**MTS Global Leadership Center**

**Strategic Priorities & Ministry Update | October 2026**

Mission

Our mission is to serve the diverse needs of the local church by equipping Christ-centered leaders, grounded in their God-given calling to ministry, with the knowledge, skills, and character essential for transformative and visionary biblical leadership.

Strategic Direction | 2026–2027

The MTS Global Leadership Center's work is focused on strengthening Christian leadership and serving the global church through research, leadership development, strategic partnerships, and accessible ministry resources.

As we move into the 2026–2027 academic year, we are placing a particular emphasis on leadership research and its practical application to ministry. Our goal is not simply to produce academic findings, but to better understand the opportunities and challenges facing Christian leaders around the world and use those insights to develop meaningful resources, training, and leadership development opportunities.

To accomplish this, we have established five interconnected strategic priorities:

1. Global Leadership Media: Making biblical leadership teaching accessible to a global audience.
2. Leadership Research & Insights: Producing meaningful research that informs and strengthens Christian leadership.
3. Leadership Formation & Mentorship: Investing directly in the spiritual and vocational development of Christian leaders.
4. Global Partnerships & Collaboration: Working alongside trusted ministry partners to expand leadership development opportunities.
5. Leadership Resources & Practical Equipping: Translating leadership insights into accessible tools and resources for local churches and ministry leaders.

Together, these priorities provide a coordinated approach to advancing the Center's mission. Our research informs the leadership resources we develop, our partnerships create opportunities to engage leaders in diverse ministry contexts, and our media and training initiatives allow us to share these insights with the broader church.

The following report provides an update on progress within each priority and outlines our next steps for the coming year.

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## 1. Leadership Research & Insights Initiative

Strategic Objective: Establish the Center as a trusted source of research and practical insights that strengthen Christian leadership within the global Church.

Leadership research is the central area of emphasis for the Center in 2026–2027. Through our Global Church Leadership Study, we are seeking to better understand how Christian leaders are formed, the challenges they encounter, and the practices that contribute to effective and faithful leadership across diverse ministry contexts.

Our goal is to produce meaningful research that not only contributes to the broader understanding of Christian leadership but also informs the training, mentorship, and resources we develop to serve the global church.

*First-Year Research Overview*

The first phase of our research explored the lived experiences and leadership development of 14 evangelical Protestant church leaders representing five continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America.

Participants represented a variety of ministry contexts, including urban, suburban, and rural churches, as well as leaders serving in both full-time and bivocational ministry.

Despite differences in geography, culture, and ministry context, the research identified several consistent themes in how Christian leaders understand and experience leadership.

*Key Research Findings*

1. Servant Leadership

Across cultures and ministry contexts, participants consistently described church leadership as an act of service rather than a position of authority. Effective leaders prioritize character, humility, and the development of others over personal influence or status.

2. Disciple-Making & Leadership Multiplication

Participants emphasized that effective Christian leadership involves intentionally developing the next generation of leaders. Leadership success is not simply measured by the size of a ministry, but by a leader's ability to identify, equip, and release others for ministry.

3. Calling & Spiritual Formation

Leaders consistently described their calling as something discerned through prayer, surrender, obedience, and affirmation from others rather than personal ambition. Spiritual vitality and character emerged as essential foundations for effective leadership.

4. Relational Leadership Development

One of the most significant findings was the importance of mentoring relationships and practical ministry experience. Participants emphasized that leadership development happens most meaningfully through personal relationships, accountability, and opportunities to lead, rather than through formal education alone.

*Implications for Leadership Development*

These findings offer valuable direction for how the Center can better serve Christian leaders around the world.

The research points to the importance of:

- Developing intentional mentoring and coaching relationships.
- Creating opportunities for emerging leaders to gain practical ministry experience.
- Prioritizing spiritual formation and character alongside leadership competencies.
- Making leadership training more accessible through flexible, affordable, and contextually appropriate approaches.
- Measuring leadership effectiveness not only through participation numbers, but also through discipleship, leadership multiplication, and long-term ministry impact.

These insights are already helping shape our thinking about the Center's future initiatives, particularly our mentorship programs, international leadership workshops, and the development of practical leadership resources.

Next Steps | 2026–2027

Research & Publication

- Complete the comprehensive first-year research report by December 2026.
- Launch the second phase of the Global Church Leadership Study in January 2027.
- Explore opportunities to publish the research findings in book form.
- Develop accessible research summaries and practical leadership resources based on the study's findings.

Sharing Research Findings

- Host two Research Insights events in spring 2027 at Moody's Chicago and Plymouth campuses.
- Share findings with faculty, students, pastors, ministry leaders, and ministry partners.
- Integrate research insights into the Center's digital media content, mentorship initiatives, and leadership development opportunities.

Intended Impact: Through this research, the Center seeks to deepen understanding of Christian leadership while developing practical, research-informed resources that help churches identify, equip, and multiply faithful leaders worldwide.

Our leadership research serves as a foundation for the Center's broader work. By identifying common experiences, challenges, and developmental needs among Christian leaders around the world, we can more intentionally shape our media, mentorship, partnerships, and practical resources to serve the global Church.

**How Research Informs the Center's Strategic Priorities**

| Strategic Priority | Application of Research Findings |
|---|---|
| 1. Leadership Research & Insights | Continue studying how Christian leaders develop across cultures and translate findings into practical resources that strengthen the global Church. |
| 2. Global Leadership Media | Share biblical teaching and research-informed insights on servant leadership, spiritual formation, and developing future leaders. |
| 3. Leadership Formation & Mentorship | Develop mentoring relationships and coaching opportunities that emphasize character, accountability, and practical ministry experience. |
| 4. Global Partnerships & Collaboration | Work with local ministry partners to develop leadership opportunities appropriate to their cultural and ministry contexts. |
| 5. Leadership Resources & Practical Equipping | Create accessible training tools that help churches identify, develop, and multiply leaders. |

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**2. Global Leadership Media Initiative**

Strategic Objective: Make biblical leadership teaching and practical ministry insights accessible to Christian leaders around the world through digital media.

The MTS Leadership Series launched in February 2026 as a digital platform offering biblical leadership teaching from experienced Christian leaders. Through short-form videos and micro-lectures, the Center is providing accessible resources that can be used by pastors, ministry leaders, students, and churches regardless of geographic location. These conversations explore key leadership themes, practical ministry challenges, and lessons learned through years of faithful service.

*Progress to Date*

- 592,034 total video views since launch.
- 4,640 YouTube subscribers as of October 2026, up from 4,080 in June, representing approximately 14% growth.

- 84 published videos, including short-form videos and leadership micro-lectures.
- Continued development of a growing library of free, accessible leadership resources.

View the MTS Leadership Series: https://www.youtube.com/@MTSLeadershipSeries

Next Steps | 2026–2027

- Continue expanding video content to include interviews with experienced Christian leaders representing diverse ministry and cultural contexts.
- Organize content around relevant leadership themes to make resources easier to discover and use.
- Identify opportunities to connect video content with leadership research findings and practical ministry resources.
- Continue monitoring audience growth, engagement, and content performance to guide future development.

Intended Impact: Equip a growing global audience of Christian leaders with accessible, biblically grounded teaching that strengthens their leadership and ministry effectiveness.

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**3. Leadership Formation & Mentorship Initiative**

Strategic Objective: Invest in the spiritual formation, leadership development, and long-term ministry effectiveness of current and emerging Christian leaders.

The Center recognizes that effective Christian leadership requires more than knowledge and practical skills. Leaders must also be formed spiritually, supported through meaningful relationships, and equipped to navigate the personal and organizational challenges of ministry.

This initiative focuses on creating intentional opportunities for mentorship, coaching, and leadership development.

*Progress to Date*

Faculty–Student Mentorship Program

- Launched a faculty–student mentorship initiative in October 2026.
- The initial cohort includes five Moody faculty mentors and eight graduate students from the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry programs.
- The program creates opportunities for intentional relationships between experienced faculty and emerging ministry leaders, with an emphasis on spiritual formation, vocational discernment, and practical leadership development.

Next Steps | 2026–2027

Mentorship Development

- Continue implementing and evaluating the faculty–student mentorship initiative.
- Gather feedback from mentors and students to inform future program development.
- Explore opportunities to expand participation in future cohorts.

International Leadership Coaching Workshops

In partnership with Axelerate, the Center is planning leadership coaching workshops designed to equip ministry leaders with practical tools for developing and supporting others.

- Nepal — January 2027: Leadership coaching workshop.
- Pakistan — October 2027: Leadership coaching workshop.

These workshops will strengthen local ministry leaders while building on existing international relationships.

Intended Impact: Strengthen the character, confidence, and practical leadership capabilities of Christian leaders through intentional mentoring and coaching relationships.

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**4. Global Partnerships & Leadership Collaboration**

Strategic Objective: Strengthen relationships with global ministry partners to create collaborative opportunities for leadership education, research, and ministry development.

The Center works closely with Moody's Global Campus and its international network of ministry partners to identify opportunities for leadership development around the world.

Rather than establishing independent programs in every region, we seek to work alongside trusted local organizations that understand the cultural and ministry needs of their communities.

These partnerships create opportunities to learn from the global church while sharing Moody's educational and leadership resources.

Current Areas of Focus:

- Continue strengthening collaboration with existing international ministry partners.
- Identifying opportunities for leadership training and research within established global networks.
- Exploring new partnerships that align with the Center's mission and strategic priorities.

Featured Initiative | Ghana Doctoral Intensive

Course Title: Leaders and Global Ministry in the 21st Century

- Dates: January 23–30, 2027
- Location: Accra, Ghana
- Instructor: Dr. Rick Melson, President of Moody Bible Institute
- Ministry Partner: Theovision International

The Center is coordinating a week-long Doctor of Ministry intensive that will bring together graduate theological education, leadership development, and direct engagement with ministry in an international context.

Students will explore leadership challenges within the global church, cross-cultural decision-making, coaching and mentoring, and the relationship between spiritual formation and effective ministry leadership.

In addition to classroom instruction, the intensive will incorporate visits to Theovision International, local Bible-listening groups, and significant historical and cultural sites in Ghana.

The Center is supporting participation for eight doctoral students by covering travel and in-country program expenses.

This initiative reflects our commitment to providing leadership development opportunities that connect theological learning with the lived realities of the global church.

Next Steps | 2026–2027

- Successfully implement the January 2027 Ghana doctoral intensive.
- Continue collaborating with Global Campus partners to identify leadership development needs and opportunities.
- Explore additional opportunities for cross-cultural leadership education, research, and training.

Intended Impact: Strengthen Christian leadership through meaningful international collaboration, reciprocal learning, and educational experiences that equip leaders to serve effectively in diverse ministry contexts.

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**5. Leadership Resources & Practical Equipping**

Strategic Objective: Translate leadership research, teaching, and practical ministry experience into accessible resources that strengthen the local church.

An important responsibility of the Center is ensuring that the knowledge and insights developed through our initiatives are accessible and useful to ministry practitioners.

This priority focuses on creating clear pathways for pastors, ministry leaders, students, and churches to engage with the Center's work.

Current Projects:

MTS Global Leadership Center Website

The Center is currently updating and expanding its website to serve as a centralized resource hub for Christian leadership development.

The updated website will bring together:

- Leadership research reports and insights.
- Digital teaching and video resources.
- Updates on the Center's initiatives.

Global Leadership Center Newsletter

The Center is launching a monthly newsletter in November 2026.

The newsletter will provide a consistent means of communication with ministry partners, supporters, and other interested audiences.

Content will include research updates, leadership insights, ministry stories, upcoming opportunities, and newly available resources.

Next Steps | 2026–2027

- Continue development of the expanded GLC website.
- Launch the newsletter in November 2026.
- Begin incorporating research findings and other practical leadership resources into the Center's digital platforms.

Intended Impact: Make the Center's research, teaching, and leadership resources more accessible, increasing their practical value for churches and Christian leaders around the world.

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*Looking Ahead*

The following milestones will guide our work over the coming year.

| Timeline | Key Milestone |
|---|---|
| October 2026 | Launch faculty–student mentorship initiative |
| November 2026 | Launch GLC newsletter |
| December 2026 | Complete first-year leadership research report |
| January 2027 | Begin second phase of leadership research |

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|---|---|
| January 2027 | Conduct leadership coaching workshop in Nepal |
| January 23–30, 2027 | Host Doctor of Ministry intensive in Ghana |
| Spring 2027 | Host Research Insights events in Chicago and Plymouth |
| 2026–2027 | Expand leadership media content and practical resources |
| 2026–2027 | Continue website development and resource integration |
| October 2027 | Conduct leadership coaching workshop in Pakistan |

*Measuring Progress & Impact*

As the Center continues to develop, we are committed to evaluating our work through both measurable outcomes and the practical value of our initiatives.

Our ongoing assessment will focus on several areas:

- Research: Completion and dissemination of research findings, publications, and resources developed from those findings.
- Digital Reach: Audience growth, content engagement, and the expanding accessibility of leadership resources.
- Leadership Development: Participation in mentorship, coaching, and educational initiatives, along with feedback from participants.
- Global Collaboration: Strength and effectiveness of partnerships and the leadership development opportunities they create.
- Practical Ministry Impact: Evidence that the Center's resources and initiatives are being used to support leaders and strengthen local churches.

These measures will help us evaluate our progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure that the Center remains focused on meaningful ministry outcomes.

*Closing Perspective*

The MTS Global Leadership Center is entering an important season of growth and development. With a growing digital platform, meaningful findings emerging from our leadership research, new mentorship opportunities, and established international partnerships, we have a strong foundation upon which to build.

Our focus for the coming year is to bring greater alignment to these efforts, with leadership research serving as the foundation for the resources, training, and opportunities we provide to the global church.

As we look toward the future, we are also developing a long-term sustainability plan to ensure the Center can continue to grow and fulfill its mission. This includes evaluating our current initiatives, identifying opportunities for strategic investment, and determining the resources needed to support our priorities. We anticipate developing a proposal outlining future funding needs and opportunities for additional support.