

HIGH POINT

Coaching churches to overcome their biggest challenges

“until we all . . . attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Eph 4:13 NIV



Church moves from “Below Expectations” to “Exceeds Expectations” in nine months

One Church’s Mood



Give Thanks!



Photography courtesy of Houston Baptist University/Michael Tims

When a West Coast church of 800 adults contacted us last year about Ascending Leaders coaching them through a “Church Discipleship Assessment” and building a discipleship plan from the results, two opposing realities were true at the church:

- a. A grumbling discontent was growing louder. Some were so discontent, they even called the church a “sinking ship.”
- b. For others, optimism ran high. Enthusiasm was in the air over being debt-free, a new children’s building, regular Saturday mission trips to Tijuana and great participation in small groups.

Church Discipleship Assessment

As a result of guidance from AL Discipleship Coaches, Mike Johnson and Rachel Young, a high 66% of their people completed the REVEAL “Church Discipleship Assessment.”

Processing the Assessment Results

The results of the REVEAL for Church assessment brought some disappointing

findings. The assessment scores were lower than anyone anticipated. Was this really a sinking ship?

After the AL coaches listened and talked the pastors through their initial shock, the Senior Pastor presented the highlights of the results to a perplexed board. Then on March 30, AL coach Mike Johnson facilitated much of a Saturday-long conference with over 100 church leaders. The anxiety of senior leadership was high. They were concerned that the results of the REVEAL assessment would not be received well. The discipleship team worked hard to create an exceptionally warm and welcoming environment at the meeting. As Mike prayed, prepared and discerned, the Holy Spirit gave him an insight to keep people’s emotions cool.

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“We at Ascending Leaders feel fulfilled when church leaders break through, as these did, and understand they are responsible for their own spiritual growth.”

- Ascending Leaders’ President Mike Johnson

6,000-10,000

Churches will close this year in the U.S., without stronger discipleship, and the rate is increasing.

42 of 52

Disciple factors improved at one church coached by Ascending Leaders

25%

The average giving increase per member of some churches coached by Ascending Leaders

NEED LONG DISTANCE HELP WITH DISCIPLESHIP?

REGISTER FOR AN ONLINE
PRACTITIONER COHORT

DISCIPLEON!

JAN 15

Expert Webinar with Bill Hull



FEB-JUNE

Monthly 90 minute web sessions

JULY

Expert Webinar with Peter Scazzero



Early bird registration ends
midnight Dec. 20

www.ascendingleaders.org/discipleon

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During that day the Holy Spirit moved through the group powerfully with the Senior and Associate Pastor concluding the day encouraging the leaders to become the kinds of leaders God desires—humble, sacrificial people who take personal responsibility for their spiritual growth. Leader after leader commented that this whole experience reminded them beyond a doubt that the Sunday worship service and small groups were not responsible for their spiritual growth.

Finishing Well

The Ascending Leaders coaches finished this coaching contract nine months after it began with a few more coaching sessions with the pastors and staff. The church leadership even went back and redefined their most critical goals in light of the assessment results.

The pastors reflected, *“We are so grateful for the pastoral experience and consulting expertise AL brought to our church this past year. Mike and Rachel came alongside our leadership with wise counsel and compassion, as we participated in the REVEAL study. We were highly dependent on their ability to interpret, encourage, communicate, and journey with us as we discerned a fresh way forward in discipleship. Mike and Rachel worked at all levels of our church leadership providing the appropriate guidance and teaching to each audience. We count our REVEAL study a success, propelled by their skilled partnership throughout the whole process.”*

Ascending Leaders’ co-coach Rachel Young says about the shift she saw in this church, *“I delighted in watching this programmatically-driven church make a shift to valuing intimacy with Jesus over activity. It was hard to absorb the truth that activity does not equal intimacy, especially as people grow spiritually. But it led to real changes in this church’s way of doing life together.”* *Continued on page 3 >>>*

Rachel Young is one of our seven trained adjunct discipleship coaches. She brings ten years of career ministry service to coaching churches.



Photography courtesy of Houston Baptist University/Michael Tims

Discipleship coach Dr. Peter Cammarano, along with Dr. Mike Johnson, facilitated 125 professors of Houston Baptist University to write their faith stories by discipleship stages in an exercise for better integration of their faith and the classroom.

Ascending Leaders
Presents
**THE DISCIPLESHIP
PODCAST**
FOR CHURCH LEADERS

GET INSPIRED!

Listen to **Episode 27** to air
on December 11

for an interview with Mike
about the mission of
Ascending Leaders

ascendingleaders.org/podcast

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This Kind of Success is Possible for many more Churches

With the large number of churches plateaued or declining, many more could use a nine-month miracle. Ascending Leaders is experienced at helping churches get to a better place. Founder and President Mike Johnson says, *“Unique churches are not helped by one-size-fits-all. I am delighted each time we coach a church; they find a better future, through better discipleship.”*

Like this church of 800 adults, nearly all the churches Ascending Leaders coaches through a Church Discipleship Assessment find:

- 1) they get a higher participation rate than do churches without a coach;
- 2) their results are different than what they hoped;
- 3) they appreciate the support they get from their AL coach to determine their optimal next steps;
- 4) they continue to add additional steps, giving long-term improvement;
- 5) they become more vibrant, increase scripture reading and increase financial giving.

See what a Church Discipleship Assessment guided by Ascending Leaders could do for more churches and disciples at www.ascendingleaders.org/reveal



In this season of life, I want to cut out more of what is not important and focus on what is important. The work of discipleship in churches is not only important, it is critical. That is why I will serve another three years on the Ascending Leaders board.

- Dr. Robert Sloan, President of Houston Baptist University and AL Board Member

SAVE A CHURCH!



Ascending Leaders' board and Staff Leadership

On Tuesday, Dec. 3 National Giving Tuesday

Ascending Leaders' faithful board and some additional friends of AL will once again match ALL donations given on that day, dollar-for-dollar.

Ascending Leaders helps small churches, as well as large churches.

We are currently coaching one rural church with just 35 adults and another church that has shrunk to 150 adults, along with other small churches.

We can serve churches of all sizes because of our faithful supporters.

Goal of Giving Tuesday Donations	+	Matched by Our Pool of Matchers	=	Total to help us impact 8,000 more disciples and save churches
\$35,000		\$35,000		\$70,000

On Dec. 3, join our family of supporters, have your donation matched and **SAVE A CHURCH!**

Ways to donate on Tuesday, December 3 to **SAVE A CHURCH!**

- 1 Send a check now to Ascending Leaders postdated Dec. 3, 2019.
3947 Field Crossing Sugar Land, TX 77498
- 2 Give by credit card at www.ascendingleaders.org/donate on Tues., Dec. 3.
- 3 Use QuickPay through Zelle or other automatic fund transfer systems using our email address, admin@ascendingleaders.org on Tues., Dec. 3.



Seals of Approval awarded to Ascending Leaders



SEE INSIDE:

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- An Online Cohort for Discipleship Leaders, p. 2
- SAVE A CHURCH! on National Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3, p. 3.

Find us on



To learn about us,
email rhonda@ascendingleaders.org
OR call 832-655-4935

Find Grace in the Arms of Emmanuel.

"During this season of giving thanks to God for His gracious provision, and adoration to Christ amidst a world of confusion, it is our prayer that your family finds grace in the arms of Emmanuel—God with Us." - Mike and Gina Johnson



this is us for 2020 and beyond

all about the
local church

trustworthy practice what we believe
cherish Jesus
overflow to others *adapt to local context*
a church's guide-alongside

customized, layered and reinforced approach

bent toward effective
implementation

