
INTRODUCTION

Since **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** is a “non-denominational” church, we have people coming to our church from many different backgrounds. We have literally assimilated people from almost every conceivable Christian background (Catholic, Baptist, Assembly of God, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, etc.) and also from non-Christian religions (such as “Christian” Science, Mormon, Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, etc.)

As you can see, to meld such a diverse group together into a body of people of “one mind and one spirit” is quite a challenge. Since all of these people come to us with their own set of religious experiences, we have to take the time and effort to explain what we stand for at **Overcoming Faith Christian Center**, what we intend to become and how we plan to get there. We also need to take the time to explain why we are the way we are.

BACKGROUND

Pastor Gene Lingerfelt was saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit and baptized in water at Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit, Michigan. Bethesda had been pioneered in the inner city of Detroit in 1934 by Mrs. M. D. Beall, a woman who had no intention of pioneering a church. She had a heart for underprivileged inner city children and rented a storefront to have a Sunday School for the neighborhood children. Before she knew it, there were dozens of families coming to her “church.” Pastor Lingerfelt recounts what a strong “New Testament” church Bethesda was in those, his formative years of the sixties. Even in those days, Bethesda was running well over two thousand people every Sunday morning. Bethesda handled every aspect of church life according to the New Testament—government, discipline, deacons, deaconesses, elders, ordination—everything. When there was ever any question of how to do something or how to handle some situation, the Word of God was always the absolute standard.

Today, the Constitution and By-Laws of **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** are patterned after the Constitution and By-Laws of Bethesda. These are the “roots” of the church, because these are the “roots” of our founder and Pastor, Dr. Gene Lingerfelt.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

From time to time, people with “congregational” backgrounds come to **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** and have some difficulty in understanding why there are no business meetings and why the people have no say in the management of the church. (“Congregational” means “managed by the congregation.”) For example in Baptist, Assembly of God and Disciples of Christ churches, the congregation meets to vote on the pastor, the budget, etc.

People raised in congregational churches hardly realize that there was no such thing as a congregational church until the Anabaptist movement following the life of Martin Luther who led the Reformation and began the Lutheran church. (The Reformation was a reaction to the

extremes of Catholicism.) Even today, the vast majority of Christendom is not congregational. From time to time we have people who were raised in congregational churches, or who currently have relatives in congregational churches, and have questions about our form of government. These folks should realize that Catholics probably cannot comprehend the congregational method either. Baptists probably do not understand how Methodist churches work and why the Bishop places pastors in local churches. Presbyterians probably do not understand why Baptists do not have elders. As you can see, it's simply a matter of background and perspective.

OUR PATTERN IS THE NEW TESTAMENT

Our goal from the early planning stages in 1983 was not to pioneer another Baptist church, or another Assembly of God church, or another “whatever kind of” church. The city and county are literally filled with these kinds of churches. Our goal was to do our very best to pioneer a new church based as closely as possible to the New Testament pattern.

This New Testament pattern includes divine healing, tongues, deliverance, etc. Baptists do not agree with divine healing or tongues. Assembly of God folk do not agree with deliverance or abundance. Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Catholics do not agree with tongues either. However, we are not really concerned with what others can accept or want. We are only concerned with the Word of God.

So to take our church teachings, practices, government or some other aspect of our church and say, “Why isn't **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** like this church over here?” demonstrates a lack of understanding that there are literally dozens of church models and patterns to choose from. That church “over there” is not our pattern. We have chosen the New Testament as our pattern.

EVERY MAN'S CHOICE

What every believer needs to do is decide: Do you want a New Testament-patterned church, or do you want one like your old home church, or like your relatives or friends? There is a give and take in methods (“patterns”) and results. Pastor Lingerfelt has learned that “God's results are based on God's patterns.” If we want the New Testament results of divine healing, miracles and deliverance, we have to pattern **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** after the New Testament in faith, practice and government.

You may want Baptist government, but what about tongues and divine healing? You may want Assembly of God government, but what about deliverance or miracles or prosperity? You may want a Methodist, Episcopalian or Presbyterian government, but what about the gifts of the Spirit? What about dancing before the Lord or other things they do not believe in or practice?

There are trade offs whichever way you go. Therefore, the question is not “Will **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** conform to these other patterns?” That question was answered in 1983. If

Overcoming Faith Christian Center were to conform to one of these other patterns, there would be no need for another church. It's the distinctions in doctrine, worship, style and government that give people choices.

There are also all kinds and types of “non-denominational” churches. For example, there is a “non-denominational” church in south Arlington that was originally a split off the First United Methodist Church. So obviously, that “non-denominational” church will be different from **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** in that each were formed and fashioned separately, independently and after the “roots” of their founder(s).

So visitors and newcomers must understand that we have made our choice—we are doing our best to go with the New Testament. The only decision left is for each man and woman to decide what kind of church they want. Every man, every woman should make that decision, and then go for it.

Now for the Word.

THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT

There is nowhere in the New Testament where the people voted. Not once did this occur. We cannot give a reference, because it did not happen. The apostles would meet, or the elders, but never did the people vote.

THE ROLE OF DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The most elementary New Testament church office was that of deacon. Deacons did not rule. Deacons served. Among the Baptists, for example, deacons rule, but this was not the case in the New Testament. In Acts 6:1-7, there was a need for service. The apostles instructed the people to point out to them seven men from among them who were known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. So here deacons had to be: (a) from among them, or a part of that group, or known by the people and the leadership, or not newcomers; (b) full of the Holy Spirit; and (c) full of wisdom. Notice verse two—this was not to be a ministry of ruling, but a ministry of waiting on tables. Notice verse six—the apostles laid their hands on these men and set them into office. Deacons were set into office by the apostles, or church pioneers.

The qualifications for deacons and deaconesses are in I Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons are to be: (a) men worthy of respect; (b) sincere; (c) not indulging in much wine; (d) not pursuing dishonest gain; (e) men who keep hold of the deep truths of the faith; (f) men of clear conscience; (g) the husband of but one wife; (h) a man who manages his children and household well. (Deaconesses are to be: (a) women worthy of respect; (b) not malicious talkers; (c) temperate; and (d) trustworthy in everything.)

Notice it says in verse 10 that deacons **“must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.”** To be a deacon in the New Testament means to serve, not rule. Deacons must also first be tested. Testing takes time. “Time” means that we wait and watch to make sure that before persons are made deacons, deaconesses or elders that they have first of all been a faithful part of the church long enough to have an enormous investment in the church in time, in service and in tithes and offerings. We want all of our leaders to have an enormous investment in the church.

THE ROLE OF ELDERS IN NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The next highest church office in the New Testament church was that of elder. (By next highest, we mean without getting to the apostle or founder, or the five-fold ministry gifts of God.)

A. Elders were appointed, not voted upon. Acts 14:23.

Notice that the elders were appointed with prayer and fasting.

B. Offerings were handled by the elders. Acts 11:30.

To really see the level of this trust and submission (with regard to offerings and money) in the New Testament, look at Acts 4:34, 35; 4:36, 37 and 5:2. The level of submitting one’s gifts and offerings to the church founders was so profound in the New Testament, they actually brought their gifts of love and laid them at the apostles’ feet.

C. Elders were the ones who handled disputes in the New Testament church. Acts 15:2; 15:22, 23.

D. Ministries and ministers reported to the elders, not to the congregation. Acts 15:4.

E. The elders were the ones who came together to make decisions, not the congregation. Acts 15:6.

F. Decrees, or decisions, flowed out from the apostles (church founders) and elders, not from the congregation. Acts 16:4.

G. Regarding decisions, Paul would call for, and address, the elders of churches, not the congregations. Acts 20:17. See also I Peter 5:1.

H. Paul specifically says in Acts 20:28 that the elders are the overseers of the church of God.

(“Elder,” “overseer” and “bishop” are all closely related terms in the New Testament.) Notice too the reason why Paul told the elders to guard the flock of God: **“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall**

grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:28-30 KJV)

I. **The elders were the ones who received visitors to the church. Acts 21:18.**

J. **The elders were held in “double honor” by the people.**

In I Timothy 5:17, Paul says, **“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”** Here the implication is that there are elders who rule and elders who do not rule. There is a further implication that there are elders who make the Word and prayer their means of life, whereas there are also those who may work outside the church, hence the phrase, **“especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”** Paul says that such elders are **“worthy of double honor,”** a concept totally foreign to our American culture.

K. **The elders were the ones who prayed for the sick. James 5:14.**

The qualifications for elder are in I Timothy 3:1-7. Elders (“overseers,” “bishops”) are to be: (a) above reproach; (b) the husband of but one wife; (c) temperate; (d) self-controlled; (e) respectable; (f) hospitable; (g) able to teach; (h) not given to drunkenness; (i) not violent but gentle; (j) not quarrelsome; (k) not a lover of money; (l) a man who manages his own family well; (m) a man who sees that his children obey him with proper respect; (n) not a recent convert; and (o) a man of a good reputation with outsiders. Also notice that Paul says in I Timothy 3:5, **“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?”** So we see that it is the elders who are to “manage the church.”

Now look at Titus 1:5-11. Here we find the following facts: (a) Paul left Titus on Crete to appoint elders. Elders are appointed, not voted upon. (b) We again have a list of qualifications (blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild or disobedient, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain, hospitable, good, self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.)

THE STRATEGY BEHIND THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Look at Titus 1:9-11 and we’ll get to the heart of the matter: **“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group [“religious folks”]. They must be**

silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.”

Notice how this passage lines up with Acts 20. The truth of the matter is this: There are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers. There are many people who do not attend church and give for righteous reasons. They want something—a position, a voice, to be seen of men. Whether by “hook or crook,” such people are hell-bent to get their way. Whether by church business meetings, unceasing slander, women’s prayer meetings, or by any other means available, they will pursue their ends until they achieve their goal. Notice that Paul says **“they are ruining whole households.”** This is why the church leadership must remain above the fray of worldly church politics and seek the guidance of God.

The divorce rate in the United States of America runs around 50 percent, and the divorce rate among Christians is hardly any less. We live in a “throw away society.” People are not going to treat their church any better than they do their families. So we can expect, in our current American culture, a turnover rate of about 50 percent in any church in the land.

Just think about the practical implications. In a congregational church, the ministry of the church, the future of the church, and whether or not the church follows the leading of the Holy Spirit are all in the hands of the people. These are people who may only stay another two weeks. These are people who may or may not be living right. These are people who may or may not be praying. These are people who may or may not be “Word” people. These are people who may or may not be tithing. Congregational churches give the unfaithful the same voice as the faithful.

Conversely, in the New Testament pattern, the management of the church is in the hands of those called by God—the elders. Elders are those who have proven themselves over time. Elders are not those who “joined” last weekend. Elders are those who have proven themselves faithful and true over the course of many years.

Even from a practical viewpoint, we can see the wisdom of God’s Word and the foolishness of man’s religious systems.

TURNOVER IN THE MODERN AMERICAN CHURCH

If you have the eyes to see it, this is exactly why you have turnover in the American church. There are many who come seeking a position. If that position does not materialize, and quickly, they leave the church wreaking as much havoc as possible. This is why the Apostle John says of Jesus in John 2:24: **“But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.”** It was Jesus who taught us about wolves in sheep’s clothing, about religious leaders who love to be seen by men, and about watching out for false prophets by being “fruit inspectors.”

This same apostle, John, is the one who said in I John 2:18, 19, **“Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going**

showed that none of them belonged to us.”

Do you remember the words of Acts 20:30? The “grievous wolves” do not come from outside the church. The “grievous wolves” come from inside the church. (How do they accomplish these things? They accomplish such things by speaking “perverse things,” by “distorting the truth.” This is why Paul calls them “**rebellious people, talkers and deceivers.**”) This is why we are forbidden from making a new convert an elder. This is why we are commanded to first test deacons. Why? Time proves the fruit of one’s life. Only time fully proves whether someone is for real or a fake.

You also need to realize that we are living in the end times. Paul says in II Timothy 3:1-7, “**But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slandorous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.”**

Over time, the sins and folly of such people are absolutely clear to everyone. That is why we always refer to “track record,” for it is necessary for the sheep to watch a ministry or minister over time to see if that ministry or minister is genuine. It is necessary for the shepherds to watch a sheep over time to make sure it’s a sheep, and not a wolf. For Paul says in II Timothy 3:8, 9, “**Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.**”

CALLINGS AND PROMOTIONS ARE BY GOD

Just because a sheep is a sheep, does not mean that they are automatically called by God to be a deacon, deaconess or elder. Callings are of God, by the decision and decree of God and we cannot attempt to take these honors upon ourselves. Hebrews 5:4 says, “**No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.**” Psalm 75:6 says, “**For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.**”

POLITICS IN THE CHURCH

Another point of wisdom we see in God’s plan for church government is that it restrains politics in God’s church. Read James 3:9-4:12 with church government in mind.

(3:9) “**With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. (3:10) Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this**

should not be. (3:11) Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? (3:12) My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. (3:13) Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (3:14) But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. (3:15) Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. (3:16) For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. (3:17) But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (3:18) Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. (4:1) What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? (4:2) You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. (4:3) When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (4:4) You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (4:5) Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? (4:6) But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ (4:7) Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (4:8) Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (4:9) Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. (4:10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (4:11) Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. (4:12) There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?”

LESSONS FROM JAMES THE APOSTLE, THE BROTHER OF THE LORD, THE OVERSEER OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM

James was an unusual man. He was the half brother of Jesus. He was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. But even though he was an apostle, he was serving as pastor of the Jerusalem church. Such was his stature that both Peter and Paul submitted their ministries to James. Let's look at the lessons we can learn from James 3:9-4:12.

- A. There were people in the early church who were praising God with their tongue, and with that same tongue cursing men. So, out of the same mouth came blessing and cursing. Sound familiar? And what does James say? **“My brothers, this should not be.”**

James says that wisdom and understanding are proven by a good life and by deeds done in humility.

- B. There were people in the early church who were harboring bitter envy and selfish ambition in their hearts. Sound familiar? James says **“such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, and of the devil.”**

James says, **“where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”** So it is envy and selfish ambition that cause disorder and evil practices in the church of the living God.

On the contrary, James says that the **“wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”**

- C. There were people in the early church who were “into” fights and quarrels. Sound familiar? What caused these fights and quarrels? James says, “they come from your desires that battle within you. You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.”

It is absolutely incredible to think that in the early church, they faced the exact same problems we face today in the American church. People want something and can’t get it. Whether it’s having a voice, being a deacon or an elder or singing solos on stage. So what do they do? They kill with their tongues (slander without ceasing) and they covet. They quarrel and they fight.

And what does James say? **“You cannot have what you want.”** And why can’t they have what they want? Because they do not ask God. They do not have the faith to get what they want in their church experience, so they use worldly, devilish methods to attain their goal. Any true man of God will recognize this, which means the rebel will end up with nothing—no position and no voice. They have ambition, but they are unwilling to achieve the things of God in God’s way.

What happens when such people do go to God with their ambitions? James says, **“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”** What is the cause of this wrong behavior? It is **“friendship with the world.”** It is acting in church like people act down at the office or in Austin or Washington. It is bringing the politics of the sinful world into the church of the living God. These people literally make themselves the enemies of God. Hence, rather than God working for them, He is now working against them, further frustrating their ambitions. (This is why such people go from church to church to church, seeking a place, a voice. Such people get nowhere, long haul, because God is working against them.)

James quotes Proverbs 3:34 in saying that, **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**

What, then, does James tell us to do if we want promotion in the church of the living God? (a) submit yourselves to God; (b) resist the devil so he will flee from you; (c) come near to God so God can come near to you; (d) wash your sinful hands; (e) purify your double-minded hearts; (f) grieve, mourn and wail; (g) change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom; (h) humble yourselves before the Lord so that He can lift you up.

- D. There were people in the early church who were slandering their brothers. Sound familiar? James says, **“Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it... who are you to judge your neighbor?”**

OUR TRACK RECORD IS CLEAR

So, the New Testament is clear. Our twenty-three year track record is clear. What the Baptists, Assemblies of God, Methodist, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Catholics do is clear. Obviously **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** is not the only church in the Metroplex. Obviously we cannot meet everyone’s needs or meet everyone’s criteria. We are what we are, by the grace of God, and that we shall remain.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT OVERCOMING FAITH CHRISTIAN CENTER

Obviously, our “roots” have influenced our church government. We have decided to follow the New Testament teachings and practices. But we also live in the world and have to deal with secular governments. Following are some basic facts about **Overcoming Faith Christian Center**, including how we relate to the secular authorities.

A. Founding

Overcoming Faith Christian Center was founded on Sunday, January 1, 1984 by Dr. Gene and Mrs. Sue Lingerfelt.

B. Goal And Philosophy

Our goal is to be a New Testament church. This leads us to a philosophy where we do our absolute best to emulate the church of the Book of Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament. We have no intention of emulating any other church, except those that have a like goal and philosophy.

C. Recognition By The Internal Revenue Service

Overcoming Faith Christian Center has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(C)3 corporation. (That is, one recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, non-profit, religious corporation. This is also a requirement of all churches

recognized by the Comptroller of the State of Texas.)

D. Recognition By The State Of Texas Comptroller

Overcoming Faith Christian Center has been recognized by the Comptroller of the State of Texas as a tax-exempt, non-profit, religious corporation, and has thereby been granted exemption from sales tax in the State of Texas.

E. Property

All property is held “in trust” in the name of the corporation, Overcoming Faith Christian Center, Inc. (In 2001, the church changed its legal name to **Overcoming Faith Christian Center, Inc.**) As a non-profit corporation, there are no shares or shareholders. No pastor, director or elder can possibly hold title to any **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** property, nor is it possible for any pastor, director or elder to have any shares in the corporation or any property. (Tax-exempt, non-profit, religious corporations do not have shares.)

E. Assets

In the event of any dissolution of the corporation, all assets have been pledged to another 501(C)3 corporation. (That is, one recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, non-profit, religious corporation.) (This is also a requirement of all churches recognized by the Comptroller of the State of Texas.)

F. Management Of The Church

The direction and management of the church are vested in the Presbytery, or eldership, of the church. **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** is not a congregational church. Members do not have any voting rights. All voting rights are vested in the Presbytery.

G. Presbytery (Elders)

The Presbytery is the management arm of **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** and consists of the Pastor, elders and directors. (Directors can vary from three to five. Directors simply carry out the wishes of the full Presbytery.) Elders are selected from among the deacons of the church or the ordained ministers of the church. Elders must be qualified according to the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-17 and Titus 1:5-9) and the Presbytery must be in absolute agreement on the selection of each new elder. In order for a deacon or ordained minister to be nominated as elder, they must have served faithfully in their respective area for a minimum of two years.

There is no limit to the number of elders we may have at **Overcoming Faith Christian Center**. As the church grows in size, the number of elders will likewise increase.

H. Church Council (Deacons And Deaconesses)

The Church Council is the service arm of **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** and consists

of the Pastor, the pastors, directors, elders, deacons and deaconesses. Deacons and deaconesses are selected from among the congregation (Acts 6:1-7) and must meet the qualifications stated in I Timothy 3:8-13. Again, the Presbytery must be in absolute agreement on the selection of each new deacon or deaconess. In order for a member to be nominated as a deacon or deaconess, they must have served faithfully in their respective area for a minimum of three years.

I. Ministry Strategy

As you can see, we take a long-term perspective of things. Dr. and Mrs. Lingerfelt did not just select a church to try to get “voted in” to have a place to minister. Rather, they pioneered **Overcoming Faith Christian Center** with the view of making it a life goal of establishing a truly New Testament church. Therefore, our leaders are likewise selected with this long-term perspective in mind. This in turn gives an additional measure of protection to the body in that it is absolutely impossible for a pretender or impostor to enter the body and come to a high place of leadership or prominence quickly.

In essence, we always prefer faithfulness over style. This is why the rich and the poor, Hispanics, Blacks, Orientals, Anglos and others all have an equal opportunity at **Overcoming Faith Christian Center**. We have created a “level playing field” for church leadership. Why? Because anyone can be faithful, and faithfulness is the standard of the New Testament!

(Rev 5/2007)