

Community of Christ

DATE: April 8, 2003
TO: Pastors, Presiding Elders, Congregational Communication Coordinators
Stake High Council, Stake Leadership, District Presidents, Campground Board
Presidents
RE: UPDATE - Mission Center Process

As you know January 28-30, a cross-jurisdictional team made up of lay leaders and staff from the Pacific NW Region, Seattle Stake, Intermountain District, and Northern Plains and Prairies Provinces Region identified boundaries for mission centers in the Northwest. On February 9, boundaries were announced to all jurisdictions with a recommendation that a mission center be created to include: SW Washington, NW Oregon, S Oregon Districts, Seattle Stake and the Alaska Church.

Since that time we have had several opportunities to work towards a mission center proposal. On March 10-11, a preliminary draft proposal was created, by request of the January cross-jurisdictional team, to advance the process. This preliminary draft proposal was reviewed, on March 22, by a design team made up of district and stake leaders: Brad Shumate, Bill McFarlin, John Berger, John Stephens, John Wigle, Leon Furhman, Janelle Jegglie, Bob Dobkins, Netta Groat, Jim Erlandson, John Campbell, Elva Eliason, Marge Neilson, Tore Neilson, Barbara Borkowski, Stacie Simmons-Bates, Bob Coleman, Steve Pomeroy, Stan Corrington, and Liza de Guzman.

Currently the design team is targeting August 2003, as the submission date for our mission center proposal to the World Church Leadership Council. January 1, 2004 is the date targeted for the beginning of our new mission center.

The preliminary draft proposal for our mission center was based on the following parameters:

- ❑ Affirming that members of all jurisdictions highly value a sense of belonging and the importance of relationship, including access to larger gatherings. Members also believe the value of sharing diverse ministries and resources are a high priority for the success of the mission center.
- ❑ Understanding that the mission center operating budget can employ diverse methods for creating equitable assessment or allocation formulas. For example, using contributor information available in MIS/Shelby we can look at total congregational contributions (minus building projects), operating contributions, the number of contributor units, and membership.
- ❑ Knowing that our budget will drive much of our proposal, we created a “cafeteria” style budget. We assigned costs to various aspects of Mission Center, for example, to continue to employ our Field Ministers it will cost a certain dollar amount, to maintain an office will cost a certain dollar amount. This kind of information will be used as we begin our initial stage of budgeting discussions for the mission center. This portion of the design team’s work will eventually result in a proposed budget for consideration by the mission center’s organizing conference scheduled for Sunday, November 2, 2003.

On March 22, the design team reviewed and modified the first sections of the preliminary design proposal created on March 10-11. The team approved the first half of the design proposal to be forwarded to Apostle Ken McLaughlin for his review and response. We also took time to lay the groundwork for future budget discussions.

The next design team meeting is scheduled for April 19, to be held in Portland. At this meeting we will discuss and review feedback from the sections of the draft submitted earlier to Ken McLaughlin. We will continue working through the design proposal and we will spend a portion of the day looking at possible budget scenarios.

We recognize that the World Conference action in 2002 was the first of several steps through this process. From June 2002 through January 2003 we gathered information about what members valued. These values have been an integral part of the design process. As we move through these design stages of the process, there will obviously be many more details that will need to be addressed. We will find ourselves asking hundreds of questions as specifics and issues arise. Therefore, your continued input is encouraged and appreciated. Please feel free to contact your jurisdictional representatives on the design team to convey suggestions, thoughts, or concerns that you might have. We will continue to provide updates as the process unfolds and look forward to sharing with you in greater detail a summary of the design team's work. Our summer reunions will also provide an opportunity for further thought and reflection, as we move closer to our targeted submission date.

Throughout this process, and in our many meetings and discussions, we have been richly blessed through the offering of many who have provided their skills, talents, and ministry. Listening and understanding each other's needs, hopes, and concerns has been critical as we begin to move towards becoming more than we currently are. These meetings are the beginnings of a new culture and new identity. The work has not always been easy, anxiety and fears have occasionally crept into our deliberations. Yet, in every meeting, in every conversation, we discover the shared value of our desire to create structures that allow for congregational ministerial support in the mission to which God calls us. Within that mission and from the participation of each member of the design team, one thing has been abundantly clear, we all value the sharing of our ministry, the sharing of our resources, the sharing of our relationships, and the sharing of our witness into our communities.

Our structural change from districts, stakes, and regions to mission centers is a direct response to our denomination's recognition that congregations are the focal places where relationships with the Living Christ are created and nurtured. Our mission center structure is intended to encourage and empower congregations as they reach beyond themselves and into their communities to bring witness and ministry of Jesus Christ.

We ask for your continued prayers, patience, and support as we move together, through this process.

Peace,

Barbara Borkowski
President & Financial Officer
Seattle Stake

Brad Shumate
Regional Administrator
Pacific NW Region – West

Bill McFarlin
Regional Financial Officer
Pacific NW Region