



## Vision, Culture & Growth of Redeemer

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*Growth & Gospel Centrality*

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*Redeemer's Current & Future Vision*

### **Vision or Mission Statement:**

***We are a community that is being changed by the gospel.***

\*We desire to be guided and rooted in the gospel. How that manifests itself in our community is that we will emphasize these core principles in worship, life groups, committees & 1-1 relationships: Redemption (A redeemed past story), Resurrection (A secure future), Reconciliation (unity with others because of the mercy and justice of Christ), Rest (the gospel brings the answer to our anxiety).

### **Guiding Principles & Values**

1. *Redemption* ( Story driven—scripture's story, congregation's story, & individual's story reveal that God has always been working his redeeming love in Jesus)
2. *Resurrection* (Hope/not fear driven—we believe in the resurrection of body and renewal of the whole world & all things are working towards that end. This is seen in the Resurrection of Jesus)
3. *Reconciliation* (Our reconciliation back to God through Jesus informs and demands that we work towards reconciliation with one another. We seek to be a community where we have a framework for hurting and healing in our extension of justice and mercy for each other and those outside the church)
4. *Rest* (We believe that to know Christ means we experience real rest in the present because our past stories have been redeemed & our future is secure. Therefore, Jesus is where we find our true rest.)

## What we do

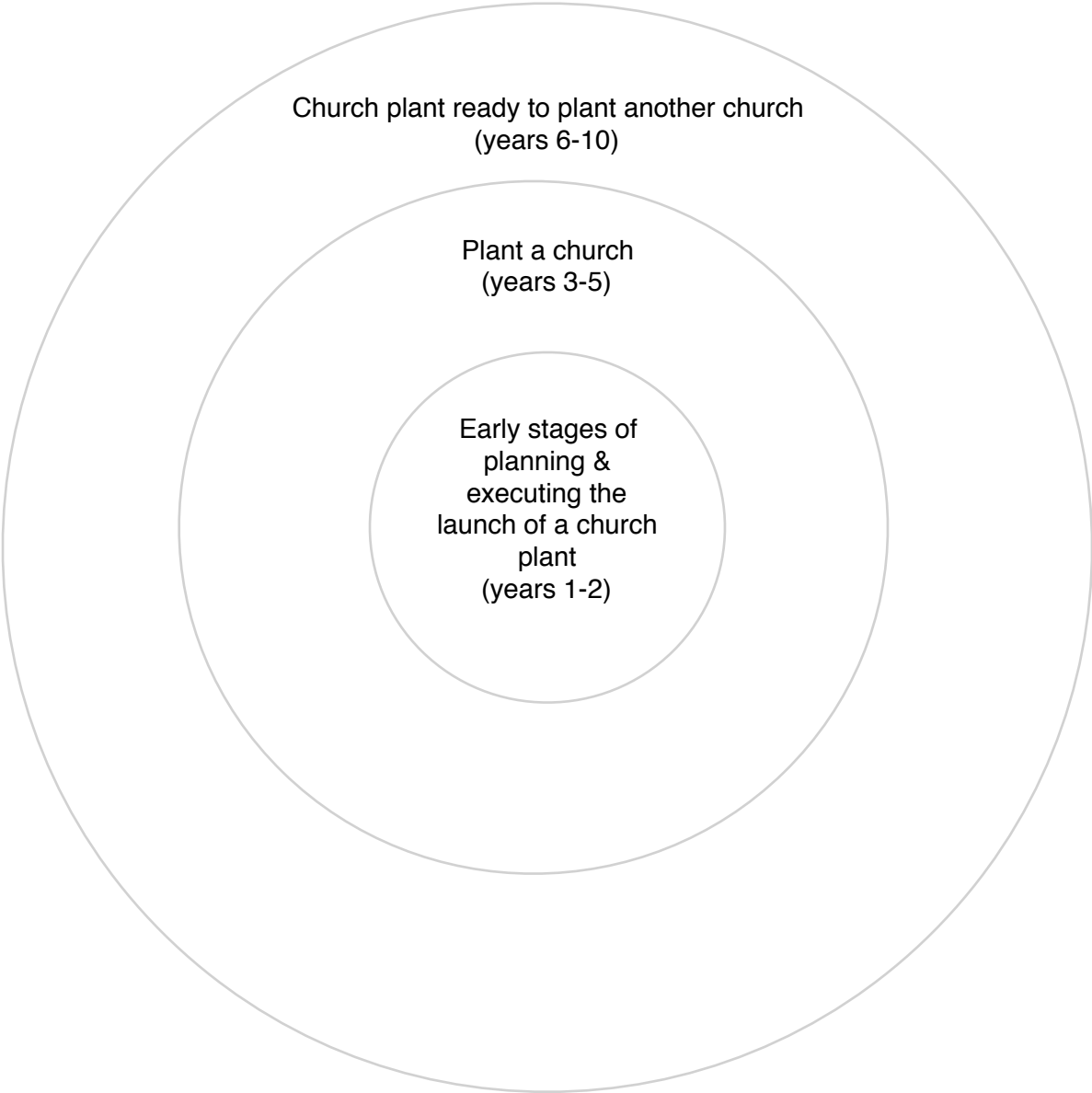
This spiritual community embodies these transcendent/eternal realities revealed in scripture primarily through worship, life groups/small groups, and 1-1 relationships. When we honor the past, and have hope in the future, we can intimately know Christ and offer His reconciling rest to others in the present in each sphere of the internal or external community. Some of the key ways we are currently seeking to implement this vision:

1. Re-launch of life groups in the fall
2. Implementation of more robust and structured mentorship avenues through 1-1 relationships and focus groups.
3. More inclusion of women's leadership and gifting at the session level for counsel in vision and pastoral care.
4. Rotating new deacons and elders into leadership positions.
5. Steps toward internal health & growth for the purpose of also outward growth into the community. This may included: two morning services, sale of property (completed), evening service (attempted), new hires (Marketing & communication administrator, 4th & 5th grade ministry assistant, Children's Ministry Coordinator), Sunday School, & Children's ministry.
  - a. Some of the metrics we are using to asses when we would go to two morning services would include but aren't limited to:
    1. A sustained 6 month period where in-person attendance for worship exceeds 180 people.
    2. Capacity for staff to execute both services well (musicians, pastors, and other staff's limitations will factor into this decision.
    3. Finances (Do we have enough money in the budget to do two services with excellence?)
6. Pray for the Spirit's work in our community at Redeemer and in the city of Lincoln.
7. Various Bible study and social options for community connection and growth.
8. We are not currently looking to leave our current space, but we are open to options that God, in His providence, might present to us if we continue to grow.

## Overarching Extensive Growth Goal

*A church planting church*—We want to plant a church or help plant a church that's healthy enough to plant another church by 2030. Why? So more people come to believe in Jesus and are saved by the gospel through Redeemer and/or sister churches.

**Redeemer 10 Year Vision Plan**



The three primary good desires that congregants are looking for in a local church:

- 1. Intimate community (closeness & knowness)—Pastor
  - 2. Structure & organizational efficiency—Manager
  - 3. Excellent preaching and teaching—Preacher
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- The difference between filling a need and trying to change a culture: If you are gifted in structure & organizationally savvy but you enjoy Redeemer even though that's where we are "the weakest," you will have to weigh what you or your particular family needs in this season through what you value most. If communal intimacy is higher on your list than structure & organizational efficiency, Redeemer might be a great place for you. If structure and having high managerial details implemented and codified is important to you (and there's no shame on that for you or for our church), Redeemer might currently be a struggle for you. This doesn't mean we will neglect to improve structurally but some of our culture is intentionally loose so that the church and staff are free to disciple & evangelize, by growing inward as well as reaching outward into the wider community of Lincoln. Where leadership comes in (not the TEs but ruling elders & deacons) is that the congregation chooses leaders to fill in the gaps with their particular gifts and character asking these deacons and elders to help them DO the work of ministry. Elders function, in some ways, as gatekeepers of the culture of the community as well as bringing their competencies to bear for the sake of building up the body.
    - For example: Phil Erdman. Super structured. Was the youngest senator in the state of NE. We think very differently in some ways and the most common phrase I've heard him use is "well, from a practical stand point..." He is incredibly organized, could write policies in his sleep, but what he loves most about Redeemer is the gospel. Not saying that other churches aren't emphasizing "the gospel" but he and Courtney love the way the gospel is expressed in our community and, therefore, I'm sure there are frustrations that Redeemer isn't better at what comes naturally to him but Phil is a great example of deploying his gifts without trying to change a culture.
  - Our tendency whenever we are placed in positions of leadership is to think, "Why isn't everyone like me, why isn't everyone seeing this??" Those who are nominated for leadership must become self-aware enough to know their natural bent. Are you more

Sunday, October 24, 2021

comfortable inside or outside the church? We are not seeking to take leaders away from their natural bent. The elder or deacon that sees the value of Christians deeply involved in the world outside the church will encourage those inside the church to be engaged in the world. Simultaneously, elders and deacons who are very gifted and *at their best* inside the institutional church should help those outside the church see the need and necessity to engage in the local church. The leader comes alongside with the gifts God has given them, and shepherds people by equipping them in a particular spiritual muscle where they (the sheep inside or outside the fold) might be weak or need growth. Purpose: to help the entire church grow up into Christ. The ability to see both/and is being self-aware enough and rooted in the gospel enough to know who you are without making your preference or natural bent a dogma for everyone. A leader sees the high value in those that are very different than they are, especially those within the household of God. This approach to leadership always displays itself in diversity, humility, joy, laughter, curiosity, patience, and a willingness to adapt. When stuck in an either/or mindset, we often times find homogeneity, seriousness, rigidity, constant concern, frustration, fear, and anxiety. ***Humble, relational, and Biblical*** should be the three traits that shine in leaders at Redeemer.

- How we should think & act when we locate an area where our entire church needs to grow? Posture: “Maybe God has allowed me to see this area that needs a lot of work and I’m called to spearhead it without expecting anything in return for the sake of the whole body?” And if you know how slow change happens in your life, compound that in the church by 200. The process of growing takes tons of time and if we continue to grow in our church we are at one of the hardest and most challenging seasons in the life of any church—at the precipice of 200—because out of necessity, when you move towards structure, you will lose some of the intimacy that a community in the early years could maintain. At a certain growth stage, it becomes impossible to know everyone and meet everyone’s needs. There’s a significant loss there for the founding members and part of the reason why we continue to plant churches is because if you like that ground breaking beginning of a church where the cost is high in terms of risk, one of the pay offs is when you’re in that mission with others it forms very deep bonds with our brothers and sisters.

Keller quotes on church size dynamics:

“The smaller church by its nature gives immature, outspoken, opinionated, and broken members a significant degree of power over the whole body. Since everyone knows everyone else, when members of a family or small group express strong opposition to the direction set by the pastor and leaders, their misery can hold the whole congregation hostage. If they threaten to leave, the majority of people will urge

Sunday, October 24, 2021

the leaders to desist in their project. It is extremely difficult to get complete consensus about programs and direction in a group of 50–150 people, especially in today’s diverse, fragmented society, and yet smaller churches have an unwritten rule that for any new initiative to be implemented nearly everyone must be happy with it. Leaders of small churches must be brave enough to lead and to confront immature members, in spite of the unpleasantness involved.”

#### SHIFTING LAY-STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

“On the one hand, the larger the church the more decision making falls to the staff rather than to the whole membership or even the lay leaders. The elders or board must increasingly deal with only top-level, big-picture issues. This means the larger the church, the more decision making is pushed up toward the staff and away from the congregation and lay leaders. Needless to say, many laypeople feel extremely uncomfortable with this.

On the other hand, the larger the church, the more the basic pastoral ministry such as hospital visits, discipling, oversight of Christian growth, and counseling is done by lay leaders rather than by the professional ministers.

Generally, in small churches policy is decided by many and ministry is done by a few, while in the large church ministry is done by many and policy is decided by a few.”

#### INCREASING REDUNDANCY OF COMMUNICATION

“The larger the church, the better communication has to be. Without multiple forms and repeated messages, people will feel left out and complain, ‘I wasn’t told about it.’ You know you’ve crossed into a higher size category when such complaints become constant. Informal communication networks (pulpit announcements, newsletter notices, and word of mouth) are insufficient to reach everyone. More lead time is necessary to communicate well.”

“The larger the church, the more it is subject to frequent and sudden change. Why?

First, smaller churches tend to have little turnover: individual members feel powerful and necessary and so they stay put.

Second, the larger the church, the more power for decision making moves away from the whole congregation to the leaders and staff. Too much is going on for the congregation or the board or eventually even the staff to make all the decisions as a group. As decision-making power comes into the hands of individual staff or volunteer leaders, change happens more quickly. Decisions can be made expeditiously without everyone signing on.

Further, the larger the church, the more complex it is and therefore the more schedules, events, and programs there are to change.”

## LOSING MEMBERS BECAUSE OF CHANGES

“The larger the church, the more it loses members because of changes. Why? Smaller churches seek at all costs to avoid losing members. As a result, certain individuals and small groups often come to exercise power dis-proportionate to their numbers. If a change were made, someone invariably would experience it as a loss, and since the smaller church has a great fear of conflict, it usually will not institute a change that might result in lost members. Thus smaller churches tend to have a more stable membership than large churches do.

In larger churches small groups and individual members have far less ability to exert power or resist changes they dislike. And (as noted previously) since larger churches undergo constant change, they regularly lose members because ‘It’s too big now’ or ‘I can’t see the pastor anymore’ or ‘We don’t pray spontaneously any- more in church.’ Leaders of churches that grow large are more willing to lose members who disagree with procedures or the philosophy of ministry.

*Keller: “While the mission of the institutional church is to preach the Word and produce disciples, the church must disciple Christians in such a way that they live justly and integrate their faith with their work. So the church doesn’t directly change culture, but it disciplines and supports people who do. Another balance has to do with society’s cultural institutions. Rather than taking them over, or avoiding them as a corrupting influence, or treating them with indifference—Christians are to be a faithful presence within them.”*

Below are a few principles that a vision committee put forward when Redeemer first planted. We would like to continue and re-engage in these principles:

- ·The Gospel is central to everything Redeemer.
- ·The Gospel is relevant and consequential to both the Christian AND the Non-Christian, the Church AND the City/Culture.
- ·We want to see both Redeemer people and Lincoln (including, of course, the people of Lincoln) forever changed by Jesus.
  
- Our measure of success is not church and budget size. Rather, it is gospel growth (in and through people) and kingdom impact . . . neither of which we will be able to really measure until we are on the other side of glory and can see what is/was lasting. Our outward focus is not to win Redeemer converts but to see God redeem people and culture . . . motivated by a love for our neighbors and our city . . . and not to grow our particular tribe. Church size and budget will likely grow as a “natural” consequence of all the rest . . . but if not, that’s okay.
  
- ·We want to be generous with our resources, people, time, talent, etc.
- ·We don’t want to be a “program” oriented church. We would rather see

Sunday, October 24, 2021

people equipped and sent out into their spheres of influence and affect change.

- If we want to be effective in the outward-focused aspects of Redeemer's vision, it is essential that we are very good at equipping/discipling, developing our people internally.

