

# THE REAL STUFF

RELATING YOUR EXPERIENCES

## Reaching Your Community in More Effective Ways

**Faith Chapel Christian Center** (FCCC) attended WEX in 2011 and spent time visiting with Paragon 360 about a potential, multi-phased stage renovation project. FCCC is a non-denominational Christian megachurch located in Birmingham, Alabama, which was started in 1981 in the living room of Pastor Michael D. Moore. The church now has two campuses: their 3,000-seat dome campus, in which the main services are held, and their older campus, which houses youth services and administrative offices. FCCC is one of the largest churches in Birmingham at 4,000 members. The Word Dome building is a concrete, monolithic dome. At 72 feet tall and 280 feet in diameter, it is the largest diameter monolithic dome designed by the Monolithic Dome Institute.

Business Administrator Michael Moore

help ministry teams to accomplish what God has called them to do. Paragon wasn't just focused on audio or video or stage design. They brought all the comprehensive elements that you would need for worship sanctuary design, which was very attractive to us."

The project at FCCC consisted of a stage renovation of multiple different staging and scenic elements that improved the look of the space for the live service but also for the television product. The orchestra pit was filled in with Paragon's own signature modular staging, which would allow for more stage floor space for FCCC's many productions. Because the floor was modular, however, it could be pulled out again in the future. Paragon also designed scenic I-Walls (Illuminated Walls) for the camera one background behind the pastor and areas under the side video screens, which were also in multiple side camera shots. The I-Walls are Illuminated light boxes with changeable graphics that allows for a constantly changing background and service branding.

The front stage facing was also replaced with an illuminated stage cap that ran the distance across the front of the stage, providing continuity between the scenic elements. The newly added stage front also covered existing steps that ran across the front of the stage. The steps were replaced with new illuminated modular steps that can be placed anywhere along the front.

With the orchestra being moved out of the pit, there was a need to organize the band on the main stage area. Several band platforms were designed to house certain elements. The acoustics and overall sound of the room was going to change when the band came out of the pit area. Paragon also included two of its new DE-3602 Drum Enclosures to control the sound of the drums and percussion. Additional stage lighting was brought in to better illuminate the stage area for the live experience and television.

"We added almost 100 ETC Ellipsoidal units to the lighting plot for the lighting of this 100-foot-wide stage," explained Paragon Lighting Designer Ron Robertson. "The Ellipsoidals allow much better control and less ambient light, which allows the colored back-



explains the church's mission of their renovation, saying, "There was a desire to appeal to a broader, more diverse audience and reach more people in our community in more effective ways. Our weekend service is the primary tool of influence that we have, so we saw this renovation as a tool to enhance our message and expand our reach and influence. What attracted us to Paragon was that they were a team helping teams. They were a team of individuals who knew the industry, who knew their trade, but their purpose was to



The project was completed in early September with one week of installation.

“2012 brought on a complete revamp of our design and fabrication processes,” said Brawner. “FCCC was one of the first bene-

factors of our new systems. We were able to fabricate 100% of the scenic and staging elements at our shop, which allowed for sufficient savings in the installation process for the client and limits the amount of time our guys have to be away from home.” **RPN**

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ground to read very well.”

Moore added, “We reached out to former clients of Paragon’s and heard that there had been some increases in attendance due to their work, as well as increases in moral and enthusiasm. This is what we were looking for.”

“We take a very historic design approach to our projects,” explained Paragon CEO Donnie Brawner. “In the case with FCCC, we were able to set up shop in the church space onsite and work on basic design concepts through computer modeling with all necessary parties present. This process leverages the contributions by the owner and design team and allows us to reach some hard design concepts very quickly. On a renovation, you have the advantage of being able to be in the actual space. This process provides value for the client throughout the project life cycle because they are more involved in the design. FCCC was very organized and thorough in their expectations, which always makes it a more efficient endeavor.”

“Paragon didn’t take a cookie-cutter approach to this project,” said Moore. “They came in, did the site survey, spent the time to understand our staff, to talk to our pastor, to really get the pulse and heartbeat of what we were trying to do. I believe anytime that you can bring in one group that can give expertise on so many areas, it helps because all those pieces have to come together for a weekend service to create that experience. With our partner, you get that knowledge, you get that experience of having been there, of having done it. But you also get someone who is in it for the long term. They value relationships. They value understanding who your ministry is, making sure that you are efficient. Making sure that the end result ultimately helps equip you to do what God has called you to do.”

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