

HighPoint

Set your heart on things above. Colossians 3:1



Following God Forward

When an organization or individual clearly hears God's call and feels His favor it is a very good feeling indeed. At other times it can be more difficult to clearly see God's direction.

This year marks the completion of Ascending Leaders' first decade of ministry and the beginning of our second. While our direction from God has always been clear, at times we too have struggled to confidently discern God's best way from here to there.

Exodus 13 is a good reference point for AL and churches for moving forward with God.

God will forcibly free us from bad habits/patterns: *When Pharaoh let the people go* (vs. 17). In Hebrew the verb translated *let go* means to forcibly push out. As miserable as slavery was, Israel would not run gleefully to freedom. They needed a push.

We tend to develop familiar patterns of thought and action. Some are useful for fulfilling a mission; if not now, they may be leveraged for the future. Others are less helpful and need to be forcibly shed. In the early days of AL's ministry, eager to "catch our big break," we developed a habit of pursuing almost any opportunity that presented itself. As a result, we were stretched thin and lacked focus. God used several events to push us into more intentional and useful patterns.

Know Yourself: *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him ...* (vs. 19). Carrying the bones of Joseph out of Egypt to the promised land reminded Israel that they were descendants of Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. Theirs was a heritage of depending on God even when the call was strong, but the path unclear. When they remembered their uniqueness in contrast to their more populous neighbors who did not depend on God, they were blessed; when they forgot, they got into trouble. At AL we have learned the difficult lesson to not covet the larger footprint of other ministries. AL does best when we remember that we are a ministry God has shaped to be innovative, daring, determined, relational, faithful and sensitive to the tangibles and intangibles of disciple-growing: intimacy with Christ and character growth. That may never make us a celebrity ministry, but it is the particular calling God has given us and blesses churches that look to us for assistance.

Follow: *By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light...*(vs. 21). God's presence was visible in two pillars that lead the way through the wilderness—day or night. They moved or stayed put on God's timetable, not Israel's. Like the Israelites, churches need to learn to wait when God remains still and follow when God is calling them forward. God has surprised us at AL when he moved us forward through unexpected means. We are learning to watch the pillars—to be alert to God's movement and timing.

We desire to be attuned to God's leading, obediently following Him FORWARD. Just as we work alongside congregations to do the same.

Dr. Michael Johnson
Founder and Executive Director



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FORWARD Gala and Dinner

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 Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER
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 Church Planter
 Covenant Grace Church

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- The Dunham Bible Museum •
- Enjoy Worship • Dinner • Fellowship •

Seating is Limited.

For more information or to RSVP, email: paula@ascendingleaders.org



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