



# Connection

FALL 2018

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## WELCOME TO DISCIPLE HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP!

It is my privilege to lead this group that has helped me in ministry since the mid-eighties.

Back then, my wife, Leslie, and I lived in Tulsa while I was a graduate student at Phillips Seminary. We had many questions about church leadership and polity, theology, and overall ministry. Those in DHF held our hands and prayed with us, showing us how to manage pastoral life with a young, growing family. We had much to learn.

A lot has changed since then. We moved to a new pastoral role in Decatur, IL, in the mid-nineties. Our children now have children of their own. The focus of DHF's ministry moved away from speaking for evangelicals within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Instead, DHF developed ministry systems and approaches for congregations wanting to thrive in local settings.

I have served as Lead Pastor of First Christian Church in Decatur, IL, since 1994. Our church has transformed in that period. When I arrived, I was the only full-time staff member. FCC Decatur has grown dramatically, more than tenfold. Our staff profile now includes dozens of ministry employees and pastors. Our ministry footprint is significantly different and larger.

We understand that since we have received so many blessings, much is expected of us. We have a responsibility to other congregations.

We were asked to lead DHF, using our staff's experience for the sake of other congregations. The goal: to encourage new congregational ministry models leading to spiritual growth and community impact.

I am now navigating two leadership roles: Lead Pastor of FCC Decatur and Executive Director of DHF. My role is to help FCC Decatur's staff consult and encourage churches that could benefit from our story and experience from the past 25 years.

DHF maintains its own board separate from FCC Decatur. The financing of DHF continues apart from FCC's income and expenses. No present staff of FCC are receiving a salary boost for their work. This approach gives greater flexibility to DHF's funds, enabling us to engage more congregations more effectively. (So yes, your financial gifts are always welcomed and needed.)

We want to hear from you. Tell us about the needs of your congregation and how DHF might respond.

Let's work together to impact the world through the ministry of the Church.

Wayne Kent  
DHF Executive Director



Wayne & Leslie Kent

**Wayne Kent** has served in pastoral ministry since 1985. His degrees include: a Bachelor's from Oral Roberts University, a Master of Divinity from Phillip's Graduate Theological Seminary, and a Doctorate of Ministry from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Wayne and his wife Leslie were married in 1981. They have two married children, three grandchildren, and one dog, who is in charge.



(left) Richard Bowman, Doug Harvey, Kevin Ray, Linda Ray, and Wayne Kent at the 2018 DHF National Conference

# DISCIPLE HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP

has a rich history of supporting churches. Our shared heritage provides a unique bond.

DHF provides the following to pastors, leadership, and congregations:



## ENCOURAGEMENT

DHF provides encouragement to the pastor, leadership, and congregation. We wish to spur one another on to accomplish good works.



## FELLOWSHIP

Leading a congregation can be difficult and sometimes lonely. DHF provides professional connections and a fellowship of pastors who understand ministry in today's Church.



## MISSIONS

Impact your community and world for Christ! DHF can help you launch community outreach endeavors as well as global missions. We provide opportunities for you to participate in mission trips.



## RESOURCES

Resources, such as the Elder Update podcast, can foster growth of lay leadership within the church. Elders have a calling to leadership and need to be challenged to grow.



## NETWORKING

Connect with other like-minded congregations across the country. The DHF National Conference is a wonderful place to connect with other pastors, leaders, and congregants.

# HISTORY AND A NEW DAY



Disciple Heritage Fellowship began in 1985, founded by a group of pastors and lay people within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We hoped to represent an evangelical presence in the denomination. Many did not appreciate our evangelical voice.

For example, in 1985 we submitted a resolution (#8516) to the General Assembly, the denomination's bi-annual gathering. A number of like-minded congregations asked the General Assembly, "... to affirm that belief in the inspiration and infallibility of scripture continues to be a viable option for members of the Christian Church (DOC)."

In the long run, the resolution did not pass. We learned those gathered in that General Assembly did not agree with our understanding of scripture's role in congregational life. That failure set us apart from our theologically liberal brothers and sisters. We learned how far the denomination had drifted from its biblical foundation.

Then, delegates to the 1991 General Assembly in Tulsa failed to elect Michael Kinnamon, the denomination's pick for a new General Minister. Conservative evangelicals would not affirm his liberal approach to theology.

The large voter turnout denying Kinnamon's election came through an elder from a congregation in rural Indiana who sent a mailer to all churches informing readers of Kinnamon's views. People from across the nation went to Tulsa and voted against Kinnamon. The denomination blamed DHF even though we were not involved in the Indiana elder's actions.

Eventually DHF's voice was gradually reduced by procedural changes at the General Assembly. We were no longer permitted to bring resolutions to the General Assembly body.

By the early 2000s, DHF's attention moved away from how we could impact the denomination. Those of us involved in DHF's ministry returned to our focus on our individual congregations. Some of our churches began to thrive, showing that a focus on biblical authority in church life brings new vitality to congregational life and mission.

Many of the churches represented by DHF have now left the Christian Church (DOC). Because of our shared heritage, leaving the DOC was a difficult choice marked with sadness.

We see other denominations with similar struggles. As those denominations move to more liberal theological teaching, evangelical congregations in the Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and other denominations have chosen to follow the pattern of the Disciples of Christ. Evangelical voices are not welcomed. Evangelical congregations leave their denominations.

So, what's next?

At present, DHF strives to help congregations of all sizes and tribes. We are no longer solely focused on churches within the DOC. We still hear from congregations wanting information about our viewpoint regarding the actions and theology of our brothers and sisters in our former denomination. They want to lift up biblical authority, but wonder about the best methods for that endeavor.

We have some experience related to the questions posed by evangelical congregations. Those experiences of years past can help churches understand their own relationship with the DOC. Our past work can guide others.

However, DHF is no longer engaged in those discussions with the DOC as in the past. We encourage congregations, focusing intently on helping individual churches develop ministries that lead people to know Jesus Christ.

The board of DHF has asked the staff team of First Christian Church in Decatur, IL, to act as a consulting team to congregations affiliated with DHF. FCC Decatur's story is one to share. Along with a ten-fold attendance growth, the ministries of the church have a noticeable impact on its community.

Contact us ([dhf@discipleheritage.org](mailto:dhf@discipleheritage.org) or **217.875.3350**) and discover how our story might impact the story of your congregation. DHF is focused on helping congregations to thrive and identify sustainable ministry for growth and vitality.

We look forward to working with your congregation!

# MISSIONS

By BJ Leonard | Missions Pastor at First Christian Church in Decatur, IL

I have served a number of different churches around the United States. I have witnessed the transformational power of mission in the life of a church. A mission unites people around a common goal and inspires and compels them to pursue it together. As one pastor put it, "Mission gets people out of their seats and into the streets." Jesus' commission to his followers is to "Go and make disciples." It requires action.

A mission is never without some kind of sacrifice. But it is in these selfless, sacrificial, kingdom-minded acts that churches find new vision, new energy, and new unity. God blesses us through His mission.

FCC Decatur made a conscious decision 15 years ago to get outside the walls of our building and serve the community around us. That decision has come at immense cost on multiple levels, but it has transformed who we are as a church.

Whether the mission is supporting church planting on the other side of the world or serving at a soup kitchen across the street, God has called all of us into his "harvest work." Every church and community are unique. Discerning the missions to which God has called your church requires prayer and courage.

We invite you to find out how you can get missions ignited in your church. We have experience in community partnership, an after-school program, and neighborhood engagement. Also, you are invited to join us in global mission trips to Kenya, Cuba, or Central Asia so you can experience God's work first-hand.

To learn more about missions, contact me at [bleonard@firstdecatur.org](mailto:bleonard@firstdecatur.org) or 217.875.3350.



## ELDER UPDATE PODCAST

Listen/download at [iTunes Podcasts](#) or [discipleheritage.org/elderupdate](https://discipleheritage.org/elderupdate)

**DHF ELDER UPDATE** is a monthly podcast that equips lay leaders. In this brief podcast, Doug Harvey brings years of ministry experience as a pastor, elder, and former Executive Director of DHF to encourage, challenge, and coach leaders to lead. Listeners are blessed with insight from scripture and years of leadership experience, some of it humorous, as Doug presents each session. DHF Elder Update was a much-requested resource of DHF in years past, and we are pleased to again offer this great resource.



# DHF PASTOR'S NETWORK

The DHF Pastor's Network is a group of church leaders who are called to pastoral ministry and desire to be recognized and affirmed in that calling by Disciple Heritage Fellowship. Pastors can depend on the DHF Pastor's Network for:

- ▶ consistent commitment to scriptural standards of faith and practice
- ▶ leadership reflective of both biblical truth and effective ministry models in our culture
- ▶ provision of a center of identity, opportunities to build relationships, and a place to plant your ministry in a healthy association of churches
- ▶ resources for pastors and church leaders that can help keep ministry both faithful and fresh
- ▶ assistance with relocation
- ▶ ready access to DHF staff

We'd love for you to be a part of the network! Here are a few things you need to know before applying:

**Recognition** We believe the primary recognition of pastoral calling lies with the local church. Membership in the DHF Pastor's Network reflects a local church's recognition of a call to pastoral ministry.

**Expectations** Membership in the DHF Pastor's Network reflects the candidate's desire for an ongoing relationship with DHF through the DHF Pastor's Network. Although DHF does not directly supervise or have direct authority over

DHF Pastor's Network members, there are expectations that are assumed in the decision to apply for membership in the Pastor's Network, including:

- ▶ to maintain a deep commitment to biblical truth
- ▶ to maintain a lifestyle and ministry style that reflects the heart of Christ
- ▶ to maintain a relationship of accountability with the leadership of Disciple Heritage Fellowship

**Chaplaincy Endorsement** Those interested in acquiring a military or institutional chaplaincy can be served through Disciple Heritage Fellowship. Most military or institutional chaplaincy positions require a denominational endorsement.

Because DHF is not a denomination and therefore unable to directly provide denominational endorsement, we are able to provide a path for endorsement for military chaplaincy through our National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) membership. Chaplains are endorsed by the NAE as DHF chaplains.

The NAE does not currently have a program for institutional chaplaincy endorsement, but in most cases, membership in the DHF Pastor's Network is accepted in lieu of a denominational endorsement.

To join the **DHF PASTOR'S NETWORK**,  
contact us at [dhf@discipleheritage.org](mailto:dhf@discipleheritage.org) or 217.875.3350

# STRENGTHENING CHURCHES DURING PASTORAL **TRANSITION**



By Dr. Tom Harris | Executive Director of Interim Pastor Ministries

The greatest opportunity to take a church to a new level is during pastoral transition. Wise congregations recognize the value of having a skilled interim pastor guide them. Interim Pastor Ministries (IPM) interims bring experience, wisdom, and guidance to churches, especially those plateaued or in decline.

IPM has placed experienced, trained, and proven interim pastors in more than 1,200 churches since 1990. We serve a wide range of evangelical denominations and independent churches of all sizes across the nation. The goal is simple: help congregations change their trajectory now and for the future and to pass the baton to the next permanent pastor.

IPM provides traditional interim pastoral functions such as preaching, teaching, planning and leading worship services, working with leadership and staff teams, church administration, and pastoral care. We also focus on:

- ▶ Identification of pertinent issues and an assessment of church health
- ▶ Leadership of a transition team
- ▶ Affirmation of church strengths
- ▶ Addressing church issues
- ▶ Clarifying church mission, vision, and values
- ▶ Facilitating actions to strengthen the church
- ▶ Coaching the pastoral search team
- ▶ Preparing the church for its new pastor

## How is this accomplished?

IPM exhibits organizational strength, experienced pastors, church partnerships, training, and coaching. It is a unique,

time-tested ministry with a proven national reputation and exposure. Our staff team works together, connected to interims in the field and the churches with whom they partner. IPM's leadership team provides direction, vision, oversight, strategic planning, marketing, communications, coaching, accounting/bookkeeping, and administrative support.

**Experienced Pastors** IPM's interim pastors have 15-35 years of pastoral experience, longevity of service, and college and seminary training. Our candidates bring maturity and wisdom from guiding congregations through all types of situations.

**Church Partnerships** IPM understands and cultivates positive relationships with denominational leaders and executive ministers. Ties are strengthened between the churches they serve and the denomination (where applicable). Some churches are quite healthy in need of a little tweaking while others are troubled and experiencing conflict.

**Training & Coaching** All IPM pastors who are equipped with a toolkit and resources to successfully guide a church through transition must complete training on the five-stage intentional process. Continuing education opportunities are provided as well as individually assigned coaches for each interim pastor.

Disciple Heritage Fellowship is pleased to provide information regarding Interim Pastor Ministries to churches in transition. Contact Lori Putnam at [dhf@discipleheritage.org](mailto:dhf@discipleheritage.org) or 217.875.3350.

# Posture Shift

November 15 - 16, 2018

One of the greatest challenges facing the church today is how to engage, welcome, and share Christ with LGBT+ persons. Join us for Posture Shift, a Two-Day Intensive presented by Lead Them Home hosted by First Christian Church in Decatur, IL. Learn effective LGBT+ outreach, care, and relational skills while maintaining faithfulness to the gospel and biblical teaching on healthy sexuality.

The cost is \$120, but we are pleased to announce a discounted rate of \$89 for DHF churches available until November 1. Use promo code "DHFCHURCH" when registering. For more information, contact Lori Putnam at [dhf@discipleheritage.org](mailto:dhf@discipleheritage.org) or 217.875.3350 or register today at [discipleheritage.org/events](http://discipleheritage.org/events).



## Cuba Mission Trip

November 28 - December 4, 2018

FCC Decatur is hosting a discovery trip to Cuba November 28 - December 4, 2018. The purpose of the trip is to experience the dynamics of Cuban ministry, seeing firsthand the impact of the Holy Spirit's work in Cuba. Wayne Kent and Roger Storms, speaker from the 2018 Intentional Church Conference, will be part of the group.

The trip is less than \$1,200 per person, which includes airfare, travel visa, travel insurance, housing, and meals in Cuba. Available spots are filling quickly. To sign up or learn more, contact Pastor BJ Leonard at [bleonard@firstdecatour.org](mailto:bleonard@firstdecatour.org) or 217.875.3350.

## DHF National Conference

April 5 - 6, 2019 at First Christian Church in Decatur, IL

Mark your calendar for the 2019 DHF National Conference hosted by First Christian Church in Decatur, IL. You will engage in worship, learn best practices, and connect with other like-minded church leaders on day one. Day two includes main sessions and breakout classes with the Intentional Church Conference featuring Ben Cachairas and Nancy Beach. More details coming soon.

Registration will open January 2019 at [discipleheritage.org](http://discipleheritage.org).





Disciple Heritage Fellowship

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   [discipleheritage.org](https://discipleheritage.org)

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### Who is Disciple Heritage Fellowship?

We are a group of evangelical Christians — some of whom come from Stone-Campbell backgrounds — who are passionate about helping congregations thrive in ministry. We strive to work with a spirit of gracious Holy-Spirit creativity.

### Why this publication?

We want to introduce you to a new model of ministry — a consulting team with a proven growth track record, ready to help you and your church. We believe this is a time for your congregation to experience new mission endeavors and community impact.

### Let's partner together!

We'd like to partner with you and your congregation, helping you discover God's best plan for your church.

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