

Background

In May after the resignation of the senior pastor, the leadership and the members of FBC generated, over a period of weeks, many questions about the future direction of our church. They were grouped under 5 themes after most of the questions were identified. On Jun 14, many members met to discuss the themes, and over the summer numerous congregants also gathered in a variety of venues to discuss these themes. The Planning Team was established to work on these themes further. The following represents the further evolving and maturing of the themes.

Summary

Based on the feedback gathered, the Planning Team is recommending:

-That First Baptist Church accepts the Pastors' recommendation (see attached) of sharing Tom's duties and continuing with our current number of pastors for at least the next six months

-That there is a more intentional effort to promote smalls groups of all sorts which will:

- Foster personal growth
- Promote unity
- Develop more authentic community within and outside of church membership
- Create small "families" where group members love and feel loved
- Build up lay leadership to move us forward

-That the planning team continues to meet in order to evaluate and to answer thematic questions more deeply, and to provide practical ways to achieve the goals we feel God is calling First Baptist Church to

-That the above suggestions are covered in prayer and fasting by all congregants of First Baptist Church

The following is a more in depth look at the themes addressed by the Planning Team.

1) Listening To God

In our Church-wide June 14 session, five topics were discussed. Under the theme "Listening to God" were the following questions:

- a. How do we find out what God is telling us?
- b. What is God telling you about next steps at FBC?
- c. How do we reconcile differences in perceptions of God's will for FBC?
- d. How do we engage more of FBC family to listen to God?

After discussions the Planning Team arrived at the following endeavors for FBC:

- **Pray** together intentionally as a church for this process
- **Fast** through giving up something one enjoys to spend that time in prayer and His Word (whether it is forgoing a meal in your day, chocolate, Facebook, etc)
- **Wait on God**, write down what God is saying to you
- **Reflect** on what God has said as written in His word
- **Confirm** - meet on September 27 at 6:30pm to share God's direction.

God is with us and through trusting in Him, the servant/leadership question will be and should be solved. "Commit your works to the Lord and your thoughts will be established" Prov. 16:3. "A man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" Prov. 16:9.

2) Kingdom of God

Basically the questions were, how can FBC best fulfill the great commission, how to balance the needs of the family of FBC with the rest of community and world, how to achieve authentic community, and the structural options at FBC in order to accomplish this.

FBC Vision and Mission statements:

Vision – We live in a better world and a transformed city because God is glorified in our lives and in the lives of those around us because we are followers of Jesus living in authentic community.

Mission – Celebrating our Life in Christ and Connecting People with God.

We are to spread the Good News of Christ to the World. "Therefore, go and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: **I am with you always**, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19,20. Spreading the Word is a must, but without balance of what Christ intends, we can sometimes hurt others, so we need to remember and learn how to effectively listen to Christ's words.

We are trying to promote people living unified, transparent lives, by reducing the distinction between "us" and "them" by **intentionally welcoming** others, without expectations of behaviour and belief. **Authentic community** with great love for one another can happen. We need love that motivates us to share (physically, spiritually, and emotionally) with others throughout our community and the rest of this world. "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:34,35. These simple commands answer why we are here and how we should live. God has shown us

this clearly and simply, we just need to listen and trust Him as we move forward, always in love. It seems quite difficult to **develop closeness** among people in strictly large gatherings. People learn to **know and appreciate each other** through time spent together. Groups exist for different reasons, service, prayer, caring, sharing and studying, to name a few. Members are encouraged to relate on a meaningful level in whatever interaction that they find themselves. Small groups can allow everyone to be heard and give individuals a way to share with each other in different ways. It can become much like a healthy family that eats, works, plays, discusses, prays, and encourages one another. It is God's plan for us to be in healthy unity with one another and he wants us to be a body (of all different types of parts) that operates together with Christ as the head. When the body is healthy as a family unit it can become useful to everyone. We become thankful of the gift of life given to us and want for others to be freed of the different burdens they carry (Good News). We can help everyone near and far when we come to appreciate God's Goodness and Hope that He offers through Christ. Christ demonstrated how we should live and gave us his Word to remind us and His Spirit to lead us (if we allow him to).

3) Community Relationships

Authentic community is something we must strive for through deliberate acts, as it doesn't happen by accident. There is no step-by-step process or check boxes that will lead us to the infallible strong community. First Baptist Church as an organization or institution cannot impose a strong community; not through constitution, not through a program, and not through a strategic pastoral team. Nor can it be manipulated into existence; it is God's initiative to make us one. He wants His followers to be one, and so we need to allow Him to direct our steps towards this goal of unity. The **responsibility of fostering unity lies with each individual member of FBC**. "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25

Small groups and **purposeful mentorship** are excellent ideas towards discipleship and servant/leadership development. However, the foundations of these are real and actively cultivated relationships.

Suggestions for Action:

Pray as a church, for direction, for vision, for wisdom. This could be done, for example, through regularly scheduled monthly prayer sessions. It is God's church and it is God who will direct. Make sure everyone is aware that all are welcome to attend.

Then, as individuals are led into servant/leadership, they can get involved in the community. It is not so much about meeting in community as it is about living in

community. This bears truth for our relationships outside of those made at FBC. This means we need to expand our relationships that we have with people who do not meet regularly at FBC. We need to host events that are meant to foster relationships. Here are a few suggestions:

- Have free family movie nights and invite Prince George, show movies that are popular with kids
- Start a Parent and Tots group for the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Get a coffeehouse for young adults going in the basement and feature local live musical and artistic talent.
- Have a walking club for seniors.
- Set up drop in volleyball or another sport at a local gym.
- Organize events like Guess Who's Coming to Lunch.
- Get a running club together.
- Commit teams of volunteers to help with the surrounding community.

4) PASTORAL TRANSITION

The Planning Team held much discussion and prayer about the next steps forward. Current budget constrains any new hiring. This includes the replacement of the recently resigned Lead Pastor. The congregation needs stability to continue the ministry to which it is currently committed. The Planning Team believes that the termination of any staff at this point would be divisive to the church family. Pastoral staffing needs to be driven by Vision and Mission.

PLANNING TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

Note: the current ratio of 4 pastors (at 3.25 FTE time pay) is within the CBWC guidelines of one pastor per 100-150 congregants.

-Gathering more data for analysis (**who we are and what are the needs**) is suggested for any future search committee. We support considering a needs assessment before striking a future search committee, and developing an ongoing assessment process that allows for both the Pastors and the congregation to give healthy feedback of how the Vision and Mission are being fulfilled.

-Servant-leadership needs to be intentionally developed through groups, **groups of all sorts** to allow for **people** to mature, grow, **and** serve with the goal of fulfilling the Great Commission.

-**Our current pastors are serving diligently and faithfully. They have accepted the challenge of taking on more responsibility and duties. It is our hope that the congregation would be fully supportive in their professional development.** Lay servant-leaders need to find their individual place in the

Kingdom work in every way possible. Leadership is addressed in the following section.

5) SERVANT / LEADERSHIP

The challenge of leadership was identified in the series of questions that were generated by the congregation and it became one of the “Themes for Consideration” by both the June focus group and by the Planning Team. For the purposes of this discussion paper we are defining leadership as:

People who respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit through submission to the will of Christ so that God’s purpose and plan for others is being fulfilled are demonstrating leadership.

Leaders are Christ’s living examples to both non-believers and believers. Please note that the definition can, and does, apply to every believer in the congregation. **Christ is our Head and we are all called to show leadership through service.** In the rest of this document we will use the term **Servant/Leadership**.

There is opportunity and support for leaders in many areas of service. A good example would be the training session for the Jump Street ministry. Servant/Leadership is also demonstrated by many individuals who are performing vital acts of service that are often “unseen”. Examples of this kind of servant/leadership are cleaning up in the kitchen after coffee garden, moving chairs for Jump Street, and specifically directed prayer. All of these actions are components of the crucial work the FBC congregation is doing for the Kingdom. We must stimulate a culture change so that our **congregation is mentored, encouraged and developed** to respond to the call to servant leadership rather than just being asked to fill vacancies.

ACTION PLANS

Build the Faith – The action of deepening our faith comes through prayer and studying the scripture. This is the basis for seeking input from the Spirit and determining where our personal will needs to be put under submission to the will of Christ. For most of us this is a very difficult thing to do. One practical solution involves us being accountable to friends and is best facilitated through small group involvement. In a small group setting you are both cared for and you care for others. Praying for specific needs in another individual’s life and being challenged for your thoughts regarding how a passage of scripture relates to present life situations strengthens the foundation of our faith “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” 2 Timothy 2:15

Enrich the Faith – The natural result of building the faith is that works will be done. If we seek the Spirit and study the Word we will be led to do works “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” James 2:26, and in doing those works we will be demonstrating Christ’s servant/leadership in our

lives. In practical terms this action may spring from needs that are identified in small group discussion, in response to congregation wide requests or by the urging of the Spirit.

Expand the Faith – This also follows as a natural result of enriching the faith. When actions are taken at the prodding of the Spirit and Christ is given the glory, we will become Christ's witnesses and we know that God will bless the testimony "so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" Isaiah 55:11

Things we talked about on the Pastor's Retreat

*Adapted from Sep 8,9, 2009 @ the Cheungs Cabin
For Planning Team – Sep 22, 2009*

We recommend that we look for a professional consultant to help us define our congregational DNA, (who we are) before we strike a search committee. In the interim (6 months), we will move forward with our 4 current pastors having Loralyn and Wayne assume most of Tom's former duties.

Some proposed changes in the pastors roles and functions (6 months)

- Funerals and weddings - Pat, Loralyn, Wayne
- Office Administrator training and care - Loralyn
- Planning of Sunday Worship - Loralyn, Wayne
- Custodian care - Pat
- Visitation - All pastors & visitation team
- Events (ie: Christmas, Easter celebrations)- Loralyn, Wayne
- Men's Ministries - Pat
- Justice and Mercy - Wayne

Liaison with Leadership groups

- Administration Group - Loralyn, Wayne
- Elders - Loralyn, Wayne
- Finance - Loralyn
- Property - Pat
- Ministry Group Chair - Loralyn, Wayne
- Adhoc planning group - Wayne

*note: The pastor who is the liaison with a particular group is committing to be at those meetings. Other pastors are welcome to attend as well.

Days Off

- Kimi (.5) - Mon, Thurs, Fri, Sat
- Pat - Wed, Thur
- Wayne - Fri, Sat
- Loralyn - Fri, Sat

Pastoral roles that will be given less priority

- Wayne
 - Wednesday afternoon Life Center involvement
 - UNBC Chaplaincy times
 - Drama, Dance, and Visual Art ministry development

- Loralyn
 - Men's ministries

Conversation around the work of God's Kingdom at FBC

- A good thing happening with the 'young married' group
- We must keep a good balance between 'doing' and 'being'
- We should create more 'front porch' opportunities, using the CBWC philosophy of: *Belong -Believe –Behave. (Create a sense of belonging first, then worry about belief systems and behavior after that.)*
- It is all about relationships – God using our youth working with kids. We should foster this more.
- Learning to love each other – to get along with each other
- Learn to wait on God - to not run ahead, but to follow

Conversation around the relationship of FBC in the PG community

- There is a good connection between the churches
- Our church building is seen as a "City" building especially with the number of funerals we do
- God has been using relationships through events such as the Seder Feasts, Phoenix Transition House, and the Freedom Singers Choir as outreach into community, we should do more.
- IDEA: On a Sunday morning (maybe 1/month), have a 45 min service and then have the entire congregation meet at a Seniors Center and serve lunch and visit with the seniors (or something like that).