

Anticipated Questions

This list of questions and answers is not exhaustive, but the members of the 15 x 15 Task do hope that you will find these answers helpful. We will be adding new questions and answers to this list as we share the 15 x 15 report with the membership.

Question #1:

I don't see the _____ committee listed in this report. How is the work that is performed currently by this committee going to be done?

Answer:

The Strategic Alignment Council is responsible for working with the ministry staff, ministry teams, support teams, deacon teams, etc., to make sure that the work of the church is carried out. The goal is not to eliminate some committees and keep others. The goal is to create a new structure that will allow us to accomplish our mission now and in the future.

Question #2:

I currently serve on a committee that is not listed in this report. Will I have a place to serve in the church?

Answer:

Absolutely! One of our ministry goals is: "Assist every church member in finding at least one opportunity for meaningful service through the church." God has given each of us specific passions, gifts, experiences, etc., that equip us for ministry service. Serving on a named committee/ministry team is only one way to serve the Lord through the church.

Question #3:

Why are we focusing on growth in the Central Gwinnett Cluster? Why are we focusing on a critical need within a three-mile radius of the church campus?

Answer:

We seek to use our resources as effectively as possible. It is simply not possible for us to have a significant impact if we seek to have the same level of involvement with multiple school clusters. As we disciple our members, we will encourage them to be on mission wherever they are. We will have influence in multiple school clusters *through the individual witness of our members*, but as a church, we will focus our combined efforts on the schools in the Central Gwinnett Cluster.

Question #4:

How did the 15 x 15 task force select the six strategy implementation teams?

Answer:

First of all, we believe that God guided our efforts. We believe that God led us toward this new structure. That being said, the Lord used our preparatory assignments (reading, church visits, etc.) and our research to help us develop this model. We also conducted a thorough evaluation of our current ministry model, and we sought to build upon strengths and overcome the challenges that are a part of our current structure. During one lengthy meeting, we started with hundreds of ideas spread across a wall. As we worked together, we began to see the need for these teams emerge.

Question #5:

Has this model been used in other churches?

Answer:

Our task force members are not aware of another church that uses this exact approach. While it was not our desire to create a unique structure, we did ask the Lord to speak a fresh word to us. We wanted the Lord to give us a vision that is specific to our ministry context.

Question #6:

Is this vision too aggressive?

Answer:

Yes, in a sense, it is. If we set out to accomplish something that we can do on our own, we do not depend upon the power of God. The goals stated in this report are very ambitious. They are BIG goals. We trust God to move mightily as we seek to follow his mission.

Question #7:

Why can't we just keep doing what we are doing?

Answer:

This question is an important one. Change is not easy, and our task force members understand that this new ministry model will be a very new approach for our church. In our research, we discovered that there is a significant duplication of effort in our current structure. There are far too many teams operating independently of one another. In today's world, time and other resources are scarce. We want to make sure that we work as effectively as possible to accomplish our mission. Furthermore, all organizations must continually adapt to new realities. Like it or not, we must adopt new ministry approaches. Our mission does not change, but the context in which we carry out the mission does change.

Question #8:

I don't see all age groups/life stages represented in this report. Are we neglecting people?

Answer:

We did not intend to list all of the responsibilities of the implementation teams. Each of the strategy implementation teams will develop a strategy to accomplish their purpose. At our current level of resources we have to focus intentionally on certain groups, but we anticipate the day when we can broaden our ministry focus to include other age/life stage groups.

Question #9:

How do our pastors/ministry directors fit into the new structure? Will we need to hire additional staff members?

Answer:

Our pastors and ministry directors participated in this strategy development process in many ways. Our pastors have had the opportunity to review and comment on the report, and many of their suggestions have been included in the final draft. While the church may call additional staff members in the future, the report does not call for the addition of any new paid staff members. As the report states, our pastors and ministry directors will develop ministry strategies to accomplish our mission.

Question #10:

How do we maintain focus on our mission over the long-term and how will we evaluate this new strategy?

Answer:

The purpose of the Strategic Alignment Council is to keep our members and our leaders focused on our mission. The members of the Strategic Alignment Council will consider both the short-term and long-term needs of the church. The Strategic Alignment Council will also present an annual report to the congregation, so that we can evaluate our progress.

Question #11:

How does this strategy impact our Sunday School?

Answer:

Our existing Sunday School structure is unchanged. The 15 x 15 Task Force affirms the work of the Sunday School and maintains that the Sunday School is the most effective small group approach for spiritual growth, fellowship, and ministry. We do expect that the work of the Member Mobilization team will impact our Sunday School through the ongoing development of new leaders.

Question #12:

When will the Strategic Alignment Council begin to function? How will the initial members of the Strategic Alignment Council be selected?

Answer:

If the members adopt the report of the 15 x 15 Task Force and the recommended changes to the bylaws, the Strategic Alignment Council will form immediately following the congregational vote. The 15 x 15 Task Force will recommend nine of the initial members of the Strategic Alignment Council on or before May 22. At the first meeting of the Strategic Alignment Council, these nine members will then nominate the final two council members and submit these nominations to the congregation for approval. In order to capitalize on the work of the 15 x 15 Task Force, we will nominate at least four members of the 15 x 15 Task Force to serve on the Strategic Alignment Council. The initial members of the Strategic Alignment Council will be:

- Deacon Chair
- Personnel Committee Chair
- Properties Committee Chair
- Stewardship Committee Chair or Church Treasurer
- Member-at-large (1 year term, followed by full 3 year term)*
- Member-at-large (1 year term, followed by full 3 year term)*
- Kwabena Gyimah (2 year term)
- Carlene Harris (2 year term)
- Brian Loudermilk (3 year term)
- Beth Ann Williams (3 year term)
- Inman Houston (Senior Pastor)

*The nine initial members of the Strategic Alignment Council will nominate members for these final two positions. The nominees will be present to the members for election.

Questions and Answers

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

The following questions were asked and answered on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

Question #13:

What is the need we will try to meet first for our community?

Answers:

“A” is a critical word. At the present time, we do not know what the need is, but we do know that we will focus on the people within a three-mile radius of the church campus. We may utilize our facilities for this. While we will continue to meet many needs in our community on a case-by-case basis, we will identify at least one critical need and seek to meet the need. It will be the responsibility of the Acts 1:8 Team to identify this need and to develop the strategy.

Question #14:

What are the goals that were met and unmet during the last long-range planning committee?

Answer: The task force reviewed the reports of the 2003 and 2007 long-range planning teams. We learned that many of the things in the 2003 report have been achieved, but several have not. The piece that wasn't worked out fully in 2003 was the implementation. There were a lot of great ideas, but there was no specific mechanism to get them accomplished, in many cases. (Note: the chairman of the committee left the church shortly after the report.) The 2007 plan dealt almost entirely with facilities, and most of those needs have been met. (Note: signage may still need to be dealt with.)

Question #15:

What committees have you already decided to do away with?

Answer: See Questions 1 and 2 on the question sheet. For example, the Nominating Committee and the Board of Trustees will be replaced by the Strategic Alignment Council. There will be some transition time involved. The process was not to keep or do away with specific teams. The ones which were maintained are core to the operation of the church.

Question #16:

Has the team analyzed census/demographic area to identify who we are reaching out to?

Answer: We did not do a new demographic study, but we did use information from previous studies. After talking with community leaders, we got a good idea of the demographics. We did have some information from previous long-range committees. We reviewed some information for the City of Lawrenceville as well as some other updated statistics. A review of all pertinent demographic data will fall under the responsibility of the proposed ministry teams. Many of the teams will work together to identify the demographics.

Question #17:

What is the meaning of the term 15 x 15?

Answer:

When we began talking about a strategy process initially, it was framed around the development of big ideas. The question was asked if we could come up with 15 ideas that would be achieved by 2015. As we began talking about it as a team, we didn't want to restrict God's leading, and we ended up with 11 ministry initiatives.

Question #18:

What is the accountability of the Strategic Alignment Council to the congregation as a whole?

Answer:

They will publish an annual printed report outlining the work they have done and the work they plan to do. We felt this annual reporting was the best way to keep the congregation informed. It will include a time for comments. The Strategic Alignment Council members will also be elected by the congregation. It will not be the same people around the table for the next several years. There will be three or four new people each year to provide fresh voices. Comment: An appearance of this plan is that it could be a self-perpetuating group because of the appointive powers of the Strategic Alignment Council. It appears the Strategic Alignment Council could maintain a grip on the church because they really become the nominating committee. (Note: the deacon process will remain the same; they will still vote on their own chair as well as the other committees.) The deacons will continue functioning as they have. At some level, we need to have trust. The team tried to develop a system that would enable work to be completed. Hopefully the best possible people will be nominated for positions. The Spiritual Leadership Development Institute will be the pool for which positions are chosen.

Question #19:

What if there is a grievance or issue with the Strategic Alignment Council?

Answer:

As a church, Jesus is the head, and then the congregation has the authority. If the Strategic Alignment Council gets out of line, then the process would be to contact the Strategic Alignment Council chair and the pastor, and then come before the congregation. Over the years, Baptist churches are known for coming to this point. The Strategic Alignment Council appears to be top-down rather than congregational. Where are the checks and balances? At some point there needs to be trust. If it comes down to this, it is probably bigger than the organizational structure (i.e. an authoritarian style of leadership). This is probably indicative of a larger issue.

Question #20:

Will there be training for developing spiritual gifts?

Answer: The team took a spiritual gift inventory and there will probably be something similar through the Spiritual Leadership Institute. The focus is really on the Member Mobilization Team in whatever method they choose. There might be some training as well as opportunities to use gifts. Find out the gifts, train, and then plug in. Members will not be limited to doing one thing. The point is to have a methodology for people to find their place(s) of service, especially for new members.

Question #21:

Will there be a minister to lead each ministry team?

Answer:

For some, there will be and others not. There will be involvement, and some may be assigned as a resource for each group. The plan does not call for a minister to be hired in each area.

Question #22:

When will we hire a children's ministry director?

Answer:

We are currently searching for a children's ministry director. Now, we're in the process of reviewing resumes, but there is no set timeline. The intention is to find the best person.

Question #23:

What about a focus on local colleges?

Answer:

The Next Generation Ministry Team is a wide-open area and they will help develop a strategy which includes that age group. This would probably overlap some as well with the Acts 1:8 Ministry Team. Again, we have to be honest with ourselves as far as resources and focus. We need to pray for the opportunities and that the Lord will bring college students and others to us and trust the Lord to work this out in His timing.

Question #24:

Are the By-Laws changes part of the motion? Will the ByLaws team be limited in its scope as far as their recommendations?

Answer:

Yes, the Bylaws revisions are a part of the motion. The big issue is on January 1, 2012 we will be operating in violation of our Bylaws if we do not make further revisions.

Question #25:

What is the adaptability and flexibility of the structure? How would we adapt to anything in the future?

Answer: The congregation could change things at any time. This question really could be asked in any structure. Right now, you could probably say that our ByLaws are too rigid (i.e. committees whether they function or not). As God works through us, the new ByLaws allow for changes. As a group, we believe the Lord led us to these goals. The 15 x 15 Task Force is a diverse group of people, and they unified around these ministry goals. This group was set apart to seek the Lord and come up with goals for the church. Within this structure, there are a number of opportunities for making changes on the various teams. There are also multiple layers of accountability so that we can avoid doing too many things. This is a five-year strategy. By 2015 we will either know things have happened or not. Our intention was to put before the congregation measurable goals so they can evaluate the progress.

Question #26:

Should the Strategic Alignment Council evaluate By-Laws each year?

Answer:

Yes. We will constantly evaluate our level of compliance with our governing documents.

Questions and Answers

Sunday, May 22, 2011

The following questions were asked and answered on Sunday, May 22, 2011.

Question #27:

How is the WMU/Women's Ministry affected by the 15 x 15 proposal?

Answer:

The report is open-ended. We anticipate WMU to continue. There will certainly be some overlap and direct involvement with the Acts 1:8 Team. More than likely the WMU director will be on the Acts 1:8 Team. The 15x15 Team developed the purpose statement and the Women's Ministry Team will be responsible for developing its own ministry strategy. This will help formalize the women's ministry at LFBC. Nothing in the report is a commentary on the current ministry.

Question #28:

If plans/programs suggested by Strategic Alignment Council are not approved, they will not be funded, right?

Answer:

The budgeting process starts with the Stewardship Committee and the bottom line budget figure. Simultaneously, the staff is developing a calendar, which represents ministries throughout the year. Once the calendar is developed, the Strategic Alignment Council will assist with making sure these things align with our church's mission. Then, dollar figures will be attached. The budget process will run through this new structure, but the Strategic Alignment will not have direct involvement in the budget process.

Question #29:

On the proposed revisions to the Bylaws, Section 7, if someone cannot fill out their term, are they elected to serve out until the end of the year or the end of their term?

Answer:

The Bylaws Review Team will deal with this type of issue when they meet.

Question #30:

In page 13 of the report, it talks about the Strategic Alignment Council qualifications. Under the first bullet point, is it saying that someone could not be on the Council if they haven't been members for two years?

Answer:

These qualifications will go into effect on Jan 1, 2013.

Question #31:

Will there be any joint venture with the Hispanic congregation and the 3-mile radius?

Answer:

It's a possibility. It will fall to the work of the Acts 1:8 Team and the decisions they make around their strategy and tactics.

Question #32:

Will we continue to have quarterly business meetings?

Answer:

Absolutely. Our current Bylaws require us to meet quarterly. If the Bylaws Review Task Force makes a recommendation, it could change. An annual report will come from the Strategic Alignment Council, which will include various ministry reports. This annual report does not replace the quarterly business meetings.

Question #33:

I was excited about 15 "God-sized" ideas. I was expecting to see more of "this is what we are going to do"--more action rather than goals.

Answer:

There are some specifics in the goals (i.e. 50% of congregation going on mission trip, 200 baptisms, etc.). The 15x15 Team has given the vision. The various teams will determine how they implement the goals. The team believes that working toward the achievement of these goals will revolutionize the church and could have a ripple effect on things that are not even in the report. The 15 x 15 team concerned itself with the overall task, not the specifics of how to implement and engage members. The team left this open because we didn't want to tell the congregation what to do, but instead allow people to identify and use their spiritual gifts. Members should serve in places that are aligned with their giftedness. The 11 ministry goals will direct our efforts for the next five years.

Question: #34:

What is the Legacy Committee?

Answer:

We are a 162-year-old church and this is a broader naming of the History Committee. This should include a broader cross-section of our history and people who have a passion for preserving our history. An important part of knowing where we're going is knowing where we've been.

Question #35:

Could you explain the Spiritual Development Institute?

Answer:

One of the items that came out of where we are as a congregation today and where we want to be is a recognition that there is a tremendous opportunity for more people to become leaders. If we are going to ask more people to assume leadership roles, we need to equip people to become leaders. To execute a plan to put the ministry goals into action, we need people to bring their passions to the table. This process is an opportunity for people to educate, learn, and share and then use their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church. Inman will encourage people to be part of the Institute, but anyone can become a part of it. The Institute will probably start in January and run through early May of each year. This will assist the Nominating Committee in the fall to plug people into positions. The curriculum will not include one specific topic or reading. Principles will be the same, but materials might change from year to year.

Question #36:

I know a lot of thought went into the goal of baptizing 200 by 2015. How did the team come up with the number?

Answer:

We believe God directed us to this number. We will begin counting on June 5.

Question: #37:

If I volunteered at one of our schools, am I allowed to invite children to S.S. or Wednesday night activities?

Answer:

We must be wise by being an example without specifically asking them to come to church *while we are in our role as volunteers on the school campus*. The goal is to develop relationships that will extend beyond the classroom. Then, we could more appropriately invite people to come.

Question: #38:

In the By-Laws, on the deacon section, under terms of service, should the date of ordination be Dec. 31 instead of Jan. 31?

Answer:

Deacons can begin their service before the ordination service. January 31 is correct.

Question #39:

How will the Strategic Alignment Council coordinate meetings with the ministry teams and staff?

Answer:

We haven't recommended any specifics, and there will be some tweaking. There will be dialogue as necessary. The staff will have a general invitation to every meeting of the Strategic Alignment Council.

Question #40:

How does the organizational structure scale up or down church growth?

Answer:

As we grow, things will be broadened (e.g., If we grow we might add additional ministry teams). It will depend on the specific needs identified.

Question #41:

Apart from the pain of change, what are the perceived pitfalls of this paradigm shift?

Answer:

Doing something different will take some time. The 15x15 team talked about being sure that we're not discussing the same things five years from now. We focused on simplicity and making it easy to become involved in LFBC. The team wanted to be sure that the recommendations would have impact in God's Kingdom. The team also wants to make sure that we don't lose any significant ministry that may be happening.

Question #42:

How do we measure the impact of ministries like the clothing mission and ESL?

Answer:

There are stories about people who have been touched through these various ministries. We expect and hope that these ministries will continue, but the Acts 1:8 Team will help LFBC capitalize on what we are doing.

Question #43:

Is it possible for two members of the same family to be on the Strategic Alignment Council?

Answer: We will need to look at this to be sure it does not happen. Inman will make a recommendation to the By-Law Task Force relating to this. It will take some coordination between the various teams and committees.

Questions and Answers

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

The following questions were asked and answered on Wednesday, May 25, 2011.

Question #44:

One of our values stated in the 15x15 report is “authentic biblical worship.” Does the report address worship specifically?

Answer:

Authentic biblical worship is one of the seven values outlined. Our pastors will continue to lead in that area. The issue of worship style was not a part of the discussion. Worship is a reflection of the health and the heart of the church. This doesn't mean there isn't opportunity for new methods or songs. As members of the congregation are disciplined and we continue reaching people for Christ, it will have an impact on our worship expression in a positive way. Changing a way of doing things (including worship) doesn't guarantee added vitality or a larger degree of reverence. We're not saying that worship should be the same every week or that there won't be any changes. Worship is our response to the goodness and greatness of God. It's not something we can manufacture.

Question #45:

Regarding the senior adult ministry team, can we have some more insight on how that will work? What is the role of the senior adult ministry?

Answer:

As the 15x15 Team was praying about this, we realized that planning every detail of what each team will do was beyond our scope and purpose. The team started with the purpose of each team and it will be up to the individual teams to determine its specific needs. Teams will likely have 10-12 people. Their charge will be to ask what that particular ministry will look like. For the senior adult ministry team, they will develop a comprehensive ministry for that area as it relates to the team's purpose. Questions will be asked about how the team will achieve its purpose. The team will chart the course and develop appropriate ministries. When the 15 x 15 Team was talking about this team, the emphasis was separating senior adults from the rest of the membership. We are encouraging seniors to get involved in other teams as well. All doors are open, not just in the senior adult ministry team. This mindset will allow for intergenerational ministry in several areas (i.e. Men's and Women's Ministry), without being segmented in specific areas. The classification of senior adult is self-identified designation. The wisdom and experience of all senior adults is valued.

Question #46:

What is the transition timing on the 15x15 plan? How will we function in the meantime if this is approved (without losing something)?

Answer:

Our present committees will continue to work and there will be a transition time. The Nominating Committee and Board of Trustees are the only committees that will be eliminated immediately. Other teams and committees will continue to work. There will be some evaluation time for some of the ministries and programs. Transitioning will include a lot of coordination.

Question #47:

There is some overlapping of teams. Will they come to the Strategic Alignment Council to coordinate?

Answer:

Each ministry area will present a plan for the coming year. The Strategic Alignment Council's job is to put all of these ministries side-by-side and ask questions about the purpose of the various ministries and events and coordinate calendar items. Currently these committees and teams operate somewhat in isolation. There will be some type of staff involvement in each of the ministry teams as well.

Question #48:

As several of the members of the Strategic Alignment Council are chairs, should guidelines be such that the chairs have at least one more year on their respective committees (i.e., do committee chairs often serve during their last year on the committee or is this high turnover rate desired/expected)?

Answer:

Committee chairs serve for various terms and this will continue. Deacon chair is usually only one year. The terms of service were factored in so that we will have both new faces and some continuity each year. At minimum, the senior pastor and four of the at-large members will repeat each year.

Question #49:

How frequently will the Strategic Alignment Council meet?

Answer:

At least monthly, but they will determine for sure.

Question #50:

What is the quorum requirement for the Strategic Alignment Council?

Answer:

The current general practice is 50% plus one. Six would constitute a quorum on that group. [Note: The 15x15 Team's task was not to rewrite Bylaws, but instead to make related issues compliant on June 5.] The Bylaws Review Team will look more carefully at the By-Laws as a whole.

Question #51:

Is there a specific metric evaluation for children and student goals?

Answer:

It would be based on *average* Sunday School attendance.

Question #52:

How do we ensure the "filling the slots" mentality doesn't impact our accounting for the baptism and 100% children/youth growth goals. Do we want to prevent or allow huge rolls in order to hit the goals?

Answer:

The 15x15 Team used the phrase "with integrity" to describe the growth items. Numbers will not be reported for the sake of just numbers. The 15x15 team felt like we needed to have some numeric goals instead of being general, so that we will not lose sight of the overall vision.

Question #53:

Are the "baptism events" that were popular in some circles in the past year considered off the table, as we are doing this with integrity?

Answer:

While the Pastor Inman appreciate the work that other churches are doing, he is not comfortable with the practice of "spontaneous" baptisms. There should be time for having a counseling session with those who make decisions. People should hear and respond to the biblical Gospel, and the decision should not be as a result of an emotional plea to practice baptism.

Question #54:

What is the approach for corporate worship space if it becomes limited?

Answer:

We have more education than we do worship space. When we hit 450-500 in worship, we will need to begin planning for a second worship service. We will consider what to do when we reach this attendance mark.

Questions and Answers Wednesday, June 1, 2011

The following questions were asked and answered on Wednesday, June 22, 2011.

Question:

I'm confused about the listing of nominees. It doesn't line up with page 12 relating to the Strategic Alignment Council composition.

Answer:

Ultimately, there will be 11 people on the Strategic Alignment Council. Five individuals will serve on the Strategic Alignment Council will serve on the basis of their elected position in the church. The positions were listed rather than the person because the 15x15 team does not know for sure that the committee chairs listed will agree to serve. The other six are members-at-large and they will serve three year rotating terms. This Sunday we will vote on the first nine people who will serve on the Strategic Alignment Council. The nine initial members of the Strategic Alignment Council will nominate the final two members and submit the nominees to the members for a vote.

Question:

Have any of the chairs of the committees accepted yet?

Answer:

Mark Limmer, our current deacon chair, served on the 15 x 15 Task Force, and he has agreed to serve. The other committee chairs have not yet been formally asked. We are waiting on the vote this Sunday.

Question:

I assume there will be no nominations from the floor?

Answers:

Yes, and no. For this vote (June 5), the answer is no. We have given members the opportunity for question and comment, so our vote this Sunday will be without discussion. In future years, the answer to this question is yes. The Strategic Alignment Council will submit nominees to the members, but there will be an opportunity for members to nominate others.

Question:

If the recommendations are approved, several new teams will be formed. Is there any time schedule for them to reach the goals for each of these groups?

Answer:

There is not a specific date and time that has been recommended. Naturally some of the goals are neatly aligned with various ministry teams, but the 15x15 team wanted the ministry teams to have the flexibility to exercise some discretion. The Strategic Alignment Council will put into place some guidelines and accountability. The teams are still conceptual and the Strategic Alignment Council will provide direction on execution and implementation. In the June to December timeframe, the committees will continue to function. Transition of work will happen during this time. Part of the work of the Strategic Alignment Council will be to prioritize each team's efforts.

Question:

In general terms, what kinds of issues will be brought before the church if the 15 x 15 team recommendations are approved?

Answer:

Our annual budget certainly will be presented to the church for comment and approval. The congregation will also formally elect nominees for leadership positions. Indebtedness, major changes in strategy, pastoral/ministry staff personnel, and other important issues will still be brought before the congregation.