

A Theological Vision for the Core Leadership Team of the Great Lakes Region (GLR) of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) on May 8, 2016

Under the umbrella of the Great Commission (to make disciples of Jesus Christ) and the Great Commandments (love God and other people), with a commitment to:

1. Cultivating transformation in Christ
2. Equipping leaders, and
3. Engaging in mission,

The GLR staff, turning our attention to the great cities (Jonah 4:11) in our region and in partnership with classis and RCA leaders, will “develop leaders to start and strengthen churches” (The Seven Words) through:

1. 2025 Church Planting Vision
2. Church Planting Collaboratives
3. One Day Training Events
4. Transition Ministry Services
5. Succession Planning
6. A Culture of Innovation: The LEAD Strong Initiative – Six Core Leadership Practices
7. Assessment using The Church Life Cycle, the Medical Church Health Metaphor, Becoming Five, Fresh Start and others.
8. Leadership Resources Network, such as
 - A. Faith-based Decision-making and Planning – Mike Gafa
 - B. Strategic Initiative Planning – Daryl Cripe
 - C. Conflict Management – Tim Meendering

- D. Ridder Church Renewal and Faith Walking Retreats – Jess Schults and Scott Lokers
- E. Ministry Networks – The Regional Leadership Team
- F. Collaboration, coaching and consulting

The beliefs that undergird this vision are:

1. Jesus Christ is building his church!
2. The church of Jesus Christ exists primarily to fulfill the Great Commission.
3. The church is called by God to place participation in God's mission at the center of its life and ministry and to choose God's mission before treasured traditions, personal preferences and rooted relationships.
4. Regarding faithful and fruitful ministry in the twenty-first century, our congregations have only two options: deep systemic change or slow death. Examples of deep change include moving from inward to outward focus, developing a culture of innovation, placing the lost before the members of the congregation in terms of priority in ministry focus or collaborating with others in planting a new church. As we lead change to establish a new level of equilibrium, there will be conflict. Therefore conflict-management and peace-making skills are essential to leading the deep change process, so that conflict can be life-enhancing, not life threatening.
5. People experience personal transformation in Christ by embracing the wonder of the GOSPEL of God's grace in Jesus Christ. A sign of

the transformation will be increased love for God and other people!

6. Personal transformation of congregational leaders through the GOSPEL of God's grace in Jesus Christ precedes deep change at the congregational level. Therefore, as go the leaders, so goes the congregation.
7. Since the journey of personal transformation and deep congregational change is God's work, all we are and do must be undergirded in prayer.
8. The best way to strengthen a relatively healthy (growing, on a plateau or in only modest decline for less than five years) church is to participate in starting a new congregation.
9. The most effective evangelistic tool on earth is planting a new church.

We value:

1. Gospel centered ministry in both word and deed.
2. A maturing and multiplying culture of personal transformation.
3. Encouraging, equipping and empowering leaders.
4. Accountable and adaptive leadership.
5. Empowered teams.
6. Communities of grace and truth.

We measure:

1. New Christians, including adult baptisms
2. Infant baptisms
3. New leaders

4. New worship venues
5. New ministry sites
6. New congregations
7. Newly organized congregations
8. Worship attendance

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Core Leadership Team of the GLR/RCA

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