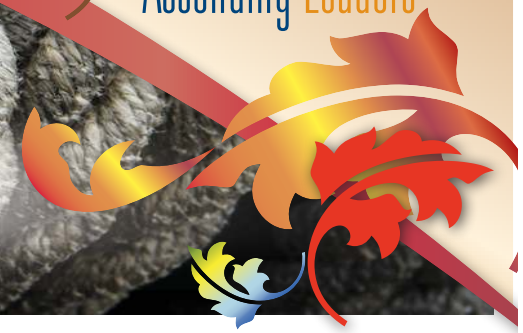


HIGH POINT

Helping Churches, Disciples and Leaders

Flourish



"A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." (Eccl. 4:12)

Triad Ties Go the Distance

2005
2015 FORWARD

It takes determined perseverance for a ministry to go the distance during a decade that included a five-year recession. We have been celebrating this mile-marker with a series of "Where Are They Now" stories. This last publication of 2015 includes the story of one discipleship triad that began in a small group using Ascending Leaders' method and materials. This group testifies to the benefits of investing in long-term, purposeful relationships. They have been doing life together for almost a decade—nearly as long as Ascending Leaders has been serving disciples like them.

In the mid-2000s, Renee Cummins, Kaylee Kolditz and Kathleen Smith had all found their way to Gateway Church in Austin, Texas. All three women were looking to renew or refocus their spiritual life. As an early adopter of Ascending Leaders' resources, Gateway offered many opportunities for the kind of spiritual growth and relationships these women were seeking.

The three first met during a *Spirit's Fruit* study in 2005, but it wasn't until they were assigned to a triad while doing *Christ Habits* that the three connected. "Almost from the start we had a solid

three-way connection," Kaylee recalls. "There is a balance in our three personalities and giftings that works beautifully."

Ascending Leaders encourages triads in addition to small groups because here members can go deeper—sharing concerns and feelings they would be reluctant to share in a larger group. And three individuals bring the diversity needed to sharpen one another the way iron sharpens iron.

When their triad finished *Christ Habits*, the women agreed to continue meeting together. Over time, they went through the entire AL curriculum together. Renee admits that growing together in this way "set a spiritual, relational and intellectual foundation among us that none of us have in entirety anywhere else in our lives (except our hubbies). No one else knows us this thoroughly and intimately."

One key to knowing themselves and each other so well was AL's *Your Self*. "It brought what I had learned in *Charting Your Course* to an even deeper and more perceptive level... and really helped me to see things I wouldn't have on my own," Kaylee said.

Kathleen agrees. "We hold each other accountable."

Continued on page 2 >>>



[L-R] Renee Cummins, Kaylee Kolditz, Kathleen Smith

>>> Continued from page 1

It often happens that one shares something that one of the others senses a need to respond to but doesn't know how. That's when the third person comes up with exactly the right response.

The Grip-Birkman assessment that is part of *Your Self* gave both the tools and language that have kept them growing together for nearly a decade. "It gave us all a thorough understanding of our own personalities and gifts and how they coexist with others," Renee explained. "Knowing and understanding ourselves and others helps us interpret life events, God's movement, and our own growth." With that knowledge, they are confident when they affirm, as well as challenge, each other. "We'll tell someone 'you're being Yellow,' or 'I'm in my stress quadrant.'" And the others understand. "It brings fun and wisdom to our conversations," Renee explained.

The connections formed in their triad spilled over into the rest of the week until the threesome was even including families in occasional social outings. Each knows the other is only a phone call away when they need a word of encouragement or advice or a shoulder to cry on. If one happens to be unavailable, the third person in the triad seems to have exactly the word the other needs to hear—confirming King



Solomon's assertion that a strand of three cords is not quickly broken (Eccl. 4:12).

Until two-and-a-half years ago, meeting together every other Wednesday was an unbreakable commitment. Then Kaylee and her husband moved across the country to Jersey City, New Jersey. Distance could not keep the trio apart. They continued to meet monthly by Skype. Even as the Kolditzes anticipate moving to Italy in the coming months, the women expect to continue to take advantage of technology to secure the bonds of their relationship.

As for the future, they fully expect to go forward staying connected regardless of where they are geographically, because they all agree relationships like theirs are essential to spiritual growth. Renee anticipates their triad will give birth to others. God may even call them to speak publicly about the importance of mentoring and discipling other women. Wherever and whatever the future holds, these three know they can rely on each other because that's what triad buddies do.

Read the story on page 3 to see how the triad was instrumental in one member's response to the international refugee crisis.

DISCIPLE FORWARD

Half-day workshops helping churches, disciples and leaders build their congregations' spiritual growth

“We left inspired about developing our own discipleship pathway and better equipped to take the next step as a leadership team. My only regret is that not more people from our church could have experienced the training with us. As an aside, my personal commitment to be a growing disciple of Christ was also sparked by the training.”

Nick In't Hout
Redlands, CA
Pastor of Discipleship, River Christian Reformed Church

Seattle, WA
Grand Rapids, MI
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Des Moines, IA
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Houston, TX

We're scheduling dates and locations for discipleship training workshops in 2016.

To bring one to your area, email admin@ascendingleaders.org

Coaching Zuni Church—Our Ebenezer

“Thus far the LORD has helped us.” | Samuel 7:12

MARKING our 10th anniversary and expressing our gratitude to God for a decade of His provision.

PROVIDING coaching services to Zuni Christian Reformed Church—a ministry with a 125-year history—standing on the brink of a new chapter.

PARTNERING with Faith Formation Ministries of the CRC and the Helm Foundation to build a stronger church body.

A DIVINE opportunity for AL to give back by serving this desirous Native American population.

Ascending Leaders and Zuni Church are growing forward.

2005
2015 **FORWARD**



▶ The Journey Wall is helping Zuni discover their unique history and patterns. Additional sessions with Mike will help members learn from the past to chart a way forward.



▶ Pastor of Discipleship Tim Eisenga, Vision Team member Josephine Panteah and Dr. Mike Johnson celebrate progress on the construction of Zuni's church building. Mike's coaching will help the church see God's clear direction for their next chapter.



▶ Vision Team Member Virginia Chavez reads to the 35 present the important events God used over its life to shape Zuni Church.

Triad Fosters Passion for Refugee Mission

At Gateway Church, Kaylee Kolditz found a community that helped her grow and unearthed a passion for global mission. After participating in several short-and long-term mission trips with her husband John, both sensed a call to focus on the plight of refugees. Kaylee immersed herself in local and international refugee organizations, eventually starting a local ministry connecting faith groups with area refugee agencies. The desire to be engaged full time in international refugee ministry persisted, but the timing didn't feel right until earlier this year when both John and Kaylee lost their jobs.

Giving up the lease on their Jersey City apartment, they began raising financial and prayer support to join the

International Association for Refugees in Italy. Recently, those efforts brought them back to Austin where Kathleen and Renee provided the publicity and organizational efforts for a Walk for Refugees fundraiser.

With months of support raising still ahead, they remain confident in God's perfect plan and timing and are buoyed by the spiritual bonds of their triad.





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 Dallas Willard (*Renovation of the Heart*)

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