

Church Leader, this is the biggest question I get as the new CEO.

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Leadership Network *Advance*



Where is Leadership Network going in the years to come?

By Ron Edmondson, CEO

I've done a ton of listening in my first six months at the helm of Leadership Network. The affirmations of the impact of this ministry has been so encouraging. The number one question I've received is - "*Where is Leadership Network going in the years to come?*"

This is a vitally important question for every organization. It's especially important for Leadership Network with the passing of our founder, Bob Buford, this past year and with my transition into the CEO role. Turnovers and new seasons represent great opportunities for looking back and celebrating, and looking ahead to discern where God is leading.

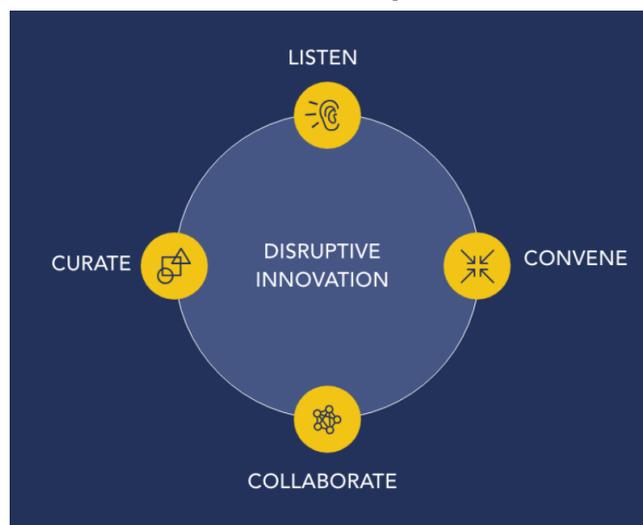
Our team is grateful for the stewardship role we've been entrusted with and we are energized by where the future is taking us.

Our *winning aspiration* (term borrowed from the book "*Playing to Win*") is to be the premier trusted source for convening and resourcing healthy Kingdom leaders who catalyze innovations that accelerate the flourishing of Churches, the thriving of communities and the prospering of the whole land.

I realize that's a bold statement. In simple terms, we want to help churches make disciples better. To accomplish this, we aren't reinventing our own wheel. In fact, in 2019 we hope to do more of what we have done for over 30 years. We want to put more true peers in the room and allow our process to help them do ministry more effectively.

There is far more on our minds than I could share here, but here are a few broad strokes of what we are looking to do in 2019:

The LN Process



Listen - I purposely end every message I send with something like “Let me know how we can help you.” We really do want to know what’s “around the corner” impacting church and culture. Listening involves research and conversations. **Listening** happens in culture, in churches and among constituents. We commit to listening more this year and in the years to come. Through research, conversations, and partnerships with other ministries, we are attempting to hear what's "around the corner" for the Church.

Convene - As we’ve done in the past we will do even more of in the future. We want to put the right people in the room, give them access to information and to peers. There is a synergy of being in the room together in fellowship and mutual learning. It was valuable to me as a pastor and I think we need this more, not less. In the future we may convene in a variety of ways, but our intent will be the same - to accelerate healthy Kingdom disciple making.

By the way, I’m convening a group of peer pastors for a stellar learning experience. There are a few spaces left. Check out details [HERE](#).

Collaborate - Information is useless if you don’t know what to do with it. The answers are usually in the room if we ask the right questions and facilitate the right discussions. Our groups are unique in that we are non-prescriptive and not sales-driven. We aren’t teaching our system. We are using our process to help participants take new ideas and best practices and put them into action plans, which can be used in their unique context. We aren’t trying to sell you a bigger product. We have products to sell, but as a non-profit our end goal is your success.

Curate - We will continue to capture information and share what we are learning with the greater Kingdom. Just as happened in the subject of leadership and multisite churches, Leadership Network is at its best when we are spurring constructive Kingdom disruptions.

LN Associates

As an organization, we recognize our need to diversify to remain relevant. LN Associates will be a strategic alliance with diverse, younger contract associates who will help us

discover emerging thoughts and trends within the Church and culture. LN Associates will be a “younger version” of Leadership Network’s “listening” component, as well as champions for our ministry. In turn we will champion their individual ministries as well.

Partnerships

We believe in partnering with like-minded Christian ministries where it makes sense to do so. The closest partnership we have formed is with Exponential - one of the most trusted ministries in church multiplication. We consider ourselves sister ministries. You will see us with a significant presence at the Orlando Exponential and should see us doing many joint projects in the days to come. One of our favorite conversations, and we are having many of them, is how we can partner with other ministries using our LN Process, as described previously, to help other ministries succeed.

Book Publishing

In partnership with major Christian publishers, Leadership Network has published many books over the years, including my own book "[The Mythical Leader](#)" (sorry for the shameless plug). This year we have a few books releasing I'm particularly excited about, because of the impact potential they have for the Kingdom. I'll let the titles speak for themselves.

- Kadi Cole releases "[Developing Female Leaders: Navigating the Minefields and Release the Potential of Women in Your Church](#)"
- Bruce Miller releases "[Leading a Church in a Time of Sexual Questioning: Grace-Filled Wisdom for Day-to-Day Ministry.](#)"
- Steve Cuss releases "[Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs](#)"

You will want to read each of these. Stay tuned for ways you can interact with these books online.

Total Health

As a pastor for 16 years, I know the stress of ministry. As we make plans for the future, I am encouraging us to think of the total health of the pastor, church, and ministry leader. You've seen us address issues such as mental health recently and our hope is you'll see us address this even more. We care about healthy marriages of the pastor and ministry leader. We care about healthy governing structures for the church. We care about healthy succession plans for the ministry leaders. We care about you! It is not enough to encourage churches to get bigger if we don't equally encourage churches (and leaders) to be healthy. We will continually look for ways to encourage health.

Faith and Work

This is huge and all I can say is stay tuned. I believe this is a "next big" area Leadership Network needs to help the church move towards. We are currently beginning to connect with and gather thought leaders in this space. The potential is gigantic for Kingdom impact.

One CEO of a large technology company in the Bay Area of California said recently at an Exponential event, “3% of the Bay Area will be in church on Sunday morning, but 76% of them will be at work on Monday morning.” He went on to say he felt he was a “pastor” to thousands of employees Monday through Friday. That’s someone who understands the integration of Faith and Work. We want to help the church understand and implement this thinking.

One thing **not** changing is who we are as a ministry. Leadership Network is the premier leadership collaborative for pastors and churches. We are a Gospel-centered ministry exposing church leaders around the world with innovative ideas that fuel local impact. By inspiring and equipping leaders, we will continue to seek to help the Church flourish and communities thrive.

My personal ministry - I want to keep myself relevant to the work in the church, so I continue to find ways to be active in the local church. It was a difficult transition from preaching most Sundays, so I am finishing a short-term interim preaching assignment and then my wife and I will settle in on a church where we can volunteer. I will continue to preach as called upon in limited capacities. In addition, I plan to lead senior pastor groups, such as the one mentioned above. We have always joked that our goal if we were ever not on a local church staff is to be the best church members ever. We love the local church.

Bonus Opportunity: Planned before I accepted this role, I am leading a trip to Israel later this year. If you’ve ever wanted to experience Israel in person I welcome you to join us. You can find details [HERE](#).

Thank you for following along as we prepare the ministry of Leadership Network for what’s next. Please let us know how we may serve you in 2019. God bless you!

Ron Edmondson



Working Women Are Leaving the Church. Here’s How to Bring Them Back.

By Diane Paddison

“I feel invisible.”

“I manage a multi-million dollar portfolio at work. When I offered to help with the finances at our church, the finance committee never responded.”

“I tried to sign up for a Bible study, but the only groups for women meet on weekday mornings. I wish I didn’t have to choose between supporting my family and connecting with other women at church.”

If you’ve ever thought or spoken aloud one of the sentiments above, you might be one of the thousands of working women leaving their churches because they feel their church “just doesn’t get me.” And, as women who work outside the home leave their churches, they’re taking their husbands, children, desire to serve, and even their pocketbooks with them.

Competing Priorities and the Camouflaged

In 2015, [a Barna study](#) found that 27 percent of professional women are leaving the church, and those women make up a significant portion of the 38 percent of adult Christian women who say they haven’t attended church in the past six months.

The unchurched gender gap is also shrinking: just over a decade ago, 40 percent of the unchurched in America were women; today, that number has grown to 46 percent.

But statistics only matter if we know the **why** behind them.

[\(Read Full Article Here\)](#)

Things You Want to Know About

Opportunities and resources for you and your team

Developing Female Leaders

By: Kadi Cole

Kadi Cole's new book, **Developing Female Leaders**, is being released in the next few weeks! It addresses how we, as church leaders, can do a better job navigating this minefield and harnessing the potential of the female leaders in our congregations, regardless of where we stand on the theological spectrum.

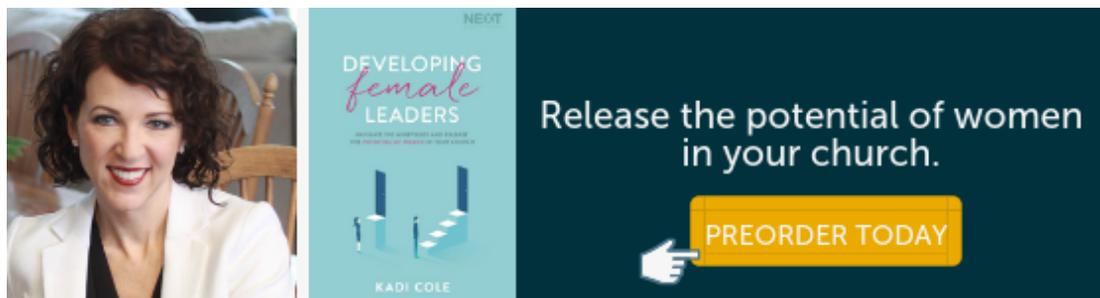
This book is research-based and includes **The Eight Best Practices** every church leader can start implementing to do a better job leading and developing the women on their teams and in their congregations. I really believe this will help move your leadership and ministry forward!

[Order Kadi's book here.](#)

Learn more about the author, Kadi Cole.

Kadicole.com

[@kadicole](https://twitter.com/kadicole)



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