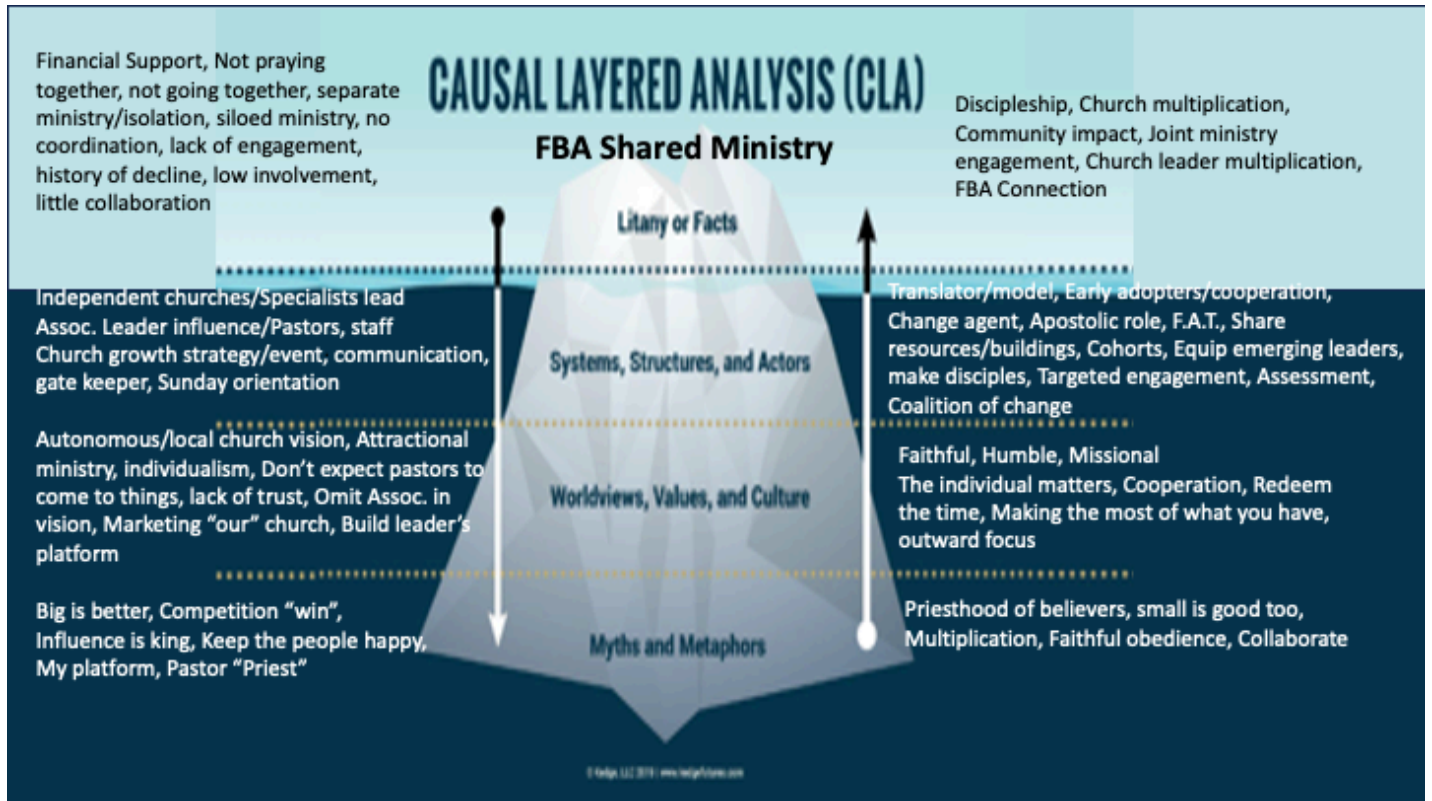


# DOCUMENTS DEVELOPED DURING THE STRATEGIC FORESIGHT PROCESS

## STEEPLES SCANNING

Social	Technology	Economic	Environmental	Political	Legal	Education	Spiritual & Ethical
Population Migration in ATL	Connect Tech to brain	Inflation/ 37% food	Church facilities downsized	Racial	501c3	Diversified Instruction	Church Planning
Smaller families	AI ministry assistants	Alcohol	Used future churches	Gender	Freedom of Assembly	Curriculum Issues	Freedom of Speech
Aging Boomers	Deep fakes	Debt, student loans, consumer debt	Population Density	Fear mongering	Freedom of Speech	ADA	Freedom of Press
Younger Gen. clustering/Apt. Living	Tech literacy/leaving behir	Gov. Defecit Spending	Garbage	Corruption	Freedom of Press	No Child Left Behind	Post Modernism/Relativism
Immigrant population 2050	Issues of privacy	Housing Prices/Shortage	Food Production (shift in rainfall & Temp)	In-fighting	Medical Ethics (requiring vaccines)	Lack of Academic Rigor	Attractional Church Model
LGBTQ+ Blessings by Roman Cath	Cyber Security	People living with parents	Electric Generation (EVs/Power Grid)	Tribalism	Citizenship	Illiteracy	Leadership Pipeline
Overuse of Alcohol "Dry January"	Robotics Roles/replace	60-100 Yr. Mortgages	Pollution	Social Justice	Sanctity of Life	Teacher Retention	Equipped for Social Engagement
Transient Population	Connected Appliances	Church giving	Aging Infrastructure	AIT Right	Marriage Laws	School Choice	Apologetics
Increase in crime due to economics	Online workers	Taxes (codes, debt, increase)	Food Scarcity	BLM	Corporate Shoplifting	Indoctrination	Theological Illiteracy
		Giving to Assoc. & CP Down	Climate Change	Apathy	Looting	Learning Differences	Aging pastors
		ATL outpacing Salary/attracting work	Global Warming	Immigration	De-criminalization	Online learning	Rise of the Nones
			Synthetic Meat/Food	Party System	Religious Liberty	Classroom disorder	Universalism/Spirituality
			Cars/pop concentration	Marital Law	Scams	Teaching World-view	Social Gospel
			HOA and City Regulations	Political polarizaito	Cyber-crime	Revising History	Selling Out
				Firm Industry	Zoning and School Access	Home School	Digital Church/Online
				Zoning Issues	Legal costs	Church School	AI Pastors
				School Choice			FBA church metrics down
				Sex abuse			Multi-vocational pastor
				Tax exempt Status			Discipleship/formation
							Decline of Christianity
							Immigrants are spiritual
							Lack of evangelism

## CAUSAL LAYERED ANALYSIS



## **SEVEN TOP DRIVERS OF CHANGE FOR ATLANTA METRO AREA COUNTIES OF SOUTH FULTON, CLAYTON, FAYETTE, AND COWETA BETWEEN 2024 AND 2050**

### **1. Demographic Shifts:**

- Aging population: Expect a rise in senior citizens, impacting healthcare needs, social services, and housing demands.
- Minority population growth: Rising minority populations will influence cultural trends, business opportunities, and political representation.
- Urbanization patterns: Continued sprawl vs. urban core development will influence infrastructure needs, transportation systems, and the character of these counties.

### **2. Economic Trends:**

- Automation and future of work: How automation impacts jobs and the need for retraining and development of new skillsets.
- Rise of the knowledge economy: Growth in sectors like technology, healthcare, and education will shape workforce needs and education systems.
- Global economic integration: Fluctuations in the global economy, potential for reshoring of manufacturing, and international trade dynamics.

### **3. Technological Advancements:**

- Artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics: AI's influence on various sectors, from automation to data analysis, will require adaptation.
- Smart city technologies: Integration of technology for infrastructure management, traffic control, and citizen services.
- Cybersecurity threats: Growing need for robust cybersecurity measures to protect critical infrastructure and personal data.

### **4. Climate Change and Sustainability:**

- Extreme weather events: Increased frequency and intensity of storms, droughts, and heatwaves will necessitate adaptation strategies.
- Sustainability concerns: Focus on renewable energy sources, resource conservation, and climate-resilient infrastructure.
- Environmental regulations: Changing regulations regarding emissions and resource use will impact businesses and industries.

### **5. Political and Social Landscape:**

- Political polarization: The potential for continued political division could affect government policies and resource allocation.
- Social movements and activism: Movements focused on social justice, equity, and environmental issues will shape public discourse and policy.

- Evolving healthcare landscape: Changes in healthcare policy, accessibility, and affordability will impact residents' well-being.

## 6. Educational Landscape:

- The need for continuous learning: Adapting education systems to equip individuals with skills for the changing job market.
- Accessibility and affordability of education: Ensuring everyone has access to quality education and addressing affordability concerns.
- Evolving educational methods: Integration of technology and new pedagogical approaches to improve learning outcomes.

## 7. Infrastructure Needs:

- Aging infrastructure: The need for upgrades and maintenance of roads, bridges, water systems, and other critical infrastructure.
- Transportation infrastructure: Adapting transportation systems to accommodate changing commuting patterns and potential growth in electric vehicles.
- Expanding broadband access: Ensuring equitable access to high-speed internet for all residents.

**Note:** The specific ways these drivers will manifest will vary across each county. Each county has its unique character, development patterns, and economic base. Strategic planning efforts should consider these nuances to identify the most pressing challenges and opportunities.

## References:

- **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC):** The ARC publishes reports and forecasts on demographics, economic trends, and future development plans for the Atlanta region. You can find their website here: <https://atlantaregional.org/>
- **Brookings Institution:** This research institution publishes articles and reports on various topics related to future planning, including urbanization, economic trends, and social change. You can find their website here: <https://www.brookings.edu/>
- **Pew Research Center:** This organization conducts surveys and research on a wide range of topics, including demographics, religion, and social trends in the United States. You can find their website here: <https://www.pewresearch.org/>
- **Futurist publications:** Several publications focus on future trends and strategic foresight. Examples include "The Millennium Project" and "Future of Humanity Institute" which you can find through general web searches.

## **SEVEN TOP RELIGIOUS DRIVERS OF CHANGE FOR THE ATLANTA METRO AREA COUNTIES OF SOUTH FULTON, CLAYTON, FAYETTE, AND COWETA BETWEEN 2024 AND 2050**

### **1. Shifting Religious Demographics:**

- Growth of minority religions: The rise of non-traditional religious groups alongside established denominations will influence the religious landscape.
- Secularization trends: Potential for a continued decline in religious affiliation, particularly among younger generations, which could impact religious institutions and social services.

### **2. Focus on Social Justice and Ethics:**

- Religious groups advocating for social justice issues like poverty, racial equality, and immigration reform.
- Application of religious ethics to contemporary issues like environmental stewardship and technological advancement.

### **3. Evolving Role of Religious Institutions:**

- Religious institutions potentially adapting services to meet the needs of a changing population, such as mental health support or childcare.
- Increased focus on interfaith collaboration and dialogue for community development and conflict resolution.

### **4. Technology and Religious Practice:**

- Integration of technology for religious services (online worship, virtual communities) and religious education.
- Potential debates about the role of technology in religious practice and its impact on spirituality.

### **5. Rise of Religious Nones:**

- The growing number of people who identify as religiously unaffiliated ("nones") could impact the political landscape and social policies.
- Need for religious groups to be more inclusive and welcoming to attract a broader demographic.

### **6. The Influence of Religion on Public Policy:**

- Continued debates about the role of religion in government and the separation of church and state.
- Religious groups potentially influencing public policy on issues like abortion, same-sex marriage, and religious freedom.

## 7. Globalization and Religious Change:

- Exposure to different religions through increased global interconnectedness could influence local faith communities.
- Potential rise of new religious movements with international reach.

### Important Considerations:

- The specific ways these drivers will manifest will vary depending on the dominant religions and existing religious infrastructure within each county.
- The South may see a different trajectory in religious change compared to other regions.
- Consider potential counter-currents to these trends, such as a resurgence of traditional religious values in some communities.

By understanding these potential religious drivers of change, these counties can plan for a more inclusive and adaptable future that respects the diverse religious beliefs of their residents.

### References:

- **Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project:** This project focuses on religious demographics, trends, and social issues in the United States. Their website provides valuable data and reports on topics like religious affiliation, religious switching, and the rise of the "nones."  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/religion/>
- **The Future of Religion Project:** This initiative by The Center for Religion and Global Citizenship explores the evolving role of religion in the 21st century. Look for their publications on topics like religious pluralism, technology and religion, and the future of religious institutions.  
<https://news.nd.edu/news/new-book-highlights-resurgence-of-religion-in-global-politics/>
- **Journal Articles:** Academic journals focusing on religion, sociology, and future studies often publish articles on religious change and its impact on society. Search databases like JSTOR or Google Scholar for relevant articles with titles mentioning "religion," "future trends," "secularization," or "religious demographics" alongside your chosen region (e.g., "religion and future of the South").
- **Reports by Religious Organizations:** National and regional religious bodies sometimes publish reports on trends within their denominations or the broader religious landscape. These reports can offer insights into how specific faith groups are adapting to changing demographics and social issues.

# The 36 Congregations of FAIRBURN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

(Did not factor in Pandemic years except to fill in gap of reporting for 2022)

Vitals	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022
Membership	23,401	22,761	22,847	23,084	20,389
Worship Attendance	7,285	6,960	6,971	6,993	5,231
Baptisms	246	224	344	322	250
#Groups	513	627	546	533	?
Mission Projects	2,978	3,075	3,068	3,419	621
Finances Total	\$18,613,749	\$21,592,632	\$24,577,940	\$23,425,699	\$23,750,923
Other Missions	\$ 1,917,527	\$ 1,709,493	\$ 1,462,774	\$ 1,757,053	\$ 1,204,334
CP	\$ 910,877	\$ 866,011	\$ 697,269	\$ 1,115,569	?
Association	\$ 1125,101	\$ 126,229	\$ 148,842	\$ 128,820	\$ 118,154
<b>Population</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2020</b>			
South Fulton County (Union City/Fairburn)	117,000	128,000	AA (114K), White (10.3K), Hispanic (2.5K)		
Fayette County	105,000	108,000	AA (26.5K), White (68.7K), Asian (4.89K), Hispanic (4.5K)		
Coweta County	<u>131,000</u>	<u>141,000</u>	AA (25.3K), White (103K), Hispanic (6.63K)		
Total	353,000	377,000			



# Fairburn Foresight Workgroup Draft Report 2x2 Matrix Scenarios

In an ever-evolving world where the intersection of faith, society, and individual well-being is increasingly complex, the need for forward-thinking and adaptive leadership within local churches has never been more critical. This report presents the results of a comprehensive strategic foresight brainstorming analysis conducted for the Fairburn Baptist Association (FBA), encompassing 36 churches across Fayette, South Fulton, and Coweta Counties in Georgia. The focus of this study is to explore potential future scenarios based on two pivotal drivers: the nature of leadership (active vs. passive) and the engagement with spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness within the church and community.

The FBA, in its mission to remain a relevant and effective spiritual force, recognizes the importance of addressing these drivers head-on. As such, this report delineates four distinct scenarios—*Typical Type*, *Dying Church*, *The Model*, and *Poser Church*—each offering a unique perspective on how varying leadership and wellness approaches can shape our churches' future and their impact on congregations and communities. These scenarios are not predictions but explorations of possible futures that can assist the FBA in strategic planning and decision-making.

The Fairburn Baptist Association (FBA) 's strategic foresight workgroup comprised 17 committed leaders, each a dedicated believer in Christ and His mission. This diverse group united in their biblical fidelity, represented various professional fields, including mental health, government, law enforcement, chaplaincy, education, business, local churches, and faith-based nonprofits. Their collective expertise facilitated a comprehensive and collaborative approach to strategic thinking, focusing on aligning the FBA's mission with the evolving community needs, particularly in leadership styles and spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness. This diverse assembly of 17 leaders will play a crucial role in developing forward-looking strategies and navigating the complex landscape facing the FBA.

The insights presented here are intended to guide the FBA and its affiliated churches toward a future where they can thrive spiritually, emotionally, and mentally, responding effectively to the challenges and opportunities. By examining these scenarios, the FBA can better prepare for the future, ensuring it continues serving its congregations and communities with compassion, relevance, and resilience.

## 1. Typical Type (Active Leader/Unaware of Spiritual, Emotional, and Mental Wellness)

The "*Typical Type*" scenario describes a church leadership actively involved in event-driven and traditional denominational activities but remains largely unaware of the importance of spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness. This approach often relies on old paradigms, making the church visibly engaged yet possibly unspiritual and carnal in the eyes of some congregants. The leadership often tends to be political and may inadvertently polarize the

congregation, leading to burnout and fatigue due to a lack of holistic wellness integration in their spiritual practices and community engagement.

By 2050, churches in this category may find themselves in a challenging position. While they are active in leadership and traditional practices, their lack of engagement with spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness could lead to a disconnect with congregational needs. These churches might be seen as out of touch with the growing recognition of wellness in the surrounding communities. They could face difficulties attracting and retaining younger generations seeking a more integrated approach to faith and wellness. This scenario might result in stagnating or declining congregations, with leadership needing help to adapt to the evolving expectations of a more wellness-aware society.

## 2. Dying Church (Passive Leader/Unaware of Spiritual, Emotional, and Mental Wellness)

In the "*Dying Church*" scenario, leadership is characterized by passivity and a lack of awareness of spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness needs. This leads to a concerning absence of a leadership pipeline and a significant disengagement of younger people. The church's focus tends to be on mere survival, with pastors potentially becoming isolated, focusing on their agendas rather than the broader needs of the congregation. The denial of wellness issues exacerbates problems like depression and fatigue, both in leadership and within the congregation, leading to an overall decline in church vitality and relevance.

Churches with passive leadership and unawareness of wellness issues could significantly decline by 2050. This scenario might lead to increasing irrelevance in their communities, as they need to address the evolving wellness needs of their members and the people they seek to attract. The lack of proactive engagement and wellness integration could result in dwindling congregations, especially among the youth. These churches may struggle to maintain their presence. They could face closures, mergers, or a shift towards more informal forms of worship and community as traditional structures fail to meet the needs of their communities.

## 3. The Model (Active Leader/Aware of Spiritual, Emotional, and Mental Wellness)

"*The Model*" represents an ideal scenario where church leadership is active and deeply engaged with spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness. These leaders are kingdom-minded, prioritizing the holistic well-being of their congregation. They actively mentor and develop a pipeline of new leaders and are committed to church planting and community engagement. This leadership style fosters a church environment that is a resource and support to the association, modeling a balanced approach to spiritual and wellness needs, which resonates strongly within the community.

In this scenario, active and wellness-aware leaders will likely flourish in churches. By 2050, these churches could be at the forefront of integrating spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness into their ministries, appealing to a broad demographic. They might become influential



community centers, offering support and guidance that aligns with evangelical values while addressing holistic wellness needs. These churches could lead in innovative ministry approaches, adapting to technological and societal changes and potentially influencing broader religious and wellness conversations. Their focus on leadership development and church planting may result in a strong network of like-minded churches, significantly impacting their communities and beyond.

#### 4. Poser Church (Passive Leader/Aware of Spiritual, Emotional, and Mental Wellness)

The "Poser Church" scenario describes a church where the leadership, while aware of the importance of spiritual, emotional, and mental wellness, remains passive and disengaged from actively integrating these aspects into the church's ministry. This approach often leads to outsourcing ministry responsibilities and a lack of intentional giving, which can compromise the church's authenticity and effectiveness. The leadership in this scenario tends to be more of a joiner than a true leader, often needing more creativity and originality. They may talk about wellness issues in sermons but fail to take concrete action, expecting others to lead initiatives like church planting. This resistance to actively engaging in community issues, particularly in their immediate surroundings, and a general inactivity despite awareness creates a gap between the church's professed values and its practical impact.

Despite being aware of wellness issues, churches in this scenario may struggle to integrate these into their ministries due to passive leadership. By 2050, they might be perceived as needing more authenticity in their approach to wellness, potentially leading to stagnation in growth and influence. These churches could maintain a stable congregation but may fail to engage with their community's evolving wellness needs deeply. They might risk being overshadowed by more proactive and genuinely integrated churches, leading to challenges in maintaining relevance and impact in their communities.

# Ten potential drivers of change that could significantly impact evangelical churches in the south Atlanta metro, South Fulton County, Fayette County, and Coweta County, Georgia, between 2024 and 2050

## Demographic shifts:

1. **Increasing diversity:** The region's demographics are projected to become more diverse, with growing Hispanic, Asian, and non-Christian populations. Evangelical churches will need to adapt to reach these new communities or risk declining membership.
2. **Generational changes:** Younger generations tend to be less religiously affiliated and hold different values than older generations. Evangelical churches will need to find ways to attract and retain younger members without alienating older ones.
3. **Urbanization and suburbanization:** Continued urbanization in Atlanta and suburbanization in Fayette and Coweta counties could impact church attendance and community involvement. Churches may need to adjust their locations and outreach strategies accordingly.

## Cultural and societal changes:

4. **Secularization:** The overall trend towards secularization in the United States could continue, impacting church membership and societal attitudes towards religion.
5. **Political polarization:** The increasing political polarization in the US could spill over into religious communities, creating divisions within and between churches.
6. **Changes in social norms:** Shifts in attitudes towards issues like LGBTQ+ rights and abortion could challenge traditional stances of many evangelical churches, leading to internal conflicts and potential membership losses.

## Technological advancements:

7. **Rise of online communities:** The growing popularity of online communities and virtual religious experiences could challenge the traditional role of brick-and-mortar churches.
8. **Use of technology for outreach and engagement:** Churches that effectively utilize technology for outreach, communication, and worship could gain an advantage in reaching new audiences.

## Internal factors:

9. **Focus on social justice and outreach:** Evangelical churches that actively engage in social justice issues and community outreach could attract new members and strengthen their ties to the community.
10. **Leadership and theological adaptation:** The ability of church leadership to adapt to changing demographics, cultural norms, and theological landscapes will be crucial for their survival and growth.

It's important to note that these are just some potential drivers of change, and the actual future of evangelical churches in the region will depend on a complex interplay of these and other factors. Additionally, the impact of these drivers may vary across different communities and denominations within the evangelical tradition.

## General Sources:

- Pew Research Center: Provides comprehensive data and analysis on religious trends in the U.S., including demographics, beliefs, and practices.
- The Center for the Study of Religion and Society: Conducts research on a variety of topics related to religion in the U.S., including the changing landscape of evangelicalism.
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: Covers news and events in the Atlanta metro area, including trends impacting local communities.
- Local church studies and reports: Many individual churches and denominations conduct their own research on local trends and demographics, which may offer valuable insights specific to their communities.

## Top Ten **Spiritual Issues** Driving Change in South Fulton, Fayette, and Coweta Counties from 2024 to 2050

Sure, here are the top ten potential spiritual issues driving change in South Fulton, Fayette, and Coweta Counties from 2024 to 2050:

- 1. Shifting Religious Landscape:** The decline of traditional mainline Protestant denominations might continue, leading to increased diversity in religious expression. This could include growth of non-denominational churches, Islam, Hinduism, and other faiths, along with a rise in secularism and spiritual but not religious (SBNR) individuals.
- 2. Focus on Personal Well-being:** The emphasis on mental health and emotional well-being might increase, leading to a search for spiritual practices and communities that promote inner peace, mindfulness, and stress reduction. This could include interest in meditation, yoga, nature connection, and therapies informed by spirituality.
- 3. Environmentalism and Sustainability:** Growing concern about climate change and environmental degradation could lead to a search for spiritual values and practices that emphasize environmental stewardship and living in harmony with nature. This could involve interest in indigenous wisdom traditions, eco-spirituality movements, and religious teachings on environmental responsibility.
- 4. Social Justice and Racial Equity:** The ongoing struggle for social justice and racial equity might continue to be a significant spiritual issue, prompting individuals and communities to seek guidance from religious teachings and spiritual values on issues like systemic oppression, poverty, and discrimination. This could involve interfaith dialogue, activism informed by faith, and efforts to build more just and equitable societies.

- 5. Rise of Technology and Artificial Intelligence:** The rapid development of technology and artificial intelligence could raise questions about the nature of consciousness, the meaning of life, and our relationship with technology. This could lead to interest in transhumanism, digital spirituality, and exploring the ethical implications of technological advancements through a spiritual lens.
- 6. Interfaith Cooperation and Dialogue:** There might be a growing recognition of the need for interfaith cooperation and dialogue to address shared challenges and promote peace and understanding. This could involve initiatives like interfaith councils, joint service projects, and educational programs that foster respect for diverse religious traditions.
- 7. Redefining Family and Community:** Changing social norms and family structures could lead to a rethinking of traditional concepts of family and community. This could involve seeking spiritual guidance on building healthy relationships, supporting LGBTQ+ individuals and families, and creating inclusive communities that offer belonging and support.
- 8. Spiritual Entrepreneurship and Social Impact:** There might be an increase in spiritually-motivated individuals and organizations seeking to make a positive impact on the world. This could involve initiatives in areas like social entrepreneurship, faith-based community development, and using spiritual values to address social and environmental problems.
- 9. Return to the Natural World:** A yearning for connection with nature and a desire for simpler ways of living could lead to a growing interest in spiritual practices and communities connected to the natural world. This could involve interest in nature-based spirituality, outdoor retreats, and sustainable living practices informed by spiritual values.

**10. Personalized Spirituality and Individual Journeys:** The trend towards individualization and self-discovery might continue, leading to a rise in personalized spiritual journeys. Individuals might seek guidance from diverse sources and traditions, crafting their own unique spiritual paths that resonate with their personal experiences and values.

It's important to remember that these are just potential scenarios, and the actual course of events will be shaped by a complex interplay of factors. However, by considering these potential spiritual issues, we can gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for South Fulton, Fayette, and Coweta Counties.