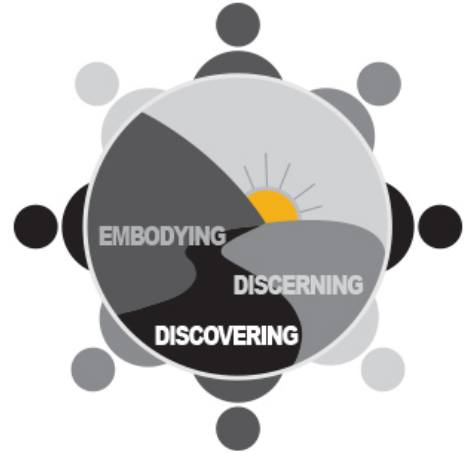


TRANSFORMING THE JUDICATORY

Vision and planning toward a missional community of communities

For practical purposes all mid-council/judicatory bodies are caught up in the major transitions required to respond to changed and changing circumstances in the North American context.

One of the ways to address these challenges and opportunities is to engage in an intentional time of learning, discerning and planning. The goal is to become clearer about identity and calling and to discover more fruitful and faithful ways to live it out in the contemporary context.



Foundational Assumptions:

Several assumptions about the church, the mission of judicatory bodies, and the nature of a transformation process are instructive:

- **A judicatory is more than an organization.** It is communities of believers who taken collectively are the body of Christ together in that region.
- An important biblical image that informs church life is **covenant**. We cannot be the church without being meaningfully connected with one another. This includes not only sharing life within a congregation but also congregations living in relationship with other congregations. Ultimately we are not autonomous; we are members one of another (Eph.4:25).
- Visioning and planning in the 21st century must lead to **a new missionary encounter of the gospel with the current culture**. The current context presents the transformation opportunity -- to help one another learn and live into new ways of perceiving, new ways of thinking, and new ways of behaving as a missional church. The process is not a mere restructuring, but seeks to engage judicatory leaders, members, and congregations on levels that are biblical, spiritual, relational, contextual, and personal. Judicatory transformation is the church's discipleship response to its calling to proclaim and embody Christ in new, changing and challenging circumstances.
- This is **"mission possible!"** Because faith communities taken collectively are the Body of Christ across an area, transforming the judicatory in spite of obstacles is not impossible. The church today both locally and regionally is on a journey, a learning journey. The test will be how much a judicatory body is able to learn to become what it is called to be as the people of God, the body of Christ, the communion of the Holy Spirit for the sake of God's mission in the world.

What Transforming the Judicatory involves:

The mid-council/judicatory and all its congregations and units are supported to discern God's vision and more faithfully to engage the missionary context in which they exist. You can expect to --

- Discover the contours of your mission territory - the shared context of your congregations.
- Discern as a mid-council/judicatory community God's vision of what you are called to be and do.
- Clarify priorities, structure and resources to carry out your discerned mission.
- Cultivate Christian practices that form and build up congregations and leaders in community with one another.
- Strengthen relationships, sharing gifts and testimony across boundaries of a diverse church family.

Judicatory visioning leads to --

- Increased trust and strengthened relationships.
- Sharing more fully the gifts with one another that build up our common life in Christ.
- Fresh clarity about what it means to be the regional church in this time and place.
- Claiming the unique contours and implications of our shared ministry context.
- Clear priorities that flow from a discerned shared vision.
- Vision-led life and structures.
- Renewed practices that form and build up the church locally and regionally.
- Churches and leaders working more effectively "side by side" for the sake of the Gospel.
(Philippians 1:27)

To learn more --

Ask a question or begin a conversation. Find out how a Center consultant can support mid-governing body hopes, needs, or transformation goals.

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