



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

USA Field Townhall Questions

Townhall meetings were held virtually April 24, 27, and 29, 2025. Field Support Ministers (FSM), President of Seventy (P70), and Apostles, current and called, led the townhall meetings and responded to questions.

The purpose of the townhall meetings was to present the reorganization of the USA Field to one Field, its emerging model for administration and leadership, and primary focus on mission. The following is a list of questions and comments received, and answers.

USA Field Operations

- Q. How does the USA Field Leadership Team plan to handle items that have previously been handled by a single Field Apostle (opening and closing congregations, calling new evangelists, etc.)?
- A. The first contact for all mission centers and congregations will go to the FSM. The FSM will share the request, concern, or inquiry with the apostle team for a response.

The USA Field Leadership Team meets regularly. The best suited apostle or P70 will reach out. We will work collaboratively when able, and individually when necessary.

- Q. The shared leadership approach sounds great! How are you defining the term "leadership"?
- A. Leadership is defined by role and responsibility, experience and gifts, vision, and response. As a leadership team, each apostle, P70, and FSM brings a unique combination of leadership capacities to the USA field.

Leadership also includes developing emerging leaders, current leaders, and new disciples. Leadership development is a mission priority across all leading quorums of the church. Additionally, P70s have identified specific goals to mentor younger adults interested in peacemaking and cross-cultural opportunities.

- Q. Will the Mission Center model continue as currently configured?
- A. Yes. Mission centers will continue as currently configured. If, through collaboration, there is a desire for reorganizing mission centers, that would occur in the future.

Each mission center will maintain connection with the FSM currently assigned to them.

Q. Will the FSM have decision making authority or act as a conduit?

A. FSMs will respond within their capacity and area of expertise. FSMs will not assume authority that resides with apostles or presidents of seventy. FSM's are empowered to take the lead in some administrative areas in which they collaborate and coordinate with support ministries (Fiscal Services, Risk Management, Legal Services).

A key objective of our new leadership model is streamlining administrative processes and decision making wherever appropriate. This is an opportunity in reorganizing as one field. This may include shifting decision making in some administrative processes to FSMs, mission center leaders, or pastors. One example is the change to increase the capital project approval amount, but there may be others.

Q. The new model seems to add additional work for the FSMs. Are they able to let go of some of their previous responsibilities? Is the FSM job description realistic? It seems overwhelming.

A. The current team of FSMs have considered this question extensively over the last several months. They support the current configuration of roles and responsibilities. Our team of FSMs have proved invaluable in their knowledge of church policies, practices, and administration.

The FSM team will lead the task of streamlining and improving processes by eliminating duplication and implementing standardizations. This will allow the FSMs to ensure their responsibilities are manageable and within scope of responsibility.

Q. Will FSMs reside close or within the areas they cover?

A. Currently, four (4) of the five (5) FSMs live in the geographic fields they are assigned to. They are regularly present within their fields. None of the FSM's plan to move. All of them are able to effectively work remotely.

Q. While the new model is a little confusing and overwhelming, do you believe the new team and each person's responsibilities will fall into place as it is implemented? Our experience is that shared leadership seems like a lot of moving parts. Our pastor team has four (4) pastors. There was a learning curve to knowing who to ask questions of, and which pastor handles what. One pastor took lead making sure administrative items get accomplished.

A. There will be a learning curve as with any new model that is implemented. We are committed to learning, adjusting, and pivoting as needed. We see the strength in shared leadership.

Q. What indicators or markers will be used to evaluate this redesign as it is implemented?

- A. Evaluation is essential. We anticipate measuring missional activity in the field, increased efficiencies, the success of new support forums for congregational and mission center leadership and collective feedback.
- Q. While I am excited about the teamwork model, part of me is sad at potentially losing that special bond with "our" apostle. Previously, the USA was organized into five different fields. Each Apostle developed relationships with local leaders in their field. Fewer relationships meant more shared experiences, better understanding, and a sense of mutual support. Is this possible in the single field model and your team approach?
- A. Quality relationships and support is crucial. The new model prioritizes connections between local and field leaders based on gifts, vision, and mission opportunities, rather than geography or role. Apostles, P70, FSMs, and World Church ministers across the USA are encouraged to collaborate on shared ministry responsibilities. Overall, field leader relationships will be shaped by mission-driven opportunities alongside geography and role.
- Q. Also has there been a carbon assessment of this model?
- A. This is an important question. It has not yet been answered for two reasons. First, currently not all field leaders live and work in the fields in which they serve. Travel, therefore, is already necessary. Second, it is unclear what the changes in travel will be. This depends on how relationships and opportunities develop, as well as how much we increase utilization of virtual technologies to span distances.
- While we have not done a carbon assessment for this model, we have upheld that as part of our assessment and wise stewardship going forward.
- Q. Will Canada be part of the USA?
- A. No, Canada will not be part of the USA field. The two apostles serving in Field 4, which includes Canada, will offer mission support in Field 5 (USA).
- Q. Should we submit our mission center conference dates, or will we be given a date?
- A. Contact your FSM with your date and plan. Let us know what your needs are for guest ministry, ordinations, or settings apart.
- Q. How will the Apostle team engage with members at the local congregational level to keep them connected to the World Church?
- A. In the new model, the field leaders aim to respond to needs more in response to their gifts, experiences, and call to ministry which will include opportunities to engage in local activities, whether at reunions, mission center activities, or in your congregations. The place to start is by contacting your FSM and sharing the invitation.

- Q. How many mission centers are in the USA Field, and is the team planning on visiting each mission center individually or as a group?
- A. There are thirty-six (36) mission centers. We plan to visit each in pairs.
- Q. Mission Center Presidents report to an "Apostle". With four apostles working as a team, which one am I responsible to then?
- A. That answer has not been finalized. We will communicate this answer to mission center leaders within a reasonable timeframe of the World Conference. The new team is committed to the support and supervision you need.
- Q. No one likes to talk about money, but we all know it has a role in at least most decisions. What will be the financial impact of this change?
- A. There is no direct financial impact on the budget. There are still five full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) in the US field. What is changing is the distribution of time and human resources.

Discipleship Formation

- Q. How do we make disciples? Do we have a certain program for this?
- A. We have a robust Formation Ministries Team and library of resources available through Herald House. The Formation Ministries Team is working on a Lectionary Library of all worship resources and lessons. It has been developed for the entire Lectionary cycle over the past 10 years. It will be available and searchable by scripture. We continue to work on new resources. Future resource development considers diverse ways that spiritual community forms and flows. Welcoming and nurturing people in authentic ways is necessary to put these resources into use.
- Q. Is the focus on community going to continue to be on the 'congregation' model and administrative requirements? What is the direction for supporting those of us who are all in for being a part of this Community but do not want to participate in congregations (e.g., youth, young adults)?
- A. Faith community happens in multiple ways. We want to see thriving congregations. Of course, it is not the only model.

The USA field will continue to support important, working ministries in addition to congregations. That includes online ministries, camps, reunions, Spectacular, campus ministries, peace forums, and other events. We want to hear from you and work to support the various ways groups and communities gather and respond in Christ's mission. We are excited about exploring opportunities for new expressions of gathering. P70 are very focused on this. Resources are being created right now for people who choose to gather outside of congregations, for example as a small group or a family. We want to know what is happening so we can continue addressing the needs.

- Q. Since Evangelists are to work with Apostles, how are you going to use them in this new configuration?
- A. Evangelists, as ministers of blessing, provide tremendous ministry with regard to companioning, guidance, and pastoral care. As the Evangelists partner with Apostles, we anticipate opportunities to partner will increase because of the focus of a whole US field.
- Q. Will there still be field trainings, leadership meetings, worships, etc.?
- A. We anticipate there will be more opportunities for field trainings, meetings, and worship as one field. To span distance, many will be online.
- Q. Is there a chance we can continue these kinds of "townhall" gatherings with you? This is a great opportunity to connect.
- A. Yes, engaging in ways like this is important to us too.
- Q. Will this new structure facilitate congregational revitalization, establishing new expressions of church and church planting? We are a small church and getting smaller in the U.S.
- A. Most of the incoming field leaders, due to age and experience, only know a church and congregations that have grown smaller. We, too, have seen our congregations close, campgrounds be sold, and friends leave church participation.

It is a difficult truth that congregational revitalization and sustainability depend on the local people and context. While collaboration and shared best practices provide support, guidance, and inspiration, they only help a struggling congregation seize opportunities—the congregation must ultimately take action itself.

New expressions and church planting have changed in the last two decades. Our focus is living into what mission in our lived context looks, feels, sounds, and acts like. We have been surprised by new ministries as a church. Each of us on the USA team has specific areas of passion. In our new model, assignments are not geographical so multiple leaders can step in to listen, vision, strategize and help.

- Q. How do you envision the church confronting oppression?
- A. Faith in action. In the past, our faith traditions have focused on “right thought,” less on “right action.” We are going to have to be more comfortable at doing what we say we believe.

We hope the USA website will be a tool to help liberate those conversations as well; where we are freer to express ideas impacting our local communities, without limiting what we can say based on a worldwide perspective. Recognizing the difference between being political and being partisan is

essential. Discipleship beckons us to be political like Jesus was – you might consider Luke 4:18-20, Luke 9:51, Matthew 25 for example. The very first step is to be very good listeners to those experiencing oppression, then learn more and take the next faithful step together.

- Q. I hear your focus on abolishing poverty, doing justice, and being peacemakers. What about welcoming the community, engaging the community, and personal invitation?
- A. We affirm that personal invitation and peacemaking may be separate actions or focus. In the end, however, we affirm that abolishing poverty, justice, and peacemaking are inseparable from engaging in community and personal invitation. We affirm this model of justice and peacemaking in Jesus' example through the gospels.

The Seventy have adopted this model of invitation focusing on peacemaking, inclusion, and service. These are the three main areas the Seventy are focused on. Each of these expand to touch the language you mentioned, and we understand that when we touch areas of injustice, we are creating ways to be hospitable.

USA Website Questions:

- Q. Do you have a date of when the USA Mission website will go live?
- A. We hope to launch before World Conference. We anticipate it will look much different a year from now as we continue to develop the site based on what we learn is most helpful.
- Q. Will the USA website highlight or provide resources for mission center engagement across the field for disciple formation or outreach ministry collaboration?
- A. That is our hope and vision for its purpose.
- Q. I have recently found the “New Brew” videos. Will we have these on the website?
- A. We would love to connect to Project Zion Podcasts. We are also dreaming about additional podcasts we would like to create.
- Q. Will the USA website connect with the other church websites? Herald House, Our Ministry Tools?
- A. We do not intend the USA website to replace CofChrist.org, Our Ministry Tools, or HeraldHouse.org. It will house documents and mission tools particular to the USA context. It will be a supplement to the main WC website focused on USA specific information. The USA website will also serve as a platform for statements and resources that we cannot post on the main website out of respect for the cultural dynamics of being a worldwide church. For example, there is not currently a place for us to post statements the USA team of apostles have released.

- Q. Please tell me more about the new website. If it is to be used to support us internally, great. Otherwise, I am concerned that multiple URL's will tend to dilute organizational outreach, marketing, and messaging to those outside our organization.
- A. CofChrist.org will remain the primary website content. The USA site will simply supplement items, such as USA-specific statements. Its purpose is to provide networking and collaboration for mission and resources across the USA.