

# GOT HEALTH?



Is your organization ready for the next big step? Has God laid a powerful vision for growth at the feet of your leadership? Having a God-given vision requires the strong support and dedication of both leadership and members. Before you begin fundraising, master planning or even defining your vision – your ministry should consider its health.

It isn't additional space that creates opportunities to become healthier or grow your ministry. Rather, your ministry must first be healthy in order to maximize the opportunities that a new building offers. Assessing your church health allows your leadership to understand the perceptions of the organization's members. This assessment is the first step in evaluating your ability to move forward into a construction campaign.

The Natural Church Development survey measures the church's relative health in eight areas that have been demonstrated to have a clear correlation with healthy church growth known as Quality Characteristics.

The Survey consists of about 80 questions to be answered by 30 church members who are active in ministry, involved in some kind of small group life, and who are considered by the pastor to be at the center of church life, plus a questionnaire to be filled out by the senior pastor. This data is computer scored to generate scores for each of the eight quality characteristics showing how much above or below the national norms the church's scores are in each of the eight Quality Characteristics

The Eight Essential Quality Characteristics:

- **Empowering Leadership.** Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry.

*What is measured:* To what extent is the ministry of the leaders focusing on equipping other Christians to serve?

- **Gift-Based Ministry.** When Christians serve in the area of their spiritual gifts, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*What is measured:* To what extent are the tasks in our church distributed according to the spiritual gifts of individual Christians?

- **Passionate Spirituality.** The point separating growing and non-growing churches is "Are Christians in the church on fire? Do they live committed lives and practice their faith with joy and enthusiasm?"

*What is measured:* To what extent is the spiritual life of our members characterized by prayer, enthusiasm, and boldness?

- **Effective Leadership Structures.** Leaders in healthy churches continually evaluate the structure and organization of their church.



Building on a Firm Foundation

*What is measured:* To what extent do our decision-making processes, operating procedures (official and unofficial), and board and committee structures facilitate rather than hinder the fulfillment of our church's mission?

- **Inspiring Worship Service.** Do worshipers feel that they have encountered God during the worship service?

*What is measured:* To what extent is attending our worship service an inspiring experience?

- **Holistic Small Groups.** The multiplication of small groups is a universal church growth principle. They must go beyond just discussing Bible passages to applying it to daily life.

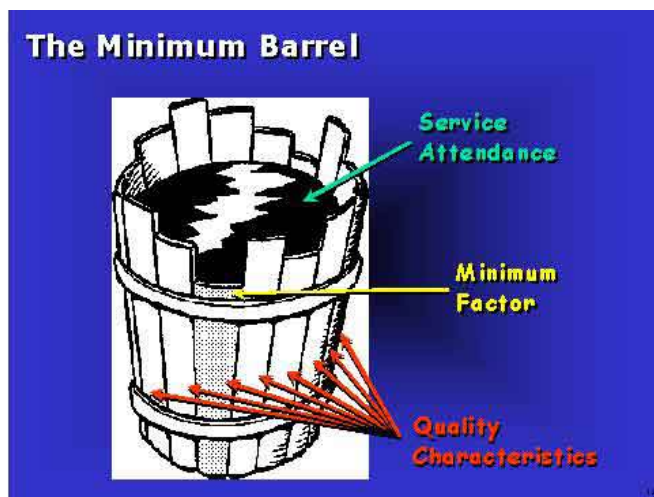
*What is measured:* To what extent do our small groups meet the real life needs of members in a holistic way?

- **Need-Oriented Evangelism.** The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the questions and needs of non-Christians.

*What is measured:* To what extent are the forms and contents of the evangelistic activities related to the needs of those you are trying to reach?

- **Loving Relationships.** Research shows that growing churches possess, on the average, a measurably higher "love quotient" than stagnant or declining ones. Genuine, practical love has a magnetic power far more effective than evangelistic programs that depend mostly on verbal communication.

*What is measured:* To what extent are the relationships of the members of this church characterized by a high degree of love and affection?



For purposes of developing your Action Plan, the most significant scores are your highest and lowest scores. How can you use your greatest strength(s) to improve you area(s) of greatest weakness?

Your lowest score is called your Minimum Factor. This indicates the area that is likely doing the most to limit healthy growth in your church. Often the Minimum Factor is a "blind Spot" that has received limited attention.

While people may initially be attracted to a church because of its strengths, if the church is not retaining as many of those newcomers as it should, it is often because of a weakness in the minimum Factor area. Strengthening the Minimum Factor is often a way to close the back door.