

REQUESTED Report Regarding One Common Discipleship Hour

Charge from the Transition Team

As Stated: A request to review and compose a thorough consideration of all that would be necessary to provide one common Sunday morning discipleship experience for all ages and customary groupings of our current Sunday School with regard for growth and expansion. We have asked that the Staff provide a written report to the church in March, 2014.

As Interpreted: Identify the feasibility (space, staff, lay leadership, and financial resources) and potential timeline of a combined discipleship hour with customary groupings that provide for greater unity and promotes growth and expansion in both discipleship and worship, with regard to current and future needs of the church and the community.

Ministerial Staff Feasibility Study

The staff has concluded that it is possible to go to a common discipleship hour. We have broken the possibilities down into three phases. Phase 1 will allow us to go to one hour using all our existing space for a period of time as we seek alternate solutions to continue in the one common discipleship hour. Phase 2 will require the acquisition of temporary space whether on campus or off campus so that growth can continue. Phase 3 will be the consideration of permanent educational space to allow for ongoing growth in a common discipleship hour.

As the staff studied each phase, they considered the values that have guided and instructed discipleship decisions over the years:

- Smaller teaching units allow for deeper relationships and greater personal care for members.
- New units grow faster and assist to more quickly assimilate new members.
- Strategic planning and future thinking is necessary if we are to keep ahead of anticipated growth.
- As we encounter change in each of the phases described below we must embrace the values of cooperation and flexibility.

Phase 1: Common Discipleship Hour within our Current Facilities

As we considered the adaptation of our organization and facilities to accommodate one common discipleship hour we addressed the issues of space, lay leadership, paid staff, financial resources, time line and opportunities and concerns.

Space:

Utilizing our current space for existing discipleship groups now meeting in two discipleship hours could be accomplished by “squeezing down” and allowing space that was primarily

designated for preschool, children and youth to be used by other groups. Each discipleship group would be allocated the least amount of space required, and areas like preschool, children and youth would turn some of their designated space over to adult groups.

The Younger Preschool wing could give up an activity room (indoor playroom) that is not used as a classroom because it does not have a restroom. This room could be assigned to an adult group. A second available room would start off the year vacant and would eventually be occupied as new babies arrive and creepers and toddlers are moved up by developmental advances. Several of these rooms are already near maximum occupancy level so the vacant room allows for the advancement to keep growth possible in this area.

In the Older Preschool wing the organization in one common hour would need 5 of the 9 rooms leaving 4 rooms to be otherwise assigned. The two first grade departments could be moved to this wing and perhaps two adult groups could be assigned to the other two rooms.

The Children's 2nd floor wing has 8 rooms of which the Children Division would need only 5 rooms in one common hour if the two first grade departments are moved to the first floor. The remaining three rooms could be assigned to adult classes.

Youth could occupy one of the two spaces that was originally designed for youth—Rooms 230-231 or Rooms 240-241. The 240-241 space is bigger than is needed on a square footage basis but contain the number of breakout rooms that the youth need. The youth classes would have ample room to grow within the existing breakout setup. The 230-231 space is adequate to handle the number of teenagers and allow for growth but the number of breakout spaces is one short of optimum. They could be assigned a nearby adult classroom if needed. If a master teaching session is used this space would require that the movable walls be put in place following the opening session.

College could occupy one of three spaces: Room 120A, Rooms 230-231 or Rooms 240-241. The optimum for their needs is Rooms 240-241. Rooms 230-231 allows for less growth but could be adequate for the first year depending on the rebound. 120A is about the same size as 230-231 but does not allow for a breakout class if such is desired; however, using 120A for college and allowing 240-241 to be used as adult space gives more space for current ABF groupings. Again these decisions can best be made when we see the rebound that could happen in the fall with a new pastor.

Adults currently have 33 ABF units. Placing youth in Room 230-231-233 area and college in Room 120A, using one room on the younger preschool hall, two on the older preschool hall and three on the children's hall and using all remaining spaces now occupied by adults there would be 26 spaces for the 33 ABFs that we currently have in the current two hour structure. The Educational Staff have discussed several places where similar classes in the two hours could be combined to add strength to these ministry area. This could likely be done to accommodate the number of spaces available. This plan would allow for growth within all groupings but would not allow for the creation of new Bible study groups within any age division.

If youth and college occupy Rooms 230-231 and Rooms 240-241 then the number of spaces needed in the Adult Division would increase by 5. Or we would have only 21 of the 33 spaces required to house all the units we currently have.

Another option would be to take the 21 or 26 spaces available and create a totally new adult origination that would fit the available space. This choice would require a great amount of flexibility and buy-in from all existing groups and great deal of cooperation within the new organization.

Lay Leadership:

The Younger Preschool Division would have the unique need for three shifts of workers: one during the early worship hour, one during the common discipleship hour and one during the late worship hour. There would be a need for approximately 18 additional workers. It will be possible for those who attend one hour of worship to attend the discipleship hour and to also work in the younger preschool area in the alternate worship hour.

The Older Preschool could combine workers from the two current hours and would have adequate staff. Additional staff would be needed as growth takes place within the existing facilities requiring at least one additional worker in each of the 5 older preschool rooms.

The Children's Division would have adequate workers as they combined the workers from two hours into one. They might be able to release three of the workers currently involved. As growth nears max capacity for the available rooms there would need to be an additional 11 workers added.

The Youth Division currently meets in only one discipleship hour and has enough workers. An additional two workers would be needed to go to an organization that had 6 breakout groups.

College has adequate leadership for its ministry to expand.

The Young, Median and Senior Adults will likely have adequate workers but that will depend on the organization that is developed. If existing units are combined to fit the space more appropriately, the leadership from both current hours would need to work together and determine their leadership/teaching structure moving forward as one unit. They may choose to share and/or rotate responsibilities, or a class leader may elect to be available to help start a new unit when growth requires.

Staff:

The church would need to call a Minister of Adults as soon as possible to help plan and implement the transition to a common discipleship hour.

The church could need to employ additional Children's Ministry Aides (CMAs) if the volunteer leadership is not adequate to cover three hours of ministry that would be necessary if there were two worship services and one Discipleship hour in between.

Financial Resources:

There could be cost in room make-ready in the preschool and children's areas. Some furniture would need to be stored until rooms are reset for use as intended and equipped.

The recommended filling of the Minister of Adults position would not require additional budget since the position is fully funded in the 2014 Budget but would require an increase in monthly expenses to cover the salary and program expenses.

The additional CMA's would require approximately \$25,000 in additional funding. These funds could come from either Budget Reserve or an addition to the annual budget.

Time Line:

The most feasible time to implement a common discipleship hour would be either in January 2015 or with Promotion Sunday in August 2015. This will allow time for the new pastor to give input to the process and for the church to begin to rebound. Allowing time to rebound will give us a better understanding of the direction we might need to go in some of the areas where there is greater uncertainty. We also need lead time to meet with current ABF Leadership to formulate and discuss the new plan so they can positively communicate the adjustments to the ABF members, and facilitate a smooth and positive transition.

If the church were to decide to move to a common discipleship hour, the ministerial staff would utilize the help of their current leadership and the deacons to clarify with each family their options in worship and discipleship and assist them in making a commitment to their anticipated Sunday morning activity that might inform our space and leadership needs. This also provides an opportunity for us to reach out to inactive members and give them a fresh invitation and orientation to our worship and discipleship options that will best fit their family.

Opportunities and Concerns:

We do expect a rebound of attendance once a new pastor is called due to more consistent attendance of existing members, regaining members who have not been present with us for some time, as well as new prospects and those curious to meet and hear the new pastor. Even the increased regularity in attendance will impact numbers/capacities. Our plans as a church need to accommodate this rebound of attendance.

While Phase 1 will work short term to immediately house all groups, it does create the challenge of relocating adult groups when growth requires preschool, children and youth classes to open new units and when it becomes apparent that new Adult Bible Fellowships need to be created. The anticipated "life span" of Phase 1 could be quite short (12-18 months) considering the growth we anticipate.

The rebound anticipated in the fall with a new Pastor can inform our decision regarding the best use of space in the common discipleship hour on Sunday mornings.

An anticipated concern is the use of the preschool and children's wings by adult groups. Doing so will allow unscreened adults on the hallway with preschoolers where we have previously tried only to allow individuals who have been screened according to our Child Risk Policies. The concern here would be the perception of parents of infants, creepers, toddlers and other preschoolers who have enjoyed the assurances that all adults on the hall have been screened and approved according to the Child Protection Policy.

Another concern has to do with how quickly we might need to reclaim either children's or preschool classrooms if immediate growth happens in these areas. In 2011-2012 the children's division used all 8 rooms on the children's wing during the late hour. Though the total attendance was much larger at that time, all classrooms were still needed in the late hour even

with 2 discipleship hours. There is a concern that we will reach that capacity much sooner with the combined attendance.

Preschool and Children's divisions have also enjoyed groups smaller than the "max capacity" indicated in our study in order to provide smaller group instruction and activities with children. In the Phase 1 plan we will be pressing the maximum limits of our space.

In the adult division there will need to be a heightened spirit of cooperation within all groups and from all members as we seek to create a new adult structure and integrate class members and leadership as we reduce the total number of adult units to fit within the available on campus space.

Phase 2: Common Discipleship Hour Utilizing Temporary Space

If the church experiences even moderate growth with the move to a common discipleship hour we will eventually require more space than is currently available on campus. Since church growth often takes place not in established units but in new units, we will need to create new units in order to continue to grow. These new units will require space, lay leaders, staff, and financial resources.

Space

As preschool and children rooms reach maximum capacity those divisions will need to regain the use of rooms that are given over to adult groups in Phase 1. When that becomes necessary the church will need to provide additional space for adults. We also anticipate that the college will quickly outgrow the space that will be assigned in Phase 1.

Additional space may be acquired either on-campus or off-campus. On-campus space would likely be in the form of modular or temporary buildings. Off-campus space would likely be rental of unoccupied space that would be fairly convenient to campus. The church would need to do a feasibility study and determine the space that can be provided to keep growing.

- **Modular/Temporary Space**

Temporary space can be provided on-campus through modular building that can be attractive and functional yet not as costly as permanent space. Modular space would have the benefit of being located on campus and directly accessible before or after worship without leaving campus.

- **Off-campus rental space**

In our recent past when education space was a limiting factor some ABF's responded to the challenge to meet off-campus. Groups have met in a local park, a movie theater restaurant, and other space for lease around town. Other possible facilities include Brazos Center, vacant retail space, etc.

The college can possibly meet for one year in the Baptist Student Ministry building near campus.

Classes meeting off campus need strong leadership and face the challenge of getting visitors to their meeting place before/after worship on campus.

Leadership:

The needs of lay and staff leadership would remain similar to those of using the existing facilities. As we expand in the Preschool and Children's Divisions we will need at least two to three leaders per department. New adult units will require additional teachers, coordinators, and various class leaders.

Staff:

The need to fill the Minister to Adults position would be even more critical so that person can provide organizational input and leadership enlistment and development for the new adult units.

Financial Resources:

There are inherent costs involved with the acquisition or use of additional space. Off campus space and other temporary space would have related cost for rental, set-up and equipment. Temporary modular space would require planning and construction cost. If the college ministry was off campus we might need to provide bus transportation from the site to our campus.

Time Line:

Planning for this phase should begin as we move to one common discipleship hour. Doing so will give 12-18 months to prepare for temporary space.

Phase 3: Addition of Permanent Space for Continued Growth**Space:**

Permanent educational space could be required in the next five or so years in order to keep pace with the anticipated growth. Permanent space would be the most costly of all the options and would take strategic planning and a major fund raising effort that includes the payoff of the existing note.

The planning, fund-raising, and construction of such space will obviously take the longest and require the greatest financial commitment. We do have the property across Cambridge Drive that would allow for additional space which could be constructed to house a college and youth-oriented space. If we choose this option, rental space, modular space, or off campus groups could be used until permanent space is constructed.

The Church Architecture Department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas provides professional services to assist churches in feasibility studies and master planning at a very reasonable cost. The Church could authorize the staff to secure a proposal from the Architecture Department at the Baptist General Convention of Texas to do a study of our facilities and provide recommendations regarding possible solutions for the immediate space needs and for a recommended adaptation of the master plan to address permanent space needs using one common discipleship hour. Obviously we could employ the services an architectural firm (like HKS who did the original campus) to provide master planning and design documents as a part of our study.

Finances Resources:

The Church may desire to address the current \$3 million debt prior to incurring the additional debt needed to construct additional space. A number of members continue to make monthly contributions above their tithe to help pay the debt down as quickly as possible. Other members need to be encouraged to consider joining these faithful few in reducing that debt as soon as possible.

The Church has approximately \$600,000 in the Budget Reserve that could be used to engage professional assistance to provide a feasibility study regarding additional space.

Time Line:

The church will need to begin planning for permanent space shortly after it acquires the temporary space need to keep growing. Approximately 12-18 months will be needed to adequately begin assess the church's permanent space needs.

Additional Impacts of a Common Discipleship Hour:

One of the goals of the staff in studying the common discipleship hour was to remain sensitive to the impact on worship services. In reviewing the ways other churches have structured their Sunday morning worship and discipleship opportunities, we found that many churches are successfully using a variety of models including:

- Common discipleship Hour followed by concurrent services in 2 different locations on campus
- Services on either side of the common discipleship hour
- Utilizing our current structure of concurrent worship services/discipleship, sometimes with a third service for additional worship option

Summary:

The Church has the capability to implement Phase 1 and go to common discipleship hour on Sunday morning using the existing facilities. The greatest need will be full cooperation from leadership, members and current groups. All of us will need to be flexible and supportive to make the transition from two discipleship hours to one common discipleship hour go as smoothly as possible.

Implementation of Phase 2 with off campus home groups, the rental of space, or the construction of temporary are all feasible options for First Baptist Bryan. We simply must choose which set of opportunities and challenges that we wish to address in the days ahead. As a congregation, we are very capable of adequately addressing those opportunities and challenges we choose to address.

Implementation of Phase 3 will take greater study and consideration to insure that a realistic master plan is developed and that construction is within the parameters of those master plans.

The church currently has approximately \$600,000 in Budget Reserve to assist with the cost of implementing various parts of the phases of ministry outlined above. With anticipated growth

and a corresponding increase in financial resources the future is bright and the possibilities for expansion are only limited by our commitment.