

Strategic Plan FAQ

Plan Ownership and Roles

1) Whose plan is it?

The Mission and Ministry Board has direct responsibility for the strategic plan. The board has approved the plan as both the vision for our work and the objectives our work is to accomplish.

2) What is the role of the Mission and Ministry Board in realizing the strategic plan?

The board oversees and assesses the work related to each initiative and vision stated in the plan. The Strategic Planning committee receives reports for staff and working groups to determine if the objective has been reached, identify next steps, and articulate new initiatives.

3) What is the role of staff in realizing the strategic plan?

Church of the Brethren staff are charged with implementing the work to achieve the objectives of the plan. In other words, the board has determined “what” the organization is to do, and the staff determine “how” that work is done. As part of this responsibility to the plan, staff report efforts and progress to the board and make recommendations for next steps or new initiatives.

Plan Development

4) Who is Auxano?

Auxano is the consulting group that supported the development of the Compelling Vision. In order to maintain consistency with the Compelling Vision and build on the energy and wisdom that generated it, the board contracted with Auxano to facilitate the creation of the Strategic plan.

5) What is the 1:4:1:4?

Auxano calls their framework for a visionary plan the Horizon Storyline. It is composed of four elements that each guide the organization to where it wants to be in 5 or more years. It has four parts that layer together like a picture with a Horizon, Background, Midground and Foreground.

1. Beyond the Horizon Vision – The place an organization wants to be in 5-10 years
2. Background Vision Strategies – Four waypoints that orient and move the organization toward the horizon.
3. Midground Vision Focus – A one-year focus that assures the organization is moving in the right direction.
4. Foreground Vision Initiatives – Four immediate objectives to be accomplished in 60-90 days, creating energy and movement toward both the Midground and Background Visions. These are intended to be assessed and revised each quarter.

6) Why is the Compelling Vision a part of the strategic plan?

The Strategic Plan Formation Team that developed the plan felt the “Jesus in the Neighborhood” vision encapsulated the most accurate and recent sentiment of the church.

Using the vision statement as the Beyond-the-Horizon Vision for this strategic plan was a way to build on the energy and wisdom of the church as exemplified in the wealth of data gathered in the conversations over the duration of the Compelling Vision process.

7) How long will we be working under this plan?

Auxano's visionary plan structure includes short term, mid-term, and long-term goals. The plan is built to guide our work for 5-10 years. During that time, the assessment and evaluation process overseen by the Strategic Planning committee will establish new short and mid-term goals to continue our momentum towards the Compelling Vision. These are the time frames related to part of the 1:4:1:4 specific to the Church of the Brethren Inc.:

Beyond the Horizon Vision- 5-10 years

Background Vision Strategies- 3 years

Midground Vision Focus- 1 year

Foreground Visions Initiatives- Assessed and Revised at each board meeting

Plan Implementation

8) Are we working on Foreground Initiatives and Background Visions at the same time?

Yes. Teams have already begun working on the Foreground Visions identified within the plan. The General Secretary, working alongside the Guiding Team and the Strategic Planning Committee, will identify teams to begin work on the Background Visions.

9) Who decides the next Foreground Visions?

The Strategic Planning committee will make recommendations to the Mission and Ministry Board regarding new Foreground Visions. They will seek the counsel of Vision teams and the General Secretary as part of the review process to gain consensus about what is needed to make progress towards the Beyond-the-Horizon Vision.

10) How do we know we've achieved a vision named in the Strategic Plan?

The General Secretary and the Strategic Planning Committee will determine benchmarks that measure Vision progress and completion.