

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



DR. MICHAEL BISCHOF KEYNOTES 2020 FEC CONFERENCE - DEEPER

“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (“One out of three pastors experiences personal discouragement or depression on a regular basis” (Souleader.org). Dr. Michael Bischof understands that statistic. In his first pastoral role, 30 years ago, he experienced depression. Out of that experience, he developed a passion for helping leaders, and 30 years of pastoral ministry has shaped the organization that he founded, SOULeader Resources. Through SOULeader, Dr. Bischof and his team provide support for ministry leaders and help them to develop transformational wholeness in their private lives and public ministries. He will address ministry leaders at the virtual FEC conference on Thursday, July 23.

Dr. Bischof’s passion for helping ministry leaders develop wholeness grew out of his own ministry experiences. Early on, he realized that he lacked the personal resources to deal with crisis and conflict. Then, discouragement and depression set in, and he began a transformational

journey toward wholeness. Years later, he discovered that his story resonated with other ministry leaders. Through his personal journey, he developed six areas that, if neglected, can affect pastors, their families, and their churches. Those six areas of our lives relate to our emotional, relational, spiritual, mental, physical, and missional formation.

Dr. Michael Bischof advises ministry leaders to live and lean into God’s grace. He also encourages them to slow down and create the kinds of rhythms that Jesus demonstrated. He says, “Slowing is a practice that is needed in our lives. Create some space for the same kinds of rhythms that were in Jesus’s life - solitude, fellowship, and ministry. The same kinds of rhythms can be lived out today in powerful ways.”

His three keynotes will focus on personal transformation through wholeness. His messages will be streamed on Thursday, July 23, starting at 10:00 AM Eastern. The sessions may be accessed through the FEC website, at fecministries.org/deeper.

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Defiance, OH, Churches Gather for Prayer Amidst National Turmoil

Following the May 25th death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, protests were ignited in large cities across the United States, and even small towns saw public outcries for racial justice. Defiance, Ohio, a city in the northwest corner of Ohio with nearly 17,000 people was no exception. In the days following the protests, King’s Cross Church partnered with other Defiance churches to pray for unity among Christians there and across the country.

On Wednesday, June 3, Pastor Sam Andres, King’s Cross Church (FEC), and Pastor Ray Gaffney, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, led 100 people of all ages and ethnicities in unity prayer for America on the county courthouse lawn. The crowd included people from other area churches and several of the protestors. Andres believes that, “God has the power to change human hearts and the conscience of our nation.”

Together, Andres and Gaffney planned another unity prayer gathering on Wednesday, June 17. The two leaders are exploring other ways to create unity between their churches and in their community. Andres notes, “This is a matter of the heart. Prayer changes hearts. The events help change attitudes toward others and change minds about people of a different skin color.”

City Church Reaches Across Racial Divide

When Chris and Madison Freeman launched City Church on Fort Wayne’s south side, they moved into a diverse neighborhood. City Church’s zip code represents the most densely populated and diverse area of Fort Wayne, Indiana. To reach their community, the church has engaged in intentional conversations about racial issues which prepared them to address the recent challenges facing Fort Wayne after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Creating a welcoming and safe environment has required City Church leaders to think differently. Pastor Chris Freeman says, “If we want to be a multi-ethnic church, our values, strategies, and methods need to reflect that.” In a step toward understanding racial issues, last fall they offered a class entitled, “A Dialogue on Race and Culture,” led by Eric Headley, Director of Fort Wayne UNITED.

In May, during the first weekend of protests, Freeman reached out to another pastor in his community, Michael Latham Jr. of New Horizon Church. The two men gathered their churches at McMillen Park on Sunday, May 31. About 300 people came together for prayer and worship. Later in June, the two churches planned a worship service at a downtown park to signify the unity that they have in Christ.

Freeman says, “We continue to pray and seek racial reconciliation and true justice for everyone in our community that is rooted and anchored in the love of Christ.”

