

# **Mobilizing Leaders for Mission and Ministry**

(First Draft for Discussion and Feedback, Burt Braunius, July 2007)

**An information pack describing the Commissioned Leader program – an approach for intentionalizing the development of highly competent leaders within the context of Fifth Reformed Church.**

## **Introduction to the Plan**

Fifth Reformed Church is a leadership congregation, particularly so in the areas of mission, ministry, and leadership development. Evidence of mission leadership is seen in her record of missionary support as well as in the recent emphasis of having a missional presence in the immediate neighborhood, including the commitment of Consistory to renovate our facilities so that they are more outreach oriented and also of the commitment to plant a new congregation.

Fifth Church, through endowment funds and personnel policies, has also demonstrated its support for those who are called to full-time ministry. During this past year two staff members have completed seminary, become ordained Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and accepted calls to pastor congregations. Other staff members have preceded them and the current Director of High School Ministry is being supported in completing a Bible college education.

The plan that follows provides a process for the development of leaders in mission and ministry within the context of the ministry of Fifth Church. The plan, while appreciating education that is available through area colleges and seminaries, anticipates the need to equip leaders while they are in-ministry. This plan, stated in educational terms, is a non-traditional, personalized, competency-based, portfolio-evidenced, Internet-resourced, and individually-coached approach.

The *Mobilizing Leaders for Mission and Ministry* program that is described here was developed by Tom De Vries when he served as Regional Executive for the Far West Region of the Reformed Church in America. *Mobilizing Leaders* is an established and proven approach to leadership development in the Far West Region. It is currently in the early stages of being implemented in Synod of the Great Lakes churches. Coaches Guides, study guides, application forms, and other materials are available to provide resources for this process. *Mobilizing Leaders* as Commissioned Leaders is the first level of leadership development. Two additional levels of leadership development have been designed for those who are called to commitments that build upon being a Commissioned Leader. These are Commissioned Pastors and Missionary Pastors. Most of this report focuses on Commissioned Leaders, however; the concepts of Commissioned Pastors and Missionary Pastors are also introduced.

Becoming a Commissioned Leader could be of particular value to members of the congregation whom God may be calling to new levels of leadership, including the offices of Elder and Deacon, to prospective staff members who lack formal ministry training, and to those who want a disciplined and personalized approach for deepening their knowledge of Scripture, commitments to faith development, and service to the mission and ministry of the Church. Much of what follows is copied directly from *The Coaches Guide for Mobilizing Leaders, Far West Region/RCA (2006?)* and is used with permission. Modifications have been made where they seemed appropriate for Fifth Reformed Church. The most noticeable additions are in regard to "Online Resources" and "Competencies."

## Overview of the Process

The pattern of Jesus in raising leaders to reach the harvest provides a model for leadership development within the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

“Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He gave them this charge: ‘What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands.’”

(Luke 10:1-2, The Message)

**Spiritual Empowerment** The power and ability to reach communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ will not come from the capacity of human power or potential. Our need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) in order to make disciples and be witnesses. We are encouraged to:

**PRAY** The mobilizing of leaders for the church starts with people who are on their knees before God interceding for our Lord’s blessing and favor in the process.

**ASK** The need for leaders who can mobilize churches today for mission and ministry is great, and we must ask God to provide the new and emerging leaders necessary to lead the church forward in mission.

**BELIEVE** Do we have a supernatural expectation, believing when we pray and ask that God will act in providing for our needs and raising leaders who can reach the harvest?

**Selection Process** Leadership selection and development looks closely at the call of God on a leader’s life. It identifies the hand of God at work through a lifetime of preparation and growth that culminates in faithfulness and fruitfulness as one lives out his or her divine calling.

**Sending Movement** Leaders are disciples who possess a Christ-like character that is evident. As disciples, they are able to make more disciples who are able to follow Christ in mission. As leaders, they have been trained to influence groups of people in order to achieve God’s purposes for their ministry.

The harvest is huge...currently, the hands are few...but we believe the God of the harvest will provide and mobilize leaders to mobilize churches for mission and ministry.

The Mobilizing Leaders process is a commitment to intentionally raise leaders from the harvest who can impact the harvest. It is the opportunity to develop leaders who can participate in disciple-making, function as servant leaders in overseeing significant ministry areas, and engage in evangelism.

## A Change in Paradigm

The *Mobilizing Leaders* process provides a true shift of paradigm for leadership development—a new pattern for cultivating leadership that brings challenge and change to current and traditional thinking and practices. Preparing 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders for ministry occurs more in process rather than a one-time event. It is ongoing development that values learning and growth as an ever-progressing and lifelong task.

*Mobilizing Leaders* is based on five foundational values that reflect a redirection and change in how leaders are developed for ministry in a local church: These are: In-Ministry Formation, Competency-Based Equipping, Missional Context, Lifelong Learning, and Online Resources.

**In-Ministry Formation** Hands-on ministry within the context of the local church is the principle location for leadership development. Opportunities to grow and develop in real life ministry situations can give help and direction in forming and informing new and emerging leaders.

The knowledge and skills needed to minister in the post-modern landscape are forged in real world experience. Ministry on the frontlines provides the necessary arena to answer the hard questions of spiritual seekers, deal with the reality of conflict in one's ministry, oversee and be responsible for individuals and tasks in developing fruitfulness, reproduce new disciples of Jesus Christ, and live out both a personal and corporate mission and vision.

While a valued context for learning is often the college, university, or seminary classroom; the emphasis of *Mobilizing Leaders* is in-ministry and under the guidance of a coach. The classroom for *Mobilizing Leaders* is really a laboratory from which one can eagerly experience the challenge of ministry in the contemporary environment with the support of an experienced ministry Coach. We aim for a model of ministry preparation that is more like the field-service learning approaches demonstrated by Jesus and Paul than of the Academy of Greek culture. At the same time; classes, courses, and other resources from colleges, seminaries, conferences, and seminars are affirmed and encouraged where they meet the goals and needs of individual learners and their churches.

**Competency-Based Equipping** While the value of education is maintained, it is also expanded to include and appreciate the need for leaders who are equipped with ministry skills that will provide greater effectiveness for local church ministry. The test of a leader is not performed in the classroom but, rather, in a conference room, in a small group, in discipleship, and in moving a group of gifted ministry workers forward in living out their vision for ministry in community.

The value of knowledge is retained, but it grows to include applied knowledge—the ability to use scriptural principles in ministry situations, to live out one's values as they are learned through biblical and theological discovery and then practiced.

A leader must have the tools and skills for ministry, not only knowing what they are and which situations require a specific skill, but where, how, and why to apply them. Fruitfulness in ministry is the result of the convergence of education and equipping processes. It is not for the goal of information transference, but life transformation – both in the life of the leader and the ones with whom he or she have been entrusted.

The importance of equipping is increased when built on the foundational value of competence. Capable leaders have the ability and skill to serve and lead effectively. It is both the exercising of proficiency in demonstrated skills (competencies) and the aptitude to perform the overall process to achieve the desired purpose (competence).

The *Mobilizing Leaders* process is developed with a commitment and understanding that leaders in the church today need to be equipped with the skills and competencies required to help congregations experience vitality and health while reaching the harvest.

**Missional Context** The vision of the church as a maintained organization or as a covenant community in mission will determine our motivation for sending workers into the harvest. If we see the need as Jesus did in Luke 10, if we see the incredible potential for ministry that requires many, many more laborers, if we see the fields white for the harvest, how can we help but respond with a vision and willingness for raising up, equipping, and sending out as many workers for the harvest as possible?

The maintenance of plateaued and declining churches and of a mission-challenged organizational structure is not the vision to be advocated for the future. Churches engaged in mission and evangelism with missionary pastors is the preferred future that is being pursued.

The context and contextualization of ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century reveals the coming of a post-Christendom era, with a new generation emerging that has had little contact with and less impact from the Church – whether collectively, or the one down the street. The current missional environment provides similar challenges to the ones faced by the first century church: pluralism, secularism, lack of status in society, syncretism. To these we can also add rationalism, modernism, post-modernism, and humanism.

America also has moved from being a melting pot to becoming a mosaic of ethnicities with their own cultures and norms, but all in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Societal changes reveal tremendous challenges that will keep the doors of the church closed to new people, unless a church is willing to throw wide open those doors to invite and include the many who have yet to give their lives to Christ. The missional context provides a missional mandate to mobilize leaders who will engage and work in the harvest.

**Lifelong Learning** *Mobilizing Leaders* is a process that values the fact that leaders are learners. Cultivating and growing one's leadership takes a commitment that lasts a lifetime. Regular training, equipping, and assessment provide insight and information to challenge and develop leaders who expand their ministry influence.

A willingness to open one's self to evaluation on a regular basis in order to improve and grow is required of leaders in validating accountability and community. The *Mobilizing Leaders* process is not a summit to be reached or a diploma to be obtained, but a journey to be traveled and enjoyed as God leads, directs, challenges, sustains, and develops a leader over a lifetime.

**Online Resources** Along with the Internet has come the transition from an industry-based to a knowledge-oriented society. Access to information has moved from being primarily preserved and distributed by schools and their faculties to being omnipresent and instantly accessible by anyone through Internet resources. Documents that were once printed on paper and in books for selective distribution are now readily available in Word, PDF, and other electronic formats. In addition, learners are able to save and share reports, resources, and other evidences of their performance that can be instantly available to other learners, coaches, credentialing agencies, and prospective employers.

Online portfolios are developed by learners to document their progress and achievements. The evidence contained in portfolios provides resources for identifying competencies that have been achieved.

## A Process for Developing Ministry Leadership

The process of developing ministry leadership helps individuals to affirm their call and develop their leadership gifts. This process has three areas of focus, three areas of development, three levels of ministry call, and three stages of involvement.

- The areas of focus are character, competency, and call.
- The areas of development include knowledge (knowing), character (being), and service (doing).
- The levels of ministry call are that of Commissioned Leader, Commissioned Pastor, and Missionary Pastor.
- The stages of involvement are introduction, participation, and completion.

### Three Areas of Focus

The areas of focus are character, competency, and call. While these three foci are basic to all of ministry, it is of particular importance for the person considering entry into the Commissioned Leader program to examine him or her self in these areas.

**CHARACTER** As leaders, we minister out of who we are. Jesus' statement in Matthew 12:35 is magnified under the leadership lens: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him."

The foundation of leadership is built upon discipleship. Spiritual leaders are men and women who have allowed the Spirit of God to make and mold them into people who reflect the mind and heart of Jesus Christ. A hunger and thirst for righteousness, the fruit of the Spirit, and a commitment to servanthood are reflected in the life and lifestyle of growing leaders.

It is the moral compass within, developed through spiritual formation, discipling, maturing of faith, and internalized integrity that allow for strong character to respond and react to the challenges of leadership rather than tossing to and fro amidst the winds and waves of change.

Faithfulness emerges out of increased and deepening faith. Future and emerging leaders will provide spiritual direction and encouragement for followers when their character is solidly grounded in the word of God, and their servanthood and ministry flow out of the character of Jesus Christ reflected in them.

Character issues for a Commissioned Leader include:

- |                  |                |                    |                |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| • Humility       | • Self-Control | • Honesty          | • Moral Purity |
| • Above Reproach | • Generosity   | • Conviction       | • Loyalty      |
| • Joy            | • Mercy        | • Perseverance     | • Love         |
| • Consistency    | • Reliability  | • Even Temperament | • Wisdom       |
| • Optimism       | • Balance      | • Gentleness       | • Discipline   |
| • Integrity      | • Faithfulness | • Teachability     | • Servanthood  |
| • Credibility    | • Passion      | • Courage          | • Commitment   |
| • Authenticity   | • Forgiveness  | • Compassion       | • Patience     |

**COMPETENCY** In John 15, Jesus tells his disciples that when you abide in Christ—character development and faithfulness, you will begin to bear fruit. The bearing of fruit will provide glory to God (v. 8) and it will prove to be lasting (v. 16). The greater the fruit production, the greater glory we will be able to direct toward God.

A leader's results are measured on different levels and in many areas. In ministry we look at lives impacted with the gospel, disciples reproduced, hearts changed, communities transformed, ministries started and developed and much more. Leaders show the "fruit" of their labor.

The development of ministry skills helps to provide the ability to produce greater fruit. Often leadership development processes are focused on what a leader is supposed to know. *Mobilizing Leaders* is also concerned and committed to what a leader is able to do—the fruit.

Emerging leaders need to develop the abilities and skills to serve and lead effectively. It is both the exercising of proficiency in demonstrated skills (competencies) and the aptitude to perform the overall process to achieve the desired purpose (competence).

Competence and competencies are to be developed in the following significant areas for Commissioned Leaders:

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|--|-------------------------|
| • Active Disciplemaking                          | • Spiritual Disciplines |
| • Intercession                                   | • Using Spiritual Gift  |
| • Evangelism: Able to Share a Personal Testimony | • Stewardship           |
| • Small Group Skills                             | • Team Building         |
| • Time Management                                | • Delegation            |

**CALL** As a ministry leader, who we are and what we do falls under the supernatural and sometimes mystical experience of "the call." It came to Moses at the burning bush and Saul as he was on the road to Damascus. It is the sovereign selection of God upon a leader's life to influence people for our Lord.

Leaders from within the reformed tradition see the supernatural calling process as two-directional. John Calvin described both an "inward" and an "outward" call.

The “inward” call is the moving of the Holy Spirit inside the heart and life of the believer. It is a personal calling—a still, small voice to be listened to, discovered, and discerned for the purpose of responding by saying as Isaiah, the prophet did: “Here I am, send me.”

The “outward” call is the confirmation of other leaders within the church capable of providing the affirmation of the inward call. Pastors and elders can provide additional discernment and encouragement for emerging leaders needing an Eli, as young Samuel did, in order to respond to God’s calling upon his life for a lifetime of service and ministry.

Os Guinness articulating this supernatural phenomenon in his book, *The Call* (1998), defines one’s call by stating:

*“Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a response to his summons and service.”*

As Commissioned Leaders seek to discern this high calling, to discover God’s leading and direction, to determine one’s own personal and individual response, it will come from hearing the voice of God, both from the inside and outside—a focusing that reveals a purpose in life from which one can not help but respond.

As one responds to God’s call on her or his life, leadership, and ministry, reflect again and again on the words of J. Oswald Sanders as he wrote in his classic work on leadership, *Spiritual Leadership* (1967):

*“Effective spiritual leadership does not come as a result of theological training or seminary degree, as important as education is. Jesus told His disciples, ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you’ (John 15:16). The sovereign selection of God gives great confidence to Christian workers. We can truly say, ‘I am here neither by selection of an individual nor election of a group, but by the almighty appointment of God.’”*

### **Three Areas of Development**

*“Just tell me what I need to do.”*

Often this is the statement heard from energetic leaders who just want to get through the process. Life and leadership development is just that—a process of development where leaders grow. Many people tend to focus on what needs to be known, or what needs to be done. The life and leadership development model that Jesus used was to walk with his disciples for a significant period of time, helping them to learn and grow from multiple experiences and exposures as they were with him. If Jesus just wanted to teach them he would have stayed in the classroom. If he wanted them to experience on-the-job training he would have focused on an apprenticeship system. If their development was exclusively personal he might have helped them by providing case studies and monitoring their responses. But the process Jesus used was inclusive of many opportunities and approaches.

The *Mobilizing Leaders* process recognizes the need to develop leaders from varied directions and experiences. It takes an educational framework for learning and expands it to include more than just education. The focus of development is centered around three areas: Know, Be, Do. It is a life development process that recognizes that we must know God and become like Christ before we can do ministry. New and emerging leaders often want to advance directly to the doing of ministry, limiting growth, depth, and personal development in the life of a leader.

In conceiving the *Mobilizing Leaders* process, a group of effective church and ministry leaders developed a system around these three areas to ensure that new and emerging leaders would be balanced in their training, equipping, and development:

**KNOW**—What are the issues that future leaders need to know to be effective leaders? What are the integral and important areas that provide a solid foundation for future learning and growth? What knowledge base is required for leadership development?

**BE**—What does a leader need to be to influence groups of people positively toward a specific direction or purpose? What qualities of character do effective leaders possess? How does influential ministry flow out of one's being?

**DO**—What skills are necessary to hone and develop for future leaders? What issues of leadership can be developed as skills to allow a leader greater influence and impact? What are the issues that leaders face regularly that given the right tools, can be effectively identified and directed, rather than sidetrack a ministry?

Effective leadership development process will help future leaders grow in multiple areas in order to have a multiplying impact. The Know-Be-Do grid was developed to help ministry leaders become balanced in their training and equipping, focusing on a large number of issues required from effective leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Three Levels of Ministry Call**

Leaders are developed daily, but not in a day. The importance of process is revealed in the identification of different levels of ministry equipping and experience that allows emerging leaders to grow to the new challenges that face them as they move forward in ministry in responding to the call of God upon their lives.

An emerging leader should not be expected to immediately oversee a youth ministry of 100 students or a Sunday School program with 500 participants. Not only is it difficult to provide supervision to that many people, the challenge is greater when a person also has organizational responsibilities and the need to oversee sponsors, teachers, or other leaders.

*Mobilizing Leaders* has recognized the progressive nature of leadership and the understanding that, when new leaders are capable of being faithful with little, they can then be entrusted with much.

Three levels of leadership have been identified to help individuals discover their call and level of effectiveness in ministry. These are Commissioned Leader, Commissioned Pastor, and Missionary Pastor. It is not expected or assumed that every future leader will aspire and grow to the second or third levels. For the majority, they will move into the first level of *Mobilizing Leaders* and discover this is exactly where they desire to be and where God called them to be. Each level brings greater responsibilities, greater challenges, and a greater sense of call to ministry. For those who may be called to the levels of Commissioned Pastor or Missionary Pastor, all three levels are described here. Progress through the levels is dependent upon completing the requirements for Commissioned Leader.

**COMMISSIONED LEADER** Commissioned Leaders minister under the authority and within the context of the local church. They are usually elders who have sensed a deeper call and are willing to step forward to make a deeper commitment to serving the church in ministry. They may be individuals who aspire to be Deacons or Elders. Commissioned Leaders may have a specific responsibility over an entire ministry area within a church: youth ministry, small groups, Christian education, worship design and team, pastoral care, or any others that would coordinate the needs of the church with the passion of a potential leader.

The Commissioned Leader would serve at a staff level within the local church. It may be as a part-time or full-time staff person, and it may or may not be as a volunteer or include compensation. These issues would be up to the needs of the church and the desires of the Consistory, Pastor, and Commissioned Leader candidate.

Commissioned Leaders are set apart and confirmed for ministry by a local congregation and are invited to begin the process of becoming Commissioned Pastors by applying to the Classis. They are given tools to help them move forward within ministry formation and ministry competency development.

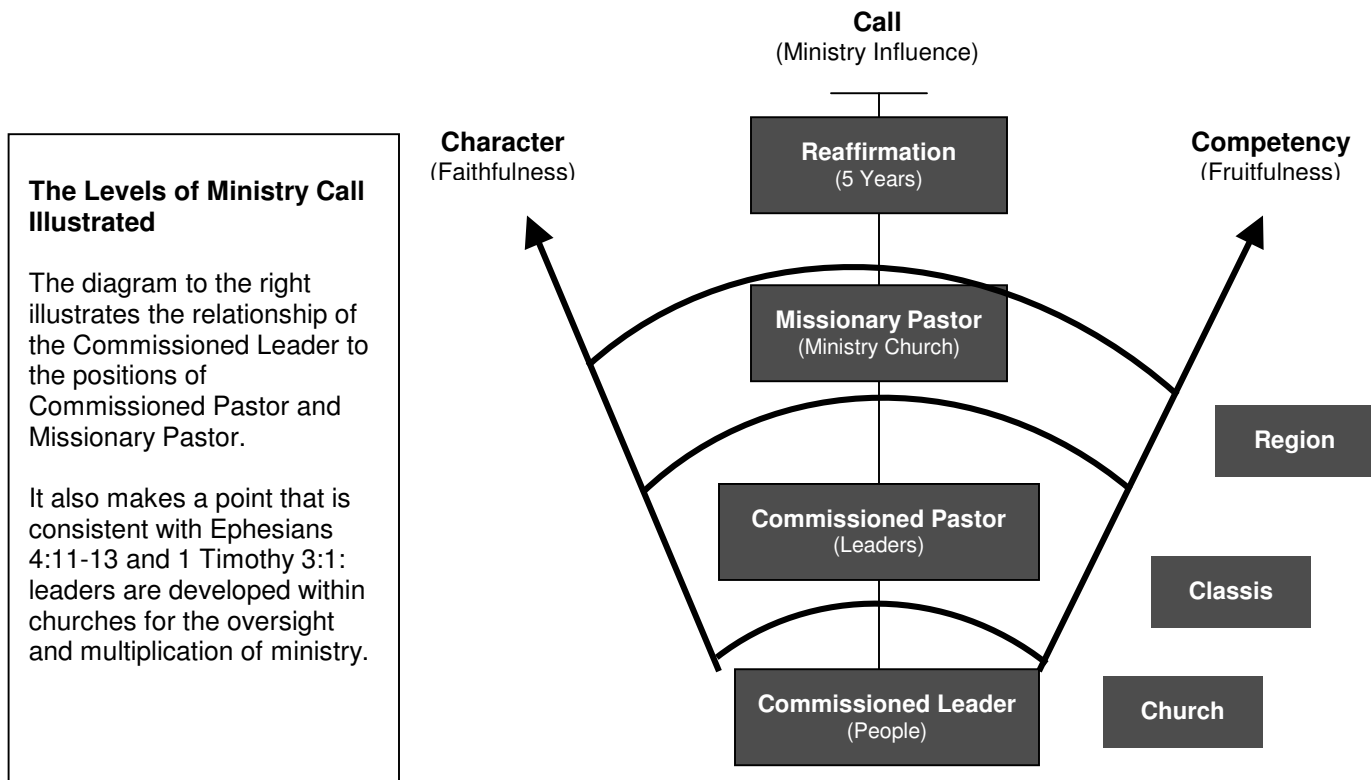
They are coached and mentored by a pastor or other leader who is designated by the Consistory in a discipleship relationship and are evaluated annually. Upon demonstrating competency in designated areas, they would take the Commissioned Leader Assessment. With valid completion of the assessment, they would then be confirmed by their Consistory and congregation as a Commissioned Leader. A re-affirmation of their call would be celebrated and confirmed every five years to discern an on-going call to ministry, continuing learning and growth, and increasing ministry influence and impact.

### Commissioned Leader

<b>Know</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of Affirmation and Call</li> <li>• Old Testament Overview</li> <li>• New Testament Overview</li> <li>• Biblical Content Exam</li> <li>• Discipleship Essentials</li> <li>• Spiritual Gift(s)</li> <li>• Evangelism Style</li> <li>• Leadership Assessment</li> <li>• D-I-S-C Profile</li> </ul>
<b>Be</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical Qualifications of an Elder and Deacon (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, Acts 6)</li> <li>• Character Issues for Future Leaders: Consistently Modeled</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active Disciplemaking</li> <li>• Spiritual Disciplines</li> <li>• Intercession</li> <li>• Using Spiritual Gifts</li> <li>• Evangelism: Able to Share Personal Testimony</li> <li>• Stewardship</li> <li>• Small Group Skills</li> <li>• Team Building</li> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Delegation</li> </ul>

**COMMISSIONED PASTOR** Commissioned Pastors have demonstrated competency as a Commissioned Leader and sense a call of God into an increasing ministry role. They are progressing from leading a group of followers to reproducing and directing emerging leaders. A Commissioned Pastor is a recognized ministry designation within the RCA. Commissioned Pastors serve under the authority and supervision of a Classis. At this level, the Classis takes greater responsibility in the assessment and commissioning of the candidate. The Commissioned Pastor is commissioned by Classis as an elder and is ready to be a solo pastor, lead pastor, church planter with authorization by Classis to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, serve as the presiding officer of consistory, and perform a service of Christian marriage (when approved by Consistory and allowed by state law), to mention a few. A commissioned Pastor is to be evaluated by the Classis every five years to be sure that he or she is learning, growing, and effective in their ministry. Competencies for Commissioned Pastor that are in addition to those of Commissioned Leader are in the appendix at the conclusion of this material.

**MISSIONARY PASTOR** The Mobilizing Leaders process is mission focused. Mission stations need Missionary Pastors. A Missionary Pastor has progressed through the Commissioned Leader and Commissioned Pastor process and now has the opportunity to serve the local church throughout the Great Lakes Region as an Apostolic church leader/planter. Missionary Pastors are trained and equipped to insure that they are increasingly competent in biblical knowledge, ministry skill, and character development. They are evaluated every five years by Classis to confirm that they are learning, growing, and effective in their ministry.



## Competencies for Commissioned Leaders

The *Mobilizing Leaders* approach emphasizes competencies that are necessary for effective church ministry. These competencies are identified and developed while being coached and serving in the local church.

*Competencies, in educational literature, are defined as abilities to perform a skill or demonstrate knowledge to a specific standard. Competencies are normally associated with areas of personal capability that enable people to perform successfully in their jobs by completing task effectively. A competency can be knowledge, attitudes, skills, values, or personal values. Competency can be acquired through talent, experience, or training. Competency comprises the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in employment or service.*

They are developed in-ministry. Learners who are *Mobilizing Leaders* participants are able to provide evidence (documentation) of the accomplishment of these competencies. These evidences include artifacts and attestations. Artifacts include such things as workshop and seminary notes, observation reports, audio/video demonstrations, lesson plans, strategic planning reports, and anecdotal records. Examples of attestations are performance evaluations, letters of recommendation, transcripts, record of employment, certificates, diplomas, licenses, and awards.

The lists that follow provide guidelines for the areas of competency in the *Mobilizing Leaders* approach. They include general and specific leadership competencies, knowledge competencies (know), character competencies (be), and service competencies (do).

### 1. General Competencies

- a. Able to influence – ability to move others to act in a desired way.
- b. Building Relationships – ability to develop and maintain links with believers, team members, peers, the unchurched, marketplace leaders, the needy, and pastors.
- c. Bias for Action – ability to initiate with a tendency to act rather than react.
- d. Problem Solving – ability to consider and resolve problems ranging from small to large, relational and organizational, identifying and addressing root causes that could involve logical as well as conceptual thinking.
- e. Serving Others – ability to meet the needs of others. This competency could range from kindness, dignity, and patience to providing relational, tangible, or spiritual solutions with their best interest at heart.
- f. Creating Accountability – ability to establish accountability in others and enforce it through effective communication and monitoring.
- g. Effective Communication – ability to meaningfully communicate in a variety of settings: one-on-one, small groups, larger groups; committee/board meetings, as well as in written form.
- h. Personal Management – ability to prioritize work, schedules, and communications to expedite responsibilities in a timely fashion, while striving to improve performance through self-development.

### 2. Specific Competencies

- a. Planning and Budgeting – ability to effectively discern and develop short and long term plans, then, to budget and manage resources toward the accomplishment of planned objectives.
- b. Conflict Resolution/Peacemaking – ability to objectively assess the situations and perspectives of others in the midst of conflict, then moving them toward understanding and resolution. This is done to benefit the mission and vision of the local church or Christian organization to reach the Harvest.
- c. Group Dynamics/Meeting Facilitation – ability to effectively plan and execute an agenda and facilitate the forward movement of the group toward the fulfillment of their stated mission.

- d. Presentation Skills – ability to gather, evaluate and meaningfully present appropriate information to an audience so that they understand the key points and are inspired to personal and / or group action.
- e. Beyond these kinds of competencies, the Coach and E3 Team (evaluation team) will create the criteria and list of any additional competencies they deem necessary for the candidates success.

### 3. Knowledge Competencies (Know)

- a. Affirmation of Call
  - 1) God calls us to ministry. For the one being called this is clear and unavoidable.
  - 2) Candidate Goal: God does not call us in isolation. The candidate will know their call is validated when it is affirmed by the Church, and they prove to be an effective leader.
- b. Bible Content Exam
  - 1) As a leader in God's Kingdom the candidate will want to be growing in his or her proficiency of the Bible. The Bible is our only rule of faith and practice, our authority in all matters of faith and rule. We take seriously our responsibility to continually learn how God speaks to us through His Word.
  - 2) Candidate Goal: To be a life long learner of the content and message of God's Word.
- c. Old/New Testament Overview
  - 1) The Bible has a single story to tell by many people in different ways. Spiritual leaders need to know and understand the "Big" picture. Old and New Testament survey studies reveal this incredible story of God's salvation and help the candidate make sense out of the whole of the Bible and each book of the Bible.
  - 2) Candidate Goal: To know with confidence the Biblical story accurately in their own words.
- d. Discipleship Essentials
  - 1) Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 28:16-20, that the role of the disciple is to make disciples. We are in the discipleship multiplication business.
  - 2) Candidate Goal: It is expected that Commissioned Leaders be trained to be disciples so that they, in turn, will train other disciples. The completion of *Discipleship Essentials* (1998) book study with others will begin the process. The candidate will then be expected to successfully disciple others before they are considered a Commissioned Leader.

### 4. Character Competencies (be)

- a. Here the Coach, the E3 Team (evaluation team) and/or the Board of Elders, need to determine whether the candidate meets the 1Timothy 3, Titus 1, and Acts 6 qualifications. This will be reflected in the recommendation forms filled out for the participant.
- b. A Coach may have a thorough knowledge of character matters because he or she knows the candidate. To more accurately understand a candidate's true character, the Coach should go beyond the observations and interactions of just the candidate and dialogue with the spouse, close friends, and those with whom they serve.
- c. The personality profile (D-I-S-C Profile) will be helpful. At the same time, it might be beneficial for the candidate to have a professional conduct an assessment.

### 5. Service Competencies (do)

Only the Coach, along with the E3 Team (evaluation team) can determine the competencies listed here. It is most important to determine the area(s) of deficiency and give the candidate adequate training for greater competence, keeping in mind the *Mobilizing Leaders* process is a balanced approach to leadership – with a strong emphasis on the participant's ability to be productive in Kingdom work. Experiences should be designed in the areas of need that will give the candidate opportunity to learn and demonstrate her or his passions and gifts.

- a. The candidate's "Do" plan should factor in what is believed to be important for her or his leadership development. However, it is recommended that every Commissioned Leader:
  - 1) Serve 4-5 hours per week of supervision for 6 months within the candidate's chosen field of ministry.
  - 2) Develop in writing a six-month ministry plan.
  - 3) Attend one major seminar or conference in the area of his/her ministry focus.

- 4) Develop in writing a work rhythm that demonstrates a healthy balance between work, rest, worship, and play, and working one's plan.
- b. Before a candidate is affirmed as a Commissioned Leader, minimum training experiences within their specialized area should demonstrate leadership competence and ministry effectiveness. The Coach and/or E3 Team (evaluation team) may have other exercises they believe are helpful, keeping in mind what is best for the candidate. Following are suggested examples for a few ministry areas.
- 1) Youth Leader
    - a) Up-front leadership experience in youth ministry
    - b) Plan and execute a youth retreat and/or outreach event
    - c) Has led 1 or 2 people to faith in Jesus, and disciplined them toward maturity.
  - 2) Spiritual Formation/Discipleship
    - a) Demonstrate leadership, show effective communication skills, and disciple other teachers/leaders.
    - b) Write and test a curriculum and/or study guide for a targeted class or group.
    - c) Demonstrate the ability to share Christ with children, youth, adults (especially their target ministry age), and can name at least one or two persons who have come to faith in Christ.
  - 3) Women's/Men's Ministry Leader
    - a) Give specific leadership assignments, be up-front with groups, showing growing communication skills.
    - b) Prepares and executes two of the following:
      - A retreat
      - An outreach event
      - A special holiday event
      - A six week Bible study for one of the groups
      - A plan that shows how to appeal to and recruit men/women for ministry.
  - 4) Worship Leader
    - a) Plan and execute the Sunday music ministry for a 2 month period with guidance from the Worship Leader. This includes rehearsals and leading Sunday worship, and is to be monitored as a means of team building skills.
    - b) Ask the candidate to take an actual relational conflict within the music department and demonstrate his/her ability toward conflict resolution.
    - c) Give the candidate opportunities with his/her ministry team(s) to demonstrate spiritual disciplines – prayer, Bible Study, testimony, etc.

Other Ministry Positions: Create any similar or appropriate assignments in whatever area of ministry focus the candidate is being led to pursue.

### **Three Stages of Involvement**

The person being called to participation in the Commissioned Leader program will normally go through three stages of involvement. Each stage has mechanisms for Consistory-authorized approval.

#### **1. Introduction**

- Information Pack reviewed
- Resource Kit reviewed
- Meeting with the Coordinator of the Commissioned Leader Program for information and orientation
- Completion of an application including receiving Consistory recommendation and colleague recommendation
- Interview and recommendation by program coordinator and assigned consistory representatives

## 2. Participation

- Coach assigned  
*A Coach is viewed as a mentor/trainer/equiper who guides the Commissioned Leader participant through the designated steps in each process.*
- Formation of the E3 team  
*An E3 Team is the designated team made up of the Coach, one or two elders (or an elder and deacon), and a third person from outside the candidate's local church who will serve as a neutral participant in the evaluation process.*
- Discipleship relationship established
- Development approval of a program proposal
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory completed
- D-I-S-C Profile completed
- Leader/Management Inventory completed
- Evangelism Styles Questionnaire completed
- Bible Content Exam completed
- Assessment completed
- Annual Evaluation Report(s) completed
- Portfolio postings demonstrating achievement of competencies completed
- Sign-offs in all competency areas by Coach and E3 team  
*Sign-offs are competency measurements. When a candidate completes the Commissioned Leader requirements, the Coach and E3 Team will make a determination whether the participant meets the sign-off criteria.*

## 3. Completion

- Consideration given to applying for admission at the Commissioned Pastor level
- Interview and recommendation or advice for recommendation to the office of Deacon or Elder
- Installation by the Consistory and congregation to the position of Commissioned Leader
- Ongoing coaching and accountability to designated leaders

## Conclusion

This Information Pack has described the approach of Fifth Reformed Church for *Mobilizing Leaders for Mission and Ministry*. The plan leads to appointment as a Commissioned Leader and is also an avenue into the Commissioned Pastor program. Individuals are invited to consider it prayerfully as a means of moving toward a new level of commitment and service. For more information about this program, please contact Burt Braunius who is the Commissioned Leader Coordinator: phone – 616-245-9247 or [burt@braunius.org](mailto:burt@braunius.org).

## APPENDIX

### Competencies for Commissioned Pastors

The following list of competencies are intended to build upon the competencies in the Commissioned Leaders program. As with Commissioned Leader competencies, they are arranged into the areas of Knowledge (know), Character (be), and Service (do). Some of these may be incorporated into a Commissioned Leaders plan where it will contribute to her or his learning goals.

#### 1. Knowledge (Know)

##### i. Reformed Theology/Doctrine

1. We are “Reformed” Christians. While this doesn’t make us better than Christians with another view, it does set us apart in our understanding of the Bible and the Christian faith. Leaders within the Reformed Tradition need to understand who we are and why we believe the way we do.
2. Candidate Goal: To know, understand, and be able to articulate what it means to be Reformed and constantly reforming.

##### ii. Biblical Interpretation

1. Note: This course has been added and, therefore, will not be found in the “Know” section of the Commissioned Pastor. However, the Biblical Interpretation booklet is included in the *Mobilizing Leader Resource Kit*.
2. Knowing the content of the Bible is one thing; being able to understand and interpret it is another. Spiritual leaders have the wisdom and discernment to know the content of the Bible and are able to make an accurate interpretation and application.
3. Candidate Goal: The goal is to increasingly understand the meaning of God’s Word and be able to communicate it with confidence and clarity.

##### iii. Reformed Church Creeds & Standards

1. The Reformed Church in America is both creedal and confessional. We have three accepted doctrinal standards – The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dordt, and The Heidelberg Catechism. We embrace three creeds: The Apostles’, Nicene, and Athenasian. Knowledge and understanding of these historic documents gives one an appreciation of history and our faith.
2. Candidate Goal: To demonstrate a working knowledge and appreciation of these historic documents, and to communicate the content through teaching, preaching, and life itself.

##### iv. RCA Polity and Book of Church Order

1. The RCA believes it is important that we be orderly in the way we conduct the “business” of the church. Church polity, as offered in the Book of Church Order, helps give boundaries to our congregational life. They are not laws, but rather, another compass giving direction in managing our business in a responsible way.
2. Candidate Goal: To know and understand the spirit of the BCO/RCA polity so that they are able to utilize it as a resource and guide in leading the congregation.

##### v. The Sacraments

1. We acknowledge two sacraments as biblical – Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also referred to as Holy Communion and the Holy Eucharist). There are considerable differences of opinion and ideas about the meaning and practices of these two sacraments. Since the candidate will be responsible for their administration, he or she will want to be biblically prepared to know and defend his or her position.
2. Candidate Goal: To be proficient in her or his understanding of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper from a biblical point of view, and to know how to administer them in a way that is consistent with Reformed teaching and in a God-honoring way.

- vi. Church History
  - 1. When we understand our historical roots we are better prepared to make sense out of the present and lean into the future with hope. The truth be known, we cannot understand God's action in the present unless we understand His action in the past. History provides a wonderful connection to God's work among the Saints of the past.
  - 2. Candidate Goal: To not only know important historical names and dates, but to understand history in a way that helps one appreciate our Christian heritage, to be able to discern trends and the implication of these trends on the present and future.
- vii. Communication 101
  - 1. Communication is our business. Christian leaders do whatever it takes to become fluent and credible communicators.
  - 2. Candidate Goal: To take as many courses and do whatever is necessary to insure the message one communicates is delivered with precision, clarity and effectiveness. It must be heard, understood and applied in the lives of listeners.
- viii. Ministry 101
  - 1. Ministry 101 is a designation for hands-on work in the local church or the organization the candidate has targeted for ministry. Coaches will need to determine what is necessary to give the candidate both knowledge of and involvement in ministry.
  - 2. Keep in mind that we are attempting to do ministry in a Postmodern world. If we are to be effective as leaders, we are obligated to understand both Modern and Postmodern worldviews. Here are a few Internet sources to help you with this subject:
    - a. [www.aquachurch.com](http://www.aquachurch.com)
    - b. [www.futurechurch.net](http://www.futurechurch.net)
    - c. [www.alternativeworship.org](http://www.alternativeworship.org)
    - d. [www.vintagefaith.com](http://www.vintagefaith.com)
    - e. [www.newchurches.com/postmodernism](http://www.newchurches.com/postmodernism)
  - 3. Candidate Goal: Whatever the chosen focus of ministry, seek opportunities to get inside every facet of it. Meet with key people to learn what is important, and what is not important. Observe work rhythms, time management, and the like. The candidate is to observe and get involved in anything and everything that has the potential of making him or her a more effective leader. Most importantly, consult with leaders who understand modern and postmodern worldviews.
- ix. Navigating Change
  - 1. Erwin McManus in his book, *The Unstoppable Force* (2001), reminds us that we serve a changeless God of change. From the moment of our conversion until we draw our last breath on earth, we are expected to become more Christ-like.
  - 2. We live in a world of speed, blur, and flux. It is increasingly challenging to figure out how to do church and ministry in our world of rapid change. The Church needs to be on the cutting edge of adjusting to change. Our faith standards and principles don't change, but how we apply them in our world is in constant flux.
  - 3. Candidate Goal: The challenge is to become a change-agent for Christ and His Church in the midst of a rapidly changing world. This means the candidate is to be knowledgeable of sociology (culture/world around us) and theology in order to help people and the congregation make appropriate changes in the way they live and communicate their faith in the world.

## 2. Character (be)

- i. The matter of character cannot be compromised. The quest is for leaders who demonstrate integrity, honesty, are morally and ethically above reproach, not prone to anger, and willing to offer forgiveness, etc. The accurate determination of the candidate's physical, emotional, and spiritual qualifications for ministry cannot be minimized. For example, if there are "red flags" it is only fair to the candidate and the Church that these be carefully assessed and then determined by the Church, E3-Team, and/or the Board of Elders whether the candidate should be encouraged to go further in

the process. This deserves more than personal observation or opinion. It may require careful testing by a competent outside source(s) to make the final determination.

## II. Approaches for the “BE” Qualities

Here are some examples of ways to help the candidate. These are not meant to be exhaustive. You may have alternative exercises more helpful than the ones offered below. Do what is best for the candidate.

1. Reproducing character qualities in others: The Coach or E3 Team has a face-to-face with the candidate and 3 to 4 people the candidate has discipled, coached, or mentored to discuss the reproduction of character qualities in them.
2. What method(s) did you use to foster the reproduction of character qualities?
3. What instrument(s) did you use to measure the development of these character qualities?
4. What is success? How do you measure the success of a healthy person? Note: This process might best be accomplished in the middle or toward the end of the CP process.)
5. Self/Personality Assessment –Two Options:
6. Request the candidate to write a paper that offers an assessment of his/her personality, based on Personal Profiles (*Mobilizing Leaders Resource Kit*, orange folder 4), and the book *Please Understand Me II* (Keirse). The Coach or E3 Team reviews the paper with the candidate to determine whether what the candidate wrote and what the Coach or E3 Team knows about the candidate is a match. This option is suitable if the Coach and/or E3 Team is certain the candidate is healthy.
7. The Coach or E3 Team may want to meet the candidate along with a professional and two other people who are well acquainted with him/her for an open-ended dialogue. First the candidate offers his/her prepared personality assessment. Then the dialogue revolves around the candidates self assessment and what the rest of the group knows to be reality.
8. Spiritual Discernment: The Coach and/or E3 Team, either the writing or in a face-to-face gathering, gives the candidate two situations that require spiritual discernment and asks how he/she would handle the situation. Also, it might be equally helpful to gather 3 to 4 people with whom the candidate has worked and ask for examples observed of his/her capacity to be spiritually discerning.
9. Seek insight from the candidate regarding his/her battle with Satan in the areas of character and ministry. Again, this will give them an opportunity to show their vulnerability and growth.

## 3. Service (do)

It is recommended that every Commissioned Pastor:

- I. Serve 6-10 hour per week for 6 months of a supervised ministry with a lead pastor or church planter (if candidate is planting a church)
- II. Attends seminars/conferences beneficial to their leadership needs.
- III. Prepares in written form a long-range plan of the ministry of his/her dreams.
- IV. Develops in writing a work rhythm that demonstrates a healthy balance between work, rest, worship, play and works the plan.
- V. Conducts an evangelism outreach event/experience and can identify 3-4 people who have come to faith in Christ because of his/her evangelism efforts in the past three years.

Acknowledgement: This information pack was compiled by Burt Braunius ([burt@braunius.org](mailto:burt@braunius.org)) who has freely copied and adapted materials from RCA/Far West Region’s leadership development materials. Tom De Vries developed the *Mobilizing Leaders* process. Karl Overbeek put together the Coach’s Guide. For more information about the original materials, contact Far West Region/RCA: phone: 800-231-8292, web site: [www.rcawest.org](http://www.rcawest.org), email: [staff@rcawest.org](mailto:staff@rcawest.org).