



HELPING CHURCH LEADERS MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

Number 80 September 15, 1997

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FIVE WINDOWS INTO THE 21st CENTURY CHURCH

Part 1

The signs are ubiquitous. A new American church is emerging for the next century led by a new type of clergy and lay leader. During the past year, Leadership Network has been listening to and learning from this new church and its leaders. In trying to describe this emerging church, we believe 21st century churches can be identified by five core characteristics. Each of the five characteristics is a window into the mission, values, structure and culture of a 21st century church and will be present or in process within an individual congregation. The five windows are (1) effective leadership; (2) lay mobilization; (3) cultural connectedness; (4) authentic community; and (5) Kingdom collaboration. Within each of these windows are a number of individual innovations. *NetFax* 80 and 81 will highlight these five windows.

Window One...Effective Leadership

The role of the pastor has changed from one focused on preaching/pastoral care to one focused on being proactive in leadership, vision casting, and centered on mission. Leadership has shifted from a single leader to a leadership team that is a gift based partnership between the pastor, staff, and lay people. Leadership has also de-centralized and shifted from the pastor and staff as doers of ministry to being equippers of others in ministry. There is now a body of knowledge related to leadership and management developed in other disciplines that is accepted and used by the leadership team. The source of pastoral and staff leadership is shifting from academic and credential based to more of an emphasis on character, gifts, and demonstrated competence and the source of the leader's abilities flows from an authentic relationship with God, their inner character, and willingness to be transparent with others.

Window Two...Lay Mobilization

There is a high value placed on lay mobilization with each person seen as having a gift, role and place to serve. There is a systemic approach to the process of identifying gifts and talents, equipping/coaching, and placement for service. Mobilization is implemented by a leadership team with a specific point person and the perspective is one of "whole life ministry" with people using their gifts to serve others not only in the church, but with family, work, community and the world. See *NetFax* 76 and 78 for additional issues in lay mobilization.

NetFax 81 will highlight the remaining three windows.

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