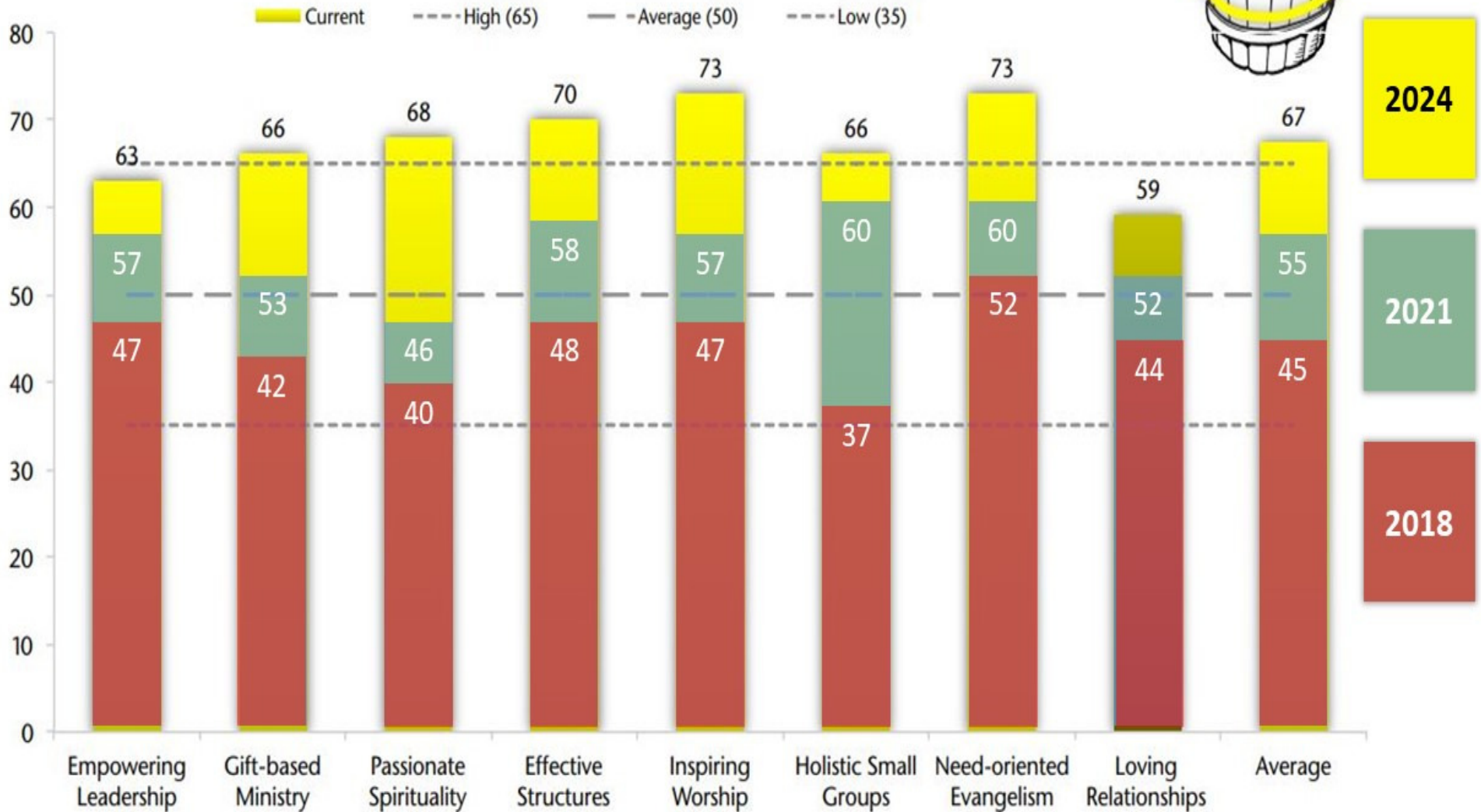
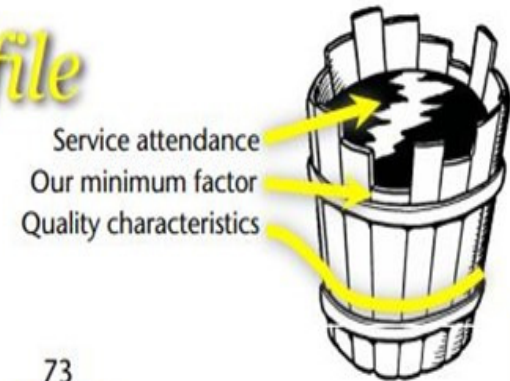




Natural Church Development *profile*

of **Sandborn First Christian Church**

January-2024





Natural Church Development *profile*

NCD America

of

Sandborn First Christian Church

January-2024

Church

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Quality Characteristics

Average: 67

Empowering leadership: 63
Gift-based ministry: 66
Passionate spirituality: 68
Effective structures: 70
Inspiring worship service: 73
Holistic small groups: 66
Need-oriented evangelism: 73
Loving relationships: 59

Attendance

Five years ago: 87
Four years ago: 88
Three years ago: 60
Two years ago: 70
One year ago: 84
Today: 106



What do the numbers mean?

The numbers on the graph can be a barrier to understanding what the profile is really saying about the health of the church. You must understand what the numbers mean before you explore the issues behind the Minimum Factor.”

Here are some clues to interpreting them:

The numbers are not percentages but standardized scores – scoring less than 50 is not a failure for that Quality Characteristic.

The NCD Institute’s software converts the raw scores from the questionnaires to the numbers shown on the profile using a standardization formula. This standardization formula sets the “average” for any Quality Characteristic at 50. In other words, the average church would score 50 for each of the Quality Characteristics.

The standardization itself is built on a national database of churches to give the profile greater contextual accuracy. In other words, the health of your church is measured against other churches in this country. This database covers a wide spectrum of churches – different denominations and movements, traditions, liturgical styles, theological positions, locations, leadership, etc.

The software has three main categories for scoring each of the Quality Characteristics:

- 70% of churches will score between 35 and 65
- 15% of churches will score less than 35
- 15% of churches will score more than 65”

It is possible to get less than zero (0) and more than one hundred (100).

If you need further information about what the numbers mean, turn to the Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development. Appendix 2 of the Guide contains an outline of the scientific basis of the profile.



A better understanding of loving relationships

Affirmation and encouragement

Another way to word this section would be:

Do we encourage one-another?

Questions to ponder:

- When people do something new, is there: affirmation, criticism or silence? How does your church respond to people who try and fail at a new ministry?
- What opportunities are given for people to publicly give and receive affirmation and encouragement?
- What systems, programs or ministries in your church promote relationship building?
- In what ways does your church/staff operate that hinders loving relationships?

Atmosphere of joy and trust

Another way to word this section would be:

Is Joy and Trust present in your church on a weekly basis?

Questions to ponder:

- How is joy and trust experienced and expressed in congregational life?
- What are indicators to you that your church provides an atmosphere of joy and trust?
- What are indicators to you that joy and trust are lacking in your church?
- What have you done to foster an atmosphere of joy and trust?

Deepening relationships

Another way to word this section would be:

How interconnected are the people in our church?

Questions to ponder:

- To what extent do church members/regular attenders invite others into their homes or out for dinner?
- How have you seen people supporting one another in your congregation?
- How does your church show love to those outside of the church?
- What factors promote or encourage interdependent relationships in your church? What factors inhibit interdependent relationships in your church?

Conflict resolution

Another way to word this section would be:

Is conflict addressed or ignored?

Questions to ponder:

- Using an example of conflict resolution in your recent church history, how would you evaluate the ability of the congregation and the pastor to face and deal with conflict in a healthy manner?
- When two individuals in the church have faced conflict, what process was used to resolve it?
- When the church has faced conflict that involved two or more groups of people, what process was used to resolve it?
- Look at this area in light of your Empowering Leadership scores. How are they related?

Additional reading? – *The 3 Colors of Love* by Christian Schwarz and *Authentic Community* by Jim VanYperen are excellent resources for Loving Relationships.

www.churchsmart.com



Minimum Factor Manual - Introduction

If you are like most people, you read Natural Church Development and became very excited about what this could mean for your church. Most people immediately identify the eight quality characteristics as something they have intuitively felt should be a part of their church, they were just never quite sure how to implement them.

The Natural Church Development survey helps guide churches through the implementation of these characteristics and provides the roadmap that so many have been looking for.

However, this brings us to a crossroads of sorts. Many churches devour the book and quickly decide to take the survey, but then get the results and ask: Now What? For many churches, the process ends after taking the survey. The reasons are many: fear of change, overwhelmed by the work, not sure what steps to take, lost in the busyness of daily church life, etc.

Clearly, the real value of NCD begins after the survey, but only if steps are taken to act on the results. If nothing is done with the survey results, then NCD just becomes another failed program.

So where do we begin? This manual is designed to help guide your church through the process and help you hold yourself accountable as you seek the unique prescription for your church.

Some steps you may wish to consider:

Re-read the book Natural Church Development. It would be good to refresh your memory on Christian's teaching about the eight characteristics and the six biotic principles. Many of them may make more sense to you now that you have your church's survey results in front of you as you read.

Guard against emotion. It is natural for people who associate their ministry/service in the church with the minimum factor to feel like they are being blamed or attacked. Assure them that this is not the case. Every church, no matter how healthy, has a minimum factor. All this means is that their ministry (minimum factor) is the area of maximum leverage for improving the overall health of your church.

Don't do it alone! Many pastors feel that as the leader of the church, they must carry the burden of implementation. Don't fall into this trap! In the first chapter, we will look into the importance of forming a Church Health Team. Surround yourself with people who want to see your church succeed. You may also wish to consider working with a coach from outside your church. The insights from an outsider are often invaluable. (See page xy for additional coaching resources.)

As you begin this process, you will be amazed at how God can use your church in a fresh and exciting new way!

Notes

Natural Church Development is a “principle-oriented” approach. “Models” are concepts that one or sometimes many churches in some part of the world have experienced positively. But imitating these experiences may not be the right answer for churches in other situations. On the other hand, “principles” are those elements that have been proven to apply to growing churches around the globe.

Who was studied?

- 1000 different churches on five continents
- 32 countries
- 18 languages
- 4.2 million pieces of data
- large and small
- growing and declining
- churches persecuted by the state and churches financially supported by the state
- well-known churches and totally unknown churches
- churches from areas currently experiencing great spiritual revivals, as well as from regions which appear to be more spiritually developing

The result

These eight quality characteristics are used by God to build his church!

- Empowering Leadership
- Gift-based Ministry
- Passionate Spirituality
- Effective Structures
- Inspiring Worship Services
- Holistic Small Groups
- Need-oriented Evangelism
- Loving Relationships

The key in each of these quality characteristics is the adjective, which can be considered a summary of the six biotic principles (see page 5) as they apply to that characteristic: empowering, gift-oriented, passionate, functional, etc. Every church has some sort of leadership or worship or structure. Not all emphasize the adjectives at the front of each of these quality characteristics. Here are some brief definitions:

Empowering Leadership

Effective leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christ-like character and a clear sense of God’s calling for leader’s lives. As this base of spiritual maturity increases, effective pastors and leaders multiply, guide, empower and equip disciples to realize their full potential in Christ and work together to accomplish God’s vision.

Leaders consider it as one of their most important tasks to help Christians develop greater degrees of empowerment. They equip, support, motivate, mentor and coach individuals to become all that God wants them to be.

Gift-based Ministry

The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives to every Christian spiritual gift(s) for the building of God’s kingdom. Church leaders have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the Body of Christ “grows and builds itself up in love.”

The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that match their gifts. When a person lives according to their spiritual giftedness, they are not longer working in their own strength, but the Holy Spirit works in them. Studies show that most Christians are either not involved in ministry or they function in a ministry that does not match their gifts.

Passionate Spirituality

Effective ministry flows out of a passionate spirituality. Spiritual intimacy leads to a strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways. A godly vision can only be accomplished through an optimistic faith that views obstacles as opportunities and turns defeats into victories.

The important issue here is not the way spirituality is expressed, but the fact that faith is actually lived out with commitment, fire and enthusiasm. The methods a church uses are really a secondary concern. A church that lives its faith with passionate fervor will experience success with many methods.

Effective Structures

The Church is the living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems that work together to fulfill its intended purpose. Each must be evaluated regularly to determine if it is still the best way to accomplish the intended purpose.

The most important criterion for forms and structures in the church is if they fulfill their purpose or not. Church structures are never an end in themselves but always only a means to an end.

Inspiring Worship

Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group - but rather the shared experience of God's awesome presence.

Is the worship service an inspiring experience for those who attend? It is not whether our services target Christians or non-Christians, whether they celebrate "in the language of Canaan" or in a more secular language, or whether we worship using a liturgical or a more free-flowing approach. Inspiring worship services are often described as "fun."

Holistic Small Groups

Holistic small groups are disciple-making communities which endeavor to reach the unchurched, meet individual needs, develop each person according to their God-given gifts and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church. Like healthy body cells, holistic small groups are designed to grow and multiply.

Growing churches have developed a system of small groups where individual Christians can find intimate community, practical help and intensive spiritual interaction. In the groups, not only is the biblical text discussed, but they apply biblical insights to everyday issues.

Need-oriented Evangelism

Need-oriented evangelism intentionally cultivates relationships with pre-Christian people so they can become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are actively participating within

the life of the church and community. Using appropriate ministries and authentic relationships, believers can guide others into the family of God.

Growing churches are not "pushy" or "manipulative" in the way they share the gospel, rather, their secret is to share the gospel in a way that meets the questions and needs of pre-Christians.

Loving Relationships

Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said people will know we are his disciples by our love. Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian community and brings others into God's kingdom.

Unfeigned, practical love endows a church with a much greater magnetic power than all the marketing efforts of this world. Growing churches manifest a measurably higher "love quotient" than stagnant or declining ones.

No Quality Characteristic Can Be Missing

Three things can be said with a high degree of certainty:

1. These are universally valid qualities
2. They can be transferred to our own situation
3. Each of these has a positive relationship with both the quality and the quantitative growth of the church

No one single factor leads to growth in churches; it is the interplay of the eight elements as they relate to the biotic principles.

The “All-by-Itself-Principle”

The secret of growing churches does not consist in pushing or pulling the church in human strength and efforts-but in releasing and developing the potential God himself uses to build his church. Then growth occurs all by itself!

“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts, and grows; though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, and then full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” – Mark 4:26-29

The church is designed by God to grow so growth happens automatically if we remove the obstacles that prevent growth. Growing churches use this growth principle.

The Minimum Factor

Imagine a barrel with eight staves, each representing the eight quality characteristics. The staves in the barrel only reach as high as the score

of the characteristic. With this analogy, you can only fill the barrel to the level of the lowest stave. So to increase the capacity of the barrel, we must increase the height of the lowest stave.

Now focusing on the minimum factor does not mean that we don't pay attention to the other seven areas. As stated before, all eight characteristics

are vitally important to healthy growing churches. Focusing on the minimum factor helps us to set timely priorities. Since all eight areas can't be worked on with the same amount of energy and concentration, we

need to find areas, which will yield the greatest long-range return on our investments. Remember, minimum factors can change quickly—especially when there is a conscious attempt to improve on this one area.

Growth Forces

The principles behind all the quality characteristics are the six Biotic Principles. The survey assesses each of the eight Quality Characteristics by measuring the degree to which each is lived out in a 'life-giving' way. Any plans to improve your minimum factor must take into account these six Biotic Principles.

Interdependence – Individual units are connected to each other in a larger system. Changes in one ministry will affect other ministries in the church and community.

Synonym: *Connecting*

Multiplication – Healthy organisms do not grow endlessly, but reproduce themselves.

Synonym: *Reproducing*

Energy transformation – Momentum or energy already flowing, whether positive or negative, can be redirected to accomplish God's purposes.

Synonym: *Harnessing*

Sustainability – Resources used should increase the capacity for on-going growth and development, as well as serve multiple purposes.

Synonym: *Recycling*

Symbiosis – Different ministries can cultivate cooperative relationships so the mutual benefit is greater than operating separately.

Synonym: *Cooperating*

Fruitfulness – Each ministry needs to produce discernible results in line with its intended purpose.

Synonym: *Evaluating*



NCD Review

Biblical Promises for Change

"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"
— Jeremiah 32:27

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
— Proverbs 3:5-6

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.
— Proverbs 16:3

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."
— Isaiah 41:13

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.
— Psalm 32:8

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.
— Psalm 37:3-5

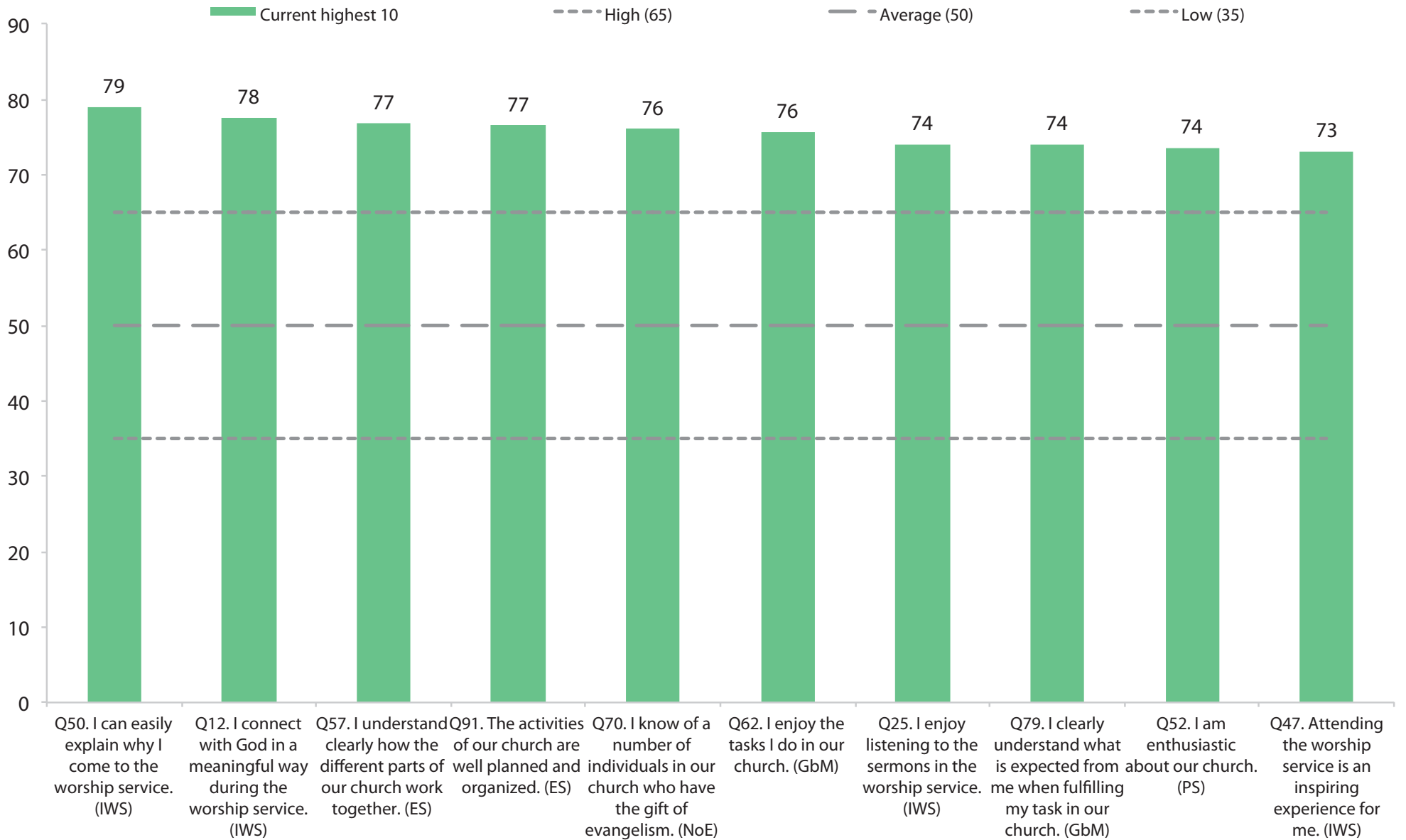
Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen
— Ephesians 3:20-21

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."
— Zechariah 4:6

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
— Mark 9:23

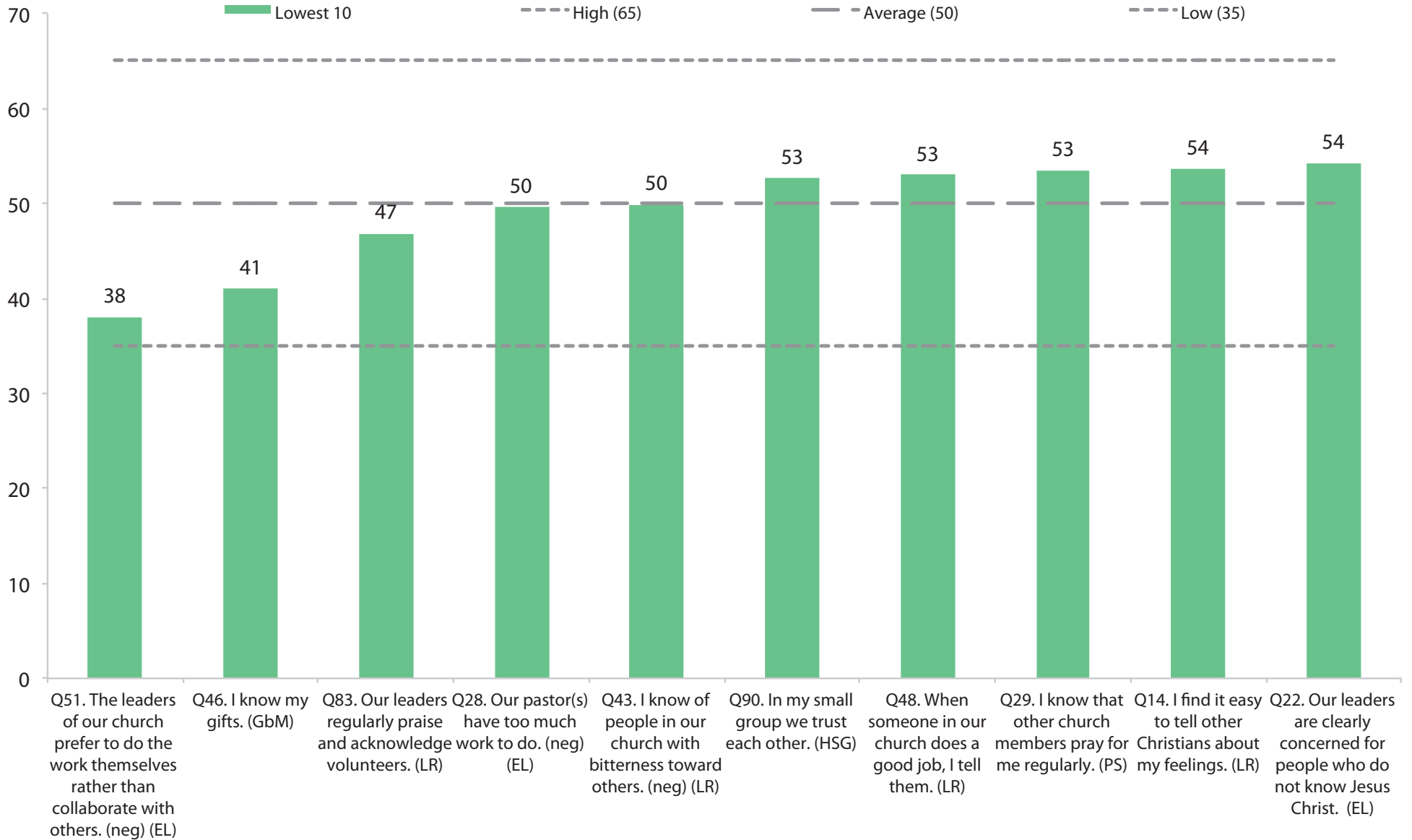
Notes

Current highest 10





Current lowest 10





NCD Story Guide

Sandborn First Christian Church

January 2024



Themes			Quality Characteristics	
Rank		Comes more naturally to us		Rank
1	self-awareness		Inspiring Worship Service	1
2	inspiration		Need-oriented Evangelism	2
3	hope		Effective Structures	3
4	prayer		Passionate Spirituality	4
5	vision		Gift-based Ministry	5
6	welcoming		Holistic Small Groups	6
7	God-consciousness		Empowering Leadership	7
8	compassion		Loving Relationships	8
9	everyday-faith			
10	accountability			
11	joy			
12	faith-stretching			
13	relevance			
14	nurture			
15	pastoral care			
16	good organisation			
17	creativity			
18	learning			
19	teamwork			
20	intimacy			
21	multiplication			
22	releasing			
23	affirmation			
24	reconciliation			
		Comes less naturally to us		

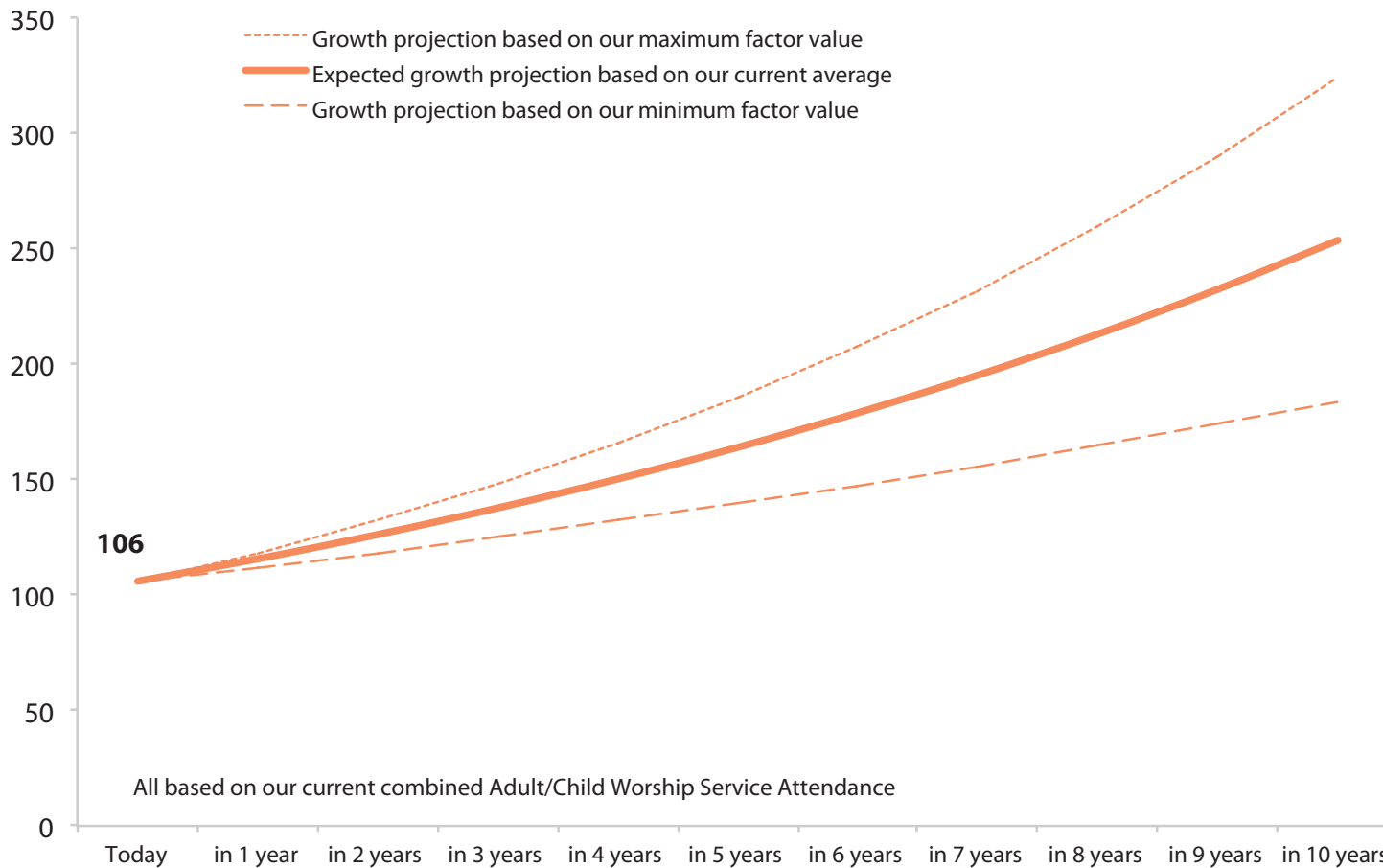


NCD Strategy Guide

Sandborn First Christian Church

January 2024

Pastor for 17 years: Bryan Sanders



Maximum factors

Faith

Inspiring Worship Service

- self-awareness
- inspiration
- hope

Minimum factors

Fellowship

Loving Relationships

- releasing
- affirmation
- reconciliation



Strategy Guide Instructions

By way of preparation for your ongoing NCD result discussions, **please work through the explanations and charts on the following pages.** The guide is laid out for group discussion, but read it first on your own and ask yourself the various questions, while imagining the responses others are likely to give. While your first pass through the guide is to help you establish your personal response to the results, the following important points will help you relate your ideas to the ideas of others along the way.

The importance of your role

Healthy churches depend on different parts of the body working together, so the NCD process works better when unique, complementary contributions are encouraged. Your role in working with or presenting this guide is to ensure that discussions lead into practical action steps which are clearly defined, owned, and kept on track. The implementation principles contained in the guide will help you to do this, not only during the Strategy Guide discussion, but each time people in your church meet together to further refine their growth cycle plans. **Your role is especially important because leaders, while full of good intentions, can so easily drift away from focusing on the least developed areas the NCD Survey identifies – areas that may be unfamiliar, but are nonetheless, absolutely essential if long-term progress is to be made.**

Strategic flexibility

Even though by working with this guide on your own, you may be able to come up with some practical ideas prior to discussion with others, **you will need to show some strategic flexibility in order to validate the very real stories and objective analysis that others may bring to the table.** Even if you feel that the practical nature of your ideas are sometimes being compromised by this “flexibility”, keep in mind that NCD is a process based on continuous, relatively short, cycles of development. That means it will never be too long before your strategic wisdom is either proven correct, or that perhaps through surprising outcomes, you will have an opportunity to even further sharpen your planning ability. At all times, seek to serve the concerns of others and try to embrace the ways in which their unique contributions enhance your own.

If facilitating group discussion...

It may be that your pastor has asked you to facilitate group discussion on this NCD Strategy Guide. If so, when you gather to discuss the results, (in consultation with your pastor) **you will need to have arranged for the relevant pages to be available to the rest of the group** either on paper or on a screen. The PDF file can simply be displayed in full screen mode on most computers connected to a projector.

The times suggested for each topic are based on moving through this guide in about two hours. You will need to adjust these timings to suit the time available.

As you prepare yourself to facilitate discussion, take the time to reflect on the Biblical passages referred to in the guide so that you can offer comment at the relevant times if appropriate.

Initial Strategy Checklist

The leaders and key influencers have...

- met regularly to refine their personal growth cycles (pages 11-13)
- discussed our growth projections (pages 3-5)
- understood the key influencer principle (pages 7-8)
- initiated ways of affirming our strengths (page 9)
- engaged the congregation with the NCD process (page 10)
- (optionally) promoted a mini-vision based on our results (page 11)
- set a date for repeating the NCD Survey to track progress (page 14)



1. Current growth projection

If facilitating discussion, refer the group to the front page of this guide while you read to them or summarise the following explanation.

Setting out to change the future of our church could be an exciting adventure. For some though, stepping out of their comfort zone and remaining focused on what is most important in the days to come is an idea filled more with apprehension and fear. In light of this, it is important to try to give some kind of picture of what the future could realistically hold, if we were to take seriously the necessary personal and collective growth that the NCD Survey highlights.

With the help of the international NCD database of more than 60,000 churches from over 70 countries, there are some visions of the future that can be presented. These can help us see the value in taking consistent, practical steps, based on our results.

The basis

To begin with, the front page of this guide shows a growth projection for our church based on our current combined adult/child worship service attendance. The projected values are based on the real life experience and average growth rates of churches around the world that have the same overall NCD quality as we do. Therefore this is not based on the "hallelujah" stories of NCD, but the very realistic picture of what churches similar to ours experience.

If our current growth is under the projection, it may be that we are simply on the lower side of the average growth band at the moment. Or it may be we are experiencing the very natural effect of our growth not quite catching up to our health yet. Otherwise, it could be that our minimum factor areas have been a cultural problem for so long that we will need to more directly address them to kick start our growth.

The three lines

There are three lines projected out over the next 10 years. Each is based on the unlikely and undesired prospect that our overall quality and minimum and maximum areas will remain at the same level over that time. The highest line indicates just how much growth potential exists within our Summary guide theme of [state term in large print], our highest quality characteristic of [state term in medium print] and our highest themes of [name terms in small print]. In other words, this is the level of growth we could expect to experience if our overall average was that strong.

The lowest line indicates how much downward pressure on growth is coming from the weaknesses within our least developed areas, [name the minimum factor and lowest themes].

The middle line shows the expected growth projection for our church when the relative strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of our church are balanced out.

Why worship attendance?

While this projection could be worked out based on other attendances within our church, the biblical and researched need for the body to be able and willing to gather regularly in diverse, unified worship, makes this measurement a very helpful indicator of growth.

Ask any of the following questions that you feel might be helpful in order to stimulate discussion (Allow about 10 minutes).

- How do you feel about the projections given they are based on the average, real life experience of churches like ours?
- Is the middle line growth projection much different from what we have experienced over the last five years? If very different, what recent changes (or lack of changes) in the church might account for that?
- What thoughts or practical experiences come to mind when you look at our lowest line and our least developed areas?
- What strategies have we employed over the last six months to specifically improve those least developed areas?

If it is taking some time for discussion to get going or if you have some personal observations about the current growth projection that have not yet been shared, share them now. When finished, move to point 2.



2. Possibility growth projections

If facilitating discussion, refer the group to page 8 of this guide while you read to them or summarise the following explanation.

Another way of considering our future as a church is from the “what if?” perspective. What if we were to deliberately focus for a season of time on our minimum factor areas and thereby change our culture and improve the overall quality of our church? What could we expect? This next chart provides some answers to that question.

The seven lines

The lines of this chart depict growth projections at seven different levels of overall NCD quality. They begin with our same worship service attendance as per the last chart, but show very different possible futures. Again, these are not based on the “hallelujah” stories of NCD, but the actual experience of the average church at the given level of quality. We can see by the red line where our current growth projection from the last chart fits within this realm of possibility.

It is worthwhile thinking about how many churches you know of, either famous or relatively unknown, that have experienced the kind of growth rate seen at the highest line. Obviously they exist if they are in the database, and it is helpful to know that many of those have moved to that level having started at a much lower quality level in NCD terms. Though this highest line should not be seen as the peek since there are many churches at, or beginning to move to a whole higher level again.

The most important point on the chart

While the right hand end of this chart shows a dramatically contrasted vision of the future, the most practical focal point of this chart is elsewhere. It is the clump of lines immediately above the “in one year” marker. This shows that different churches starting with exactly our current attendance would see very little difference in their respective attendances after just one year even though they have dramatically different levels of health. If we have somewhat of an “instant results” approach to church development, we would be in danger of perhaps doing some great work on our minimum factor areas for 12 months and then giving up. Or maybe we would take on the latest program as a way of “speeding things up”. Unfortunately, some churches do this and miss out on the growth that was just around the corner—natural, multiplying, exponential growth, in keeping with the way God tends to grow everything in creation.

Beyond numerical growth

Of course, this has all been focused primarily on numerical growth. This is important, because it represents more people loving and being loved by God and others for eternity. However, according to NCD research, there is more to this projected future if we were to become a very healthy, rapidly growing church.

In simple terms, such churches provide a healthier environment in which people can grow toward God and each other. It is a nicer place to be. That is of course, if one is committed to bearing greater fruit in partnership with God (See John 15). If not, a healthy church (or biblical Christianity) may not be all that desirable.

Healthier churches also connect with the deepest needs of their community in increasingly natural ways. This kind of social justice, missionary or welfare ministry is not some para-church activity that is bolted to the side of the church, but a perfectly natural extension of the everyday ministry of such churches.

There is an increasing proportion of conversion growth compared to transfer growth in these churches. If churches involved in NCD were only growing on the basis of moving the existing flock from one field to another, the whole NCD process should be considered a gimmick. While sheep choosing to move to a healthier field where they will actually be fed and grown should not be criticised, it is good to know that increasing numbers of newborn lambs also become part of healthy churches.



2. Possibility growth projections continued

The leaders and lay workers also experience more manageable workloads in healthy churches. Look at the top and bottom lines on the chart. Which leadership group has the more manageable workload? Despite, the stream of new people, discipleship, leadership development, ministry to the community, etc. going on, it is the group behind the highest line of growth. This can only be comprehended in the context of the easy yoke that Christ invites us to share. As we align with him and his principles of growth, life becomes more manageable and more fruitful (See Matthew 11:28-30 and 6:25-34).

The aim of church development is of course not that you would have more younger people in your church than older people. However, it will be heartening for some aging congregations to know that improving their church's health increases the proportion of young people in attendance. And, because healthier churches grow, they can be confident in the future of their church as more people of all ages come and find a spiritual home.

For those with administrative responsibilities in church life, it will be encouraging to know that the proportion of core church members who give at least 10% of their gross income in tithes and offerings more than doubles when going from the lowest range of health to the highest. From a day-to-day ministry perspective this is very positive, but it is also a useful consideration when critically accounting for the financial cost of a church health process like NCD. But again, this increased giving is actually exponentially larger, because in a healthy church, this larger proportion of tithing relates to an increasing number of givers as the church grows.

The healthier the church, the more efficiently it uses its available resources—time, treasure and talent. This is at the heart of NATURAL Church Development. In creation, healthy living things produce maximum fruitfulness with a minimal input of resources. This means healthy churches don't tend to run out of money, time, or talent (especially leaders). They not only know about the parable of the talents, they live it out (See Matthew 25:14-30).

While many other points could be raised, the last one we will mention here is that healthier churches are considerably more inclined to plant other healthy churches. For them it is simply an obvious extension of multiplying disciples, small groups and congregations (See Matthew 28:18-20).

Ask any of the following questions that you feel might be helpful in order to stimulate discussion (Allow about five minutes).

- Does the prospect of such high levels of growth excite you or cause you anxiety? Why?
- If we were to experience or be entrusted with much higher levels of growth, how much would we as key influencers in our church have had to change and grow personally?
- Other than building facilities, which aspects of our church would come under greatest pressure if this week, we were to immediately grow to the largest size listed on the right?

If it is taking some time for discussion to get going or if you have some personal observations about the possibility growth projections that have not yet been shared, share them now. When finished, move to point 3.

NOTE: While it is not important for the sake of focusing on your specific minimum factor areas, if asked how the score numbers from your church's green Status Guide relate to these projection levels, the answer is...

"Very much above average" is an overall NCD score of 80+

"Well above average" is an overall NCD score of 65-79

"Above average" is an overall NCD score of 50-64

"Below average" is an overall NCD score of 35-49

"Well below average" is an overall NCD score of 20-34

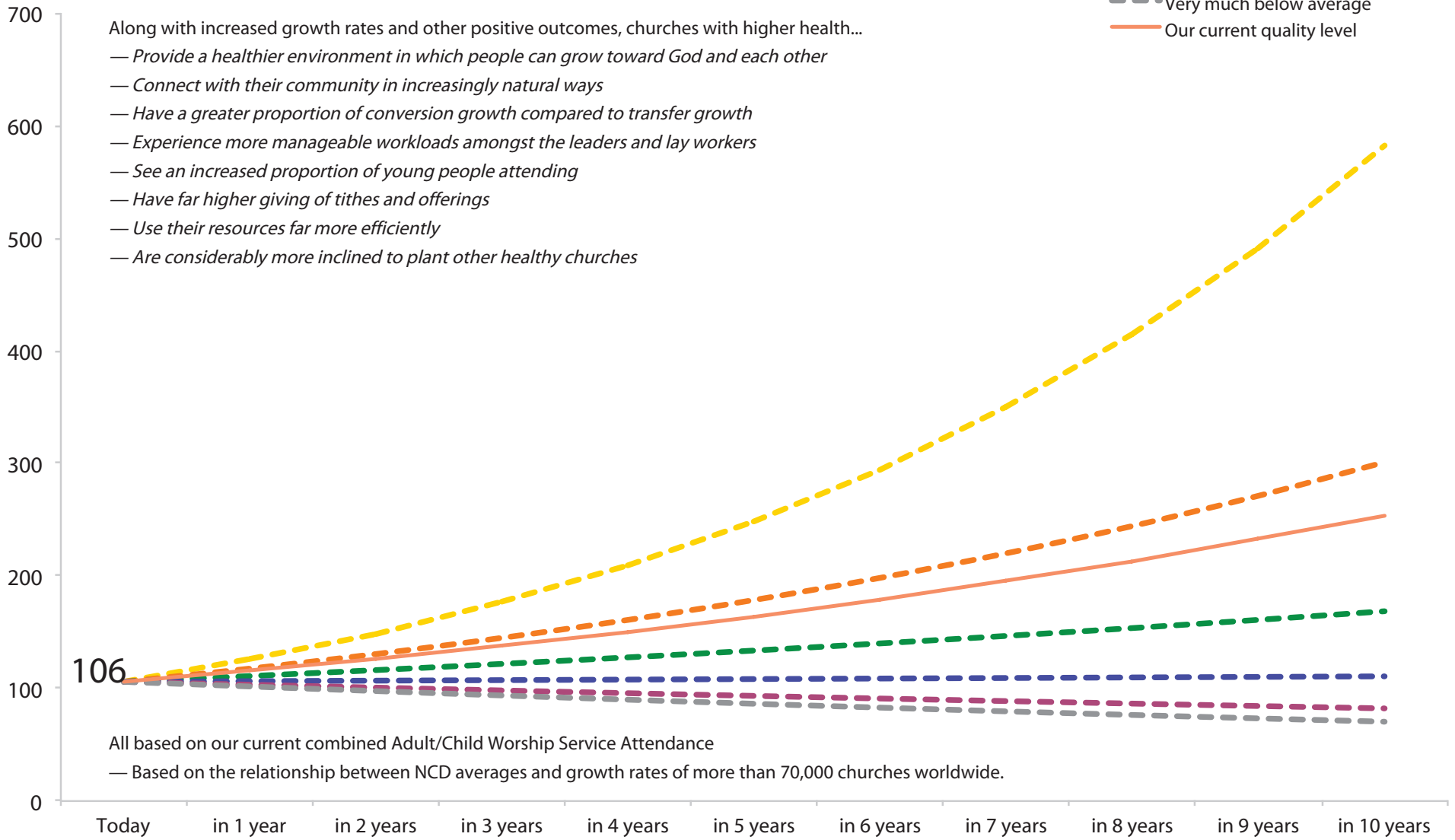
"Very much below average" is an overall NCD score of less than 20



Possibility growth projections

NCD Quality Characteristic Average Bands

- Very much above average
- Well above average
- Above average
- Below average
- Well below average
- Very much below average
- Our current quality level





3. In practical terms, whose survey results are they?

If facilitating discussion, refer the group to page 10 of this guide while you read to them or summarise the following explanation.

The question, “Whose results are they?” may seem quite simple. “They are the results for our church!” However, to make substantial progress in the NCD process, the meaning of “our church” needs to be clarified.

Not everyone has the same influence on our church’s overall health. The results in fact reflect the influence of quite a small number of people. We could line up everyone in our church in order of their individual influence over the decisions and activities of church life. This line would stretch from the ‘key influencers’ at one end, through to those we might call the ‘Christmas and Easter attendees’. The greatest impact on our results comes from the key influencers.

Power is not always about official position

It is important to understand that our key influencers may or may not have a leadership position, be outspoken, or even be members of the church. Key influencers are those most able to get a decision through or block it. They are the ones most respected or feared in our church or those to whom others turn for advice. Where they go (or grow), so goes our church.

The origin of our results

Our NCD results did not just suddenly drop from above. Through the history of our church, influential people have taught, modeled, prioritised or allowed into existence what is now our culture—reflected accurately in our results.

Key influencers – honour and responsibility

If our church is to grow, it is essential that the key influencers come to understand and “own” the issues in the survey results. Just as they are due higher honour for the higher results, they must lower themselves and accept greater responsibility than others for the lower results.

The greatest strategic mistake is to primarily develop plans directed at those with less influence – “The congregation”. The minimum factor areas in our results point out very clearly where, for our key influencers at a personal level, discipleship or apprenticeship to Jesus must be taken more seriously. If key influencers take personal responsibility for the principal issues affecting the church as a whole, and follow through with plans to do things differently in their daily lives, their healthy influence will flow all by itself throughout the congregation.

We must aim to engage every key influencer with the current health issues. Some, however, will find the personal implications of the results too challenging to begin with. If so, we need to start with those willing to accept their share of responsibility.

Ask any of the following questions that you feel might be helpful in order to stimulate discussion (Allow about 15 minutes).

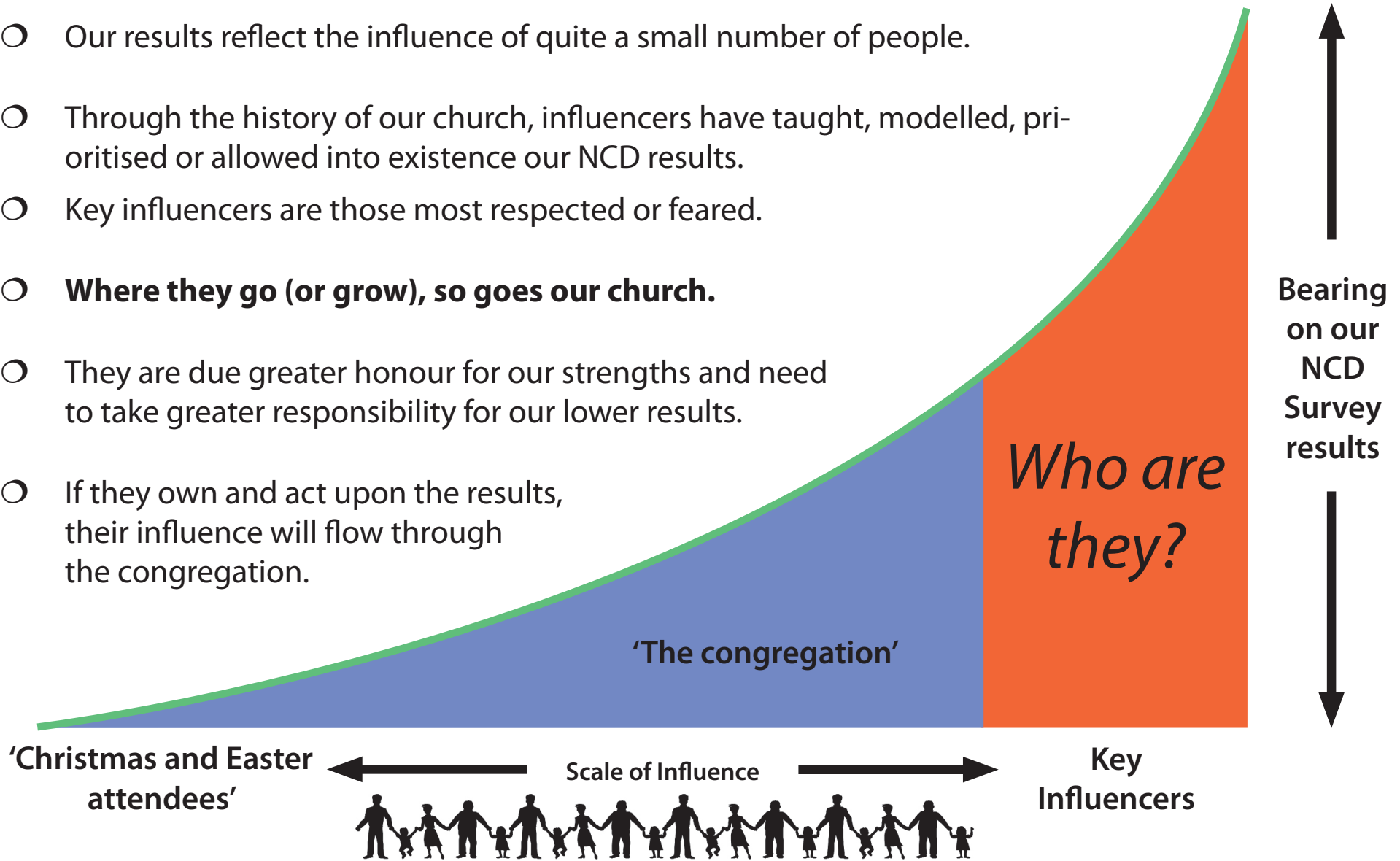
- Who are the key influencers in our church? They may: be good spiritual examples; be commonly viewed as having great potential; know most about how the church functions; be constantly elected to official positions; be those whose opinion carries the most weight; be those whose humility is a challenge to others; be most widely respected; be most feared?
- If you are a key influencer, how do you feel about the honour and responsibility that comes with these results?
- In light of the key influencer principle, how important do you believe our own personal growth cycles are for the long-term healthy growth of our church? Are we willing to make our personal growth a priority over and above any church-wide strategies we might come up with?
- If not those gathered here now, then who are the people who have shaped the culture, are shaping the present, and will be apart of shaping the future of our church to the greatest extent?

If obvious key influencers in the room have not been acknowledged, or if you have personal observations about the key influencer concept to share, do so now. When finished, move to point 4.



In practical terms, whose survey results are they?

- Our results reflect the influence of quite a small number of people.
- Through the history of our church, influencers have taught, modelled, prioritised or allowed into existence our NCD results.
- Key influencers are those most respected or feared.
- **Where they go (or grow), so goes our church.**
- They are due greater honour for our strengths and need to take greater responsibility for our lower results.
- If they own and act upon the results, their influence will flow through the congregation.



Natural Church Development *summary* guide

The current culture and values of...

Sandborn First Christian Church

January-2024

Comes more naturally to us

1

Faith

2

Service

3

Fellowship

Comes less naturally to us

Our current culture and values 

A balanced church 





8 essentials of church life

The current culture and values of...

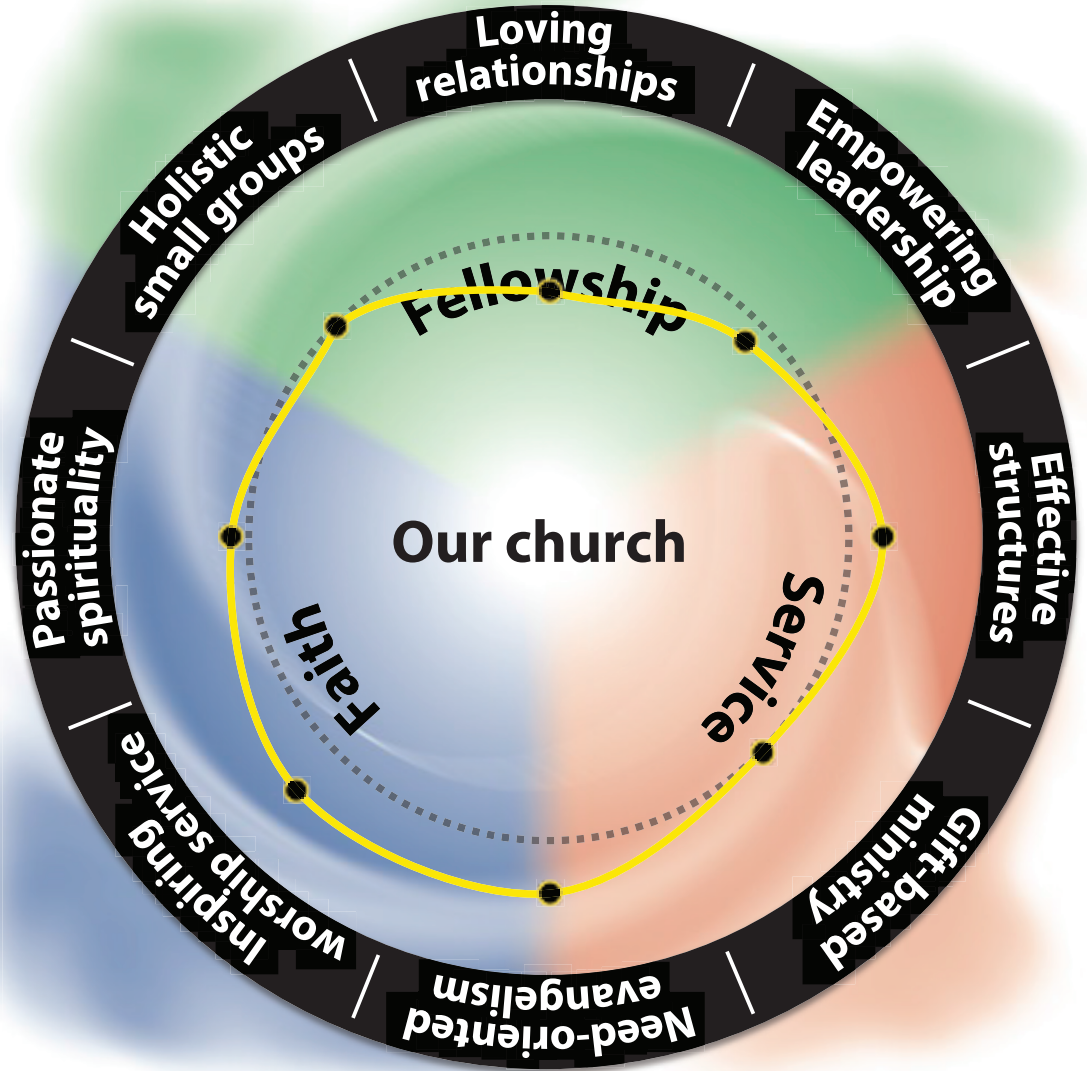
Sandborn First Christian Church

- Comes more naturally to us*
- 1 Inspiring Worship Service
 - 2 Need-oriented Evangelism
 - 3 Effective Structures
 - 4 Passionate Spirituality
 - 5 Gift-based Ministry
 - 6 Holistic Small Groups
 - 7 Empowering Leadership
 - 8 Loving Relationships
- Comes less naturally to us*

Comes less naturally to us

Our current culture and values

Our current average



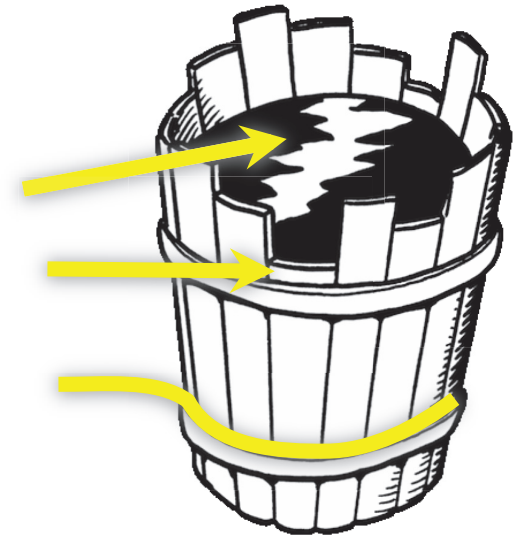


Where are we leaking?

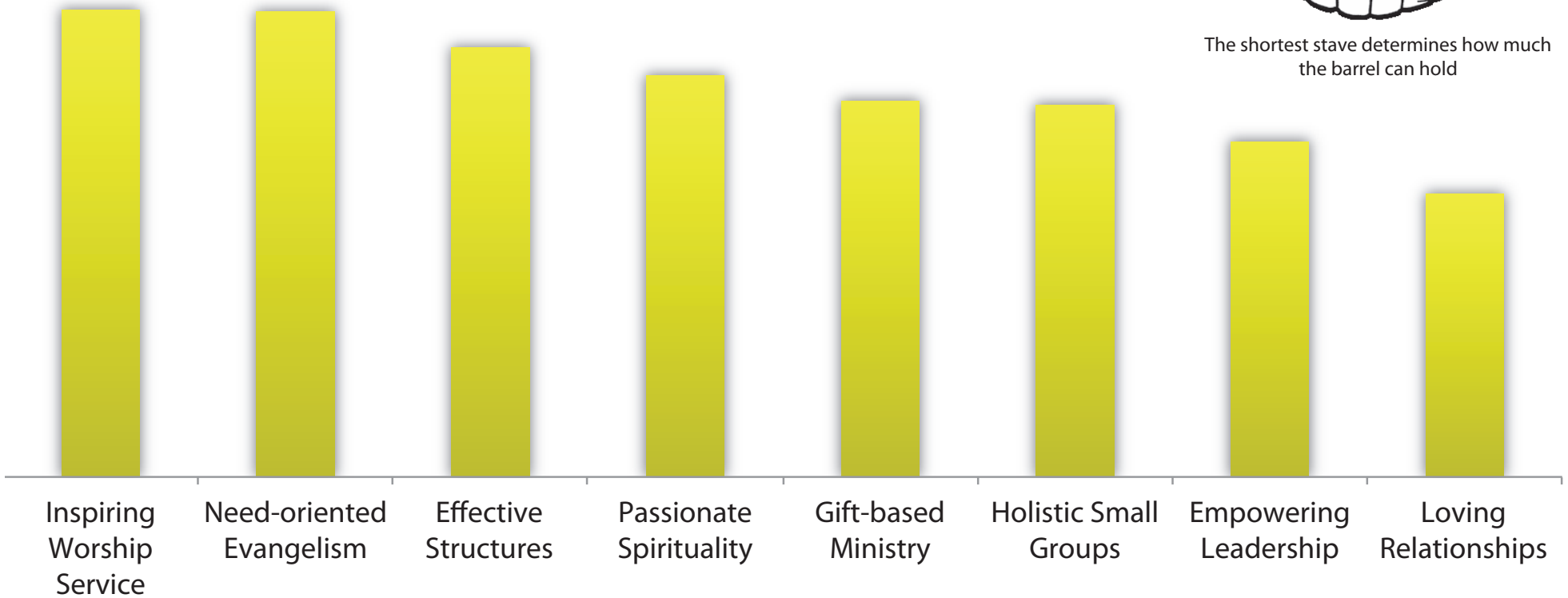
Our church community

Our "minimum factor"

8 essentials of church life



The shortest stave determines how much the barrel can hold





"Closing the back door" and "Opening the front door"

A local church should be a home in which people can grow in deep, fruitful relationships. It should also send its family members out to be salt and light in the world. With that inward and outward focus in mind, it is common to speak about the "front door" and "back door" of church life. While Passionate Spirituality and Effective Structures are equally important for opening the front and closing the back door (see diagram), the other essential qualities have a stronger connection with one of the two doors.

"Closing the back door"

When it comes to the back door, you don't want to bolt it shut (that would be acting like a cult). Instead, you want to create an environment within your church home in which people couldn't imagine leaving via the back door since they are being challenged, grown and cared for so well.

Loving Relationships binds people together through the giving and receiving of justice, truth and grace. Holistic Small Groups (or Holistic Teams) provide a place to go deeper with each other, sharing feelings and problems and discovering the fullness of what God intends for each individual and for the group as a whole. Empowering Leadership raises up new leaders by releasing the potential God has placed in each person.

"Opening the front door"

Of course, even if no one is reaching for the back door, without an open front door, you will become a stale, lifeless, inward-focused family pretty quickly. The front door is a place through which people can be welcomed and embraced. But it is also the door through which the church family is sent to engage with the world through daily life.

Need-oriented Evangelism acknowledges the unique journey of each person and seeks to meet them at their point of need. An Inspiring Worship Service is an embracing gathering in which intimacy with God and other people can be experienced. Gift-based Ministry is the means by which the church family serves each other, but to an even greater extent, those beyond the current church community, sharing God's grace in its many forms.



With the protection of anonymity, your survey participants were able to openly indicate their thoughts and feelings about church life.

Based on that feedback, it would appear that your minimum factor of Loving Relationships is at the heart of your challenge in closing the back door.

You need to work on removing whatever barriers are inhibiting your people from connecting more lovingly with each other across the breadth of your church.