

Global  
Leadership  
Network

# 2018 Annual Report





# Dear Friend and Ministry Partner,

It is a sight I will never forget. Three business leaders attending the 2018 Global Leadership Summit from a country in Asia that limits the expression of Christianity, walking into a lake on the South Barrington campus to be baptized. Moved by God during one of the Summit sessions, these attendees inquired how they could become Christians. In a significant step of faith, all three were baptized, and many of us got to witness the life change.



My heart overflows in gratitude for you and your partnership! Because of your support and God’s generous blessing, stories of transformation like this were repeated around the world at 725 sites in the U.S. and Canada, and 875 sites in 135 countries in 60 languages. In 2018, The Global Leadership Summit was one of the highest rated events we’ve ever experienced. Additionally, we launched our new website, **GlobalLeadership.org** in June this past year. It is a leadership platform that provides instruction and resources, and can help everyone increase their influence. We expanded our impact in prisons, and many inmates have shared how personally and profoundly the Summit is touching their lives and giving them hope for the future. We are seeing city leaders unite and leverage the Summit to catalyze new ideas and opportunities for a better community.

While there was much to be grateful for this last year, we also experienced difficult and demanding circumstances that deeply affected the Willow Creek Association, The Global Leadership Summit, our partners and staff. (See separate article on page 3.) Through this painful time, and today, we have continued to feel God’s presence and direction. The words of our Board of Directors in response to the independent report reflect our commitment:

*We recognize we cannot change the events of the past, including the incidents of this past year, and those that transpired over multiple decades. We sincerely regret and grieve over all that has occurred, seeking forgiveness, and committing to pursue healing and reconciliation in the future. The pain that has been caused by past mistakes provides opportunities for God’s mercy and grace to be extended and for the making of apologies and amends as part of the restoration process in moving forward.*

On February 15, 2019, our ministry’s name changed to the **Global Leadership Network** (GLN), completing a two-year rebranding process. The name change reflects our expanded focus on ministry innovations that reach all Christ-followers to inspire vision and ignite transformation. We are incredibly grateful for the 27 years we’ve existed as Willow Creek Association. Because of your partnership, God has allowed us to train, equip and inspire more than 2 million people!

Our name is different, but our commitment to expanding the reach and impact of The Global Leadership Summit in the U.S. and in the 135 countries we currently serve has not wavered. And we remain fully committed to serving you with leadership development opportunities.

Our commitment to the goal of growing the Summit to reach 500,000 people annually by 2020 has never been stronger. We are grateful to our partners in North America and around the world who pray for us, support us and are engaged with us in God’s work of restoring and reconciling the world to Himself through Christians—showing compassion and encouraging justice.

Now, we are humbly asking God to pour out His favor on us in new ways as we boldly move forward in pursuit of our collective goal to impact more than one million Christian influencers annually by 2025.

Together, we are making a difference—an eternal one. Thank you for walking with us, growing together with us and especially for praying for us.

Together in the Cause,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom De Vries".

Tom De Vries  
President & CEO, Global Leadership Network



## WCA Board of Directors’ Response to the IAG Report

On April 4, 2018, Bill Hybels stepped down as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Willow Creek Association (WCA), known today as Global Leadership Network, and stepped down as a participant in the 2018 Global Leadership Summit. This action was in response to public accusations and allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct. Since that time, Bill Hybels has not had a role in the organization.

Almost a year later and following the recent report by the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), jointly commissioned by WCA and Willow Creek Community Church, there is more clarity regarding the accusations and actions that transpired over multiple decades, how they impacted staff and culture and recommended response and actions moving forward.

We are grateful to the IAG for the time and commitment they gave to this effort, and the help and understanding they have provided through the presenting of their report.

The IAG was tasked with a scope of work that included the following:

- 1. Consider allegations related to Bill Hybels
- 2. Review the organizational culture of the church and association
- 3. Make recommendations to the church and association for future actions

The findings of the IAG can be viewed at: [GlobalLeadership.org/IAG-Report](https://GlobalLeadership.org/IAG-Report)

The response of our Board of Directors can be viewed at: [GlobalLeadership.org/IAG-Board-Response](https://GlobalLeadership.org/IAG-Board-Response)

As a Board and staff, we remain committed to our member churches, The Global Leadership Summit and to God’s call on our shared work and impact of the Summit around the world. God continues to be opening more and more doors as individuals are trained and equipped to realize their full leadership potential.

In trusting God’s leading for our future, we seek to let love prevail. May it be the foundation of how we relate to one another as Christ-followers. May it be the language from which we communicate with each other. May it be the base out of which we discover forgiveness and healing with each other as Jesus teaches and instructs. May we continue to go forward with a conviction that even in the midst of difficult circumstances, Christians can still let love prevail.



# Aim Higher

*Expanding influence. Creating impact.*

The Global Leadership Network equips people to *aim higher* with Christ-centered leadership development. As Christ-followers are energized with tools that allow them to inspire others to live with purpose, they expand their influence, and release Kingdom power that creates impact in homes, churches and communities throughout North America.

The Global Leadership Network is on a mission to put Christ-centered leadership development into every community in North America. We believe every Christian, regardless of what their position is or where they serve, needs to grow their leadership in order to increase their influence in every part of society.



## Under-Resourced Communities

Thousands of people return to the Summit each year for a leadership development experience. And year after year, they tell us that the Summit offers the highest-value leadership development for the most economical price. Still, there are communities across the U.S. where people simply cannot afford to attend. We are committed to helping bridge the financial gap to make this experience possible for anyone.

## Domestic Language Groups

The Global Leadership Network is making the Summit accessible to increased populations in the U.S. by expanding the GLS into Chinese, Korean and Spanish communities.

## GLS Live Stream

The GLN is launching a new way for groups to view the Summit in 2019. Live streaming will revolutionize the way we provide the Summit, and is intended especially for small churches, rural and inner-city communities, people who live too far from a Summit site, and businesses that can now bring the Summit into their environments. If you can't come to us, we'll come to you!



Attendees receiving the GLS in Spanish



Live Stream participants engage in Craig Groeschel's talk

**With your support and prayers, we are expanding the impact of the Summit throughout North America.**

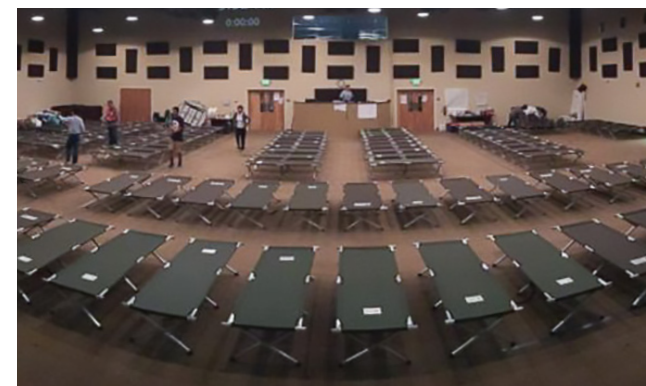


## The Church for People Who Don't Go to Church

NewLife Christian Fellowship was planted in Sonoma County, California, the second most unchurched community in the United States, where surveys show many people are skeptical about church. The leaders at NewLife determined early on they wanted to awaken people to the idea that God is not some abstract judgmental concept, but a loving, caring force for good. The Global Leadership Summit has inspired the church's vision to change the spiritual climate in the community and ignite its calling.

But they had no idea God would use California wildfires to elevate that vision.

No one saw it coming, but when the fires hit, people in the community knew where to go. They knew that the church would be a gathering place for both victims and caregivers. NewLife Christian Fellowship opened its doors, providing shelter for more than 500 guests. Church staff and volunteers made a point of creating an environment where people could engage with God.



Cots set up at NewLife Christian Fellowship for people displaced by California wildfires

Executive pastor Angela Lam said, "Local officials commented that we had something special in our shelter. They likened it to our organizational skills creating a calm atmosphere. But we know it was love. The legacy that started at our church is fanned annually by The Global Leadership Summit."

"The wildfires wreaked terrible devastation on our towns, but it forged something beautiful in our community," says Angela. "It was an example of leaders who are for others, even in a crisis."

*"The legacy that started at our church is fanned annually by The Global Leadership Summit."*

**Angela Lam**  
Executive Pastor  
NewLife Christian Fellowship  
Petaluma, California

Read more:

[GlobalLeadership.org/Stories](https://GlobalLeadership.org/Stories)



# Dig Deeper

*Always learning. Always growing.*

To inspire vision and ignite transformation, we continue to *dig deeper*—developing new tools that engage new audiences. Last year saw the launch of two new such resources: The **new Global Leadership Network website**, a year-round leadership development platform, is changing the conversation about our mission and message. In addition, our **new Global Digital Content** now includes Spanish, Portuguese and English subtitles, and we are pushing to expand into other languages in the months ahead. The GLN is not only about a two-day event, but is committed to providing year-round leadership learning tools.



## Year-Round Resources

Following the Summit and throughout the year, the GLN provides next-step tools and resources for people to continue their leadership development. Hundreds of thousands of people from every country in the world access our GLSnext app and online content.

## Prison Growth

The GLS in prisons has grown from four sites in 2014 to 67 sites in 2018, bringing life-changing leadership inspiration to those behind prison walls. With 94% of the prison population being released back into society, giving new vision and hope to inmates is transforming the lives of their families and future communities.

## GLS Youth Events

Youth events are growing around the world. The next generation is hungry and ready to be inspired to make their lives count, and a variety of GLS youth models are being held on every continent. In 2018 more than 34 GLS youth events were held in countries including Vietnam, India, Russia and Thailand, creating new models for future growth.



Inmates from Southeast Correctional Center engage with the GLS



GLS youth event in the Philippines

**Your vision is making it possible to generate new ways for people to continue their growth throughout the year.**



## The GLS Brings Redemption to Men and Women Behind Bars

For too long, prisons have served as warehouses—clothing, housing and feeding humans until they're sent back into society with a vague hope the experience has made them better. But look at the high recidivism rates across the country—the degree to which released offenders re-offend—and you'll see that this **rehabilitation** effort is a huge failure.

But what if we tried something new? What if we sought **redemption** for those in prison? What if we showed them that there's the possibility of hope in the here and now? Whether they are serving a short time or a life sentence, what if we gave them something to live for and think about?

Enter The Global Leadership Summit and its ability to unlock human potential.

Allen Hughes, corrections training officer at Southeast Correctional in Charleston, Missouri, believes there's a lot of human potential in the 1,700+ offenders incarcerated there. In 2015, he was part of introducing the GLS to the prison with 35 specially selected offenders on hand. Participation has grown steadily in the three years since.

In between annual Summits, inmates take part in follow-up sessions that serve as refreshers about what they have learned, along with classes in everything from substance abuse prevention to anger management.

In 2014, one year before the prison's first Summit, there were 576 times when staff had to employ physical force to gain compliance from offenders. In 2018, after hosting the GLS for three years running, the prison recorded 198 such incidents—a record low. Other key indicators also dropped: the number of acts of prison violence and inmate grievances filed against staff.

For those behind bars, believing in themselves—and in God—is a huge break from the despair and anger of the past.

The results of prison life are deep and long lasting, with consequences for everyone. Because 94 percent of the prison population will be released one day, they'll go back into society and into our neighborhoods, maybe even to the house next door. We need to do whatever we can to help them be successful and leave the criminal life behind.

*“The message inmates receive through the Summit is clear: Just because they failed and ended up in prison, doesn't mean their whole life is a failure.”*

**Allen Hughes**

Corrections Training Officer  
Southeast Correctional Center  
Charleston, Missouri

Read more:

 [GlobalLeadership.org/Stories](https://GlobalLeadership.org/Stories)



# Reach Farther



## Local ownership. Global reach.

The Global Leadership Network is creating an infrastructure that allows us to *reach farther*—where needs and opportunities are often greatest.

More than half of the international sites cannot afford the Summit without financial support. The GLN is focused on going where it is needed most, especially where people are facing issues of poverty, disease, injustice and corruption. Summit content is contextualized by local leaders to best meet the needs of their communities. From the Congo to Chicago, GLS participants can benefit equally from the GLS speakers and apply to their local situation. Cities are ready and waiting for additional resources to become available.

## International Expansion

Around the world, the Global Leadership Network is equipping Christ-followers to lead the charge of transformation. In 2018, 875 international sites opened doors to leadership development in 135 countries and 60+ languages with a clear mission:

- Inspire leadership in **Europe** to bring the Church back to life and transform countries for Christ.
- Provide resources in **Africa** where churches face the immense challenges of poverty, HIV/AIDS, political corruption and human trafficking.
- Develop leadership in **Latin America**, for those who see opportunities for change as they build on a vision to care for the poor, feed the hungry, offer healing and peace and change lives through love.
- Encourage leadership in **Oceania** (Australia, Fiji and New Zealand) to expand their influence in business, government, education, non-profits and multiple others arenas.
- Support leadership in **Asia** with resources in countries where Christians are in the minority, but their passion is on fire, even in the face of oppression.
- Embolden Christians in the **Middle East** who face persecution as the minority in their countries. Leadership development and encouragement are critical to inspire Christians to create a credible voice in their communities.



Volunteers at a GLS site in Venezuela



GLS in China



GLS in Guatemala

Your global heart is empowering more people to be forces for Christ in their local churches and communities internationally.



## The Summit Renews Hope and Vision in Cameroon



Cameroon

Cameroon is a nation of approximately 24 million that is situated just southeast of Nigeria. In Cameroon's male-dominated society, it is common for women to experience discrimination and even violence.

That has not deterred Bishop Angela Acha-Morfaw from pursuing her calling from God.

Twenty years ago, Angela was a student in Nigeria when she came to know Jesus. Her family didn't like it and issued an ultimatum: Choose family or choose faith.

"I tried to make my family realize that no one can encounter God and turn away. That in forcing this choice, they were telling me to go with Him—and let go of them." That's what happened.

Angela went to Cameroon, armed with a God-given conviction that the Lord wanted her to start a ministry there. "He wanted me to build a community of leaders—not followers," she says. The Summit stirred her to strive for excellence—and do something great for God.

"Every year when I come to the GLS, my soul is renewed, my vision is strengthened and my passion overflows. The confidence I've gained has helped me overcome those who scoffed at the idea of a woman pastor. It helped me overcome threats of violence after hoodlums threatened to burn down my church and kill me, because who was I to invade the domain of men? The Summit has helped me remain steadfast after taking what has been the most decisive step in my walk with God—becoming the first woman bishop in Cameroon."

*"The Summit has helped me remain steadfast after taking what has been the most decisive step in my walk with God."*

**Bishop Angela Acha-Morfaw**  
Founder & Bishop  
Abundant Life Faith Chapel International  
Cameroon

Read more:

[GlobalLeadership.org/Stories](https://www.GlobalLeadership.org/Stories)



Bishop Angela Acha-Morfaw interacts with her community





## Mission

### Why We Exist

To inspire and equip world-class leadership that ignites transformation.

## Vision

### Our Desired Outcome

We envision a movement of Christians and churches maximizing their full leadership potential to impact the world.

Read more:

[GlobalLeadership.org/Who-We-Are](https://www.GlobalLeadership.org/Who-We-Are)

## Board of Directors

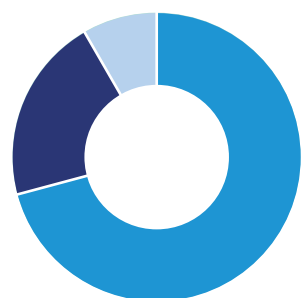
Dick DeVos, Chairman  
Tom De Vries  
D. Mitch Barns  
Sherri Miller  
Terry Moore  
Gary Schwammlein  
Kimberly D. Simios  
Bradford Whitmore

## Executive Team

*Global Leadership Network's executive team is responsible for aligning resources to the ministry strategy.*

Tom De Vries, President & CEO  
Gary Schwammlein, President Emeritus  
Steve Bell, Executive Vice President, Events, Church Relations & Publishing  
Scott Cochrane, Vice President, International Ministries  
Sue Elworth, Vice President, Development & Marketing  
Alicia Hendricks, Vice President, International Conferences  
Jen Servini, Chief Financial Officer  
Michael Strong, Chief Information Officer  
Doug Yonamine, Vice President, Human Resources & Legal Services

## 2018 Financials



### Sources of Revenue (\$21.7M)

- 69% Conferences
- 23% Donor
- 8% Resources & Membership



### Use of Funds

- 44% U.S. Operations
- 26% International Operations
- 8% Capital Reserves & New Initiatives
- 18% Corporate Overhead & Technology
- 4% Development

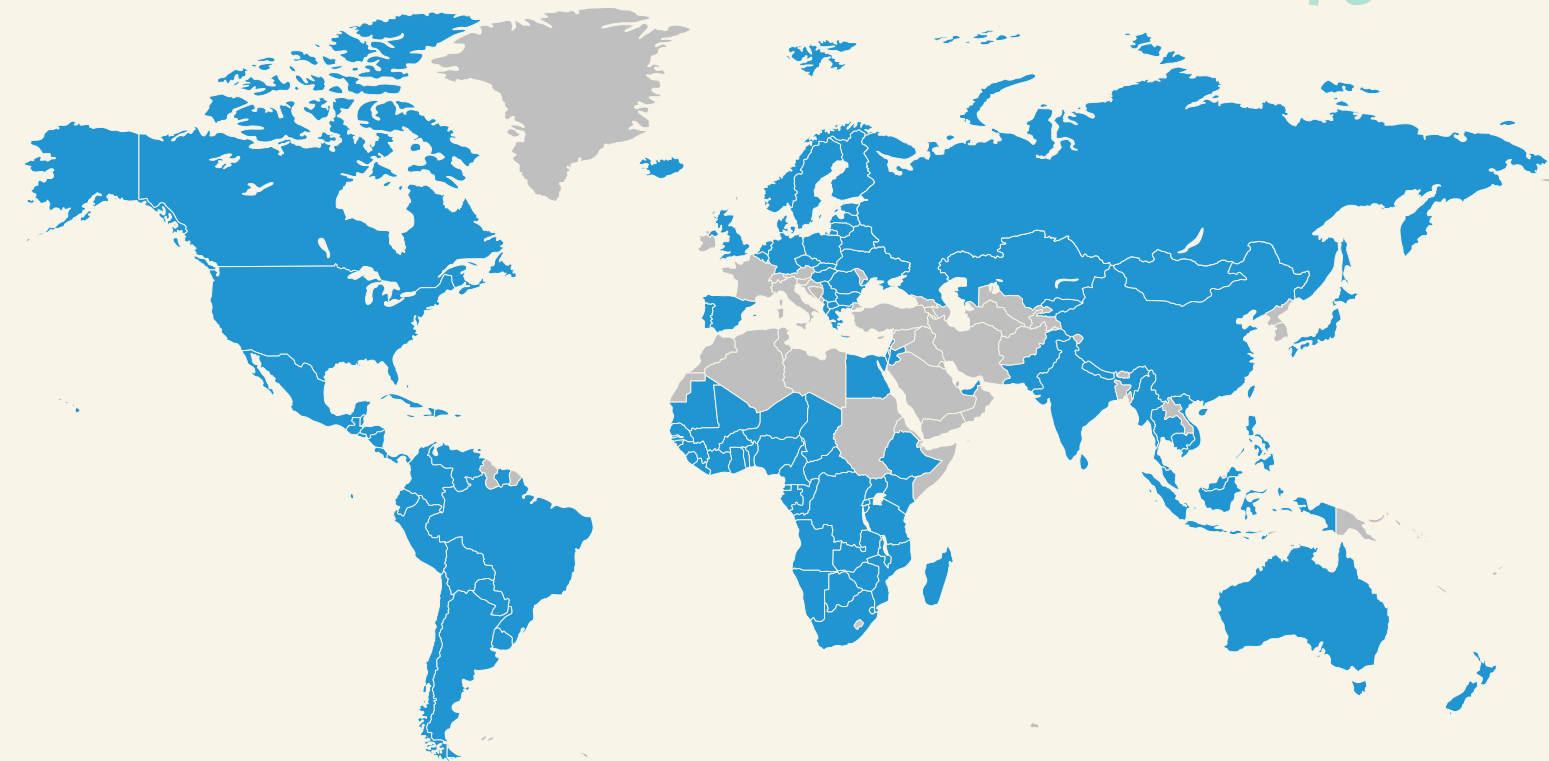


# Global Impact

Translated into 60+ languages, in 135 countries,\* representing more than 90 denominations.

● Countries with GLS Events (August 2018 through March 2019)

\*Some countries undisclosed due to persecution



ANNUAL REPORT  
2018

## Why Attend GLS?

For almost 25 years, the Summit has proven to **produce compelling outcomes\*** for attendees.

\*Independent research conducted by Excellence in Giving based on repeat Summit attendee data.

10%

OF ATTENDEES

said they would have quit their leadership position without GLS inspiration to persevere.

89%

OF ATTENDEES

gained courage to lead despite opposition.

79%

OF ATTENDEES

feel improved teamwork increased job satisfaction and productivity.

**WE** — *empower*

*catalyze*

*equip*

*inspire* —

**SO YOU CAN  
CHANGE THE WORLD**

[GlobalLeadership.org](http://GlobalLeadership.org)



**Global  
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