



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

Letter of Counsel about World Church Leadership Presented to the 2019 World Conference

The role of prophet-president demands constant attention to the leadership needs of the worldwide church. There are many questions to consider. What are the current and future needs of the church? What opportunities throughout the world await the church's response? What are the plans of current leaders as they reach milestones of service or have changing family circumstances? Who is equipped and available to serve in new roles? How will a new call impact a candidate's family and church jurisdictions the person currently serves? And, most importantly, what is the witness of the Holy Spirit regarding individual calls in immediate impact and future potential?

My testimony is that at the juncture of these questions and more, the Holy Spirit provides timely insight and guidance about World Church leadership transitions and callings. So, once again, I am permitted by the Holy Spirit to offer the following counsel about World Church leadership.

To the Worldwide Church:

1. **Linda L. Booth** has served in the Council of Twelve Apostles since April 1998. She was one of the first women called to the office of apostle. In harmony with her intentions, Linda will be released with honor from the Council of Twelve and granted retirement at the 2019 World Conference. As an apostle, Linda blessed the fields she served. Her inherent spirit of evangelism and ability to communicate vision for mission mobilized congregations and new expressions of the church to embody the gospel more fully. Linda served as secretary of the Council of Twelve from 2005–2013. She was elected by the Council of Twelve and set apart to serve as its president in 2013, a position in which she has served to the present. She was the first woman to serve in that role. Furthermore, Linda has carried significant responsibility as director of Communications. Linda's apostolic ministry included a kindhearted concern for all people. She constantly urged the church to be a body where all people, regardless of background, can encounter the joy and blessings of being loved in community. As Council of Twelve president, Linda guided decision-making processes that respected and harmonized diverse perspectives. She also provided sensitive pastoral ministry and unceasing encouragement to colleagues. As director of Communications, Linda's professional and team-building skills greatly enhanced the church's ability to communicate effectively with seekers, members, leaders, and many cultures. Following retirement, Linda will continue ministry as a high priest. She has offered to serve in a self-sustaining capacity to support the First Presidency. Linda will be assigned by the First Presidency to various functions, including mentoring World Church leaders, supporting new expressions of the church, and exploring vital topics to benefit the work of the Presidency.
2. **Rick W. Maupin** has served in the Council of Twelve since 2005. According to his desires, Rick will be released with honor from the Council of Twelve and granted

retirement at the 2019 World Conference. When Rick was called to the Council of Twelve he expressed reservations about his ability to serve effectively. However, in faith, he responded affirmatively to the call because of his unreserved commitment to the mission of the church and his passion for the message of Christ. His ministry has been exemplary. Rick's ministry is defined by integrity, leadership effectiveness, advocacy for the Worth of All Persons, and passion for justice and peace initiatives. His ability and willingness to address complex administrative issues has blessed church jurisdictions around the world. Rick's positive impact in the apostolic fields he served and in the councils of the church will bear fruit into the future. As one who suffered physical hardship and bore heavy burdens because of his deep love for people and the gospel, Rick revealed the heart of Jesus to many who otherwise might not have discovered the hope of the gospel. May this awareness bring Rick lasting joy and peace. Following retirement, Rick will continue to serve as a high priest. He will remain fully engaged in ministry, supporting the local and worldwide mission of the church.

3. **Jane M. Gardner** will be granted retirement at the 2019 World Conference in accordance with her plans. However, while no longer having supervisory responsibility for various International Headquarters teams, Jane graciously has agreed to continue serving as presiding evangelist on a self-sustaining basis, which includes World Church Leadership Council membership as before. As a World Church employee since 1998, Jane has made lasting contributions to the church's life. Coordinating various teams, she led advances in worship, music, fine arts, Temple ministries, and resources. Jane led the team that created and effectively introduced the hymnal, *Community of Christ Sings*. This hymnal is enriching the church's understanding of its identity, mission, and multicultural character and gifts. Jane served as president of the Quorum of High Priests from 2007–2016. She was the first woman to serve in that role. She presided with skill and sensitivity in an increasingly diverse body of high priests. Her leadership contributed significantly to added insight and renewed emphasis to their vital ministry. While no longer assigned supervisory responsibilities, Jane will continue to offer visionary leadership for Temple ministries as presiding evangelist. Also, she will be available to consult with worship, spiritual-formation, and fine-arts ministries, including a focus on the nature and appropriate expressions of the sacraments.
4. **Michele K. McGrath** will be released with honor as a counselor to the presiding bishop and member of the Presiding Bishopric at the 2019 World Conference. This action is occurring at her request to relieve her of demanding World Church responsibility so she can relocate and provide more support to her family. Michele's financial expertise has been invaluable during a critical time in the church's life. Her professional accounting, compliance, and budget-management skills have been essential to the Presiding Bishopric and the World Church Finance Board. Her colleagues were looking forward to many more years of Michele's ministry in the Presiding Bishopric. Nevertheless, there is full support for her decision to put the needs of her family first. Though no longer a church employee, Michele will continue to serve as a bishop. In addition to her finance skills and enthusiastic advocacy for A Disciple's Generous Response principles, Michele has a strong passion for economic, social, and environmental justice as essential aspects of the reign of God. In her ensuing location and vocation, she will find evident opportunities to express her ministerial and leadership gifts to the benefit of the church and others.

To fill the vacancies created by these actions:

5. **Catherine C. Mambwe** is called to serve as an apostle and member of the Council of Twelve. Catherine's strong faith in God, devotion to the gospel, and broad experience in church ministry, leadership, and finances are among her many gifts. Catherine expresses an evident love for people that transcends tribal, cultural, and national identities. She speaks and acts courageously to advocate for marginalized and voiceless people. She is eager to enhance her leadership abilities through additional theological education. As a World Church leader and apostle, Catherine will continue to contribute to the dynamic growth of the church in Africa. She will be instrumental in the continuing liberation of the ministerial giftedness of women in Africa and throughout the church. Catherine's insights, testimonies, and experience will bless the World Church Leadership Council and the Council of Twelve as they seek to better understand diverse cultural, social, theological, and economic perspectives. Catherine is encouraged by the Holy Spirit to embrace her call with confidence and assurance of its divine origin.
6. **David M. Nii** is called to serve as an apostle and member of the Council of Twelve. David's abiding love for the gospel and the church community equip him for this role and will find expanded expression through apostolic ministry. As a humble, wise minister, David is the epitome of the servant-leader in the likeness of Jesus Christ. His previous experience as a bishop, especially recently as bishop of the USA, provides him a unique perspective from which to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing the church. His demonstrated capacity to hear various perspectives, integrate important information, and present an accurate perception of current reality and future potential will bless his colleagues and the church. In addition, David has a passionate concern for marginalized and oppressed people and groups. He is urged to continue to speak and act to shape communities of justice and empowerment within and beyond the church. David is encouraged to embrace his call without reservation. His leadership in the fields and councils of the church will be received with gratitude and seen as blessing.
7. **Jeffrey A. Naylor** is called to serve as a counselor to the presiding bishop and member of the Presiding Bishopric. Jeff's commitment to the church is evidenced by his willingness to serve as a self-sustaining member of the Presiding Bishopric with full knowledge of what that calling entails. Jeff has excellent business and financial acumen as evidenced in his professional accomplishments and exemplary service on the World Church Finance Board. Those skills, coupled with his church fiscal, audit, and budgetary-management strengths, particularly equip him to serve in the Presiding Bishopric. Jeff's extensive expertise in financial planning and his attention to important details enable him to analyze financial data and pose specific questions while keeping overall strategic direction in mind. Jeff also offers a compelling witness of God's initiative and generosity as seen through church history. This attribute includes an understanding of how stewardship practices have evolved over time in response to changing circumstances. Jeff's ministry, while inclusive of gifts associated with the office of bishop, is broad in scope. His ministerial abilities include pastoral gifts, communication skills, and collaborative leadership. These strengths are evidenced by his recent service as a mission center president and as president of the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation Board. The church is grateful for Jeff's willingness to respond to his calling. Jeff will make a significant contribution to the Presiding Bishopric and as a World Church leader.

I offer this counsel in gratitude to God for the dedicated service of those leaving World Church leadership roles and the willingness of gifted individuals to respond to calls. In the spirit of thankfulness, I also am aware that the willingness of World Church leaders to serve is but one aspect of the overall commitment of many who serve in ministry, priesthood, and leadership roles throughout the church.

I request that the calls presented in this Letter of Counsel be prayerfully considered for approval by the 2019 World Conference.

*In the peace of Christ,
Stephen M. Veazey,
president of the church*

Additional Information

Questions have been asked about expense management related to World Church leadership positions during a time of budgetary and staff reductions. In response, I would like to provide the following information.

During the past three years expenses for World Church Leadership Council positions have been reduced or offset as part of overall budget reductions. This has been achieved through various actions, such as:

1. Some World Church officers serving in full-time leadership positions while donating all or significant portions of their income back to the church as World Mission Tithes. On average, World Church Leadership Council members contribute 12 percent of their incomes to Worldwide Mission Tithes, in addition to local contributions.
2. Individuals have accepted added major responsibilities without additional salary. This has reduced the number of funded full-time World Church Leadership Council positions. This response frees funding to support other staff positions in the fields and at International Headquarters.
3. An integrated leadership model has reduced the number of full-time funded positions in the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric. This approach frees funding for other field and International Headquarters positions.

In the years ahead, if this Letter of Counsel is accepted, more than \$200,000 (USD) in World Church Leadership Council expenses will be eliminated in addition to expenses already reduced from 2016–2019. Much of this amount will be achieved through actions anticipated in this Letter of Counsel.

Noting the steps described above is not meant to suggest WCLC members are doing more than others. Numerous paid staff members have taken on additional responsibilities while increasing their tithing. Also, many church members tithe generously, fulfill multiple responsibilities, and serve in self-sustaining roles in all arenas of church life. The commitment, generosity, and service of all is valued greatly and deeply appreciated.

This information is meant to answer questions about whether WCLC personnel expenses have been decreased during a period of overall expense reductions. Hopefully, these facts provide helpful answers and assurance of our mutual response.

*Stephen M. Veazey
president of the church*