

TOGETHER in A JOURNEY OF FAITH

2012 USA National Conference

April 2011

Dear Friends,

It is our testimony that God continues to direct the church and blesses us as we faithfully journey together toward the 2012 USA National Conference and beyond.

Our journey in Christ spans the generations. However, the unique opportunity to gather in national conferences came when the 2010 World Conference delegates approved inspired counsel. Doctrine and Covenants 164:7d provides for national conferences where broader dialogue, understanding, and consent on challenging issues specific to nation or field are best resolved.

Delegates also approved a church bylaw change that empowers nations to convene “special conferences” to address specific issues and achieve the highest level of dialogue and consent. The bylaw change does not allow for resolutions to be approved by any national conference that would be binding on the entire church.

During World Conference, participants from the United States were also asked to identify which relationship issues needed to be considered “for the restoring work of the gospel to move forward with all of its potential.” Over 80 percent identified issues surrounding same sex/gender relationships and ordination.

Delegates to the USA National Conference, July 18–22, 2012, in Independence, Missouri, will determine the level of support for the following issues. The statements are phrased in the affirmative not to encourage a specific outcome but to question whether policies should or should not change.

- 1.) Extending the sacrament of marriage to persons of the same sex/gender OR providing a church-recognized way for two persons of the same sex/gender to publicly express their commitment to each other.
- 2.) Allowing people in committed, monogamous, long-term, same sex/gender relationships (legal marriage, civil union, church-recognized commitment) to be considered for ordination.

Because we know many people are joining us in prayer for the church in the United States we feel Christ's peace as we journey with you. We are thankful that you, like us, are allowing your own perspective to be shaped by the Holy Spirit. We ask that you and your congregation enter into a spiritual process that will help us discover God's will for the church in the United States.

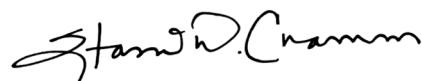
With this letter is a process outline, which provides resources that incorporate many spiritual tools and practices to assist us in discovering God's will. These resources will be released over the next 15 months on the USA National Conference website (www.CofChrist.org/usacnf) and by mission center leaders. You are also receiving a resource that provides reflection questions and spiritual practices for individuals and groups. The resource is also available on the USA National Conference website as a downloadable PDF file that can be printed.

We ask that you and your congregation actively engage in this journey of faith and use the resources outlined in the spiritual process in preparation for the USA National Conference.

As always, we thank God for your faithful and dedicated service to God and God's people. With deep trust in God, we pray that as you lead your congregation in Christ's mission of evangelism, compassionate ministry, and justice and peacemaking that you will feel Christ's peace and rich blessings.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact your mission center president.

In Christ's Peace,



Linda L. Booth, Stassi D. Cramm, Ronald D. Harmon Jr., Rick W. Maupin, and K. Scott Murphy
USA Team of Apostles

cc: Mission Center Presidents, Mission Center Financial Officers, Mission Center Missionary Coordinators, Apostolic Assistants, Field Missionary Coordinators in the United States