

"He inspires me to live as a Kingdom seeker rather than an empire builder."

That's what Ken Shigematsu, internationally-known speaker and author and pastor of Tenth Church in Vancouver, Canada, says about his longtime friend and mentor, Leighton Ford.

Ken came to Tenth Church in 1996, after years of decline, when the church went through twenty pastors in twenty years. Sitting in his car with Leighton, desperate for encouragement, Ken listened as the older evangelist said, **"Remember that God is an artist. He will not lead you to copy anyone else. Seek God for His unique vision for this place."**



Paul Johnson and the Spiritual Friendship Journey Group met in September in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Ken and others began seeking God together in prayer. Before long, they were actively ministering to people on the streets. Ken writes, "The Holy Spirit began drawing people of all walks of life to Christ." Today, Tenth Church thrives with six locations and countless lives transformed by the Gospel.

Ken describes Leighton as "a deeply loving and attentive listener," having inspired him to teach and mentor leaders in places as diverse as Canada, Japan, Australia, Germany, Ukraine, and Russia.

Mentoring Emerging Leaders

For thirty-one years, Leighton served as an associate evangelist with his brother-in-law Billy at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He shared the Gospel with thousands in person, via radio, and on television, including the popular "Hour of Decision" broadcast.

Through his crusade ministry, he gained international recognition and respect, eventually leading to his serving as the chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization for many years. **He was later appointed honorary lifetime Executive Chair of what is now known as the Lausanne Movement.**

In the 1980s, following the death of their oldest son, Sandy, Leighton and Jean sensed the slow stirring of the Spirit, preparing them for something new. **Through a few years of seeking God and practicing discernment, they believed the Lord was calling them into the second part of their journey.** Leighton writes, "Increasingly, I was seeing my calling as one to connect and mentor. To identify, develop, and bring together the emerging young evangelists from around the world."[1]

Forty years ago, in 1986, the Fords officially launched Leighton Ford Ministries with the aim to "identify, develop, and network the emerging leaders for the global cause of Christ."[2]

In those early days, Leighton began **The Point Group** as his first spiritual mentoring community of young men who showed much promise for Gospel impact. More than thirty years later, this group still meets today. In 1991, LFM established **Arrow Leadership** to mentor and train emerging Christian leaders.

Aware of how badly ministry leaders need authentic mentors, models, and friends, LFM sought to be a friend on the journey to these pastors and evangelists.

Leighton put an arm around emerging leaders. **Forty years later, LFM is still putting an arm around leaders — and your gift helps us put that arm around the next generation.**

"I had never met anyone like him."

Steve Johnson is one of those people who Leighton put his arm around. In 1984, Steve decided due to lack of funds he could not finish

A Love Story that Touched the World

Leighton Ford and Jean Graham met at Wheaton College, and love awakened. Married in 1953, their love for each other, Jesus Christ, and evangelism would last for a beautiful, seventy-year marriage. Today, their legacy continues transforming lives through Jeanie's Vision and Leighton's Journey Groups.



A young Leighton and Jean



Leighton with "friends on the journey"



Leighton and Jean on Billy and Ruth Graham's front porch

seminary. Someone told him about the Sandy Ford Scholarship Fund, to which he applied: “I was overwhelmed when selected. The money was very helpful, but what meant far more was that Leighton wanted to meet me. I was touched by how thoughtful he was and all the questions he asked. I had never met anyone like him.” Leighton modeled for Steve and others what has become a deep value in Leighton Ford Ministries – attentiveness. Steve remembers, **“Leighton gave his complete attention to me when in conversation. He told me the potential he saw in me.** My father died when I was 18. It was like having a conversation that I always would have wanted with my father.”

Following seminary, Steve spent time with Leighton and Jean. He and his brother Paul were in the early stages of starting a church planting movement throughout Wisconsin. Leighton again provided that arm around the shoulder. “He offered to host a meeting of church planters from various denominations. It was held in Charlotte, and we learned how other groups started churches. Over the years, this movement has started 690 churches. Leighton and Jean were such encouragers of my wife Lynne and me. They provided us with wisdom and love which played a key role in keeping us going.”

Like the Fords, the Johnsons experienced the death of their oldest son in his twenties. Steve recalls, “We called Leighton and Jean. They prayed with us and cried with us. I was a part of **Leighton’s Point Group**, and my wife and I were loved on by them all. It is the worst thing we have ever been through, and Leighton and Jean knew just what to say.”

At age 55, Steve and Lynn transitioned their ministry to forming what we now call Journey Groups so they could give to others what they had received from Leighton, Jean, and the **Point Group**.

Around the world, pastors, evangelists, and emerging leaders are asking for the kind of spiritual friendship Leighton has modeled for forty years: **someone to listen, encourage, help them discern God’s direction, and remind them they are not alone.**

As we wrap up our 40th anniversary year, we have an opportunity to walk alongside even more of these leaders. But we cannot do it without friends like you.

Would you consider making a gift today to help us launch new Journey Groups, equip mentors, and provide coaching and spiritual friendship to leaders who need an arm around the shoulder?

Your gift will help ensure that the legacy Leighton began forty years ago doesn’t simply become something we celebrate… it becomes something we carry forward.

“I do not feel alone!”

Today, over 110 LFM Journey Groups exist around the world. We recently transitioned

our language from mentoring groups to Journey Groups, as these participants become “friends on the journey” together. And we continue launching new ones each year.

One of these communities, the **Awakening Emerging Leaders Journey Group**, recently met in Berlin, Germany. Heidi told us, “I do not feel alone!! I have friends that understand my heart, call me deeper in God and call out the gold in me that God wants to use. I feel honored, received and understood in this group, **giving me more courage to go after the things God is calling me to pursue in my home city!”**

Heidi works with youth gatherings for both churched and unchurched people. Her team has witnessed many young people saved and set free, especially young people who do not come from Christian homes.

One young lady who came from a Muslim family heard her friends sharing testimonies of Jesus on a school trip. Alina* asked them if she could know God the way they knew Him, so they invited her to these youth gatherings. Her friends met her in their own time to pray and read Scripture together. After a few months Alina surrendered her life to Jesus and suffered much rejection at home.

Heidi says, “We have all been praying with her and for her family. This Ramadan, as her mother fasted and prayed to Allah, Alina woke up before sunrise, but she did not pray to Allah — she read the Bible and prayed for her family’s salvation. We are

Leighton’s Journey Groups

We recently transitioned our language from mentoring groups to Journey Groups, as these participants become “friends on the journey” together. With over 110 Journey Groups worldwide, LFM continues launching new ones each year.



Journey Group guides at a facilitator training in Eurasia in August



The Panama Journey Group met in August for an in-person retreat.



The Impact Couples Journey Group recently gathered in the Colorado mountains.

believing for her family to come to Christ. Her brother and cousins have already asked her for a Bible and begun visiting churches!" We rejoice at the encouragement leaders receive through their LFM Journey Groups — and for the incredible Gospel impact these leaders make throughout the world.

Carrying the Torch

Several years ago, Leighton and Jean, along with LFM's Board of Directors, prayerfully and thoughtfully considered, "Does LFM cease to exist when Leighton retires or can no longer lead the ministry?" During that time, they again sensed the consistent direction of God to carry the torch of this ministry for future generations. **They saw an incredible need in not only mentoring young leaders, but also in helping churches and ministries thrive.**

In 2019, Kevin Ford came on board as LFM's Chief Catalyst and CEO, intentionally forming a team that would help expand the ministry to help us build healthy leaders and thriving ministries across the globe.

Dave McKechnie, LFM's Board Chair, says, "The future is bright for LFM. We are positioned to make tremendous positive impact for leaders and ministries in the 21st century both in North America and globally. LFM is in good hands for years to come."

We exist to help leaders and organizations reconnect with their truest calling through spiritual mentoring, coaching, and consulting. With the help of seasoned mentors and spiritual discernment

** name changed for privacy*

> ***I cannot thank Leighton Ford Ministries enough for your generosity and kindness. Not only making a way financially but to pray for our group too. It feels too good to be true. When God called us to make this group He told me to say yes and let Him provide the rest. He is not a man that He should lie!! Thank you for being an answer to prayer and changing our lives. I know it will have ripple effects that impact all of Europe. Thank you for believing in what God wants to do in Europe. Thank you for loving a people and land that are not your own. We are so moved and humbled by your generosity and support.***
>
> – HEIDI
> European Awakening Emerging Leaders Journey Group

> ***Like Jesus, Leighton meets people wherever he is. He never fails to engage a young waiter in a restaurant or a person he meets walking on the street, with cheerfulness, curiosity, and a listening heart. Often he can be heard inquiring about a person's dreams, or how he can pray, or their own faith journey. Just looking at their face, the change toward a smile and light in their eyes is often evidence of his leading, like, two and for Jesus."***
>
> – ANNE GRIZZLE
> Longtime friend of Leighton and Jean Ford and Director of LFM's Jeanie's Vision initiative

processes, leaders and churches rediscover their direction in God. Supported by trusted friends and whole-life guidance, leaders are empowered to take real, guided steps toward renewal, transformation, and lasting impact.

Forty years after Leighton Ford Ministries began, we remain deeply committed to carry on this Gospel legacy.

Thank you for your investment in the lives of pastors, evangelists, and ministry leaders all over the world. You are touching lives both near and far.

Grateful for you,



Rich Hurst
President

1. Leighton Ford, A Life of Listening, 141.
2. Ibid., 135.

Will you prayerfully consider joining us in strengthening healthy leaders and helping ministries thrive around the world? You can participate by:

- **Praying** daily for the leaders, churches, and evangelists we serve.
- **Giving $100 per month** to strengthen ongoing Leighton's Journey Groups that provide encouragement and soul care for ministry leaders.
- **Investing $2,000** to equip one leader to participate in a Journey Group where they will receive mentoring, encouragement, and spiritual friendship.
- **Giving $5,000** to launch a new Journey Group, creating a safe space where leaders can discern God's voice and encourage one another.
- **Investing $15,000** to establish and sustain a new Journey Group for its first three years, helping build a lasting community of healthy leaders.
- **Providing $30,000** to train a new generation of global mentors through Jeanie's Vision, equipping evangelists who will strengthen countless others for years to come.

Every gift, whether through prayer, monthly support, or a transformational investment, **helps leaders hear God's voice, clarify their calling, and live and lead as God intended.**

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