

Church Health and Wellness Toolkit

A Resource provided by
Central Canadian District of the C&MA

Introduction . . .

Unfortunately, health care in North America tends to focus on pathology—diagnosing disease and treating sickness. More attention is usually invested in remedies than in prevention. When it comes to church health, we want our emphasis to be directed toward wellness. We cannot ignore illness, but we must pour a lion’s share of our resources into promoting holistic health, including . . .

- Spiritual Health
- Directional Health
- Relational Health
- Missional Health
- Structural Health.

This toolkit will offer some resources for you to define key ingredients of church health, assess the level of health in your church and customize tools for enhancing wellness in your congregation. Mike Slaughter, pastor of Ginghamburg Church, notes:

“No longer can one community of Christ followers dictate what another church must do in order to grow. We don’t need franchised models of McChurch. We don’t need little clones. What we do need is transformational leaders who will go out and demonstrate the kingdom of God in unique ways to diverse communities.”

This “Church Health and Wellness Toolkit” seeks to provide a menu of options to be customized. It is intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive—to stimulate your own God-given creativity as you adapt tools to your distinctive ministry setting.

Any attempt at monitoring the health of a church entails some standard of wellness. This toolkit leads its user back to the New Testament to revisit biblical health components. It also includes other contemporary descriptions of congregational health. Traditionally, statistical data has been the primary indicator used—bodies, budgets and buildings. Though attendance at services, participation in programs and giving patterns can be tangible indicators of health, other metrics needs to be taken into consideration, such as conversion growth/baptisms, holistic spiritual formation, missional engagement locally and globally, etc. It has been suggested that one of the most accurate barometers of church health is more external than internal—what impact is our congregation having on our community and the world? “Counting what counts” is essential. After reflection on a variety of current church health assessment tools, the leadership of each congregation needs to give careful attention to the health factors it will track and use to measure its effectiveness.

The Post-modern context in which we live will require discovering more organic ways of defining church health, utilizing more “right brain” oriented approaches. We must give greater emphasis to “beneath-the-waterline” realities which rely more on spiritual discernment than on statistical analysis.

Health is not an end in itself. It should naturally lead to multiplication—organically reproducing new life in terms of new disciples, new leaders, new missional outposts and new congregations. As the wellness level in our CCD churches increases we anticipate through God’s power that we will see our mission statement become a reality:

“Becoming a growing network of healthy reproducing churches.”

Defining Church Health . . .

A great place to start the journey toward church wellness is Scripture. Take some time to review with your leaders some key passages about the church, identifying elements of health.

The Jerusalem Church: Acts 2: 42-47

List health factors demonstrated:

The Antioch Church: Acts 11:19-30 and 13:1-3

List wellness traits modelled:

The Ephesian Church

- **Church Beginnings: Acts 19:1-20**
- **Apostle Paul's Instructions to a Growing Church: Ephesians 4:1-16**
- **Christ's Message to a Drifting Church: Revelation 2:1-7**

List characteristics of church health:

Church Health Assessment Tools

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Natural Church Development Survey offers one of the most sophisticated evaluation tools available. It is international in scope, undergoing extensive field testing with over 2,200 surveys completed in Canada, assessing over 1,600 Canadian congregations. The results of the NCD Survey are filtered through a Canadian grid, providing valuable contextualization. User-friendly materials are available for interpreting the survey and applying its results. It can be accessed online at www.ncdcanada.com. Taking the survey about every 18 to 24 months offers the added benefit of monitoring progress and adjusting to changing dynamics in congregational life.

The NCD Survey measures the following 8 characteristics of church health:

1. Empowering Leadership
2. Gift-Oriented Ministry
3. Passionate Spirituality
4. Functional Structures
5. Inspiring Worship
6. Holistic Small Groups
7. Need-Oriented Evangelism
8. Loving Relationships

TRANSFORMING CHURCH INDEX

The Transforming Church Index (TCI) comprises one of the most recent church health assessment tools available. It has been developed by Kevin Ford (son of Leighton Ford) and founder of TAG, a consulting firm used throughout North America. This tool is described in the book, *Transforming Church: Bringing Out the Good to Get to Great* by Kevin G. Ford, Tyndale House Publishers, 2007. TCI is designed to survey the entire congregation and is taken online. The results are compared to national norms. A free evaluation of your church, called a TCI Snapshot, provides a quick view of your church's overall health. To access this snapshot, you need a product key which comes with the purchase of Ford's book. The full TCI Survey can be acquired by logging on to www.transformingchurch.net.

The Transforming Church Index measures the following 5 health indicators:

1. Consumerism/Community

A healthy community is one in which people experience casual relationships, deep relationships, and feel personally connected to the church's purpose. These scales help identify whether people are "consumers" or "partners in ministry."

2. Incongruence/Code

A church's code is its identity or personality. While the survey does not tell us what a church's code is, it does tell us whether or not people have a deep personal connection to what the church is all about.

3. Autocracy/Shared Leadership

Leadership, in a transforming church, is much less about who gets to make decisions and much more about how best to fulfill the church's mission. A transforming church develops a multiplying group of leaders who lead by serving.

4. Cloister/Missional

This health indicator measures the church's effectiveness in proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel in its unique context.

5. Inertia/Reinvention

A church must be able to reinvent itself. Change is inevitable, and how a church handles changes is critical.

CHURCH HEALTH ASSESSMENT TOOL

This 72-question assessment is built on ten church health principles explained in detail in Stephen Macchia's book, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, Baker Books, 1999. The Church Health Assessment Tool (CHAT) is an online survey designed to be completed in about 20-25 minutes. It processes the responses of your congregation and leadership team, providing a comprehensive report delivered to your email inbox. To preview a sample report, download questions from the survey or register online, visit www.HealthyChurch.net.

CHAT measures the following 10 health indicators:

1. God's Empowering Presence
 2. God-Exalting Worship
 3. Spiritual Disciplines
 4. Learning and Growing in Community
 5. A Commitment to Loving and caring Relationships
 6. Servant-Leadership Development
 7. An Outward Focus
 8. Wise Administration and Accountability
 9. Networking with the Body of Christ
 10. Stewardship and Generosity
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THE CHURCH HEALTH SURVEY

The Church Health Survey (CHS) is a 160-item questionnaire church leaders can use to help discern a congregation's health. The survey gather's church participant's perceptions about the church in six key areas:

1. Worship
2. Evangelism
3. Discipleship
4. Ministry
5. Prayer
6. Fellowship

The survey takes about 45 minutes to complete and to obtain a statistically valid analysis, 15% of the average worship attendance must participate. Within approximately two weeks, users will receive a 40-page analysis report. This evaluation tool can be accessed by logging on to www.churchcentral.com.

INVENTORY OF SPIRITUAL/EMOTIONAL MATURITY

In his book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Zondevan, 2003), Peter Scazzero sets forth six principles of an emotionally healthy church. A 40-question, self-scoring inventory is included in the book. Scazzero approaches church health from an internal point of view. Insights gained from this inventory can be supplemented through using *The Emotionally Healthy Church Workbook*. The six principles upon which this inventory is based are as follows:

1. Look Beneath the Surface
2. Break the Power of the Past
3. Live in Brokenness and Vulnerability
4. Receive the Gifts of Limits
5. Embrace Grieving and Loss
6. Make Incarnation Your Model

Scazzero has also written *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* along with the *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Workbook*. These resources can be acquired by logging on to www.center4ehs.org.

THE COMPLETE MINISTRY AUDIT (Revised Edition)

This audit, produced by church consultant, Bill Easum, provides comprehensive tools for gauging your church's health and charting a future course. It includes assessments related to the following areas:

- Understanding Your Congregation's Particular Character
- Diagnosing Problems and Opportunities
- Plotting Strategies to Remedy Problems
- Extending Your Mission into the Community

It includes a CD-Rom and is available at www.easumbandy.com.

FACING REALITY: CONGREGATIONAL MISSION ASSESSMENT

This resource, crafted by church consultant, Tom Bandy, is a practical tool that gathers both quantifiable data and leadership perspectives. It is designed to help congregational leaders interpret their church and take positive steps into the future. It includes the following:

- Guide to Demographic Research
- Profile of your Congregation
- Leadership Readiness Test
- Church Stress Test
- Ancient Diagnosis for Today's Congregation

This resource is available through www.easumbandy.com.

3. What programs might we consider **discontinuing** to achieve a healthier balance of biblical priorities?

4. What programs might we consider **launching** to achieve a healthier balance of biblical priorities?

CHURCH'S CORPORATE CULTURE ASSESSMENT

This tool is designed to help surface the corporate culture of a church which often lies beneath the waterline. The principles upon which this tool is based are contained in the book, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church From the Inside Out* by Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, Jossey-Bass, 2005.

EXPLORING YOUR CHURCH'S CORPORATE CULTURE

Each church has a unique corporate culture. It's your congregation's default mode, its flavour, its style. It is the distinctive lens through which you view life. Culture is the sum of values, customs, beliefs and patterns of behaviour which distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is like the air we breathe, something essential to our existence, yet not something we are consciously aware of. Identifying a church's culture provides the foundation upon which to build a vision for a new tomorrow.

If we liken a church to an iceberg, we can say that its programs, facilities and budgets represent the public, visible tip protruding out of the water. The congregation's culture resembles the massive bulk of ice which lies hidden beneath the waterline. It's possible to tweak the external tip of the iceberg, but unless the underlying bulk is shifted, no lasting change will occur. The following questions can help surface components of your congregation's unique DNA.

POINTS OF COMMONALITY

Ask each individual to jot down a list of 2 or 3 ideas under each heading. Then compare your individual responses with those of other members of your group. What points of commonality emerge? Transfer the most often repeated items under each heading to the chart on the whiteboard or flip chart.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS (those things you are appropriately "proud of" as a congregation):
HEROS and HEROINES (people in the past or present who embody what your church values highly):
TRADITIONS (annual events):

SPOTLIGHTS (things that tend to receive the most attention and get rewarded):

DIM CORNERS (things that tend to get the least attention and are least rewarded):

SPARK PLUGS (things that get your people excited – create a positive buzz):

HOT BUTTONS (things that can stir up controversy – create tension):

STORIES (happenings which tend to get retold – “Remember when . . .”)

INVESTMENTS (things that tend to receive the most money, time and people):

GOD MOMENTS (powerful demonstrations of the supernatural):

POINTS of PAIN (things that your congregation grieves the loss of – things that have caused a corporate sense of hurt):

VALUES CONTINUUM

Circle the number which MOST CLOSELY corresponds to your personal preferences. Choosing a “0” means you value an exact balance of the two choices.

Teaching/Preaching:

Depth of Content 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Relevance of Application

Truth-Telling 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Grace-Giving

All-Church Fellowship 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Small Group Relationships

Lay-Directed Decisions 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Staff-Directed Decisions

Informal Relational Outreach 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Event/Program Outreach

Seeker-Focused Services 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Saint-Oriented Services

Contemporary Worship 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Traditional Worship

Missions Sending/Supporting 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Missions going/Participating

Local Church Focus 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Kingdom Cooperation Focus

Expand to Mega Church 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Birth Daughter Churches

Strategic Change 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Stable Routine

Invest Resources 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Conserve Resources

Staff-Provided Care 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Small Group Provided Care

VITAL SIGNS OF HEALTH ASSESSMENT

This tool is based on New Testament descriptions of the church, using the metaphor of the human body.

VITAL SIGNS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH BODY

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27

Rate the degree to which your church currently reflects the following indicators of health: (1=low – 5=high)

- 1-2-3-4-5 **HEAD**: Christ is exalted above all else in the church. Members demonstrate unified surrender to His authority and control. (Eph. 1:22-23)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **BREATH**: Members of the body consistently experience Spirit-empowered, life-transforming worship. (Phil. 3:4)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **KNEES**: Believers regularly seek God in personal prayer and unite in corporate prayer. (Col. 4:2)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **EYES**: Clear, unified vision is provided by church leaders, keeping the congregation focused on biblical purposes. (Phil. 2:2)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **HEART**: Caring, loving relationships are experienced through in-dept fellowship. (Jn. 12:34-35)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **HANDS**: People are equipped to actively minister according to their unique gift mix. (Eph. 4:11-12)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **STOMACH**: Members of the body are spiritually nourished through life-application-oriented teaching of God’s Word. (Mt. 4:4)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **EAR and MOUTH**: Open, grace-filled communication flows among members of the body with truth spoken in love. (Eph. 4:15)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **FEET**: People are actively reaching out to spiritually lost people, resulting in regular conversion growth. (Mt. 28: 1-20)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **SKELETON**: Church’s organizational structure and programs are viewed as means to an end, not an end in themselves. They remain flexible, continually evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness in enabling the congregation to accomplish biblical purposes. (Lk. 5:36-39)
- 1-2-3-4-5 **REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**: The church body regularly reproduces itself in terms of multiplying leaders, giving birth to new converts, launching new cells (small groups) and ministries to new people groups. (2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 11 and 13)

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- Which vital sign of health is *strongest* in your church body?
- Which vital sign of health is *weakest* in your church body?

Church Health and Revitalization Resources

Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation, by George W. Bullard, available at www.lakehickoryresources.com.

Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing, and Adapting in Changing Communities by Carl Dudley and Nancy Ammerman, www.josseybass.com.

Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey by Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James Furr, www.josseybass.com.

Fresh Start by Bob Humphrey, www.churchsmart.com.

The Ministry Playbook: Strategic Planning for Effective Churches by Henry Klopp, www.bakerbooks.com.

Advanced Strategic Planning by Aubrey Malphurs, www.bakerbooks.com.

Comeback Churches by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, www.BHPublishingGroup.com.

Focused Ministry by Terry Walling, www.crmnet.org.