

The Heart of a Leader: Shepherding According to God's Heart

By Mike Sparrow, AFCM Executive Director

In December of 1993, while ministering with missionary friends in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia, I found myself in a season of deep prayer and decision. I was wrestling with whether to return and continue serving as lead pastor at Agape Church or to relocate my family to Bolivia for a new assignment. During a church service, as I prayed, the Lord brought me to Jeremiah 3:14-15: "Return, O backsliding children... for I am married to you... and I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." In that moment, I sensed the Lord speak clearly to my heart: "I have set you as an elder at Agape Church, and I am not calling you away." That encounter settled my direction—but even more, it defined my pursuit. The phrase "shepherds according to My heart" became a lifelong compass for how I understand leadership.

In a world saturated with leadership models, strategies, and countless books, the question for Christian leaders remains both simple and profound: How do we lead in alignment with the heart of God? Scripture gives us a powerful picture of David. Psalm 78 tells us that he shepherded God's people "according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands." David's leadership flowed from a heart deeply connected to God—expressed in worship, courage, repentance, and dependence on divine direction.

Yet it was also marked by practical wisdom, strategic thinking, and decisive action. True spiritual leadership is not just about passion or gifting—it is the union of a transformed heart and disciplined, skillful hands.

Ultimately, Jesus is the perfect expression of leadership according to God's heart. He led with compassion, clarity, and complete submission to the Father's will, declaring, "I only do what I see My Father doing." His leadership was not driven by position, but by relationship with the Father and others. Scripture reminds us that we are being transformed into His image "from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18). This transformation is not instantaneous but progressive, formed through ongoing encounters with His presence and alignment with His Word. As we behold Him, we reflect Him. Leadership, then, is not merely about influence; it is about becoming.

People are looking for authentic representatives of Jesus Christ. Leaders whose lives demonstrate integrity, humility, love, power, and Spirit-led wisdom. As we allow the Holy Spirit to shape us, our leadership becomes more than functional; it becomes transformational. And in that place, we begin to fulfill the promise of Jeremiah: to be shepherds who truly feed God's people with knowledge, understanding, and the very heart of God. "Let my heart be your throne."

We appreciate your generous giving that not only enables us to continue to minister the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, but also bless those in need. We expect you to be blessed because of the generosity that you have shown toward the work of God.

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2026 AFCM Family Gatherings

In 2026, we've expanded our schedule to include three AFCM Family Gatherings, each following a similar format with AFCM leaders, missionaries, and speakers. Our final gathering of the year will be October 19-22 in San Luis Obispo, California!

West Coast Family Gathering

October 19-22, 2026
Agape Church
San Luis Obispo, CA

Embassy Suites
333 Madonna Road,
SLO, CA | 805-549-0800
Ask for the AFCM room rate

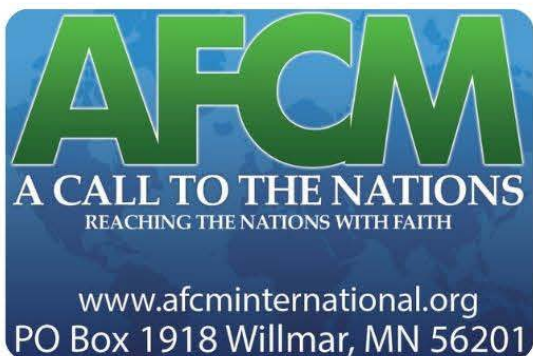
****Registration is required.****

Save the Date

START PLANNING NOW!



Beautiful setting, inspiring teaching, and unforgettable connections with the AFCM Family—don't miss it!



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Rev. Mike Sparrow will be ministering at all meetings listed below unless otherwise noted.

July 11
Springfield, MO
AFCM Midwest Regional Meeting

July 12
Houston, MO
Faith Fellowship Church

July 19
Porterville, CA
Porterville Believer's Church

August 8
Cobbs Creek, VA
AFCM Mid-Atlantic Meeting

August 9
Cobbs Creek, VA
Cornerstone Fellowship Church

September 20
St Catharines, Ontario
Eagles Nest

September 21-22
St Catharines, Ontario
AFCM Canada Overnighter

September 24-25
Willoughby, OH
AFCM Ohio River Valley Overnighter

September 27
Carrollton, OH
Carrollton Believers Fellowship

September 30
North Manchester, IN
Victory Christian Fellowship

October 1-2
Beloit, WI
AFCM Great Lakes Overnighter

October 4
Beloit, WI
Good New Christian Center

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If you would like to invite AFCM Executive Director Rev. Mike Sparrow to minister at your church, camp, conference, or special event, please contact the AFCM office at office@afcminternational.org.