



GIA Board: A Quick History

By GIA Board Chairperson Arvid Schwartz November 2022

Back in 2010, a handful of laymen gathered for the first time. We wanted to start an organization to help the WELS. You might say we were a board with no ministry organization – yet.

There were many unanswered questions:

- What would this organization be?
- How should it be organized?
- What exactly was the role of this group or Board?

Our first gathering was in the church basement at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. The group was small, only six people. We talked for about three hours about what we might do and following that conversation, we started some very simple and small projects.

As we went through the first year, we continue to search for our niche. Some things worked out; some did not. As time went on, the subject of leadership training kept coming up. We started to focus on that and slowly with a part-time staff of one and multiple volunteers, we began to serve ministry teams with a variety of resources and tools.

God blessed these initial steps, and GIA began to receive more and more inquiries from ministries looking for help. Without going into too many details, it became more apparent that the issue of leadership in our churches and schools was something our pastors and principals wanted to discuss and learn more about.

Today, Grace in Action has an active staff of eight team members led by our CEO Don Sutton. During the current year, GIA has done the following . . . and more:

- Assisted 29 teams with developing an initial ministry plan (VTO)
- Helped 33 teams reset or refresh their ministry plan (VTO)
- Served 44 teams with CliftonStrengths training
- Encouraged 13 teams and 11 individuals with spiritual, emotional, and physical resiliency planning and ongoing leadership coaching
- Presented at nine conferences
- And more

The GIA board has been determined to keep things moving. We come together regularly to provide leadership support and resources for the GIA leaders. We've tapped into the gifts, strengths, and experiences of our board members to help move GIA forward all while keeping it simple:

- Our overhead is minimal.
- Board members received no reimbursements.
- We don't even have a true headquarters.
- All board meetings and committee meetings are Zoom meetings except for one face-to-face each year

Grace in Action, an organization devoted to serving our church, has been blessed by God beyond anything we ever imagined. As a board, in the beginning, we had no plan. We just knew that we wanted to help tell people about God's plan of salvation.

But, as always, God did have a plan, and we just needed to ask for his help, step up, and keep on serving!

Let this be an encouragement to any board. Step up. Ask God for direction. Keep on serving. And be prepared for God's blessings!!