

highpoint



ascending
leaders

equipping churches for Christ-centered discipleship



Follow the Trail Through the Blizzard

*For to us a child
is born, to us a son
is given, and the
government will be
on his shoulders.
And he will be
called Wonderful
Counselor, Mighty
God, Everlasting
Father, Prince
of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

***Equipping churches for Christ-centered discipleship.
Measurable results. Eternal outcomes.***

Through the blizzard of chaos and craziness swirling around us, we keep our eyes on Christ's light at the end of the narrow path. That hope is what Ascending Leaders presents to churches.

We help churches find their way in discipleship. No matter the size or circumstance, God has a unique approach for each of them to traverse.

Churches who are new to this can learn more by reaching out to Ben Compton, our Church Liaison. ben@ascendingleaders.org.



AL Staff Grows to Better Equip Churches



One of the strengths that AL provides to churches is the longevity of our staff. Mike Johnson founded Ascending Leaders nineteen years ago. For the past seven years, he has had the able assistance of Operations Director, Rhonda Spriggs. Reporting to Rhonda are part-time assistants Teri Watson, Ellie Tow and Ann Pang. Most recently, the staff welcomed Ben Compton.



International Work

Discipleship Groups Multiply

Eight churches participated in our international discipleship training in July 2024. The churches went on to begin 70 discipleship groups, including 350 people. These discipleship groups are countercultural because churches expect all the spiritual growth to come from a Sunday worship service. One pastor who experienced exponential growth wrote, "It was difficult for me to form one discipleship group, but now I have 21 discipleship groups where 130 people are going through the process of discipleship. I also realized that this is a huge task, and I need more people with me to help in my journey of creating a culture of discipleship. I am thankful that I and my people resolved to use this pathway."

Mature International Church Grows a Discipleship Culture

Twenty-five leaders from one church came together for a two-day conference on discipleship principles led by one of our international coaches. The result was six new discipleship groups for this church over the next six months. This church is moving the discipleship experience beyond the Sunday morning teaching, a radical culture change for this church.



A Tale of Two Churches

“ALL THE THINGS I EXPECTED TO GO WRONG, HAVE NOT. IT HAS BEEN WONDERFUL,” said Pastor Jon Harrison in a recent interview. This stands in stark contrast to the trials in participation, finances and serving that many pastors are facing post-pandemic.

During the pandemic, Greensburg Christian Church and First Baptist Church in Greensburg, Kansas, participated together in Ascending Leaders’ first discipleship co-lab.

Discipleship Coaches Matt McClure and Mike Johnson led this co-lab. Jon Harrison was the pastor of Greensburg Christian Church.



Both churches made good progress in this co-lab. Greensburg Christian Church made progress through sermons over three years chronologically through Scripture, with the children’s programs and adult Bible Studies following the sequence.

After the end of the co-lab, First Baptist Church’s pastor took a call to a church in another town. As First Baptist Church looked at what to do next, conversations began to bubble up about the two churches sharing ministry together and possibly even combining.

Late last year, they began to worship together, one week at one church and one week at the other. Early this year, both congregations took a vote about becoming one church. Often when churches try this, there is a contingent that does not want to let go of the church’s history. These unification processes often end up with three churches—the combined congregation and a remnant of each of the former congregations that refused to combine. That was not the case in Greensburg. Each church unanimously voted to become “Cornerstone Fellowship Church” of Greensburg, KS.

This is how Pastor Jon describes it: *“We set out at the beginning saying the only reason we would consider merging into a new congregation was that we believed if we were to combine our efforts, we could have a bigger impact with the Gospel in Kiowa County and beyond. It was truly a testimony to the faith of both congregations that they voted unanimously to combine—knowing it meant closing two*

churches, each with over 100 years of history, and letting go of some history and tradition because we believed the potential upside was far more important. Therefore, as we went through the process, we were honest with both congregations that we didn’t know exactly what this would look like, but we did know why we were considering doing it. And if we made this merger about anything else other than Jesus Christ, then it would fail spectacularly. I think because we kept that ultimate goal of being faithful stewards of the Gospel and kept our focus on Jesus Christ and His kingdom, we simply escaped so many of the pitfalls that plague churches in similar situations.”

The new church has decided to worship at one of the buildings and convert the other building into a youth center. One of the congregations was especially strong in children’s ministry and the other in teenage youth ministry.



Now as one church, Cornerstone Fellowship is strong in both children and youth. They have a midweek adult Bible Study that involves almost 40 adults which is more than Greensburg Christian

Church worshiped with four years ago.

The church has spent the first six months of this year completing all official paperwork to combine the churches into one. Pastor Jon says that this feels like both a church plant because of its zeal and passion and an organized congregation because of the maturity and commitment of the members. He is trying to be realistic, knowing the personality conflicts that could arise with combining two congregations, but has been astonished that all his expected challenges have not come to fruition at Cornerstone Fellowship. He has never had a better season of ministry than the last six months.

We at Ascending Leaders are glad that God sovereignly used the co-lab and our coaching to help create the foundation of Cornerstone Fellowship. The support of the foundation that underwrote much of this co-lab and the support of many more make this kind of mature ministry possible.

Multiply this Mission

Matched & Multiplied

2024

Giving Tuesday 2024 (Dec. 3) kicks off this year's Matched & Multiplied year-end drive to raise \$125,000 for the mission of Ascending Leaders.

All year-end donations beginning on Giving Tuesday will be matched dollar-for-dollar, multiplying impact!

\$100 Matched & Multiplied \$200

Can give training books to 4 churches

\$2,500 Matched & Multiplied \$5,000

Can sponsor coaching a small church 1:1

\$500 Matched & Multiplied \$1,000

Can sponsor the discipleship assessment for 2 churches

\$5,000 Matched & Multiplied \$10,000

Can sponsor coaching 2 churches 1:1

\$125,000

Donate securely online beginning Tues. Dec. 3 at www.ascendingleaders.org/givingtuesday or give by mail to be matched & multiplied!

Our board and anonymous donors have pledged \$67,600 to match all donations dollar-for-dollar

Ascending Leaders can accept gifts of stock. To see the steps, go to ascendingleaders.org/waystogive/



Our ministry is proud to be ECFA-accredited, meaning we adhere to the highest standard of financial integrity and transparency, ensuring gifts are used wisely.

