



Reformed Leadership Initiative

A two-year initiative funded by a generous grant from the DeVos Foundation, dedicated to helping the CRC and RCA denominations create the foundation for a collaborative, multi-faceted leadership development network for all levels of the church and kingdom.

Guiding Principles

For Congregational Leadership Learning Networks

Spirit-Led

Grounded in scripture, rooted in prayer, and guided by the Triune God, each congregation engages in the opportunities and challenges to which the Holy Spirit leads them.

Collaborative

Congregations learn with and from one another, in community, over an extended period of time; co-leaders from the CRC and RCA cultivate learning communities and leverage their strengths; the denominations offer support as needed.

Contextualized

Acknowledging that every context is unique, that each congregation has different strengths and gifts, and that the role that God is asking each congregation to play within the broader mission of God in the world is varied and established by God, each congregation discerns its own opportunity for growth; the equipping process is shaped to each congregation's unique mission.

Reproducible

Processes, practices, and skills learned and experienced within Congregational Leadership Learning Networks are reproduced in other networks and contexts for congregational transformation; they are also incorporated into the practices and processes of participating congregations.

How does the initiative work?

RLI is a grassroots initiative overseen by staff from the CRC and RCA.

Unlike many traditional denominational programs, this initiative does not establish specific "program goals" for participating churches.

Instead, participating co-leaders gather at regular intervals to lead regional **Congregational Leadership Learning Networks (CLLNs)** to share tools and models for leadership development in an atmosphere of trust, creativity, accountability, and innovation.

Back at their home congregations, **Congregational Leadership Equipping Teams (CLET)** transfer learnings and best practices into actionable plans for that congregation.

The model is self-sustaining. Participants in a CLET are exposed to the RLI leadership model, expanding the reach to more potential leaders.

Increasing Local Impact

Because of its flexibility and focus on grassroots learnings, learning networks would be effective on a regional level. Piloting this model as a classis initiative would allow for greater hands-on support to the local churches involved.

Our vision for the future: the next generation of leadership

This initiative offers a grassroots model for leadership growth. But we're not looking to develop just any kind of leader. We're growing the next generation of leaders to be:

- **Collaborative** with their congregations
- **Open** to new ideas and to the Holy Spirit
- Willing to **experiment**
- **Engaged** and actively participating in the **local** and **global** church
- **Passionate** about making an impact
- Enthusiastic to **share** learnings and resources with other congregations
- **Accountable** to each other and to the goals they set

Key Learnings for the future

The process is more important than a "product"

We planned to create shared resources but networks found helpful existing resources, and focused on the process for leadership growth.

Things take time

It's important not to rush the discernment process, which takes a lot of time! Ample time is also needed for recruiting, events, and meetings.

Relational trust is key for collaborative learning

The bond between co-leaders and with coaches provided a strong foundation for collaborative learning to be carried forward.

Regional events were successful for sharing the vision

The Taste & See and Equipping & Launch events provided needed information, and were critical for setting a collaborative tone.

Prayer guides the process

Prayer was the vehicle for developing cultural competence, and celebrating the work of the Holy Spirit fostered togetherness.

"Nothing imposed" promotes authentic engagement

Each network was able to contextualize learnings and develop processes and projects based on their needs and circumstances.