Developing a Healthy Church

Bud Diener
Cell: 076 584 9734
Fax: 086 671 2866
# Developing a Healthy Church

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction** 3
- **The Founding of the Church** 4
- **The Building of the Church** 6
- **The Purpose of the Church** 11
- **The Development of the Church** 12
- **The Characteristics of a Healthy Church** 14
  - **Characteristic One: Leadership** 15
  - **Leadership Questionnaire** 17
  - **Characteristic Two: Ministry** 18
  - **Ministry Questionnaire** 20
  - **Characteristic Three: Spirituality** 22
  - **Spirituality Questionnaire** 26
  - **Characteristic Four: Organisation** 27
  - **Organisation Questionnaire** 29
  - **Characteristic Five: Dispersion/Decentralisation** 30
  - **Dispersion/Decentralisation Questionnaire** 32
  - **Characteristic Six: Worship** 33
  - **Worship Questionnaire** 34
  - **Characteristic Seven: Preaching/Teaching** 36
  - **Preaching/Teaching Questionnaire** 37
  - **Characteristic Eight: Evangelism** 39
  - **Evangelism Questionnaire** 40
- **Identifying the Greatest Need** 41
- **Taking the Next Steps** 44
- **Closing Thoughts** 50
- **Appendix A – Ministry Diagnosis** 51
- **Appendix B – Goal Setting Worksheet** 60
Introduction

Many churches throughout the world are caught in a condition I call “motion without movement.” They are active and busy each week with special meetings, worship services and prayer meetings but they are not making any progress toward fulfilling God’s purposes for the church.

Activity creates “motion” but it may be like a mouse on a wheel, the pastor and people are running in place making no movement toward accomplishment of the purpose for which God founded the church. The routine of activities continues from Sunday to Wednesday to Sunday to Wednesday. It runs from Christmas to Easter to Christmas and then to Easter again.

Routine is not necessarily a bad thing. In the New Testament we see evidence of routine:

- Acts 20:7 – Luke records Paul’s gathered with the church in Troas on the first day of the week as a regular occurrence.
- 1 Cor. 16:2 – Paul speaks of setting aside an offering on the first day of the week.
- Heb. 10:23-25 – The writer of Hebrews urges believers not to forsake the assembling together of the church as was the habit of some.

Though routine and repetition is good (2 Pet. 1:13), it does not automatically follow that a church with a busy routine will be a healthy church. A routine in a healthy church will be intentionally leading toward God’s vision for the church.
God is interested with the progress of the church. Look at how the apostle Paul uses the language of advancement and progress:

- Rom. 8:29, “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son…”
- Eph. 4:12-13, “For the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”
- Phil. 3:14, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

A healthy church will make movement toward becoming like Jesus in both character and conduct. Before we explore in detail the elements of a healthy church, let’s first understand the founding of the church, the purpose and building of the church as well as how the church actually grows and develops. Understanding these essential truths will help provide a solid biblical foundation for our exploration.

**THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH**

The founding of the church has been part of the will of God from the very beginning.

- Eph. 1:9-10, “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth…”
- Eph. 3:8-10, “To me, the very least of all saints this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”

A “mystery” is a truth that in the Old Testament was hidden but has since been revealed in Christ. That mystery, into which angels longed to look (1 Pet. 1:12) is the fact of the redemption of the lost and the unity both Jews and Gentiles have in the church. The administration of God (the church) is a reflection of His will. God gave us glimpses in the Old Testament:

- Gen. 12:3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”
Developing a Healthy Church

- Isa. 42:6, “I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations.”
- Isa. 49:6, “He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’”
- The New Testament gives us a clearer picture as to who the prophet is referring in:
  - Lk. 2:32, “A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”
  - Acts 13:47, “For the Lord has commanded us, ‘I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, that You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.’”
  - Acts 26:23, “that the Christ was to suffer and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”
  - Gal. 3:8, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations will be blessed in you.’”

The church has been part of God’s program since Abraham and it is God who founded the church:

- Acts 2:37-41, 47, “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.’ And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation!’ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” “Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
- 1 Cor. 1:30-31, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, just as it is written, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH

Let us consider the teaching of our Lord Jesus, as He makes the declaration about who will build the church in Matthew 16:13-20.

Jesus was just six months from crucifixion and then ascension...His identity is essential to the nature of the church...His disciples needed to be taught so that their militant messianic expectations would not drive them to approach the church in a way that was incompatible with its nature.

The Church’s Foundation

- “upon this Rock” – the church cannot be built on any mortal man
  - Catholics use this passage to support Peter as the first Pope and initiate of the papal succession
    - If this were true then why...Mt. 20:20-21 (James & John)
      - If they knew Peter was the foundation, they would not have made the request...
      - If they misunderstood it, then Jesus would have made it clear to them...
  - Protestants quickly bring up the point about:
    - Peter – petros – little stone
    - Foundation – petra – big rock or bedrock
  - While I personally like this, we do have to consider Eph. 2:19-20, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.”
  - So, what is the foundation of the apostles and prophets?
    - 1 Cor. 2:1-2, “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
    - 1 Cor. 3:11, “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
Developing a Healthy Church

- Acts 2:42 clarifies it even more, “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” The key point here is that it was the teaching or the doctrine of the apostles that provided the foundation of the church…

- Heb 1:1-2 talks about how God spoke through the prophets but now has spoken through Jesus Christ (John 1:18 – “…He has explained Him…”)

- Our understanding of the Church’s foundation is critical for the Church’s effectiveness and obedience in the world today…

The Church’s Certainty

- “I will build My church…” – or the assurance…Phil. 1:6
- The church is not a crowd…it is not built by gimmicks or methodologies…it is built by Christ.
- It is Christ who called us out of darkness into light (Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:9)…it is Christ who began the good work in us and will perfect it until He comes…
- The future tense of the verb indicates that Christ will, with certainty, continue His sovereign work of building the church…
- Our goal is not to build the church, but to work with Christ as He builds the church by following His will for us as outlined in His Word…

The Church’s Relationship

- “I will build My church…” – the church belongs to Christ…
  - Acts 20:28 – “…the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
  - 1 Cor. 6:17 – “But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”
  - Heb. 2:11 – “…for this reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

- In Acts 9:4 when Saul was persecuting the Christians, Jesus said to him on the road to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

- What you do to the church you are doing to Christ.
The Church’s Identity

- “I will build My church...” – what is the church?
- The NT gives us many images/pictures to help us understand the identity of the church:

**The Bride of Christ**
- Nothing must ever compete with Him for our allegiance...

**The Body of Christ**
- Eph. 5:30, “because we are members of His body.”
- 1 Cor. 12:13, 27, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit.” “Now you are Christ’s body and individually members of it.”
- Rom. 12:4-5, “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members on of another.” Remember that what happens to us individually happens to us corporately...we are as a church, what we are as individuals...
- Col. 1:18, 24, “He is also Head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”
- Eph. 1:22-23, “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”
- Eph. 4:12-16, “...for the equipping of the saint for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking
Developing a Healthy Church

The truth in love we are to grow up into all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

- The body of Christ is a picture of unity and connectedness...

The Pillar and Support of the Truth

- 1 Tim. 3:15, “But in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God the pillar and support of the truth.”
  - Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus…big, difficult church…
  - Paul writes him because he was having trouble with some false teachers in the church…He deals with prayer, women, elders, and deacons…he wanted to come to him but if delayed, he needed to get this information to Timothy…

- In our world today, we find more and more of the world philosophies finding their way into the church…Jude 4…certain persons have crept in unnoticed…

- Syncretism is becoming the word for the day…

- Evangelicalism has walked away from the truth of God and have mixed itself with the nations…Hosea 7:8…

- Jeremiah 2:13, “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

The Church’s Invincibility

- “…and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it…”

- “Hades” – place of the dead or place of departed spirits…it is the word used in the LXX for Sheol which refers generally to the place of the dead with no specific distinction between
righteous or unrighteous. NOTE: the reference in Acts 2:24, 27, 31…general as death or the place of the dead…

- NT in most cases identifies Hades with torment, and for the righteous dead, the preferred terms are Paradise and Abraham’s bosom.
- There seems to be a division in Hades (Lk. 16:22-23).
- Hades is separate from Hell (Rev. 20:13-14).
- The notion that Hades is a holding place is erroneous (2 Cor. 5:8).

- The church Christ is building will face opposition…but Christ said that the grave will not overpower the work of life that Christ is doing…see
  - 1 Cor. 15:55-57, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - John 11:25-26, “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.”

- The battle is spiritual and Satan is always opposed to the work of God…
  - Paul put it this way in 2 Cor. 10:3-5, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”
  - We must respond by destroying speculations and things that are not consistent with the truth of God and His word

The Church’s Authority

- “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven…”
- Jesus is addressing Peter as the representative of the Twelve …about their authority to declare what is divinely forbidden or permitted on earth…
  - John 20:23 – shortly after Jesus’ resurrection He says, “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have
been forgiven them; If you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”

- In giving instructions for church discipline Jesus says in Mt. 18:15-18, “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuse to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

- “shall have been bound” – perfect passive participle…perfect tense is a completed action in past time with future and continuing implications…

- The church’s authority rests on the Word of God…we have the authority to proclaim on earth, that which has been proclaimed already in heaven…In other words, the church has the right to tell an unrepentant brother that he is out of line with God’s Word… Paul illustrates in 1 Cor. 5.

**THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

The purpose of the church is clear in Scripture:

- **Worship**
  - Our existence as a church praises God – Eph. 1:4-6, 12, 14 – “to the praise of His glory.”
  - We testify of His great wisdom and excellence – Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 2:9.

- **Proclamation and Disciple-making**
  - Seek the lost – Lk. 19:10.
  - Teach the saved – Mt. 28:19-20.

- **Exhortation, encouragement, and building up one another in holiness**
  - The work of the ministry – Eph. 4:11-16.
  - Build up one another – Rom. 12:19.

The purpose of the church is summarized in 1 Pet. 2:9-12, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own
possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has
called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; for you once were
not a people but now you are the people of God; you had not received
mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens
and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against your
soul. Keep your behaviour excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the
thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your
good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Jesus gives us an interesting analogy in Mk. 4:26-29. From this analogy
we may glean a principle of church growth that is attested to elsewhere in
Scripture.

Mark 4:26-29, “And He was saying, ‘The kingdom of God is like a man
who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by
day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The
soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature
grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the
sickle, because the harvest has come.’”

This agricultural analogy provides us with two important principles to
consider:

- The growth of the kingdom (church) is not something we can
  know about. We see the effects and reap the harvest but the
  essence of church growth is unseen. We must note the existence
  of the visible church and the invisible church (Mt. 7:21; 13:24-30,
  36-43).
  - The visible church is made up of those who associate
    themselves with a local body of believers. They attend
Developing a Healthy Church

services and may even be involved in ministry. In the visible church, there are tares and wheat.

- The invisible church is comprised of those who are true believers. We don’t know who they are because we can’t see a person’s heart. Entrance into the invisible church is completely the work of God and is unexplainable to us much in the same way that Nicodemus could not understand the concept of being born again (John 3:1-8).

- The growth of the kingdom (church) happens by itself. The farmer does prepare the soil and plant the seed, but he does not cause the growth. Paul attests to this agricultural analogy when he says in 1 Cor. 3:6-7, “Apollos planted, I watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.”

  - The farmer is responsible for the environmental aspects of the crop. The soil must be free from weeds and rocks; there must be enough nutrients to promote healthy growth and of course water is a necessity. These environmental elements define the task of the farmer.
  - But the farmer does not make the seed grow. The seed grows all by itself when the conditions are right.

As we approach the topic of church growth we often reduce our discussion to issues of more and bigger. However, given the reality of the visible and invisible church, size is not an adequate or accurate criterion to determine the health of a church. It is possible for a small church to be healthy and a mega-church to be unhealthy. In other words, large gatherings do not constitute health when it comes to the church.

As pastors and church leaders we are NOT in the business of building the church. Christ has already made it clear that the work of building the church belongs to Him. Remember that the church is built when people are transferred from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of God. This is not something we are human beings can produce. There is however something we can do. I believe that 90% of all church development is the sovereignty of God; while the other 10% has to do with our cooperative working with God to avoid hindering His work. We cooperate with Christ in His construction of the church as we create and establish an environment where His work may flourish and grow.

We have already seen that Christ will build His church as a matter of certainty. If we hinder His work in our local church because of environmental unhealthiness, Christ will move to another place and
continue the work of building His church. The image I want to give you is one of a water pipe. The larger the pipe (healthy church) the greater the flow of water through the pipe, but if the pipe is restricted (unhealthy church) the flow will be diminished.

The Bible is clear about the characteristics which are essential for a healthy church. In the remaining pages of this workshop we will examine those characteristics and explore the ways we can help establish an environment where the church will effectively accomplish the purposes for which it is being built by Christ.

**The Characteristics of a Healthy Church**

These are not gimmicks or methods guaranteeing numerical growth when blindly implemented in your local church. They are biblical principles of a healthy church. A healthy church glorifies God. That must be our overall desire as pastors and church leaders (1 Cor. 10:31).

One important note before we look closely at these characteristics; for a church to be healthy, **all** characteristics must be present. Two analogies will help us understand this:

- When a farmer plants his crops, he cannot expect growth if there is no water. Every other necessity may be present, but if water is not, there will be no harvest.
- We have already seen that the Bible refers to the church as the Body of Christ. The body is made up of many different systems all necessary for health. If just one of those systems are unhealthy the whole body will be unhealthy and possibly worse. Paul, in 1 Cor. 12 tells us that all the parts of the body are important and when one hurts the whole body hurts.

One final point of introduction; maybe you have heard the expression, “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.” This expression holds true for a
healthy church. The weakest characteristic will determine the relative health of the church. Of the eight characteristics, your church may be fairly healthy in seven, but if it is unhealthy in just one, it will impact the degree through which Christ can work in your local assembly. This is illustrated often in our own lives when otherwise healthy people experienced diminished productivity simply because they hurt their big toe. It seems small, but the impact is big. Why? Because there is a symbiotic relationship that all the parts of the body share together and when one of the interconnected parts are hurt, it hurts the overall effectiveness of the body.

We will approach each characteristic with biblical teaching and description, then after each characteristic, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire that will help identify the relative health of each characteristic. We will use these results to set goals and develop a plan to improve the health of your church for the glory of God.

**CHARACTERISTIC ONE: LEADERSHIP**

Clarifying question: *To what extent is the ministry of the leaders focused on equipping other believers to serve in ministry?*

There are many popular viewpoints concerning leadership. Most of the prevailing perspectives reduce leadership down to a set of steps or a “to do” list that give the impression that leadership is a science of observable and tangible realities. However, the essence of leadership is very intangible. It is not uncommon to see a man or woman with great leadership influence who, upon closer inspection, does not fit the profile of an effective leader. The Old Testament is filled with examples of unlikely leaders. Moses had a speech impediment; David was the youngest and wasn’t even considered by his father as a candidate for leadership; Joseph was a dreamer and a prison resident; Daniel was a captive; and Gideon was the least one in the smallest of tribes, yet they all demonstrated great influence and effective leadership.

In the environment of a healthy church, the essential qualities or practices of leaders include concepts like investment, example, discipleship/mentoring, delegation, and equipping. We must understand these from a biblical perspective if we are to establish a healthy environment in the church.

- **Investment** – Mt. 25:14-30; 1 Thess. 2:7-8
  1. The idea of investment is illustrated by the parable of the talents from Mt. 25. Two of the servants invested the masters
Developing a Healthy Church

money and it earned more money, but the third slave was afraid (though the master called him a wicked and lazy slave), instead of investing, he simply saved the money and gave it back to the master without any gain.

2. The principle seems obvious. When you save, you only get back what you give. The limits of return are already defined without variable. So it is when a leader does not invest himself into the lives of others. He/she has already limited the return to no more than what he or she has to offer from their own strength. The investor, though taking a risk, also opens up the potential for unlimited gain. So is the leader who invests in others. The ministry return is multiplied as others are equipped and commissioned to do the work of the ministry.

3. As leaders, we must invest in the lives of others through equipping and character impartation (also known as discipleship/mentoring).
   - **Equipping** – Eph. 4:11-16 – the role of leaders in the church is to equip the saints for the work of service for the building up of the body of Christ.
   - **Discipling/mentoring** – 2 Tim. 2:2 – there is a four generational transfer and ministry succession implied by this passage. Paul often exhorts people to follow his example or imitate his faith (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17).

- **Delegation** – Ex. 18:17-27; 2 Tim. 4:9-22 – Equipping leadership does not simply train, but also employs people in the work of ministry. The above passages show the need and impact of delegation. From the life of Jesus we will see the “how to” of effective delegation.

1. Often called the Jethro principle, Ex. 18:17-27 records how Moses’ father-in-law recognised the need for Moses to delegate significant responsibilities to others. The Bible even tells us here that Moses’ current plan was not good because it would wear both Moses and the people down (vv. 17-18). By lack of delegation many leaders actually equip/train their people hypocritically, thus wearing the leaders down and the people who should be in ministry.

2. In 2 Tim. 4:9-22 we see a long list of people who Paul had put into significant ministry. Paul understood the necessity of equipping and commissioning others for the ministry. It is interesting that we notice many successful delegations but also a couple failures. Such is the reality of working with flawed human beings.
3. Jesus’ life demonstrates a simple three step method of delegation:
   - **Watch Jesus do it** – early ministry, follow me, and be with me – Mk. 3:13-15; Mt. 4:23; Lk. 8:1.
   - **They do, Jesus gives instructions, watches and gives feedback** – Mt. 10:1-23; Lk. 10:17-20.
   - **They do, and others watch** – Acts 1-28.

Take a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire about the leadership health in your church.

**Leadership Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches about the need for believers to be equipped for ministry.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. In my church, there is a clear and accessible pathway for leadership development.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. New leaders are being commissioned for ministry on a regular basis.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. My church’s mission/vision is consistently being communicated by ministry personnel other than the pastoral staff or elders.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. I can clearly identify my church’s leaders.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. I know with certainty the role of the leaders in my church.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. I know that each of the leaders is actively and intentionally mentoring/equipping others to step into significant ministry roles.

---

*Notes*
8. I have seen second and third generation disciples be equipped for and move into significant leadership functions or ministry roles.

9. The leaders’ vision is clear and I know what my role is in helping to accomplish that vision.

10. I have been challenged by the leaders to be prepared/equipped for a ministry role or leadership function.

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total________

CHARACTERISTIC TWO: MINISTRY
Clarifying question: To what extent are the tasks in the church distributed and performed according to the spiritual gifts of individual believers?

There are two major approaches to ministry involvement. The first approach views the open positions as the motivating factor for recruitment of workers. This approach considers success as no empty positions, so the primary focus is not who fills the position, only that the position is filled.

The second approach first considers how God has designed and gifted each believer and then seeks to match them with an appropriate ministry that uses their spiritual gifts.

Every believer has a unique spiritual profile. Understanding the elements of that profile will help the church become healthy in terms of the service rendered to God by the believers who make up that local body. Rom. 12:3-8 gives us some information, but 1 Cor. 12:4-7 gives the following instruction, “Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries and the same Lord. There are varieties of
effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

- "varieties of gifts" – The word “varieties” is rendered “diversities” in the King James Version which, in this case, more accurately conveys the meaning of the Greek word. The original word literally means division. It can also mean apportionment or distribution.

- The idea is that God gave to each one the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Cor.12:7). This manifestation of the Spirit has been divided and apportioned to us in many different ways, thus giving us a multiplicity of spiritual gifts. Romans 12:6 also indicates that we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. Now the grace given to us by the Holy Spirit is not measurably defined by the spiritual gift you possess. Everyone has the same amount of the Holy Spirit. The difference is found in the expression of the Holy Spirit’s manifestation in the life of every believer.

- The word translated “gifts” is charismaton, which is a divine endowment the Spirit confers on His chosen people. It is the same root word as “grace” (charis) and carries the connotation of being freely given by the will of God, not on the basis of an earned wage or any quality possessed by the recipient of that grace that would make them more worthy to receive the gift.

- “varieties of ministries” – The word for “ministries” is diakonos which literally means service or waiting tables.
  o Paul is saying that there is one Lord of the church (the Head; Christ cf. Eph. 4:15), but within the work of the church there are divisions of the ministry.
  o There are many different areas of ministry that one could serve in. All of these ministries are important and when serving in them properly, they bring glory to God.
    o Some ministries will motivate us while others will not. As we look at the church, some people especially want to help those who are sick, while others want to minister to women, or men, or children, or teens.
    o God will give us a burden on our heart to help direct us to the particular ministry He wants to use us in
Developing a Healthy Church

- “varieties of effects” – The Greek word here talks about that which is accomplished, or the effect produced by something. This is the word from which we get our English word “energy”. The effect of each spiritual gift varies greatly with the person who possesses that gift. Some people feel more comfortable talking to strangers than others are. Still others are more organised, while some are more sensitive to relationships. All these different personality traits should be considered when you are seeking to serve Christ in the church.

It is also essential in a healthy church that each believer understands the necessity of using their gifts for the sake of the body for the glory of God. Look at these verses:

- Rom. 12:4-7, “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching;”

- 1 Pet. 4:10-11, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

As leaders we must establish an environment where people are free and equipped to discover, use and develop their spiritual gifts for ministry in the body of Christ.

Ministry Questionnaire

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches that the Holy Spirit has given gifts to each believer that must be used in the body.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. My church has an ongoing strategy and method for helping people discover and use their spiritual gifts.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Personal spiritual giftedness is the primary consideration before enlisting a believer to be involved in a ministry.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. I can confidently tell you what spiritual gifts I have been given by the Lord.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. The ministry in which I now serve is an excellent match for my spiritual gifts.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. My church confirms and evaluates my spiritual gifts regularly.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. I have received biblical teaching on the definition and use of my spiritual gifts.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. When ministry needs are announced in my church, the spiritual gifts needed to fulfil that ministry are also mentioned.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. There is a sense of complete freedom to serve in my gifted area even if it means saying “no” to other opportunities not suited to my spiritual giftedness.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Generally speaking the believers in my church feel fruitful and fulfilled in ministry because they are serving in areas that match their giftedness.

    0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total______
CHARACTERISTIC THREE: SPIRITUALITY
Clarifying question: To what extent is the spiritual life of the believers in the church characterised by prayer, discipline, and enthusiastic holiness?

In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) Jesus tells us that unless our righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, we will not enter the kingdom of heaven (vs. 5:20). He goes on to illustrate that the righteousness of the Pharisees is one of external compliance only. They avoided murder, but were angry with their brothers which is the source of murder; they avoided the physical act of adultery, but by their lustful leering of other women they were infidels in their hearts; they avoided making false vows, but to do this they developed an elaborate system of loopholes and escapes so that they could manipulate and deceive; they prayed and gave to the poor, but their outward acts of piety were nothing more than calculated hypocrisy so as to appear holy in the presence of others. Jesus said of them in Mt. 15:8, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, ‘This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.’” In contrast to the Pharisees, Jesus summarizes the Law and the Prophets when He is speaking with a lawyer in Mt. 22:37-40, “And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.’”

In a healthy church, the leaders establish an environment where the acceptable norm of Christianity is consistent prayer, discipline for the purpose of godliness and enthusiastic passionate holiness. It must be remembered that the essence of spirituality is not correct doctrine alone, but hearts that are in love with God.

PRAYER
Sincere Prayer

- Mt. 6:5-15 – records the practice of the Pharisees who used to pray in public using meaningless repetition so as to be noticed by men, but Jesus instructs His disciples to pray privately and the Lord, who sees in private, will reward them with His presence and provision.

- Prayer in a healthy church, whether public or private is always sincere and real. The leaders are the ones who set the tone for the “prayer culture” in the church. Everyone’s prayer should be unique because they are unique individuals who are going before their Father Who is in heaven…
Developing a Healthy Church

**Personal/Private Prayer**

- A healthy church is an environment where the leaders exhort, reprove and encourage people to engage in consistent, private, personal prayer with God. It is in these times that God does some of His greatest work in the hearts of His people.
- Jesus provides us with an example of the priority of personal (private) prayer.
  - Mk. 1:35, “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”
    - “early morning” – refers to the last watch of the night which was from 03h00-06h00.
    - “was praying” – this is in the imperfect tense in the Greek which indicates an uncompleted continuing action.
    - cf. Isa. 50:4, “The Lord God has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.”
  - Lk. 4:42, “When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowd were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them.” Lk. 5:16, “But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.”
  - Mt. 14:23, “After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.”

**Persistent Prayer**

- Eph. 6:18, “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”
  - “pray at all times” – means to pray on every occasion.
  - “in the Spirit” – to pray in the Spirit is to pray in concert with or in union with the Holy Spirit as noted by the Greek preposition en. Here Paul is bringing back previous Holy Spirit involvement in the church:
    - Eph. 2:18, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”
    - Eph. 4:3-4, “being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling.”
Developing a Healthy Church

- Eph. 5:18, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”
- More than likely, Paul also has in mind his earlier instruction on the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer from Rom. 8:24-27, “For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. In the same way the Spirit also helps our weaknesses; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

  • The Holy Spirit intercedes for us, knowing our hearts even though in our feeble weakness we do not pray as we ought (cf. Heb. 7:25, Jesus daily makes intercession for us).
  • The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to bring our requests before God in a way that is consistent with His will (cf. 1 John 5:14-15).

  1 Thess. 5:17, “pray without ceasing.” – this does not mean to pray without a break, but to pray persistently (cf. Lk. 11:1-13; 18:1-3), with devotion (cf. Col. 4:2, 12), and in everything (cf. Phil. 4:6).

To put it another way; in a healthy church prayer is the first approach rather than the last resort. It is taught from the pulpit and modelled by the leaders. It is relied on and expected as a natural vital part of the church's spiritual life.

DISCIPLINE

Paul makes the concept of discipline very clear in 1 Tim. 4:7, “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.”

  • “discipline” – literally means to make oneself obey, or idiomatically to command one’s heart.
  • “godliness” – the Greek word is a compound word which literally means to worship rightly; to have appropriate beliefs
and devout practice as it relates to God; to live as God has told us we should live.

- Titus 2:11-12, “For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.” The details of how we achieve this can be found in Eph. 4:22-24 which says, “that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” This is the picture of discipline for the purpose of godliness. It involves the physical aspects of “stopping” our sin and “starting” to live for God, but there is also the essential element of being renewed in the spirit of the mind, which in the healthy church (which we will address later) comes through the strong, clear proclamation of truth.

HOLINESS

The word for “holiness” is the same root word from which we also get “sanctification.” It means to be set apart, dedicated for special use. The spirituality of a healthy church includes a passionate enthusiastic holiness. There is a significant difference between the church and the world. Look at the commands and descriptions in the following passages.

- Heb. 12:14, “Pursue peace with all men and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”
- 1 Pet. 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were your in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy for I am holy.’”
- 2 Cor. 6:14-17, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from their midst and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you.’”
A healthy church is not a tolerant church; it is a pure and holy church.

**Spirituality Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches about growing to spiritual maturity through prayer, spiritual disciplines, and holy living.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. In my church, personal devotions are emphasized as a matter of priority.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. The leadership models disciplined personal devotional habits.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. I have a consistent daily time of prayer, Bible reading, meditation, worship, and Scripture memory.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Social conversations at my church always seem to come to the topic of spiritual growth, development, or discovery.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. People at my church are held accountable for living a life of personal holiness.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. My church teaches and practices biblical discipline for those in the body who are sinning.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. There is usually an excellent attendance (a majority of the church body) at special prayer meetings.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. I am more enthusiastic about godly living as a direct result of my church’s example and exhortation in my life.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. Sacrifice or even persecution is not a deterrent to the spiritual commitment of the believers in my church.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total________

CHARACTERISTIC FOUR: ORGANISATION
Clarifying question: To what extent does the organisational structure of the church encourage and support ministry and spiritual development?

The organisation of a healthy church should be designed not as an end in itself but as a means to a spiritual end. It is not uncommon to see churches proliferate their organisation to the point that the organisation exists to perpetuate itself.

An example of a runaway organisational structure can be seen in what had occurred in Judaism by the time Jesus was born. In Ex. 20:8-11, God clearly says to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days humans were allowed to work but on the seventh day, he was to rest from labour according to the example given by the Lord Himself in the creation of the world. The Pharisees then developed an elaborate system of laws and regulations, adding over 300 stipulations to that one commandment.

In an unhealthy church, the organisational structure is cumbersome and actually hinders the free moving of the Holy Spirit as He uses the spiritual gifts of people to accomplish the purposes of the church.

Here are a few things to consider with regard to healthy church organisation:

- **It should support ministry needs**
  - Acts 6:1-4, “Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their
widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables, therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.'"

- Here is an excellent example of organisation that facilitates greater ministry rather than ministry waiting on the organisation to inspire it.
- The Holy Spirit had motivated many new believers to sell their possessions and give the money for the sake of the church. This complaint never would have arisen if ministry was not happening (cf. Prov. 14:4).
- When the complaint arose, the apostles established a division of ministry. In short they introduced a simple organisation that would facilitate the proclamation purposes of the church as well as the “one another” ministry of the church. It was just enough organisation to handle the need, but not so much that it became the “slave master.”

- It prolongs ministry life and gives hope
  - It is sometimes called the Jethro principle. Recorded in Ex. 18:17ff, Moses’ father-in-law gave him advice about broadening his organisation with respect to judging Israel.
  - Jethro’s reasons are simple and direct:
    - Moses would get worn out by trying to do too much.
    - The people lose heart (wear out) because there was only one man to judge so many issues.
  - Healthy organisation must always be attached to a ministry need. Structure that is not connected to need/ministry has no real eternal purpose and instead of being a support, it must be supported. When structures create needs, then people and resources go toward meeting those structural needs which means that the structure is consuming resources that should be going toward eternally significant needs.

- People must always come first
  - Even when the structure is good, people must always come before process, programmes or structure.
  - Look at the example Jesus gives in Mk. 2:23-28, “And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on
the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. The Pharisees were saying to Him, ‘Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?’ And He said to them, ‘Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?’ Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’”

**Organisation Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently communicates the importance ministry and life change over church structure.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. The organisational structure of the church is not obvious.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. In my church, ministry is promoted above its structure.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. I have been encouraged each time I have had to work within the organisational structure of my church.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. My church’s structure is functionally designed to enhance ministry effectiveness.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. The organisational structure of my church is easy to work with and through to accomplish ministry.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. I am regularly assisted with the administrative side of ministry by my church’s organisation.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. The organisational structure of my church is a servant to the people of the church.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. The organisational structure of my church does not intimidate me due to its complexity.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. The organisation of my church reflects a passion for people and ministry.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total________

**CHARACTERISTIC FIVE: DISPERSION/DECENTRALISATION**

Clarifying question: *To what extent does real life ministry take place in smaller groups outside of the large gatherings of the church?*

In a healthy church, significant ministry and care takes place outside of the pastoral staff or the large gatherings of the church. This characteristic is inseparable from organisation, for if the organisation is too self-perpetuating and all-consuming, it will not allow for decentralisation or dispersion of ministry. All paths will lead through the process creating a “chokepoint” through which only a few Holy Spirit energised ministry initiatives will flow.

To be fair, this kind of structural model for ministry does reduce the risks of having over zealous people making mistakes, but it chokes the biblical expression of a healthy church.
The principle is taught in Eph. 4:11-16, it is illustrated by the ministry of Timothy, Titus, and Epaphras, but it is contextualised in our day and age through small cell groups.

- Eph. 4:11-16, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies according to the proper working of each individual part causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

- The principle is taught in that the leadership structure equips the members to accomplish the significant task of maturing the saints to become like Jesus in mature godly character. This is not a centralised ministry core of professionals, but the proper working of each individual in the church.

- The principle is illustrated by Timothy, Titus, and Epaphras.
  - Timothy – 1 Cor. 4:16-17, “Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of my. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.”
  - Titus – Titus 1:5, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you.”
  - Epaphras – Col. 1:3-7, “We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondservant who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.”
The principle is contextualised through small cell groups. It is in these groups that healthy church leaders care and encourage the members of the church. Each small group in the church must possess the following elements:

- **Care** – members of the group must bear one another’s burdens.
- **Encouragement** – members of the group must exhort and urge one another on to love and good deeds.
- **Accountability** – members of the group must take holiness seriously and hold one another accountable to live for Jesus.
- **Ministry** – significant ministry must be an integral part of the small group.
- **Bible Study** – the church is the pillar and support of the truth and therefore the Word of truth must have a prominent place in each small group gathering.

**Dispersion/Decentralisation Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches about the importance of my involvement in a small group.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. I know when and where my church’s small groups meet.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. The small groups minister to their members in an extensive and holistic way.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. I have been asked and encouraged to be a part of a small group.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. I know who the small group leaders are.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Small groups are the first point of contact for the pastoral care needs of the people in my church.
Developing a Healthy Church

7. If I had a personal need for care, I would first call my small group leader or someone else in my small group.

8. Small group leaders are proactively shepherding the members of their groups.

9. Those who are not a part of a small group are missing out on the essential ministry hub of my church.

10. The small group ministry in my church is growing in visibility and significance.

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total________

CHARACTERISTIC SIX: WORSHIP

Clarifying question: To what extent is attending worship services an inspirational God-glorifying experience?

The worship services in a healthy church are both inspiring and God-glorifying. Everything we do as believers should be to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). The element of inspiration must be connected with the element of glorifying God in order for corporate worship to be healthy.

The corporate worship experience is nothing more than an outpouring of individual believer’s personal worship. If they have connected with God throughout the week, corporate worship can never be uninspiring.

Let’s look briefly at the priority of worship and the practice of worship in a healthy church.

- Priority – Rom. 12:1 tells us, “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy
sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Worship involves the sacrifice of all that we are to all that we know of God. It is a lifestyle of holiness and service to God that culminates in a sacrifice of praise to Him as we sing, serve, study or simply stand for Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; Heb. 13:15-16).

- **Practice** – John 4:20-24, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'"
  - The Father is seeking worshipers – God desires worshipers who engage the heart, mind, and will in worship.
  - Worship Him in spirit – the idea of spirit encompasses all of the above. It is not only our will and volition, it is our emotions. These are not irrational emotions though; a point that is strengthened by the next attribute of worship that pleases God.
  - Worship Him in truth – pleasing, healthy worship of God must be in accordance to truth. Anything short of truthful worship is idolatry. There are four forms that idolatry takes, none of which are healthy or have any place in a healthy church:
    - Worship of false gods – Ex. 34:14.
    - Worship of the true God in the wrong form – Ex. 32:7-9.
    - Attributing to God untrue attributes or attributing God’s attributes to another – Mt. 12:22-29.

Truthful, non-idolatrous, healthy, inspiring worship that receives the blessing of God must be according to His self-revelation in Scripture.

**Worship Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches about glorifying God through the discipline of biblical worship.
2. The words of the songs my church sings in worship are biblically accurate.

3. My church’s worship leaders always direct my focus toward God and not the music, musicians, choir or themselves.

4. After the worship services at my church, I generally feel as if I have been in the presence of God.

5. The Bible plays a significant role in my church’s worship services.

6. I am inspired to live for God and grow in my personal worship as a result of participating in my church’s corporate worship.

7. I am completely unaware of time during my church’s worship services.

8. Worship is always inspiring because the centre of attention is always God and His glory.

9. My church’s worship services could be characterised by the phrase: “He must increase and I must decrease.”
10. I never allow other events to keep me from attending my church’s worship services because they are too significant to my spiritual growth and inspiration.

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total________

CHARACTERISTIC SEVEN: PREACHING/TEACHING

Clarifying question: To what extent is God transforming believers by the knowledge of His Word communicated through the preaching/teaching ministry of the church?

Paul describes the church in 1 Tim. 3:15 as the “pillar and support of the truth.” The message must not be watered down by contemporary psychologies, philosophical proposals, or tolerant acceptance of aberrant ideas. The biblical writers were very clear as to the content, construction and the commitment to the fidelity of the church’s message:

- **Content** – 2 Tim. 4:1-2, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” The word is truth (John 17:17), and should be the content of the church’s message. When the content of the word is delivered it the following elements must be present:
  - “reprove” – is a negative element that has to do with an appeal to the mind for the purpose of showing him his practical and doctrinal error; it is to refute error and misconduct with careful biblical argument; this discloses the sinfulness of the sin.
  - “rebuke” – to bring an erring person to repentance with an appeal to the heart; this element discloses the sinfulness of the sinner.
  - “exhort” – a positive element carries the positive idea of being called alongside of someone for encouragement. After the preaching of the word reproves the sin, and rebukes the sinner, it also encourages the believer to press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Developing a Healthy Church

- **Construction** – the preaching of the word must not be confused with the telling of stories; it is not merely taking a thought, a word or a verse out of context. The preaching/teaching of the word must be constructed in such a way that people get the sense of what the author is communicating. The writers of Scripture are inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17) not individual preachers. Only when we are true to the meaning of the text, will we allow the living active word to do its work in the hearts of men. Look at the explanation in Neh. 8:5-8, “Then Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people remained in their place. They read from the book, from the law of God, explaining to give the sense so that they understood the reading.” Systematic expository preaching through the Bible is the best diet for a healthy body of Christ.
  - “explaining” – while some translating was probably involved for those who were Aramaic speakers in exile, the literal meaning of the word is to “break down” the text into parts so that the people could understand it.
  - This preaching ministry of Ezra in Jerusalem reflects his commitment in Ezra 7:10, “For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.”

- **Commitment** – 2 Tim. 2:13-15, “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance and with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” 1 Tim. 4:16, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”

**Preaching/Teaching Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches verse by verse through a book of the Bible.
2. I am mentally and spiritually transformed by my church’s preaching ministry.

3. My church’s preaching ministry could be described as an excellent exposition of God’s Word.

4. I learn more about the Bible each week through my church’s preaching ministry.

5. I am motivated to personally study God’s word deeper as a result of my church’s preaching ministry.

6. Through my church’s preaching ministry I am consistently being confronted with the reality of who I am and what I should be from a biblical perspective.

7. At my church, the Bible is faithfully and consistently proclaimed as inerrant and sufficient for all life’s issues.

8. From week to week in my church, there is biblical continuity in the preaching.

9. I am being taught how to understand the Bible through the preaching ministry of my church.
10. After listening to the messages at my church, I am amazed by the truth of God’s Word more than I am impressed by the clever message or interesting presentation.

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total

CHARACTERISTIC EIGHT: EVANGELISM

Clarifying question: To what extent are the forms and content of the evangelistic activities accurate and relevant to those you are trying to reach, thus giving them a legitimate opportunity to respond to the gospel?

Evangelism in a healthy church is a commitment to spread the message of the gospel as widely and as clearly as possible. Remember that Christ builds the church. Conversion is not our job but God’s (cf. John 6:44, 65; 1 Cor. 1:30; 3:6; Eph. 2:1–5). We must firmly grasp the sovereignty of God in the process of conversion, but we must also understand His programme for evangelism. He has chosen that through the preaching of the cross, people would be saved:

- 1 Cor. 1:21, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”
- Rom. 10:13-14, 17, “for whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

The evangelistic efforts of a healthy church should include:

- **Spiritual vibrancy** – Mt. 5:13-16 – it is reflected in:
  - A heart for the lost (lost people matter) – Luke 15.
  - Godly testimony – Col. 4:5; 1 Pet. 2:12.
- **Contact** – people must hear the gospel and even see it through you.
  - Extension of Christ’s ministry of compassion to the world.
  - Meeting practical needs because we love, with no strings attached.
We must tell them – Mt. 5:16 – our light must shine in such a way that it leads to Jesus.  Rom. 10:17 – faith comes from hearing.

**Evangelism Questionnaire**

1. My church consistently teaches/preaches on the great commission.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. In my church there is an enthusiasm for sharing the gospel as widely and as effectively as possible.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. The people in my church participate in regular evangelism training courses.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. In my church I have been taught to understand the role of God’s sovereignty in evangelism.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. My church actively seeks ways to contextualise the gospel to different cultures and cultural sub-groups.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. My church practices the ministry of compassion as an opportunity to share Christ with the hungry, hurting and needy people in the community.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. My church has taught me to understand the five essential elements of the gospel.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. I feel well-equipped to share my faith with others.
   
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. I am enthusiastic and motivated to share my faith with others.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I regularly share my faith with others.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add up and record the sum of all your responses. Total_______

IDENTIFYING THE GREATEST NEED

Now that you have completed all the questionnaires, take your eight total scores and enter them on the results grid provided following this section.

Church health characteristics that appear in the shaded area of the grid represent areas that are of moderate health. Left of the shaded area represents unhealthy characteristics that are either undeveloped or under-developed and should receive immediate attention.

While we recognise that there is no perfect church, we are nonetheless, not to be satisfied with anything less than perfect health. This attitude will be a motivating factor toward development of the less healthy characteristics. We must prioritize areas that need the most development and focus on them first. The challenge is to address the area of greatest need without neglecting other areas thus creating new under-developed characteristics.

In the example on the page 43, you will notice that the lowest scores were given to organisation and dispersion. Let’s use dispersion as our working example.

The fact that dispersion scored low does not give us adequate information to take any steps at improving the health of this area. Return to the questionnaire and in your group; identify and discuss the statements which elicited the lowest scores. The following ideas may help you get the discussion going:

a. Do others agree with your assessment of this characteristic? By reading each statement in the questionnaire you can identify which statements represent a general consensus. For example, in the questionnaire on
dispersion, one statement reads, “Small groups are the first point of contact for the pastoral care needs of the people in my church.” There may be a range of responses for this statement. One person in the group may have responded with a “2” while another person responded with a “9”. Discuss the reasons for the responses given. It may be that the person who gave a “2” is not part of a small group, or feels that it is the pastor’s job to do all the pastoral care so instead of calling the leader or members of the small group, he/she calls the pastor. By discovering the reasons for the responses, you will have better understanding of the issues that precipitate the need for greater development.

b. Is the development assessment isolated or global? By this I mean to ascertain if there are just one or two specific elements of the health characteristic that need development. For example, if you notice that the low overall score is a reflection of just one or two statements that received very low marks, then you can identify the undeveloped elements more clearly. So maybe the small cell group ministry in the church is undeveloped, but in your discussion you discover that almost no one has been asked or challenged to become a part of a small group, you may then, point to this element as one of the contributing factors in the under-developed health characteristic. On the other hand, if the assessment is global (reaching across most or all aspects of the characteristic) this may represent a need for a total change of mindset with regard to the characteristic.

c. Is it an environment issue or a response issue? By “environment issue” I am referring primarily to a leadership issue. The leaders establish the environment in which growth can take place. But lack of development is not always environmental. Sometimes, people fail to respond in one area because of weakness in another area. For example, the small group or dispersion characteristic may have scored low on the assessment but when you analyse this characteristic you do not find the weaknesses that are suggested by the score. As you investigate further, you notice that the church also needs development in the organisation characteristic, whose lack of functionality and support has hindered people from following through on their desire to engage in small groups.
To record your results, please place a “●” on the grid that corresponds with your score for each of the characteristics of a healthy church. After you have placed the dots on the grid, connect the dots by drawing a vertical line through each dot as shown in the example below.
Taking the Next Steps

Below are suggestions as to taking the next steps in the development of weak health characteristics.

1. **Pray and confirm commitment** – remember that we are in a spiritual battle. Satan does not want your church to be healthy. He wants to hinder the work of God at every turn; therefore we must submit therefore to God and resist the devil. Before any steps are taken, there must be a prayerful commitment to make the necessary sacrifice to see Christ build His church through a healthy environment.

2. **Identify the scope** – you already began identifying the scope of the need in your group discussions. As you strategise your development approach you must the scope of your activities on one of three levels:
   a. **Isolated development** – this approach will deal with specific elements of the target characteristic to ensure overall development and improvement in health.
   b. **Global development** – if the weakness of the characteristic is widespread, you will need to approach its development from a global perspective, meaning every element is a potential candidate for change.
   c. **Exploratory development** – if you are not clear on the scope of the need, you may want to approach each element within the health characteristic with the intent of discovering its health with respect to other elements (Appendix A may offer more detailed assistance in diagnosing the scope of need).

3. **Establish goals** – there are two important aspects to setting goals:
   a. **Quality vs. quantity** – avoid the temptation to establish numerical goals only. It would be inadequate to simply establish a goal to have a 7% increase in small group attendance by the end of six months. Attendance at small groups is not an adequate indicator of church health. Instead, we should be concerned also with the quality and significance of ministry happening in the smaller group gatherings of the church.
   b. **SMART goals** - It is essential that these goals are S.M.A.R.T. goals:
      o **Specific** – to get a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:
        - Who is involved?
        - What do I want to accomplish?
        - Where? Identify the location.
Developing a Healthy Church

- When? Establish a time frame.
- Which? Identify requirements and restraints.
- Why? Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
  - **Measurable** – establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set.
  - **Attainable** – be sure that when you set goals, they are goals that you can figure out ways to make them come true. Remember though, that if they are consistent with God’s desires (and they should be), then anything is attainable.
  - **Realistic** – to be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both **willing** and **able** to work.
  - **Tangible** – is when you can experience it with one of the senses. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable, and thus attainable.

4. **Define tactics** – from your statement of SMART and qualitative goals, define the tactics (specific activities) necessary to achieve your goals. The process may include the following steps:
   a. **Identify specific activities and milestones** – If your goal statement is, “By 15, February 2009 I will begin a lay pastors training programme designed to equip small group leaders to shepherd the members of their group.” The activities are the tasks required to accomplish the goal. The milestones are the events marking the beginning and end of one or more activities. It is helpful to list these activities (see Appendix B for Goal Setting Worksheet).
   b. **Determine appropriate sequence** – This step may be combined with the activity identification step since the sequence is evident for some tasks. Other tasks may require more analysis to determine the exact order in which they must be performed.
   c. **Construct a relationship diagram (optional but helpful)** – using the activity sequence information it is helpful to construct a diagram that shows the successive and parallel activities.
   d. **Estimate activity times** – Weeks are commonly used but any consistent unit of time can be used. Of course the times assigned to an activity are an estimate.
e. **Determine the critical path** – the critical path is determined by adding the times for the activities in each sequence and determining the longest path in the project. The critical path determines the total calendar time required for the project. If activities outside of the critical path speed up or slow down, it still does not impact the overall time it will take to accomplish your goal. The critical path may not be immediately obvious. Overall progress toward goal is determined by monitoring the critical path. Below is a simple diagram showing the critical path.

![Diagram of critical path](image)

The shaded blocks with the bold lines above represent the activities in the critical path. The white blocks and dashed lines represent those other activities/tasks that are not part of the critical path. This simple diagram shows the form only. In your actual diagram each block would be labelled with the name of the activity and each line would be labelled with time duration.

5. **Initiate learning loops** – as we work through the process of implementing our tactics toward accomplishing our goals, we must also developing learning loops which will help us convert our progress analysis into practical actions and mid-course adjustments. An overview of the process may be seen in the diagram below:
Developing a Healthy Church

Explanation of the process

Analyse the Environment

- Establishing the habit of constantly analysing the environment will help us to see problems when they are still small enough to fix, and we will be poised to take advantage of opportunities for growth and development.
- A wise overseer will note changes in the variables that may effect goal accomplishment directly or indirectly thus having a firm grasp on both problems and opportunities.

Problem Recognition

- As long as Satan is alive and free to roam this earth, and as long as we are seeking to develop a healthy church for the sake of bringing glory to God, we can be absolutely sure that he will do everything in his power to create problems and opposition.
- There is no substitute for having a clear vision of your goal and the resolve to make it become a reality. The more familiar and committed you are to your goals, the more obvious problems will become.

Problem Identification

- This stage involves making sure your efforts will be directed toward solving the real problem rather than merely eliminating symptoms of the problem. Also
involved in this stage is the establishment of objectives that will evidential testimony that the problem has been or is being solved.

- The desired outcome of this stage is a set of decision criteria for evaluating various options. If the problem occurs in a critical path activity, the criteria for evaluating options may be different than other activities. Key questions to be asked include the following:
  - What happened or will happen?
  - Who does it or will it affect?
  - Where did it or will it have an impact?
  - When did it or will it happen?
  - How did it or will it occur?
  - Why did it or will it occur?
  - What could we do to be more successful?

- These questions are aimed at getting to the core problem or identifying the real opportunity.

Making Assumptions

- Assumptions are an essential part of learning loops but may cause you to overestimate the potential of a particular alternative to solve the problem effectively. To reduce the risk of invalid assumptions, it is best to utilise a group approach.

- The accuracy of your assumptions is in direct relationship to the amount and quality of the analysis you have done on the environmental variables.

Generating Alternatives

- Generating alternatives involves cataloguing the known options and generating additional options. The extent to which you can clearly identify and formulate useful options, you can maximise the chances that a problem will not derail the accomplishment of your goal.

- The purpose of generating alternatives is to ensure that you reach the selection stage with enough potential solutions for fair evaluation.

Evaluation and Choices

- Decision-making should be based on a systematic evaluation of the alternatives against the criteria
established earlier. A key part of this process involves determining the possible outcomes of the various alternatives.

- Generating excellent alternatives and determining their possible outcomes increase the chance that an effective choice will be made.

**Implementation**

- Once you have a clear idea of what you want to do and a plan for accomplishing it, you can take action. Implementation requires persistent attention.
- Stay in close contact with progress and with the people responsible for the “hands on” part of the activity.

**Control**

- Evaluating results is the final and often overlooked stage in the development process. The purpose of control is to determine the extent to which the actions you have taken actually accomplished their intent. This stage feeds directly into the environmental analysis stage, which begins a new cycle of development.
- Sometimes development and problem solving is an exercise in “three steps forward and one step (or two) back.”
- It is important at this stage to be able to recognize deficiencies in your own solutions if necessary. If you can admit to making mistakes or changing your mind without feeling defensive or embarrassed, you have acquired the humility and skills for open-minded adaptation.

6. **Repeat Assessments** – retain blank copies of the original questionnaires and after implementing, problems solving and implanting development steps, reassess your church’s health. If there are many areas that need development, you may want to reassess after just six months. The assumption here is that progress will be made in a short period of time and it will serve to motivate and encourage the church. The usual timeframe for reassessment is yearly.
CLOSING THOUGHTS
The development of a healthy church must be intentional. Christ has promised to build His church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. As we prepare the soil; establish the environment; and shepherd the church toward health, Christ’s power will mightily work through us and the church will be built to the praise of His glory.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any of the concepts or the practical application of these principles in your church:

Bud Diener
Cell: 076 584 9734
Hm: 033 347 0781

Postal Address: Box 13859
Cascades
3202
APPENDIX A – MINISTRY DIAGNOSIS

To assist you in diagnosing the scope of need, your group may want to walk through these ministry diagnostic steps.

A ministry diagnosis is similar in many ways to a medical diagnosis. Both require prior preparation and planning. Both require the gathering and consolidation of pertinent information by various methods. And both require that the information be analysed and interpreted by people knowledgeable about the church’s mission and the ministry’s history.

Follow the steps listed in this section to determine a clear picture of the present realities existing in your ministry. These steps will include:

- Plan the diagnosis
- Gather the necessary information
- Organize the information
- Analyze and interpret the information

Planning the Diagnosis

The following questions will help guide the development of your diagnosis plan.

1. **What are your reasons for making the diagnosis?** – In other words, why are you doing the assessment and evaluation? Your answer to this question will determine the effort you put into this step and will ultimately impact the accuracy of the information gathered.

2. **What is going to be diagnosed?** – This is meant to limit or at the least explain the scope of your study. It is not a good idea to attempt too large of a scope.

3. **What kind of information will you need to gather?** – Given the knowledge you already possess from the characteristic questionnaire, you should be able to determine what specific information you will need to gather in order to achieve a usable diagnosis.

4. **How will the information be organised to facilitate analysis and interpretation?** – While I will give you some ideas on organisation, you may decide to organise your information in a different way. See the section on Gathering Information for more details on organisation of information.
5. Who will have access to what information? – In other words with whom are you going to share this information with? It may be that some of the information is only appropriate to share with the leadership team, but other parts of the information may be helpful to share with the ministry participants as a whole. Determine this division as part of your plan for the diagnosis.

Gathering Information
There are several methods of gathering information needed to complete your diagnosis. The following is a brief description of some of the more commonly used methods, as well as their relative advantages and disadvantages.

1. Interviews are one of the most frequently used methods of obtaining information. They normally consist of talking with selected people to get their views about what is contributing to the present level of effectiveness. Interviews can be structured (using pre-determined questions designed to elicit specific information) or unstructured (open-ended questions aimed at opening up a conversation that will produce information of a broad-ranging and general nature). Here are some baseline skills necessary for the person(s) conducting the interviews:

   - Being able to develop rapport with the person being interviewed (personable).
   - Knowing what questions to ask and how to ask them.
   - Understanding the answers (somewhat intuitive).
   - Accurately recording the essential meaning of the messages.
   - Minimizing the effects of personal biases or prejudices on the selection and phrasing of the questions asked.

   **Main Advantages**
   - Easily adapted to fit differing situations (flexibility).
   - Rich in emotional content.
   - Can be used to develop rapport with respondents.

   **Main Disadvantages**
   - Respondents develop unrealistic expectations about what will happen as a result of the interviews.
Developing a Healthy Church

- Personal biases present in the information may or may not be apparent.
- Information obtained will present only the responders views of a given situation which may or may not be accurate.

2. **Questionnaires** are another commonly used method for collecting information. A questionnaire can be viewed as a pre-structured, “self-administered” interview. They can be of a “standard”, or “off-the-shelf” variety, or can be custom constructed to provide specific information at to fit specific situations (if diagnosing scope, you may want to reword the questions of the initial characteristic questionnaire to elicit more specific responses the purpose of clarity).
  - **Main Advantages**
    - Responses can be easily summarized and quantified.
    - Large amounts of information from many people can be obtained in a relatively short time.
    - They can be constructed to provide information about one particular issue, or to provide a very broad range of diagnostic information.
    - They are inexpensive and easy to administer.
    - Their use can be repeated to provide information on the same topics at some later time.
  - **Main Disadvantages**
    - They may not be designed to provide the specific information needed, but cannot be readily modified and still retain their validity.
    - Cannot pick up the kinds of emotional information that would accurately reflect the intensity of feelings about the topic.
    - Respondents may develop unrealistic expectations about what will happen as a result of them filling out the questionnaire.

3. **Personal Observations** of events and behaviours as they are occurring represent another method of gathering information. Observers can let those being observed know what they are
doing and why, or they make their observations without letting others know what they are up to.

- **Main Advantages**
  - The information is current, not retrospective.
  - The information can be collected in a non-obtrusive manner.
  - Can be easily adapted to pick up whatever kinds of information might be needed.

- **Main Disadvantages**
  - The information may be biased as it is conveyed through the worldview of the observer.

4. Examination of documents, records, and written materials is another method of gathering information about your ministry’s effectiveness. Many kinds of records are kept by ministries for all sorts of reasons. These include information about attendance, training, individual and group performance, etc. Useful information about the present state of effectiveness can be extracted from these records. The main knowledge and skill required to use this method are an ability to understand what the records, documents, etc., actually are saying about the church’s effectiveness, and what records are available from what sources and how to gain access to them.

- **Main Advantages**
  - There is less chance for responders or collectors bias.
  - Normally there is a high level of validity to this information.
  - Information can be easily quantified and analysed statistically.
  - Unobtrusive method of collecting information.

- **Main Disadvantages**
  - The quality of the information is dependent upon the quality of the various systems used to produce it.
  - It is sometimes hard to interpret and understand, requiring inferences about causes.
  - It has a tendency toward quantity rather than quality assessment.
Developing a Healthy Church

- It can be difficult to gain access to all of the right information.
- The examination of documents and records can cause a high level of apprehension and anxiety on the part of those who do not fully understand the reasons the information is being collected or how it will be used.

**Organising Information**

The methods used for organising information will vary somewhat, depending upon the methods used in gathering it. The following are guidelines for organising information:

1. **Use main headings as a basis for sorting the “raw” information.** Within each health characteristic evaluated, go through the raw information and use some sort of a code to indicate which of the following four main headings it falls under. The four main headings are:
   - Environment
   - Organisation
   - Culture (Personality)
   - Outcomes

2. **Consolidate pieces of raw information that are the same or similar to other pieces into a single piece.** The reduced information should accurately reflect the essence of the raw information that went into it.

3. **Organise consolidated information under various sub-headings which will appear under each of the main headings.** Following are a list of the sub-headings and the type of information that should be organised under them:
   - **Environment**
     - Demands and Opportunities
       - Expectations held by those in the church now and in the future.
       - Potential development opportunities.
     - Culture
       - What impact does the environmental culture have on future demands and opportunities as well as current situational effectiveness?
     - Resources
       - This includes people (to draw from)
Developing a Healthy Church

- Money available in the church and community.
- Support and information for and about ministry.
- Includes observations about now and the future.

**Organisation**
- Tasks
  - Methods
  - Facilities and equipment
  - Technologies
- Social Systems
  - Structures
    - Distribution of ministry responsibilities and accountability.
- Information Systems
  - Mechanism for learning, informing, following up on people and decision making.
- People Processes
  - Recruiting
  - Assimilation
  - Training
  - Developing (responsibility advancement)
- Rewards
  - Intrinsic reinforcement
  - Extrinsic reinforcement
- Renewal Process
  - Mechanisms for readjusting “fit” for sustaining continuous improvement.

**Culture** (Personality)
- Leadership
  - Behaviours, attitudes, and assumptions of those individuals who have the greatest influence both formally and informally.
Developing a Healthy Church

- Climate
  - Feeling or tone of the ministry.
  - What is the emotional context in which events and activities are carried out?
    - Is it trust or fear?
    - Is it optimism or pessimism?
    - Is it enthusiasm or apathy?
    - Is it peace or division?
    - Is it unity or competition?

- Behaviour
  - Unwritten rules of the ministry
  - Patterns of action, reaction, or non-action that characterize “the way things are done around here”

- Assumptions
  - Hidden beliefs about people, God, or ministry that drive and shape behaviours, feelings and attitudes.

- Outcomes
  - Results
    - Hard (tangible) and soft (intangible), short and long range measures of how well the ministry is accomplishing its reason for existence.
  - Meeting needs
    - Extent to which needs are met:
      - Safety
      - Security
      - Fair treatment
      - Being valued
      - Development
      - Opportunity
      - Contribution
      - Organisation
      - Increasing capability to learn, develop, and adapt.
4. Include any side-comments or observations about particularly high levels of energy or emotions associated with any of the information. Information about the intensity of feelings about a given topic can be as important as whatever opinions might have been voiced. This information will also help understand the tangible and intangible aspects of the scope assessment.

5. Group together information that represents a consensus on the part of the information providers about cause-effect relationships between certain kinds of information. Where consensual information is provided about how environment influences the activities or attitudes present in a ministry, that fact should be noted.

**Asking Why?**

Possibly, the most critical and difficult aspect of ministry diagnostics is cause and effect relationships. It is critical because it provides the basis for deciding on what needs to be done in the future to help develop health. It is difficult because it requires a good understanding of the essence of each characteristic of church health and how it relates to the fulfilment of Christ’s purposes for the church.

Your conclusions about cause-effect relationships and their impact on the effectiveness of your church should reflect a consensus of people who have studied the information and have the knowledge required to accurately interpret its meaning. It is extremely risky to proceed to make changes based on one person’s interpretation of diagnostic information, because if incorrect conclusions are drawn, the changes that are based on them are likely to do more harm than good.

When you have organised your information along the lines suggested above, the analytical process is primarily concerned with answering two questions. These questions are “why?” and “so what?” These are the questions that can lead to an understanding of the cause-effect relationships between the information pieces.

The answers to “so what” questions will lead to the discovery of the relative importance of a piece of information. The answer to “why” questions provide us with insights into the causes of the condition which led to the gathering of the information. The “so what” questions deal with effects, the “whys” deal with causes.
Using the headings already suggested, the “so what” questions are answered by moving from issues of environment toward outcomes. The “why” questions are answered in reverse order.

Here are some suggestions to aid you in analyzing and interpreting your information.

1. **Begin by analyzing data about outcomes, using “why” questioning to discover their causes.** The initial answers will normally be found in one or more factors under the Culture heading. By continuing the why questioning, the more basic causes will usually be found in the relationship of Organisation or Environment.

2. **Identify the issues that look like they might have the greatest potential impact on effectiveness and explore them first.** These could be issues related to any one of the headings. Normally, you should begin by checking out their significance by asking “so what” questions, then try to identify causes.

3. **Identify any incongruency among the Organisation elements that might be causing effectiveness problems.** There may be some incongruence between one or more of the organisational aspects with the environmental category.

4. **Where the cause-effect relationships are complex, construct diagrams to illustrate connections.** These can take the form of flow charts or system maps showing the factors connected by lines and arrows to show casual relationships. Plus and minus signs can be used to indicate whether the relationships are generally positive or negative in terms of their impact on ministry effectiveness.

5. **Whenever feasible, make the information analysis and interpretation a group activity.** This will allow discussion and debate around differing opinions about cause-effect relationships and differing interpretations about the significance of information. If the conclusions represent a consensus of the group, the chances of error are reduced.

The knowledge and insights gained from making the diagnosis should provide you with a good platform for initiating meaningful and successful transformation in your church health characteristic, moving it toward the biblical description of healthiness.
APPENDIX B – GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

My goal is:  
Completion date:

What is the first step?  
Target completion date:

What is the second step?  
Target completion date:

What is the third step?  
Target completion date:

Final step?  
Target completion date: