

United States Catholic Mission Association

# The Roles in Mission

A Concept Paper – The Development of Affinity Groups

First, there is mission. Mission is the command, the invitation, the promise and the prayer of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew – also known as the Great Commission.

16 The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. 18 Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:16-20).

There are many different roles in the world of mission. Generally, people tend to fall into one role or another although, in some cases, there may be a mixture of two roles – both missionary and Director, for example, or a staff person who is also a donor.

First, there is the (1) **missionary** (or missionary) – a person who has been sent by the Church to go beyond themselves, leave their comfort zone, cross some type of border, risk a personal encounter with a “stranger” and to do so in service to the common good – the Kingdom of God on earth.

There are a variety of organizations the Church entrusts mission too – parishes, dioceses, religious institutes, volunteer programs, universities, hospitals – just to name a few. These organizations usually have a (2) **director** – someone who is responsible for the overall day to day operations of this missionary organization.

These organizations also have (3) **staff** – people who have defined roles within that organization that the organization sees as essential for the full realization of its purpose. These staff roles could be in fundraising, formation, communication, administration, recruitment, finance, etc.

The (4) **leadership** of an organization is its highest authority – its leadership council, provincial council, or board of directors.

A special type of leadership – that is just beginning to emerge within the Church – is the (5) **mission council member**. This is a parishioner who is willing to accept responsibility for – with others – the missionary impulse of the parish or diocese.

**Students** (6) are another significant role within mission – they are the ones investigating mission; perhaps even going on a mission related trip – so they can learn firsthand all of what is involved in mission.

Mission could not exist without the generous support and leadership provided by (7) **donors**; people who believe so much in the importance of mission are willing to give time, talent, and treasure to the development and continuation of mission.

The task before USCMA is to identify all the roles that have been created by mission organizations. Second, to discern if affinity groups will benefit the people who hold those roles. What roles would benefit the most from an affinity group?

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