

Part II January 1, 2009, Omaha, Neb.

# Strategic Transformation at Faith Christian Church

The last time we visited the story of Faith Christian Church in Omaha, Nebr., was May 2005 when the congregation took a vote on whether or not to change to a new way of being church. The vote was overwhelmingly positive to change: 64 to 2!

What follows is their new way of being church.

The six elders are spiritual leaders who find leaders (called deacons—not necessarily the people who serve in worship) of teams, which then do the ministry of the church.

For example, our worship elder recruited four deacons:

- A deacon to recruit and oversee a team that would lead our traditional worship.
- A deacon to recruit and oversee a team that would lead our contemporary worship.
- A deacon to recruit and oversee a team that would lead our graphics and design work.
- A deacon to recruit and oversee a team that would recruit our servers for worship (what those labeled “elders” and “deacons” used to do).

The pastor became more of a vision-caster, worship leader, and trainer of leaders.

The pastor then recruited the elders. The elders recruited their deacons. The deacons recruited their teams. The leaders and teams went to work. And, we lived and worked in this system for 16 months.

In October of 2006, we evaluated our present system of governance. And, then we voted by an overwhelming margin (80 to 0) to continue to live within the new structure.

We found that this “new way of being church” has many advantages. A few are:

- It uses the Biblical method of “call-

ing” leaders (not voting on them—there is not a vote taken in the Bible).

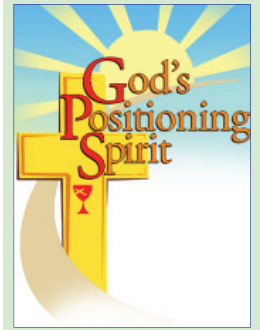
- It uses the Biblical method of letting people serve as long as they and God think they should. So, there are no terms—there is less of a chance of burnout.
- It sets up a streamlined structure of teams that are somewhat autonomous—less of a tendency for a group to control everything.
- It helps people find where they truly fit according to their spiritual gifts. People tend to be more joy-filled because this process takes into account their feelings and personality. There is less of a feeling that they are a “warm body” to fill a machine.
- It places the responsibility of getting tasks done squarely in the team—so that the Biblical principle of accountability is held on a very interpersonal level (not on a bureaucratic level).

One of the major challenges of this system is the need for good communication between teams and leaders of teams. When good communication (such as respectful and consistent) does not occur, the system does not work as well.

Not all the teams and leaders are working as is described above. But, most of them are. And, most of them are filled with the joy of Christ!

Amen. Alleluia!

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**Transformation is the intentional spiritual journey that a congregation undertakes systemically in order to realize what God has called it to be as church and to do in mission in today's world.**

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Also available is a CD with a 21 week Bible study, written and developed by Rev. Norma Roberts, “Continuing the Journey.” The congregation can use this Bible study as a companion on its transformation journey.

For more information and resources contact The Rev. R. Wayne Calhoun, Sr. (toll free) (888) 346-2631 or [rcalhoun@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:rcalhoun@dhm.disciples.org) or Lois Robinson [lrobinson@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:lrobinson@dhm.disciples.org)