The Redemptive Covenant We Share

The ***Redemptive Works*** framework seeks to launch new ambitions that link members, staff, and constituencies with the needs before you. It does so through appreciative inquiry at the outset that affirms your deepest commitments, invites the insights of participants along the way, and sustains engagement as the element that keeps redemptive planning moving ahead.

Since the planning goals and the means to get there must reflect distinctly Christian virtues[1], the following covenant both defines the work and its unique redemptive characteristics.

A Redemptive Covenant

Between [Name of Church or Christian Organization] and
Dr. David Hietala, for Redemptive Works
Date: [Date]

Preamble

Grace is not only in what we believe; it is what we seek to practice. This covenant describes a season of work in which [Organization] ("the Organization") and Dr. David Hietala of Redemptive Works ("the Consultant") walk together toward new ambitions and ways of working that reflect the grace that we both proclaim.

No claim of perfection is promised in the here-and-now. We do, however, promise to make room for redemptive practices: showing visible glimpses of grace, compassion, dignity, truth, humility, sacrifice, and restorative hope in the small and large efforts that the Organization influences and directs.

This covenant is first a statement of shared purpose and mutual care. The practical and financial terms that accompany it are set out in Part 7 and in a subsequent, specific formal engagement agreement the parties will sign prior to beginning shared work.

[1] Identified as based in Scriptural guidance, laced in prayer.

1. Our Starting Posture: Attentive Before Prescriptive

The Consultant will begin with what is really there, not with a prepared answer. Every organization has a story, a culture, deep commitments, and people whose experiences deserve careful attention.

We hold three convictions from the start:

- **Some things should never change.** The Organization names its confessional foundations and unwavering commitments, and the Consultant will treat them as the horizon for all that follows.
- **Some things can change.** Habits, structures, and rhythms may be revised when doing so serves the organization's purpose and people.
- **Some things must change.** Where people are unseen, unheard, or hurt, even by well-intended habits, the Organization must be willing to name it and respond appropriately.

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2. The Six Steps and the Redemptive Ambitions They Serve

Each step below pairs the work to be done with the redemptive ambition it carries. The steps are a path, not a formula; the Organization and the Consultant may adjust their pace and order by mutual agreement.

Step 1: Listen & Discern

The work: Beginning from shared appreciation, the Consultant and the Organization's leaders identify the unshakeable foundations and deepest convictions that define who the Organization is. This is the starting place and horizon for every later step.

The Consultant will: listen deeply; gather the Organization's story, history, and commitments; and offer a brief written reflection of what was heard for the Organization to confirm or correct.

The Organization will: make leaders and members available, speak candidly about its story, and name what must be protected.

Redemptive ambition: *To be known truthfully and honored for what we are*. Seeking to ground all future change in gratitude for what is already faithful.

Signs of grace: Leaders recognize themselves in the reflection; the people's story is told with dignity; the foundations are clearly named.

Step 2: Look Inside

The work: The Consultant brings survey and focus group expertise so the Organization can see clearly what its own people feel, see working, and sense could be enhanced.

The Consultant will: design and conduct surveys and focus groups; protect participants' confidentiality; and return a clear, honest account across the many voices, including the quiet and dissenting ones.

The Organization will: invite a wide and genuine range of participants, assure people they may speak freely, and receive the findings without retaliation or defensiveness.

Redemptive ambition: *That no one inside our walls is unseen or unheard.* We seek to hear those who are usually hard to hear.

Signs of grace: People say they were heard; difficult truths are acknowledged; participation reflects the whole community, not just its loudest members.

Step 3: Look Outside

The work: The calling to serve reaches beyond the Organization's own members and staff. When appropriate, the Consultant helps suggest outside voices for conversation, such as neighbors, partners, and those the Organization hopes to serve, so that what is missing but central can come into view.

The Consultant will: recommend which outside voices to seek, conduct the listen sessions respectfully, and report what was learned.

The Organization will: approve who is approached and how, and be willing to hear things it did not expect.

Redemptive ambition: *To see and serve our neighbors as Christ sees them.* We seek relationships rooted in dignity and not in our own needs.

Signs of grace: Outside voices are treated as persons created in the image of God, not as data or prospects; the Organization is surprised, humbled, or stirred by what it hears.

Step 4: What's Emerging?

The work: From steps 1-3, the Consultant brings a picture of what is emerging: internal areas of focus and possible external needs. This is a time of exploration and testing. Should the Organization take up a new internal need? Pursue an effort that touches those outside? Think further? Gather more information?

The Consultant will: present the emerging picture without pressing a conclusion, frame possible options and their tradeoffs, and facilitate conversation about them.

The Organization will: deliberate through its own channels and decide what to explore further and what to set aside.

Redemptive ambition: *To discern together rather than decide alone; seeking wisdom that belongs to the whole body.*

Signs of grace: Options are weighed openly; the Organization can say why it chose what it chose; some ideas are rightly laid aside.

Step 5: Adopt & Develop

The work: From the emerging possibilities and deep knowledge of who the Organization is, the Consultant helps it consider new ambitions to adopt and develop into redemptive practices. The needed approvals are also sought in this step, with the new efforts designed so that the tasking itself is redemptive, as well as the outcomes hoped for, asking the question, "Is the way we do this as faithful as what we hope to achieve?"

The Consultant will: help articulate each chosen ambition, with assistance given in developing specific motions, if needed, for organization approval.

The Organization will: formally adopt the ambitions it chooses, share this information, and invite people and resources into these efforts.

Redemptive ambition: *To make our methods as redemptive as our goals*. We seek to care equally for those doing the work and those it serves.

Signs of grace: New roles are well-defined and considerate; workloads are fair; the plan can be described in terms of grace.

Step 6: Launch & Tend

The work: The Consultant walks with the Organization as new ambitions begin—introducing them as faithful additions alongside what is already valued, reading early redemptive signals together, and making space for timely conversations and check-ins that guide in-process adaptations so that important efforts sustain early momentum.

The Consultant will: be present (to the extent desired) through the launch period, help the Organization read early relational and practical signals, guide timely conversations and check-ins, and recommend thoughtful in-process adaptations.

The Organization will: launch in good faith, honor past faithfulness while tending to the human side of new ambitions, observe and report honestly what it sees and experiences, and make graceful adjustments where needed.

Redemptive ambition: To let grace become visible in ordinary practice. We seek glimpses of "His will being done on earth as it is in heaven," making changes as needed, offering thanksgiving, and walking together in humility.

Signs of grace: People experience the new ambitions as genuine care; early missteps are named and mended without blame through timely conversations, check-ins, and adaptations; the Organization tends and carries forward the practice naturally without needing the Consultant.

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3. Commitments of the Consultant

Dr. Hietala covenants to:

1. **Listen before advising**, and never present a prescription as though it were a finding.
2. **Honor the Organization's foundations**, treating its confessional and theological commitments as given, not as obstacles.
3. **Tell the truth with kindness**, including what is hard to hear.
4. **Protect confidences** entrusted in surveys, focus groups, and conversations, reporting themes rather than identifying individuals unless a person explicitly consents.
5. **Respect the Organization's authority**, offering counsel and options while leaving decisions to those properly responsible for them.
6. **Name the limits of his own role** and point to others (pastoral care, legal, financial, denominational or judicatory leaders) when matters lie beyond his competence or calling.
7. **Practice what is proposed**, conducting this work in a manner consistent with the grace it seeks to promote.

4. Commitments of the Organization

The Organization, through its authorized leaders, covenants to:

1. **Name a covenant partner (contact person)** who can speak for the Organization, provide access, and convene the right people.
2. **Welcome every voice**, including critical ones, and protect those who speak from consequences for having done so.
3. **Be forthcoming** with the information, documents, and other access the work requires.

4. **Engage the findings** seriously and in good time, neither burying them nor weaponizing them.
5. **Decide through its proper governance**, honoring its own constitution, bylaws, polity, and any oversight from its denomination or supervising authority.
6. **Keep its commitments** of time, participation, and payment as agreed.
7. **Receive imperfection with grace**, including the Consultant's, and its own.

5. Commitments We Make Together

1. **Dignity.** Every person involved, whether member, staff, volunteer, neighbor, or critic, is to be treated as someone beloved and made in God's image.
2. **Truthfulness.** We will speak honestly, and say so when we are uncertain.
3. **Restoration over blame.** When harm is discovered, our first question is how people can be cared for and relationships restored, not who is to be faulted.
4. **Patience.** Redemptive change takes the time it takes. We will not manufacture urgency or force outcomes.
5. **Humility.** We trust that God is at work in this place before we arrive and after we leave.

6. Safeguards

1. **Confidentiality of participants.** Individual responses from surveys and focus groups are held by the Consultant. The Organization will receive summaries and themes, with identifying details withheld.
2. **Serious concerns.** If the Consultant learns of abuse, danger to a person, or conduct that the law or the Organization's polity requires be reported, he will raise it promptly with the appropriate leaders and authorities and will not treat it as confidential consulting material.
3. **Disagreement.** If the parties disagree about the work, they will first speak directly and plainly. If needed, they may invite a mutually trusted third person (such as a judicatory leader or respected elder) to help.

7. Practical Terms

These terms, as appropriate, are placeholders to be completed by the parties. For binding terms, a separate engagement agreement, reviewed by counsel where appropriate, may be used alongside this covenant.

- **Scope and steps[2] included:** [All six steps (or) Steps ___ through ___]
- **Expected timeline:** [Start date; estimated duration of each step]
- **Fees and expenses:** [Fee structure, payment schedule, reimbursable expenses]
- **Organization's covenant contact:** [Name, role, contact]
- **Consultant's contact:** Dr. David Hietala, Redemptive Works (redemptive.works)
- **Review points:** The parties may pause at the close of each step to confirm, adjust, or conclude the work.

8. Revising or Concluding This Covenant

Either party may propose changes at any review point, and changes may be made by mutual agreement in writing. Either party may conclude the engagement with 30 days' notice, after a conversation held in good faith. In that event, the Consultant will provide an orderly summary of the work to that point, provide a final billing, and the parties will part with blessing and without recrimination.

Covenant Prayer

Gracious God, you have first loved us and made us your own. Give us ears to hear what is true, eyes to see those we have overlooked, and courage to change what must change. Keep us faithful in what must not. Let our work, in its means and in its ends, make room for your grace, for the sake of the people you love, to the praise of Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Continued next page)

[2] Depending on the needs of the Organization, à la carte services might warrant consideration.

Signatures

We enter into this covenant in good faith, trusting in God's mercy for what we cannot yet see.

For the Organization:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dr. David Hietala, for Redemptive Works:

Dr. David Hietala: _____

Date: _____