

**REPORT TO ST. ANDREW BAPTIST CHURCH
FROM THE PASTOR AND STAFF
CONCERNING THE LAWLESS CONSULTATION**

Near the beginning of 2016, St. Andrew Baptist Church engaged The Lawless Group, led by Dr. Chuck Lawless of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the International Mission Board, to do an evaluation of the health of our church. St. Andrew Baptist is a 4 Generation Church seeking to reach and disciple people of all ages, grandparents to grandchildren. We also asked The Lawless Group to make recommendations for how our church could more effectively reach and disciple people of the Millennial Generation (born between 1982 and 2001) and Generation Z (born 2002 and later).

The Lawless Group conducts these kinds of consultations with churches of several denominations, and had a standard format by which they would perform their analysis and make their recommendations.

1. Soon after The Lawless Group was enlisted, we (the staff of St. Andrew) sent reports and statistics covering the years from 2006 to 2016 and answered a series of questions to help The Lawless Group gain a basic orientation and understanding of St. Andrew.
2. In the spring, 137 adults, all of whom are active participants in St. Andrew, but who were of a wide range of ages and areas of involvement in the church, were given a standardized Church Health Survey to complete in the Fellowship Hall. These completed surveys were then given to The Lawless Group for automated scoring and analysis.
3. Dr. Lawless and another consultant visited St. Andrew and conducted interviews with each of the Ministerial Staff and with 12 Lay Leaders from the congregation. The two of them also were present on a Sunday and moved about from place to place, observing what happens at St. Andrew from 8:30 to 12:30 on the Lord's Day.
4. The Lawless Group also enlisted two pairs of young adults (Millennials) to be secret shoppers and visit our church on a Sunday morning, coming unannounced and intentionally remaining incognito. Each pair wrote a report, giving responses to standardized questions posed by The Lawless Group, indicating their thoughts and feelings about what they saw, heard, and experienced while visiting our church on a Sunday.
5. After all the information was gathered, and analysis by The Lawless Group had begun, Dr. Lawless phoned the pastor to clarify a few points where they lacked understanding and requested a couple of other reports to clarify some issues.

The production of the final report by The Lawless Group came with two surprises.

1. St. Andrew was a healthier church than they usually worked with in doing a consultation. That statement in no way implies that the team did not find plenty of ways that St. Andrew could improve and grow. However, not many churches that are as healthy as our church enlist the services of The Lawless Group to examine their health and give suggestions for improvement for reaching others. The Lawless Group commended St. Andrew for taking this step, but the consequence for those performing the consultation was more work! The Lawless Group had developed an automated system that was helpful for producing reports for churches that were basically unhealthy, but that automated system could not produce an accurate and helpful report for St. Andrew. The Lawless Group had to do our report by hand.
2. The consequence for us was good and bad. Good in that we received a report done more carefully and personally. Bad in that it took about six months to receive it rather than the two we (and they) had expected.

In approving the enlistment of The Lawless Group, the church charged the Pastor and Ministerial Staff with reading the report and recommendations resulting from the consultation and bringing a report and recommendations from the staff back to the church. The staff has spent months in studying the Church Health Survey and the Lawless Report.

1. We have spent many, many hours in staff meetings discussing the details of the findings and the recommendations.
2. We have also established an additional time of prayer weekly for the Ministerial Staff.

Both of these have made this time to be a time of growth for each of us, growing closer to the Lord to seek His will for our lives and for the church, and a time of growing closer to each other, enabling us to better work together to lead the church to follow the will of God for St. Andrew.

We offer our report to the church in two parts:

1. Things of Importance About St. Andrew Baptist that should be noted by the membership so that we can give serious and prayerful consideration to each of the recommendations.
2. The recommendations the staff believes are the appropriate way to respond to the above findings that will help our church become all that the Lord desires for us and will help us more effectively reach and disciple Millennials and those of Generation Z.

Things of Importance are included in this document. The recommendations of the staff will follow in a second document, after the church takes action on the first.

THINGS OF IMPORTANCE ABOUT ST. ANDREW BAPTIST

A. First, the staff offers to the church the full Executive Summary given by The Lawless Group:

- 1. St. Andrew is one of the healthier churches with whom we have worked.**
Both the interaction with the laity and staff of the church and our analysis of the church's data indicate that the church has much positive to celebrate. The church is touching both its community and the world. St. Andrew has room for improvement, but any suggestions we make here are designed to build on an already-strong foundation.
- 2. Local demographics provide opportunities to reach younger generations.**
Much of the projected growth in the area over the next five years will be among Generation Z (born 2002 and later) and Millennials (born 1982-2001). The church must give even more intentionality to reaching them by continuing to offer excellence in worship, application in preaching, mentoring through small groups, and hands-on experience in ministry.
- 3. Parking and space issues contribute to a current attendance plateau.**
Attendance figures have remained essentially the same for the last four years, but it appears that a lack of sufficient parking and worship space for continued growth have contributed to this issue. The same issue will become apparent for education space with any significant future growth. These space issues require discussions now to address the current needs and to prepare for the future, and included among these discussions should be the possibility of additional Lifechange and worship service hours.
- 4. The current worship facility appears dated.** Research shows that younger generations affirm more "traditional" settings for worship, but the current worship facility for St. Andrew has an older feel. Upgrading and updating the foyer/entryway, the Worship Center, and the bathrooms in the area would make the facility more attractive – and could provide additional seating space.
- 5. The church is a giving church.** Indeed, the congregation's per capita giving has consistently been above the national average, and the church has continually supported missions efforts. The challenge now will be to raise up, train, and support the next generations to be equally giving.
- 6. The church must continue to emphasize local evangelism and discipleship.**
The church has a desire to reach people, but the evidence of local evangelism could be stronger. The current approach to discipleship is clear but fairly new, so continued review/evaluation/strengthening would be wise. St. Andrew already has a strong commitment to Lifechange Groups, and these groups will continue to be central to the church's evangelism and discipleship strategies. Further, providing mentoring relationships for Millennials would make St. Andrew more attractive for a generation that longs for such relationships.

7. **The church is asking the right questions.** We believe that St. Andrew Baptist Church stands at an important juncture in the church's history. Under the leadership of a long-tenured pastor, the church has seen this time as the right time for seeking outside consultation, and we commend the leaders for doing so. Indeed, the leadership has openly and willingly allowed us to examine the church and be forthright with them. We trust that this honest evaluation will lead to future growth.

B. The staff offers the church details concerning each of these areas mentioned in the above Executive Summary, some of which are drawn specifically from The Lawless Group Report, but others drawn from detailed examination by the staff after being prompted by a Lawless Group observation.

1. St. Andrew is one of the healthier churches with whom we have worked.

The Lawless Team uses six categories to characterize the health of a church: Very Healthy, Healthy, Marginally Healthy, Marginally Unhealthy, Unhealthy, Very Unhealthy. Their overall evaluation placed St. Andrew in between Healthy and Marginally Healthy. Among others, the following positives were indicated in the Church Health Survey and/or the interviews:

- a. Overall, the church affirms the focus on the Word in the worship service.
- b. The church is generally theologically strong. The final questions of the Church Health Survey give a glimpse of the church's theology. While not every single response is what we want to see from an evangelical church, the overall response is stronger than most congregations.
- c. The church has a strong benevolence ministry, as indicated by 100% of the Church Health Survey respondents when evaluating this ministry.
- d. The church is committed to missions, both locally and internationally.
- e. The congregation is open to reaching people from all groups.
- f. The ministries to preschoolers, children, and students are strong.
- g. Church members are friendly and caring, and the church sees itself as a family. "Unity" is a word we heard often.
- h. Members are excited to be a part of the church. Just over 94% of the Church Health Survey respondents indicated such about their own level of excitement with the church.

The staff agrees that St. Andrew is on the right path, and is in fact much healthier than many churches. Strengths embodied in our own Church Vision Statement were noted in the consultation that need to be maintained, so they not be lessened in the desire to accomplish other things:

- a. Exalting Christ - The fidelity of pastor, staff, teachers, and the church to Scripture
- b. Meeting Needs - The Center of Hope mission ministries of the church

- c. Reaching the World - The Acts 1:8 Strategy of the church and its strong commitment to missions

However we are also agreed that we have not "arrived," either as a church or as individuals. There is much that can be improved, and it is important that we not be self-satisfied nor settle for being on the good side of average. We must strive to be the best that we can be in serving and honoring our Lord, knowing that we can only do that by His power and according to His grace.

2. Local demographics provide opportunities to reach younger generations.

As a 4 Generation Church, St. Andrew needs to make an intentional commitment to reach and disciple Generation Z (born 2002 and later) and Millennials (born 1982-2001). As a staff, we are agreed

- a. We must do this to be faithful to Christ in making disciples of all ages of people in our own Jerusalem.
- b. We must do this to keep St. Andrew viable for the continuing work of Christ if He tarries in His coming. If we do not reach and disciple people of these younger generations, our church will become a religious monument rather than an effective and powerful part of the Body of Christ.
- c. Being 4 Generation (4Gen), we must seek to reach and disciple the younger generations without neglecting the reaching and discipling of all people, including the older generations which have provided the foundation for our church and remain essential for its mission.
- d. We do not claim to know everything about how to effectively reach and disciple Generation Z and Millennials, but we believe, based on the experience of others and testimonies from people from these generations, that we will certainly have to do the following:
 - 1) **In every area, we must attempt to do everything we do with excellence.** This is not a new goal for St. Andrew, but it is a goal of great importance to Millennials. Therefore we must keep this goal in mind more than ever before if we are going to be effective in reaching this generation.
 - 2) The areas noted for changes below are not mentioned because of great dissatisfaction within the church. For instance, in the Church Health Survey, taken by 137 active members across all age groups
 - a) 94% said they learned a lot about the Bible from the pastor's sermons.
 - b) 83% indicated that the sermons are relevant to their real life situations.
 - c) 93% said the Holy Spirit uses the worship services to lead people to make decisions for God.
 - d) 88% indicated their faith is strengthened by the worship services.
 - e) 86% affirm that the church has a good music ministry.
 - f) 99% say "I know what I believe as a Christian and why I believe it."
 - g) 96% said they are involved in regular Bible study in St. Andrew.
 - h) 97% said they have grown as a Christian since being at this church.

The areas below are mentioned for change because change will be necessary for more effectively reaching and discipling Millennials and Generation Z.

3) For the sake of reaching and discipling Millennials and Generation Z in larger numbers, there must be changes in the pastor's style in preaching.

- a) These changes will mean more explicit practical application of the truths and principles in the Scripture, more personal example to demonstrate the application and to make a personal connection with the listeners, including at times a softer tone in the delivery of the message.
- b) These changes will not mean that the pastor needs to soften or weaken the message of the Scriptures themselves. The changes only address the style and delivery of the sermons, not the content.
- c) Bro. Mike has already begun to implement these changes in his preaching.

4) There must be changes in the musical portion of Worship as well to more effectively reach Millennials and Generation Z.

- a) While maintaining a blended style of music that will still minister to all ages, we must move toward the style preferred by the younger generations. The blessing is that the style most embraced by the younger generations is not dramatically different from the style being used in our Worship today. The newer style is distinctive and will require noticeable changes, but they are not changes that should alienate worshippers of other generations.
- b) Bro. Doug has also begun to make the necessary changes in the music portion of Worship. Some of the music being used in our Worship presently is music such as Millennials and Generation Z prefer. These changes will affect all who are a part of leading our congregation in Worship through music, from members of the choir to soloists, from members of the orchestra to instrumentalists.
- c) All of us who are part of St. Andrew should acknowledge some basic truths concerning music as a part of worship:
 - 1) The most important quality of music is that it be God-honoring and Christ-centered.
 - 2) Most people have their own preferences in music style. Styles of music are not based on biblical standards. They are simply preferences.
 - 3) It is impossible to meet everyone's preferences.
 - 4) Those of us with some spiritual maturity need to yield our personal preferences in style for the goal of offering a style that matches the

preferences of the unreached Millennials and Generation Z we are seeking to reach and disciple.

- 5) We need to commit ourselves to continue to participate fully and meaningfully in Worship even when something is not consistent with our own preference.

5) There must be changes in the way that we offer opportunities for discipleship.

- a) Knowing that we cannot force anyone to grow as a disciple, we must offer opportunities to be disciplined in ways that are more likely to gain reception among the younger generations.
- b) This will mean seeking to engage people personally in prayer, evangelism, and ministry, not only for the sake of doing those important things, but for the sake of the discipleship of the one involved.
- c) It will likely mean continuing to make changes in when discipleship, prayer, and evangelism training opportunities are being offered so that those of every generation can and will choose to be involved.
- d) This will mean offering increased opportunities for mentoring - a relationship between a new disciple and one who is more mature, who can demonstrate how the principles of Scripture are lived out day by day.
- e) Greeter ministry will need to continue to be strengthened to try to immediately welcome newcomers and help them connect with the groups of the church that can best disciple them.
- f) Because the demographics of our area and our own observations of people visiting and attending St. Andrew, we need to expand our teaching and discipleship concerning marriage and family and of people who are widowed and divorced.
- g) Bro. Jeremy, and others of the staff, have also already begun these kinds of changes to accomplish this goal, such as our enhancement of discipleship classes on Sunday evening instead of Sunday Evening Worship; but more changes will be required as we move forward.

3. Parking and space issues contribute to a current attendance plateau.

Frankly, that we have parking and space issues was a surprise to most of us on the staff. We can see that there are still places to sit in worship, and when we arrive on Sunday morning around 8 a.m., there is plenty of parking. Our consultants helped us to see that the issue is not if a seat is available, but is it easily accessible when new people come into a service a little late. Can a family who enters after Worship has begun easily see a place that they can sit together? The question about parking is similar. Can a person entering from any direction find a place to park without having to do a frustrating search? We must

remember that we are not primarily seeking to reach people mature in their walk with the Lord who will do whatever it takes to park and find a place in Worship. For the lost and less mature, we need to make it easy. Making it easy tells them we want them to join us.

- a. The Lawless Consultation reveals we need to increase parking space now, and we need to strive to keep adding space as we grow so that it is only 80% full on an average Sunday.
- b. The long-range plan of the church for worship and education space is that as space is needed, we will move to a "flip-flop" approach with Worship and Lifechange Groups. That is, at one hour have both Worship and Lifechange Groups and at a later hour again have Lifechange Groups and Worship. This doubles the usefulness of space for everyone except preschool, and to a lesser extent, children.
- c. We believe this long-range plan is still viable and is the best approach when we reach the threshold of needing it. The staff believes that while we need to do some things to address space issues, our attendance is not yet to the point that it would be wise to go to the "flip-flop" approach. Until we reach the threshold for using the "flip-flop" approach, we believe it is wise for the church to continue in one Worship Service and one Lifechange Group period for everyone. When we reach the threshold of 80% of capacity in either worship or education space, we will initiate the "flip-flop." We are praying with excitement for that opportunity to arrive.
- d. There are things that can be done to increase the effective seating capacity in the Worship Center. These methodologies will be explained in the recommendations section.
- e. Our space problem now concerning Lifechange Groups is not a lack of square footage allotted to education. Our present problem is at least fourfold.
 - 1) We lack empty rooms in which to create new Lifechange Group classes. We have lots of room in some existing classes, but it is more difficult to add new people to existing classes than it is to start new units. This is a long established "fact" of church growth.
 - 2) We need space for more senior adults on the same level as the Worship Center, so that they do not have to walk up or down the hill from parking, to Lifechange Group, to Worship, and back.
 - 3) We need more classroom space for our students. We have plenty of room in the Student Center in total, but we are running out of classrooms.
 - 4) Many of our educational spaces need to be updated technologically, and signage needs to be improved.

4. The current worship facility appears dated. Our church is blessed to have a lovely Worship Center, but the truth is that it is nearly 30 years old. With the exception of a new stage, screens, painting, carpet, and floor repair, the

appearance of the Worship Center is unchanged. It is not surprising that younger generations would want some things to look and function differently.

Specifically the following things need to be addressed:

- a. Updating the appearance of the interior of the auditorium and foyer.
 - b. Updating sound and lighting.
 - c. Enlarging the mall area to provide what Millennials call a "third space" to enhance fellowship and gathering.
 - d. Enlarge and update the Ladies' Restroom.
 - e. Update the Men's Restroom.
 - f. Update the appearance of the Worship Center exterior and entrance from the perspective of Highway 98 and from Beck Avenue
- 5. The church is a giving church.** We are all grateful for the level of giving by the membership and supporters of St. Andrew. Even though our level of giving is favorable compared to many churches, we still fall below biblical standards. As we disciple, we must also make disciples who are good stewards. The experts on the demographics of Millennials tell us this is an especially challenging area of discipleship for this generation. For St. Andrew to remain in the future what it is today in effectiveness in the work of the Kingdom of God, and especially for her to grow beyond our point of effectiveness today, we must find ways to disciple the future generations in biblical stewardship, while we continue to grow people of generations older than Millennials in this discipline as well.
- 6. The church must continue to emphasize local evangelism and discipleship.** Our goal at this point needs to be crystal clear: to reach and disciple more people than we are reaching and discipling presently.
- a. Reaching does not just mean having people attend Worship or Lifechange Group. Reaching means being evangelized and participating in the church, the local Body of Christ.
 - b. Discipling means having a person involved in things that are making them a more faithful follower of Jesus Christ, in their lives, in their thinking and worldview, in their attitudes and character, and in their actions.
 - c. Prayer is an essential element in meeting these goals, as well as in personal lives and the general life of the church. We must seek ways to better involve people in genuine, meaningful prayer.
 - d. Communication within the church family is also important, and we must always be trying to use every means possible to effectively communicate with everyone who is a part of the ministries of the church.
- 7. The church is asking the right questions.** We believe the Lawless Consultation has helped us to ask and to some degree find answers to the

pertinent questions that will help St. Andrew to continue to be all that it is today and become all that God desires for us. We believe that to do this, we must continue to ask questions, seek answers, and evaluate progress objectively. We must continue to do some of the things we did during the consultation such as surveys and interviews in order to keep our progress up-to-date.

The Lawless Consultation conclusion is this:

St. Andrew is a strong, missions-minded church with a heartbeat for reaching all socioeconomic levels in the community. The challenge now is to reach Millennials and [Generation Z] and train them to become the next generation of church leaders without failing to affirm, minister to, and love the church's [current] members.

CONCLUSION: The Pastor and Ministerial Staff, humbly request St. Andrew Baptist Church to adopt this report as an accurate description of the church in 2016 and of St. Andrew's desires and goals for 2017 and beyond.