

HIGH POINT

Coaching churches to overcome their biggest challenges



Original Photo Courtesy of Wildmanresort.com



2019: Your Support Carried AL Through an Arduous Adventure

JAN

Ann Pang joined us as Mike's assistant and coordinator of DiscipleOn! (our online learning communities).

As I reflect on ministry in 2019, the image that comes to mind is an arduous adventure in discipleship ministry, something akin to white water rafting. It was a year of unexpected and delightful discoveries and accomplishments, along with strenuous challenges.

The discoveries and accomplishments included:

- Our first discipleship co-lab: A program in which multiple churches work on discipleship, including their discipleship teams meeting together periodically.
- Measurable success achieved in churches we have served over several years.
- Ten new podcast episodes.
- More churches requested coaching from us, from small, to large, to mega churches.
- Ascending Leaders grew more fiscally efficient.
- Directly coached 18 churches, impacting over 13,000 disciples.
- On a personal note, I got to baptize both my granddaughters with four generations present.

The challenges included:

- Coping with the stress on United Methodist congregations we serve due to the deep denominational shifts.
- Ministering under the cloud of exceptionally tight financial constraints.
- On a personal note, breaking three bones in one hand in early July 2019, making it much more difficult to type for many weeks.

The Spring of 2020 has brought even more turbulence through the "stay home" orders and the strains that has put on society. While it now may seem so long ago, 2019 is the subject of this Highpoint special edition. Read on for more about what YOU made possible through YOUR giving and the challenges YOU helped us traverse. Because YOU give, we can fulfill the discipleship possibilities in churches.

Mike

FEB

8,000 Impacted Disciples goal surpassed already, the funds for which we raised in the 2018 Giving Tuesday and Year-End 8,000 disciples drive.

GOD is Faithful

13,000+

People whose discipleship journey YOU positively impacted in 2019 through AL

MAR

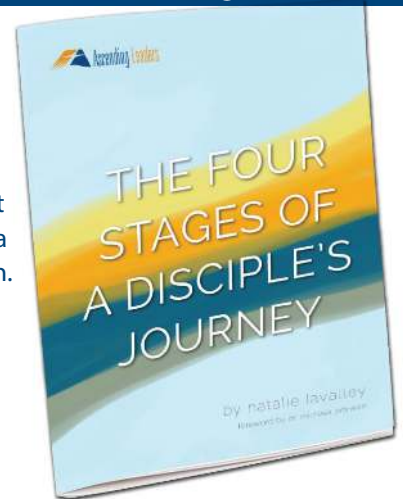
One of AL's Discipleship Coaches, Ken Schripsema, taught to a receptive audience in India the message of "discipleship by stages." Ken and his wife plan to move there in the fall as missionaries, while he teaches more churches about discipleship by the stages.



Discipleship Coach Ken Schripsema

A NEW RESOURCE

was produced by AL—a booklet describing the four stages of a disciple's growth.



APR

120 Leaders of SBPC experienced a major breakthrough when facilitated by AL to realize Christ-centeredness for their church begins with each of them. (Listen to episode 29 of The Discipleship Podcast for Church Leaders.)



SOLANA BEACH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Words of Inspiration after REVEAL coaching from Ascending Leaders: *How church members are being transformed by 15 minutes/day with God in Scripture*

- Learning to let go of old hurts, disappointments. Learning how judgmental and proud I've been. Growing to trust, to obey and to pray.
- Sets the stage for being sent (into the world) every day. Every work meeting, every activity is now placed in the context of what work God is doing in that place. And it brings me peace and joy.
- I am better connected to my church since daily we are meditating on the same scripture. I am experiencing calcifications on my heart slowly dissolve, allowing me to experience the presence of the Lord.
- Much better understanding of "on earth as it is in heaven." His will be done, not mine!



Discipleship Coach Rachel Young assisted Mike in coaching Solana Beach Presbyterian Church.

MAY

130 University faculty wrote their faith stories by the discipleship stages at Houston Baptist University, facilitated by Drs. Mike Johnson and Peter Cammarano of Ascending Leaders, to better integrate their faith into the classroom. This concluded with a day in August of the deans sharing their own faith stories with faculty in their departments.



Discipleship Coach Dr. Peter Cammarano

Photography courtesy of Houston Baptist University/Michael Tims



GOD is

Faithful

Many of the Churches

You Helped in 2019

JULY

12

Churches AL guided in 2019 using a REVEAL or RENOVU assessment to take the discipleship temperature of their church and discern optimal next steps to move more people to be Christ-centered.



PARKWAY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Let the journey begin.



CHAPELWOOD
UNITED METHODIST



AUG

Discipleship Co-lab for Rural Churches began in Greensburg, Kansas with the Artevel Foundation covering 95% of the costs so that these two small rural churches can work together with AL on their discipleship mid 2019 -mid 2021.

Your First Local Discipleship Co-lab Begins



In the two-year discipleship co-lab, each church has a discipleship team that meets monthly to work on improving discipleship. A coach for each church meets regularly with the team lead and the pastor. Quarterly the two coaches travel to Greensburg to provide an evening gathering for the church teams to train, encourage and brainstorm.

This co-lab community is the prototype for as many as 20 more we hope to start over the next several years, impacting thousands of people in hundreds of churches.

greensburg
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF GREENSBURG, KS



GOD
is

Faithful

AUG

Annual Board Meeting
in Humble, TX.



One Church's Success at Pursuing Their Next Chapter—Guided by Ascending Leaders



DISCERNED NEXT CHAPTER: 2017-2019 Connecting Our Service with the Good News of the Servant King

FOCUS #1 to Pursue this Direction:

Serve Where We Are Able to Speak the Good News

- ✓ Completed all five major tasks they set forth, not deterred by Hurricane Harvey which flooded neighborhoods around the church and five church members' homes. They wore t-shirts proclaiming "Serving You for our Servant King," became an impromptu Harvey storm shelter, hosted Harvey recovery groups, provided parents of special needs children a parents-night-out while teaching the children about Jesus and more.

FOCUS #2 to Pursue this Direction:

Become People Deeper in Christ

- ✓ Completed all six major tasks they set forth, including a one-on-one mentoring model for youth ministry, starting new small groups, training a few lay preachers and more.

In the churches I pastored and associated with before beginning Ascending Leaders, I have not often seen a church pursue a specific next chapter with as much clarity and accomplish all the goals they set forth.

Mike Johnson

This productivity in churches is one result of your giving.

SEPT

The National Baptist Convention
(an historic black denomination) invited Ascending Leaders to exhibit at their national gathering.

OCT

Mike interviewed **Terry Looper**
author of *Sacred Pace* for the Discipleship Podcast for Church Leaders.

"The Discipleship Podcast for Church Leaders"

Episodes Produced and Released in 2019

Episode	Title
18	The 10 STEPS Toward a Clear DISCIPLEPATH: Step 8—Identify Implementation Steps (and Do Them)
19	The 10 STEPS Toward a Clear DISCIPLEPATH: Step 9—Include a "You Are Here" Icon on the Map Legend
20	The 10 STEPS Toward a Clear DISCIPLEPATH: Step 10—Surprise! Expect it. Adjust for It. Celebrate It.
21	Undoing Indifference to Disciplemaking
22	Extending the Sermon through Sermon-based Small Groups
23	A Curriculum to Move More People to Abiding
24	Charting Your Church Course Coaching
25	The Value of Taking the Spiritual Temperature of Your Church
26	Hearing and Surrendering to God's Guidance in Decisions
27	The Why of Ascending Leaders

ascendingleaders.org/podcast



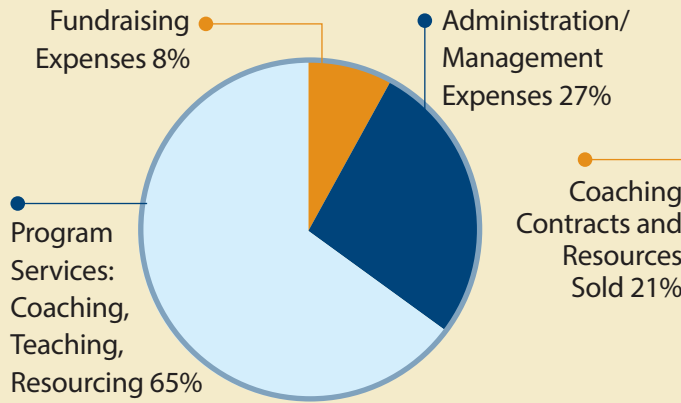
GOD
is

Faithful

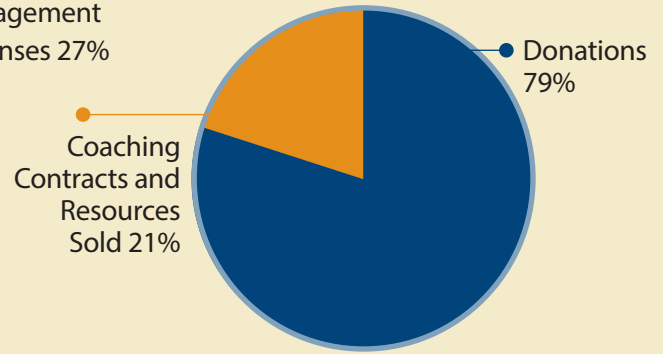
NOV

Our supporters attended
one of three open houses in Michigan, Iowa and Texas.

COSTS OF 2019 MINISTRY



2019 FUNDING SOURCES



DEC

51,000

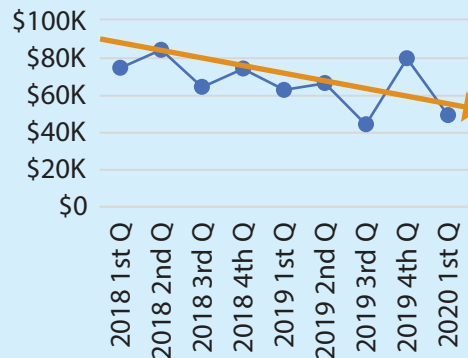
Dollars given to save churches
from extinction and to a vibrant culture through Giving Tuesday and year-end donations matched by the AL board and friends.

1,303

Dollars given at a "Bless-it-Forward" Banquet
at the conclusion of the coaching of two small churches receiving a scholarship—donations that will be used to scholarship other small churches in the future.

Our Successful Initiative to Decrease Expenses Quarter-by-Quarter

EXPENSES EACH QUARTER



This intentional decrease in expenses means we are becoming an even more trim and fit ministry, to better steward resources for the good of serving more churches.

→ = the trend

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Thank you for purchasing Amazon products through Amazon Smile and choosing Ascending Leaders as your give-to organization. We receive small donations from Amazon periodically because of it.



By
year's-end, our small support staff needed to let off some steam.



GOD is Faithful

Endorsements of Ascending Leaders' Financial Integrity.



You can find our independently compiled 2019 financials and our conflict of interest policy on our website www.ascendingleaders.org/transparency

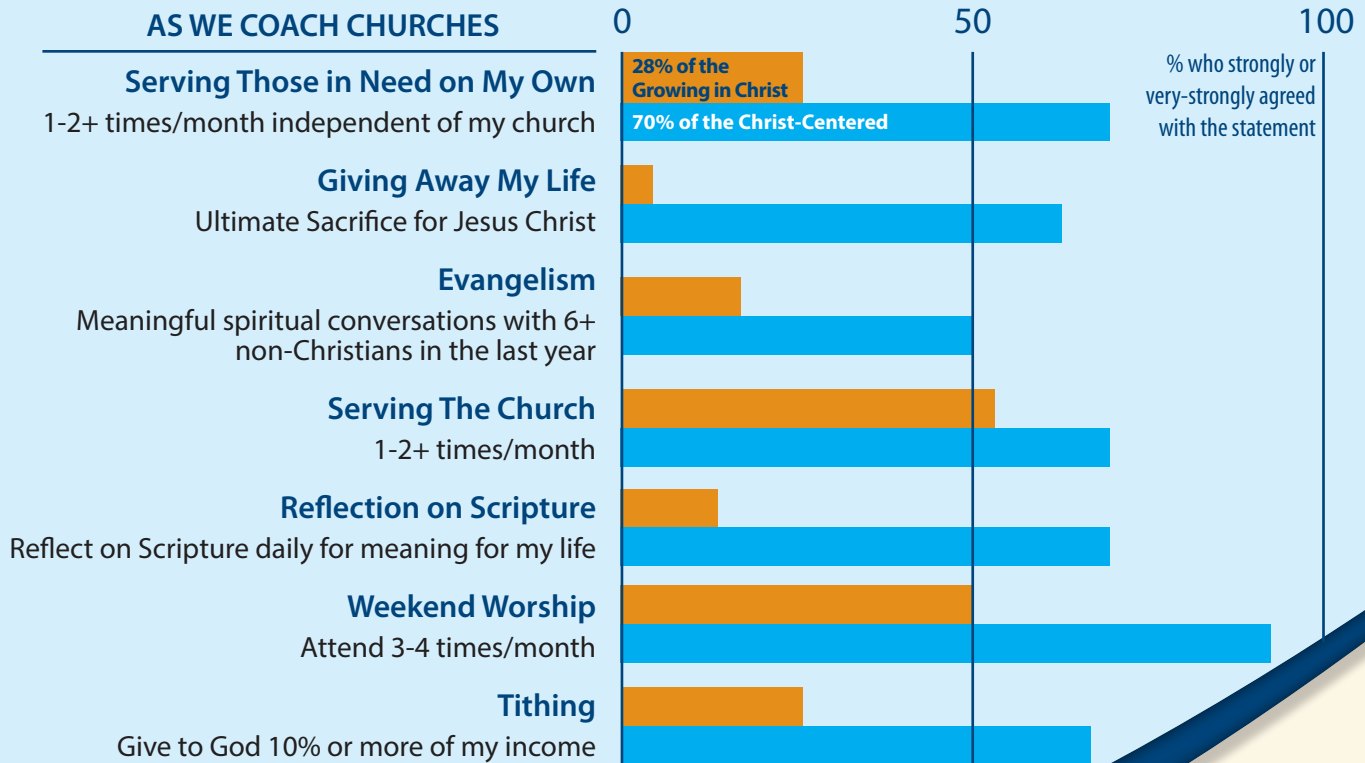
YOU ARE, THROUGH US, HELPING CHURCHES Grow Disciples to be CHRIST-CENTERED and see more of the attitudes and actions that build vibrant churches!

KEY for a Disciple's Growth Stages

EXPLORING CHRIST **GROWING IN CHRIST** CLOSE TO CHRIST CHRIST-CENTERED



CHARACTERISTICS WE AIM TO GROW AS WE COACH CHURCHES



These are scientifically valid percentages from **real churches** Ascending Leaders has coached: mega, large, small, urban, suburban and rural.

OUR AIM!

The **CHRIST-CENTERED** Leader

- Disarmingly Humble
- Models a Surrendered Life
- Focuses on Growing Hearts
- Passion for Intimacy with Jesus



you
donate

disciples
flourish