



MORNINGSTAR
TRANSFORMATIONAL TOURS

Opportunity Invitation

Chief Executive Officer

FSP Leaders

The Morning Star Tours Story

Travel, learning, and experiencing different cultures is life changing, but Morning Star Tours knows that walking in the footsteps of our faith is life *transforming*. Since 1995, [Morning Star Tours](#) (MST) has been offering travelers opportunities to experience the Bible in a transformational way that would impact their hearts and engage their minds. MST is a for-profit ministry driven by purpose, service and Kingdom work. For more than two decades, MST has cultivated loyal, long-term business partnerships around the world. MST offers its clients a unique opportunity to impact their key supporters and leaders in transforming lives for Christ through once-in-a-lifetime experiences. With a solid reputation based on integrity and excellence through professional and heart-filled service, MST is known for its “above-and-beyond” commitment to service.

MST’s heartbeat is to develop ministry partnerships that further each organization’s unique vision and purpose. They understand the unique culture and objectives of the church, ministry and academic communities and thrive working with church leadership, donor development teams, and those seeking to impact lives through travel. MST is the preferred choice because of superior field expertise, exceptional relationships with service providers, attention to detail and heart for ministry. MST is not just a tour company. It is a small band of highly motivated curators of experiences and memories. Their defining goal is to help draw clients and their guests into a deeper understanding of, and connection to, their personal faith journey through transformational travel experiences.

Motivated by a desire to ignite a passion for God and His Word, the founders began offering intimate guided tours through the Holy Land, allowing travelers to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. As the ministry/business grew over the next several years, the vision expanded to offer other signature tours, including the Footsteps of Moses, Journeys of Paul, and Church History and Protestant Reformation tours. With a commitment to excellence and a dedication to providing unsurpassed value, Morning Star offers unique tours that leave a lifelong impact.

Morning Star Tours is dedicated to partnering with churches, universities, and other ministries that are impacting the world, providing the behind-the-scenes support for destination ministry that transforms lives. Through the years, tour destinations have included: **Jerusalem and the Holy Lands, Greece and Turkey, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and other European countries, along with New England.**



The CEO Opportunity

Cheri and Mike Fitzsimmons built MST into a premier brand leader in the “*Biblical Tour Company*” category, currently generating tour revenues in excess of \$10M/year. Cheri has been the company’s undisputed business development catalyst. Her deep and lasting client relationships formed an early foundation for word-of-mouth recommendations that have been the primary source of consistently expanding business partnerships and revenue growth. Mike has served as omnibus business operations and financial oversight leader for MST, and he and Cheri were the primary owners of the company. In 2002, the Fitzsimmons welcomed their oldest daughter, Mikele, into the business as operations manager. Today she is a shareholder in the company and serves as Vice President, focusing her attention on long-term projects and positioning the business for growth.

From her home office in Washington, D.C, Mikele works with Cheri and Mike in leading a staff of nine other Dallas-based teammates. Together they have learned to leverage their carefully selected and complementary skills and abilities with the systems and processes that have been built and refined to deliver a true concierge-level service to every client and their most influential supporters.

With twenty-five years of growing commercial success and relational continuity, MST’s founders are ready to transition leadership of this transformational event planning enterprise to the next generation CEO who can enhance and broaden MST’s influence and reach. The new CEO will be charged with leading the finalization of a strategic planning process. Current work has already begun with a certified [StratOps](#) consultant to construct a framework that will allow the new leader to enter this succession process with a “running start.” As a rhythm of the business model, virtually all the 2020 tours are already booked and on the docket. Planning for the 2021 budget year and beyond will be the object of the new CEO’s strategic planning attention, along with key client relationship cultivation.

The well-considered CEO succession transition plan was begun almost a year ago when Cheri, Mike, and Mikele reached the conclusion that the next CEO would need to come from outside the current organization. Since that time, they have reached out to learn about successful business transitions and founder succession challenges. This family has confirmed their commitment to see their successful family-owned business more fully develop a plan for future flourishing that extends beyond their lifetimes. The cornerstone of that process is locating the next CEO who will take the leadership handoff with an owner’s mind-set. S/he will inspire and mentor the experienced, full-service support team as a spiritual leader and visionary for MST’s continued impact for the glory of God and through a growing global clientele.



The Morning Star Vision

MST's goal is to provide a start-to-finish experience that leads to a transformational encounter with Christ. The company believes the Bible is not just words printed on a page, but rather it is a sacred testament illustrating their walk of faith. The whole MST team prays that through every tour, travelers can powerfully perceive the timeless truth that brings hope, peace, and salvation through Jesus Christ.

MST Values and Beliefs Require that We:

- **Devote Ourselves to One Another** – Romans 12:10 *“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”*
A visible commitment to being intentionally involved with each other in accountable and encouraging relationships. Trust is built as we share and encourage each other toward spiritual and professional growth. We value honest relationships where truth is spoken in love and every member takes responsibility for the well-being and reputation of others.
- **Speak Life-Giving Words** – Ephesians 4:29 *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen.”*
An effective team is comprised of people who are committed to encouraging interaction, lively discussions, the exchange of ideas to improve the work environment, as well as conflict resolution, encouraging one another toward unity and thanksgiving.
- **Cultivate a Teachable Spirit** – Psalm 86:11 *“Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.”*
Value openness to change and a willingness to be flexible, which is the climate most conducive to healthy growth for the company, for individual teammates and the growth of our collective spiritual impact on our clients and their guests.
MST seeks to provide a business and relational structure that allows for change, freshness and innovation. The entire team is encouraged to work toward the optimization of every policy and practice so that every element serves the purpose for which it was originally designed.
- **Faithfully Steward Our Time** – Psalm 90:12 *“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”*
With integrity, we prioritize and manage our time wisely so that we have continual productivity.

- **Commit Ourselves to Prayer** – Jeremiah 29:13 *“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”*

Earnestly praying for our ministry/business, all people involved in our client organizations and for each other. Ask the Lord to show Himself in ALL areas of our work.

Including a staff position of Prayer Intercessor demonstrates MST’s strong belief that prayer is the foundation of every aspect of our work.

- **Demonstrate Our Heart for Ministry** – John 13:34-35 *“As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

Provide customer care through professional and heart filled service to both those we serve and those who partner with us as service providers. We find purpose by providing the most effective and efficient corrective action in resolving customer service issues to ensure our customers’ satisfaction. Believe our efforts are part of a bigger plan...God’s plan.

- **Dedicate Ourselves to Excellence** – 1 Corinthians 15:58 *“So then, dear brothers and sisters, be firm. Do not be moved! Always be outstanding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Excellence is the foundation of glorifying God and it is an intentional attitude in all we do. Pursuing excellence should not be relegated to the task at hand. Excellence is not an act but a habit that reaps eternal rewards.

- **Joyfully Serve Others** – Ephesians 6:7 *“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.”*

Find joy in serving others. This is a choice each and every day and it is from joy that we find our strength.

- **Steward Our Emotions** – 2 Timothy 4:5 *“You, however, be self-controlled in all things, endure hardships, do an evangelist’s work, fulfill your ministry.”*

Understand that you are part of a community of people “doing life together” and caring for one another. It requires being real with each other yet being self-controlled with our emotions.

- **Maintain a Posture of Humility** – Philippians 2:3-4 *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of others.”*

Recognize we cannot do it alone and each person on the team brings important value to the success of the team. Most importantly, acknowledge that only through God’s grace can we fulfill His purposes for MST, requiring us to seek Him and His will in all we do.

- **Walk in Integrity** – Proverbs 22:1 *“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches and favor is better than silver or gold.”*

Without integrity there is no ministry. It is the soil that raises up trust and respect. Let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no.

- **Be an Example of Grace** – Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as, in Christ, God forgave you.”*

Extending and receiving grace is fundamental to a cohesive team and maintaining an attitude of joy in serving others.

A Sampling of Morning Star Clients

“Dallas Theological Seminary has chosen to travel exclusively with Morning Star Tours for many years. They are unequalled in their commitment to biblical ministry, their attention to detail, and their passionate desire to serve each traveler. Those who travel with us state that they can tell the difference! Morning Star Tours encourages every traveler to have a heart-changing experience.”

Dr. Mark Bailey
President, Dallas Theological Seminary



WATERMARK
COMMUNITY CHURCH



UNCHARTED
MINISTRIES

Fellowship NORTHWEST
ARKANSAS

[Watch the video to hear from one of Morning Star's clients.](#)



Mike Meeks

LEAD PASTOR
EASTLAKE CHURCH
CHULA VISTA, CA

CEO Responsibilities

Position Overview

MST is a for-profit ministry/company driven by purpose, service and a clear sense of calling to this Kingdom work. For more than two decades, the founders and full-service support team of this ministry/company have cultivated strong and loyal partnerships around the work. MST continues to offer a unique opportunity to impact and transform lives for Christ. With a solid reputation based on integrity, excellence and heart-filled professional service, MST is known for their above-and-beyond service.

With a sturdy foundation laid and a successful business rhythm established, the next CEO will be called upon to take the handoff to run the next leg of the race with his/her unique skills, experiences and capabilities. With an overarching goal of enhancing and broadening MST's influence and reach, the new CEO will inherit tremendous potential for growth in the evangelical market that could double or triple the size of the MST business over the course of this new decade.

The "inner workings" of the ministry/company have been carefully constructed and designed with growth and expanded impact in mind. What a great time to welcome a new CEO leader who has the talent, vision and passion to prayerfully compose the next chapters of MST's unfolding story.

Performance Objectives

- **Spiritual Stewardship**

- ✓ Serve MST as a dynamic leader called to guide this ministry/company in dynamic discipleship, future growth, deeper connectivity and sound stewardship of the resources of our clients and of our ministry/company.
- ✓ Recognize that MST exists to provide a healthy and sustainable platform for God's transforming work in the lives of all MST teammates, in the lives of all those who experience MST event travel and in the collective impact of those clients, partners and suppliers brought together through MST's mission.
- ✓ Cultivate an environment of spiritual growth and prayer that actively and creatively inspires all aspects of work and ministry. Ensure MST's ministry heart is clearly and consistently demonstrated and remains at the center of all decisions.

- **Visibility and Accountability**

- ✓ Within the first four (4) months, develop a clear system of goals and metrics that align with the vision, mission and values of Morning Star Tours.
- ✓ Create weekly/monthly/quarterly scorecards to determine project management on/off track indicators and success redundancy protocols.
- ✓ Conduct regular leadership meetings with department leaders – review metrics and goals.
- ✓ Discernment related to pace of growth and optimization.

- **Strategy and Forecasting**

- ✓ Within the first four (4) months, identify, develop and establish an implementation plan for pursuing increases in business growth, employee performance and overall ministry/company impact (new partners, new markets, new offerings, new methods or systems, new resources, etc.)
- ✓ Determine the resources needed to support the planned growth, including talent, training and information systems infrastructure.
- ✓ Create a transparent budgeting process that includes the leadership team and considers the nature of an event planning business with client bookings, more than a year in advance of the planned travel.
- ✓ Explore a more formal Board governance structure and, in consultation with the family shareholders, evaluate the options for future policy and governance professionalization.

- **Cultivating Culture**

- ✓ Maintain cohesive team culture – serving as the first element of leading.
- ✓ Embrace and enhance current environment which seeks to promote top performance and positive morale, resulting in high employee retention (right person/right seat).
- ✓ Meet with each team member in the first 30 days to understand their “why” for being part of this ministry/company.
- ✓ Maintain communication channels thereafter to help design individualized mentoring and training opportunities to improve and expand each person’s ability to grow in their career and to contribute to advancing the ministry/company mission.
- ✓ Ensure the recruiting, training, and developing of key staff in roles strategically aligned to increase the capacity of the MST ministry/company.
- ✓ Prepare staff to lead their own advancement, lead others, lead teams and lead organizationally in their current roles, growing personally and professionally and becoming prepared for future opportunities.

- **Business Development & Marketing Strategy**

- ✓ Actively engage in transitioning current relationships of the founders with existing clients, partners, suppliers and influencers. Build personal rapport and connections that honor the founders’ highly valued, hands-on approach while offering a fresh vision for the future.
- ✓ Within the first six (6) months the new CEO should prepare and present a strategic marketing plan/campaign to scale the business to increase overall revenue and expand brand recognition.
- ✓ Design a business development/sales growth strategy to achieve \$20M in sales within 5 years – and \$30M within 10 years.
- ✓ Develop a staffing plan for building an active and effective business development team.

Key Candidate Characteristics

- Inspirational and motivational leader – face of the ministry/company.
- Demonstrated success and comfort amid the ambiguity and need for controlled change management that often comes with rapid growth.
- Trustworthiness, accountability and honesty in all endeavors.
- Respectful appreciation for the crucial roles of operators, educators and administrators within the institutions and ministry organizations where MST has a presence.
- Relational leadership style matched to decentralized operational structure of MST’s service providers and international partners.
- Courage to make tough calls when needed and the wisdom to know when to defer.
- The confident humility to serve others and model that servant leadership spirit with joy and passion.
- Strategic thinker - innovative and creative problem solver.
- Mature spiritual leadership as demonstrated through active involvement in a local faith community.

For more information, or to apply for this position, please contact:

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