

**Leaders for the Harvest Report**  
**April 14, 2009**

**Where have we been?**

In 2006, just before I began this role with Leaders for the Harvest, I was asked a question about a strategy for the Synod if I would be offered this job. I remember at that part of my answer was, "It seems reasonable that there would be churches in each of the classes, who are going through the process and advertising by example to other churches in their classis."

At that time there were nine participant churches in five of the classes. There was one church in Pleasant Prairie—Orchard Hill; four churches in Central Iowa—Plano, Third Pella, Westview, Waukee, Adventure Life Altoona (also Second Pella in a separate network); one in West Sioux—First Sioux Center; three in East Sioux—Good News, Okoboji and American, Primghar and Trinity; and one in Minnesota--Peace.

Three years later, with a few of the first ones discontinuing, we have added seven more in the LFH network. This includes one in central Iowa—Meredith Drive; two in West Sioux—New Life and Maurice; one in East Sioux—First Orange City; and three in Dakota classis—Hamlin, Faith Brookings and Riverview Park, Yankton.

Additionally several of these churches began the second stage--Equipping Leaders and the third stage-- Enriching Leaders. Unfortunately we have not seen additional churches in Minnesota or Pleasant Prairie and there has been no churches added from Central Plains. This does not mean there hasn't been movement and growth. In those same three years there have been over 180 participants in Emerging Leader, close to 50 in Equipping Leader and around 15 have gone through the third stage—Enriching Leader. Also several facilitators have been trained to lead these groups.

Also, when before we have only offered retreats at Inspiration Hills for Emerging and Equipping Leader groups, we have now held retreats in central Iowa and Minnesota and South Dakota in order to maximize participation and benefit. There has also been growth in the networks of Third Pella and Orchard Hill. Each of these lead churches has drawn in participants from churches in their immediate vicinity. In at least case, a staff person from a different church—Central Oskaloosa will be starting an Emerging group this fall.

**Where are we going?**

I believe that adult discipleship and leadership formation are still valued by the Synod of the Heartland. With my transition to fulltime ministry with a *still to be identified* congregation, and no current plan for someone to replace me, we need to plan for continued attention to leadership formation. Regional synod staff will need to be in tune to the needs of congregations and willing and able to point inquiring church leaders to Vantage Point 3 as a resource. We will need to contract with Vantage Point 3 for ongoing facilitator training, regional retreats, and for regular proclamation of the benefits of this movement. Continuity for this movement will also hinge on the churches that "get it." Obviously, Orchard Hill and Third Pella are already doing this. Northwest Iowa and South Dakota churches could also form a network for assisting new churches in this journey.