highlighted are expressed sufficiently elsewhere in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The testimony I offer is assurance that God, the eternal One, lovingly and patiently guides the church according to divine purposes. Let us be grateful for that guidance. May it serve as a pathway of light and hope for all who seek to follow God's will.

To the councils, quorums, and orders, to the World Conference, and to the church:

1 a. Community of Christ, a divine vision is set before you. Presented over the years through various inspired phrases and symbols, it is expressed now through initiatives in harmony with Jesus Christ's mission.

b. As a spiritual venture, boldly follow the initiatives into the heart of God's vision for the church and creation. Then, in response to growing insight about God's nature and will, continue to shape communities that live Christ's love and mission.

c. Lovingly invite others to experience the good news of new life in community with Christ. Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them.

d. Undertake compassionate and just actions to abolish poverty and end needless suffering. Pursue peace on and for the Earth.

e. Let nothing separate you from this mission. It reveals divine intent for personal, societal, and environmental salvation; a fullness of gospel witness for creation's restoration.

f. Continue to align your priorities with local and worldwide church efforts to move the initiatives forward. Additional innovative approaches to coordinating congregational life and supporting groups of disciples and seekers are needed to address mission opportunities in a changing world.

2 a. Free the full capacity of Christ's mission through generosity that imitates God's generosity.

b. Listen to the testimonies of those responding generously. Follow your soul's yearning to come home to God's grace and generosity. Let gratitude show you the way.

c. Remember, a basic discipleship principle is growing Christ's mission through local and world mission tithes according to true capacity. Giving to other worthwhile organizations, while an important part of A Disciple's Generous Response, should not diminish or replace mission tithes.

d. Tithing is a spiritual practice that demonstrates willingness to offer every dimension of one's life to God. When defined by faith, love, and hopeful planning, including resolving unwise debt, capacity to respond becomes much greater than initially assumed.

e. Stewardship as response to the ministry of Christ is more than individual giving. It includes the generosity of congregations and jurisdictions that give to worldwide ministries of the church to strengthen community in Christ in all nations.

f. Sharing for the common good is the spirit of Zion.

3 a. More fully embody your oneness and equality in Jesus Christ. Oneness and equality in Christ are realized through the waters of baptism, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, and sustained through the sacrament of Communion. Embrace the full meaning of these sacraments and be spiritually joined in Christ as never before.

b. However, it is not right to profess oneness and equality in Christ through sacramental covenants and then to deny them by word or action. Such behavior wounds Christ's body and denies what is resolved eternally in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

c. You do not fully understand many interrelated processes of human creation. Through its wonderful complexity, creation produces diversity and order.

d. Be not consumed with concern about variety in human types and characteristics as you see them. Be passionately concerned about forming inclusive communities of love, oneness, and equality that reveal divine nature.

e. Oneness and equality in Christ do not mean uniformity. They mean Unity in Diversity and relating in Christ-like love to the circumstances of others as if they were one's own. They also mean full opportunity for people to experience human worth and related rights, including expressing God-given giftedness in the church and society.

4 a. Regarding priesthood, God calls whomever God calls from among committed disciples, according to their gifts, to serve and reach all humankind.

b. Priesthood policies developed through wisdom and inspiration provide a clear way for disciples to respond to calling. They also define the difference between a sense of call as potential and the need to align one's life with principles of moral behavior and relationships that promote the well-being of the church community.

5 a. Spiritual growth and guidance enrich involvement in Christ's mission. The presiding evangelist and the Order of Evangelists, with their colleagues in ministry, should concentrate on spiritually forming communities of disciples and seekers that live deeply and generously in Christ's Spirit.

b. Offer the sacrament of evangelist blessing not only to individuals and congregations, but to families, households, and groups seeking spiritual guidance to more completely give themselves to Christ's mission. Nothing in this instruction should be construed to lessen the importance of the sacrament of evangelist blessing for individuals.

6 a. Beloved Community of Christ, do not just speak and sing of Zion. Live, love, and share as Zion: those who strive to be visibly one in Christ, among whom there are no poor or oppressed.

b. As Christ's body, lovingly and patiently bear the weight of criticism from those who hesitate to respond to the divine vision of human worth and equality in Christ. This burden and blessing is yours for divine purposes.

c. And, always remember, the way of suffering love that leads to the cross also leads to resurrection and everlasting life in Christ's eternal community of oneness and peace. Trust in this promise.

Stephen M. Veazey
president of the church