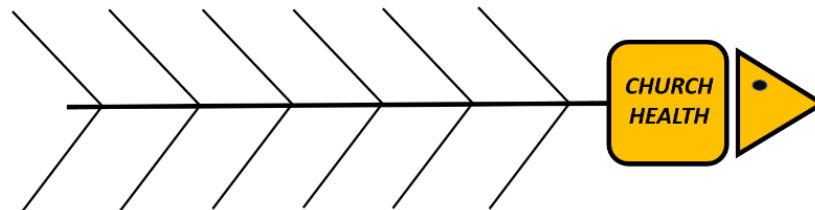


# The Fishbone Diagram Church Health Assessment

## A White Paper



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## Part 1: The Need for a Comprehensive Church Health Assessment

I am a church consultant. In addition, I oversee an organization called the Society for Church Consulting which trains and certifies church consultants. In my world, church health assessments are a very big deal. Assessments are at the core of everything I do and how I try to design both training and experiences, so others can learn to do what I do or something similar.



It is said that you shouldn't use the name of a thing in the definition of something you are attempting to define. But in this case, it is true that a church health assessment is a way that churches are assessed or measured to determine their health. The assessment may be the thesis of a book, a listing of healthy biblical attributes, or it may be a listing of attributes represented by an assessment survey. It may also include a set of tools or other exercises. Among evangelicals, it is always also some form of summary and representation of what our bibles say should comprise a church.

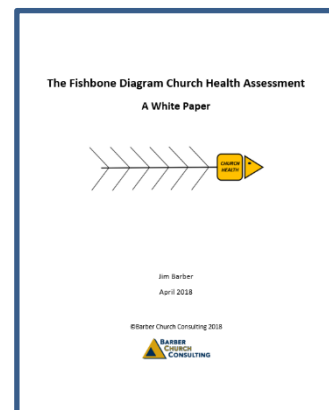
But which health assessment do we use? Many options have surfaced over the past thirty to forty years. In addition, there are some compelling leadership concepts that are not found in health surveys that seem essential. We also have the resource of secular concepts that could help us. Finally, there is wisdom that comes from a review of church practices and experiences.

This white paper seeks to take the best of all these things and develop an all-encompassing tool. We need a comprehensive tool, so we can use it with confidence that when we do, we will be serving the Church, and a specific local church, not just well but very well.

### Why a White Paper?

A white paper is a proposal or study representing an authoritative position or opinion on a subject. The subject is usually somewhat complex. It is common for example for governments or businesses to develop such papers to fulfill their missions. But why do we need a white paper on church health assessments?

I have been a student of church health and health assessments



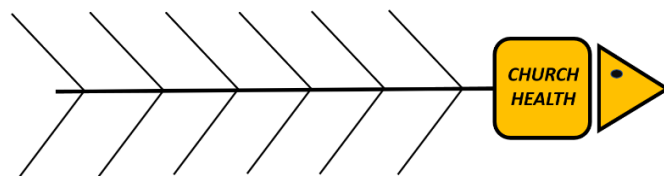
for many years. In fact, at one time I started an Excel spreadsheet to compare the various assessments. For this white paper, I went back to that spreadsheet and expanded it as part of my research.

Through the years, I have been asked what I think of one assessment or another. For example, I have recently been asked, “What do you think of Nine Marks?”. I have also been asked many times, “What are your thoughts on NCD (Natural Church Development)?” Sometimes those conversations are also about the comparative worth of assessments. For example, “Do you think the Lawless Survey is better than the NCD assessment?”

Based on the above, my reason for a white paper is partly due to the interest in health assessments and the concern for comparison. But my reason is actually much deeper than that.

The primary reason for a white paper is that the Church, and every local church, is very important. The health of each church is important. Most need revitalization. Therefore, having a very helpful assessment tool is very important. And a white paper is a way to construct such a tool and share it with others.

### Why a Fishbone Diagram?



When you think fishbone and the church, you may first think of **Ikthus**, which is Greek for fish, and was an early church acrostic using the first Greek letter of the words Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior. But the actual reason for a fishbone in this white paper goes back to a guy named **Ishikawa**.

Karou Ishikawa was a Japanese professor and engineer who developed the fishbone diagram in the 1940s to analyze problems in manufacturing<sup>1</sup>. It is a cause and effect diagram that is sometimes called the Ishikawa diagram, the fishbone diagram, or the Fishikawa (clever!). The diagram for manufacturing typically uses major categories of causes called the 5 Ms: Material, Mother Nature, Machine, Method, and Manpower<sup>2</sup>. Each bone contains one of these labels and there are sub-parts for each of these five causes for manufacturing problems.

Assessing church health can seem overwhelming. The number of different types of assessments alone can cause leadership paralysis. Therefore, having some form of diagram can simplify and make manageable what initially seems very complex.

I can think of two analogies, both of which fit my educational background and experience. Consider the following from the differing fields of study of theology and strategic planning. In the table below, I have positioned Health Assessments alongside of these two other fields of study.

	<u>Systematic Theology</u>	<u>Strategic Planning</u>	<u>Health Assessments</u>
<b>Complexity</b>	66 Books of the Bible	Church purpose, values, directions, etc.	Many different versions of this
<b>Simplification</b>	10 or 12 Key Categories in a Doctrinal Statement of Faith	14 Categories of Planning such as from Dr. Aubrey Malphurs <sup>3</sup>	5-12 Important Categories of Health
<b>Diagram</b>	An Outline	An Outline	Fishbone Diagram

So, simplification for clarity is one reason that a Fishbone Diagram is helpful. However, there are at least three other reasons for using this type of representation for church health:

- Many people are visual learners and a diagram is not only a simplification, but it is also the way that many think and feel about the world around them.
- The visual diagram (as will be shown below) is a helpful way to synthesize the best from many various sources into a unified whole.
- Finally, keeping with the original intent of the fishbone diagram, it serves as an analytical tool to assess church health and isolate those factors that are contributing to a lack of health.

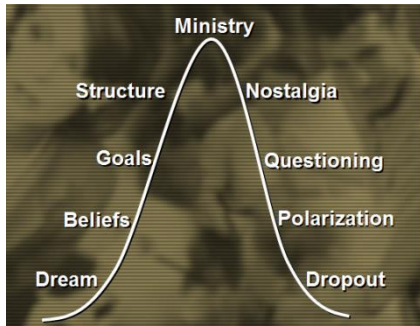
## **The Value of Church Health Assessments**

Sometimes in their zeal to see the church thrive, church leaders will look for the one thing that will turn their church around. Assessments, and associated surveys, tell us that none of us should be looking for a silver bullet that will solve everything. The solution is usually much more complex, and assessments help us to navigate through the complexity.

If you were going to plant a new church from scratch, learning from the laborious work, studies, and experiences of others would be an immense help. The assessments that this white paper

shares and synthesizes represents untold hours of work and experience by many others who love the Church and want to see it thrive. So, this paper could be very useful for church planters.

If you are pastoring a church, or on the leadership team of a church and want to lead better, having the material in this paper could also be very useful. It should enhance your leadership toolbox.



Finally, if your church is stuck or dying, this white paper is definitely for you. Every church has a lifecycle<sup>4</sup>. There are reasons why you are stuck or dying and others have labored to help you assess why that is and to change it. In these situations, the church health assessment content in this paper is very helpful for church revitalization, church strengthening, and church turnaround. Your church can move from the plateaued or declining side of a lifecycle to the

growth side. But it will take work.

There are varying estimates in America about how many churches are stuck or dying. For many years, the standard estimate, by many authors, has been somewhere in the 80% range or more<sup>5</sup>. Only in recent years has that estimate been softened somewhat<sup>6</sup>. This more recent estimate is that at least 65% are stuck or declining in the Southern Baptist Church, the largest footprint of evangelical churches in the country.

Based on the state of the church in America, I maintain that this calls for the very best we have to offer in church health assessments. We need a very good assessment and we need to use it wisely for the betterment of our churches.

Finally, as stated above, there is generally more than one reason that a church may be unhealthy, ineffective and not growing. Therefore, a very good assessment will consider a full array of possible reasons for unhealth and then identify the specific factors of unhealth for each church. Only then, can we begin to work on a realistic set of actions for health improvement.



## The Strengths of an Unhealthy Church

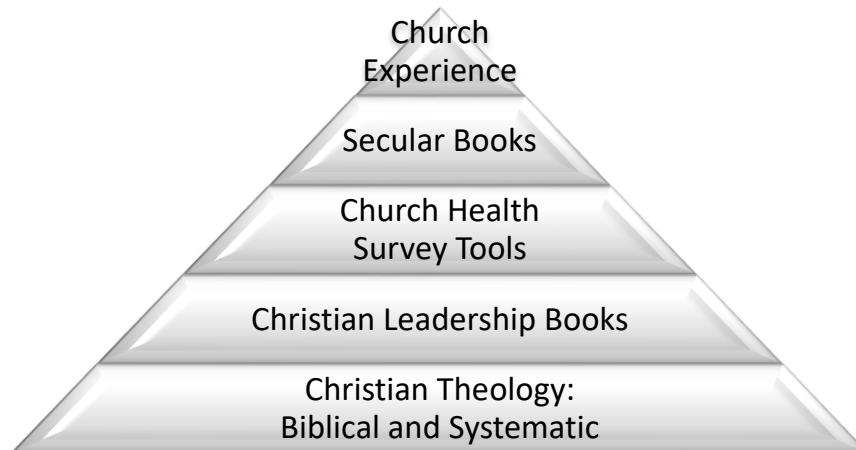
The very nature of a health assessment makes it sound like we are only looking for church weaknesses or, even worse, that a church only has weaknesses. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter, even in unhealthy churches, that unhealth is living alongside of strengths. From my personal experience in consulting, when I assess a church and make recommendations for health improvement, I also can usually point out as many as 15 or 20 strengths. Often those strengths may be part of the solution to moving the church away from unhealth to health in all areas. So, although this white paper is focused on diagnosing the causes of unhealth, the wise leader will always also bring to the surface the strengths of a church.



### Part 2: Five Sources for a Comprehensive Health Assessment

Drawing from my seminary days, I am reminded that when you are doing research, a thorough treatment of the matter includes not only a biblical foundation but supporting arguments from history, philosophical positions, and even from experience. Based on that, The Fishbone Diagram Comprehensive Health Assessment has been developed from the five sources reflected in the following illustration.

The use of a pyramid is intentional. Some sources are more foundational than others. Therefore, building a rationale on this topic or any topic should start on a foundation of both biblical and systematic theology. That foundation can be supplemented with Christian leadership books. Some of those books provide us with church health listings of attributes or survey tools. Others provide us with indispensable leadership concepts that if employed, can help a church move toward health. Some secular books also provide important and helpful concepts. Finally, the practices of healthy churches or churches that have become healthier are also instructive.



*Disclaimer:* For each of the five sources, I have been selective in the number of biblical books or other readings used. For example, under Biblical Theology, I am using only some of the New Testament teaching on the church (although I believe these are foundational). From time to time, I intend to revise this with a new edition that will reflect further research and refinement of my thinking on this topic. (Hence, the reference to a “First Edition” on the cover). I welcome the input of others in my pursuit of a more complete process and product.

### **Five Sources: Source #1: Christian Theology**

Our Bibles are of course an important source of understanding about what church health looks like. For that reason, I reference Biblical Theology first. However, there is value in seeing what systematic theologians have to say as well. One nugget from Grudem below is a reference back to the works of Luther and Calvin in the Reformation.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment Categories or Significant Concepts</u>
<b>Biblical Theology (1)</b>	Holy Spirit	various	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church health must include a desire for and an outcome of church growth.</li> </ul> <p>Jesus is the original church growth proponent, not those commonly identified with the 20<sup>th</sup> century “church growth movement”. Mt. 16:18, Mt. 28:18-20, and Jn. 17:20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church health must include the practices of the early church in the descriptive book of Acts that are taught prescriptively throughout the New Testament.</li> </ul> <p>The actual behavior of the early church included biblical instruction, worship, evangelism, ministry, fellowship, discipling, prayer, and financial stewardship. Acts 2:42-47.</p> <p>biblical instruction                      2 Tim 3:16; 4:1-2</p>



			<p>worship 1 Cor 11:17-35; Col 3:16</p> <p>evangelism 1 Thess. 1:7; 1 Pet. 3:15</p> <p>ministry 1 Cor 12, Rom 12, Eph 4, 1 Pet 4</p> <p>fellowship Gal 6:2; Heb 10:24-25</p> <p>disciplemaking Phil. 3:12-16; 2 Tim. 2:2</p> <p>prayer 1 Thess 5:16-18; Jas 4:2</p> <p>stewardship 2 Cor 9:6-15; 1 Tim 6:17-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While church polities will vary, a balanced view of spiritual gifts will help a church mobilize its people for ministry. (This is an expanded thought on ministry from above and the 4 selected passages).</li> <li>• Church health must include behaviors that address cultural context See Paul’s example in Acts 17: 22-34 and his teaching in 2 Cor 9:19-23</li> </ul>
<b>Systematic Theology (2)</b>	Erickson	1983-85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>functions</b> of the church include: Evangelism, Edification (through fellowship, instruction, gifts) Worship, Social Concern</li> <li>• Servanthood, Flexible Methods</li> </ul>
	Grudem	1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>marks</b> of the church from Luther and Calvin are preaching and sacraments (baptism and Lord’s supper) which are “membership controls”</li> <li>• The <b>purposes</b> of the church kept in balance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry to God: Worship</li> <li>- Ministry to Believers: Nurture</li> <li>- Ministry to World: Evangelism / Mercy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Doing Church</b>	Malphurs	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Hermeneutic</li> <li>• Church health is primarily concerned with biblical functions of the church allowing room for a variety of forms.</li> </ul>

Table Notes:

- (1) Biblical theology- study of Scripture following the thread of salvation history from book to book gleaning what each book teaches in its historical and cultural context.
- (2) Systematic theology - study of Scripture for the purpose of forming the doctrines of the Christian Faith. While biblical theology seeks to understand what revelation and inspiration meant in each book in its time, systematic theology seeks to state what revelation and inspiration mean today as a unified whole in a topical listing.

**Five Sources: Source #2: Christian Leadership Books**

<u>Source</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment Categories or Significant Concepts</u>
<i>To Dream Again</i>	Robert Dale	1981, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization health cycle</li> <li>• Dreaming churches plan</li> <li>• Beliefs and Goals</li> <li>• Structure muscle for ministry</li> <li>• Nostalgia and Decline</li> <li>• Dreaming Again</li> </ul>
<i>12 Keys to an Effective Church and Leaders Guide and Planning Workbook</i>	Callahan	1983, 1987, 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long Range Planning is important.</li> <li>• Strong, healthy congregations deliver 9 of the 12</li> <li>• The 12 are in order of priority</li> <li>• The 12 Keys are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-6 are <b>Relational</b></li> <li>7-12 are <b>Functional</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>1. Specific missional objectives serving the community</li> <li>2. Shepherding Visitation (hospitals, homebound, assisted living, nursing homes. Shepherding one another. Events, tough times. Shepherding unchurched.</li> <li>3. Stirring, helpful worship: music, preaching, greeters, ushers, warm space (80% is full), large vestibule for</li> </ul>

			<p>gathering, multiple venues, integrated themes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Significant relational groupings: warm, welcoming, open, some closed. New join new groups.</li> <li>5. Strong Leadership Team (love listen learn lead)</li> <li>6. Solid Decision Process (simple structure)</li> <li>7. One Major Program (serves many, connected to mission)</li> <li>8. Open Accessibility (site access, fitting natural traffic patterns, points of ingress/egress, spacious entrances,</li> <li>9. High Visibility (from road, signs, communications (phone, web, email, advertising) people involvement in community.</li> <li>10. Land, Landscaping, Parking adequate, developable, attractive; parking 10 best Sundays capacity</li> <li>11. Adequate space and facilities balance between worship, education, fellowship</li> <li>12. Generous Giving</li> </ol>
<b><i>The Peacemaker</i></b>	Sande	1991, 1997, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to assess your involvement in a conflict in Summary and Application sections.</li> <li>• Scriptural guidance Romans 12, Mk 7:3-5; Phil. 4:2-9; Jas. 4:1-3; Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15</li> <li>• The 7 A's of Confession</li> <li>• How to go to a person</li> <li>• How to take one or two others along</li> <li>• The Mt 18 process including telling the church</li> <li>• The Peacemakers Pledge</li> <li>• Appendix B Alternative dispute resolution</li> <li>• When is it right to go to court (1 Cor 6)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Levels of Peacemaking and how to transform to a culture of peace</li> </ul>
<b><i>Finding Them, Keeping Them</i></b>	McIntosh and Martin	1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health churches develop effective strategies for evangelism and assimilation</li> <li>• Churches grow by bringing people in the front door and keeping them from going out the back door <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help people develop friendships</li> <li>- Help people become involved</li> <li>- Help people belong</li> <li>- Help people work together</li> <li>- Help people grow in their faith</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>How to Break Growth Barriers</i></b>	George and Bird	1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a Shepherd versus a Rancher</li> <li>• How you can enlarge your vision</li> <li>• Church growth is a matter of the heart and of technique</li> <li>• Evaluation exercise to assess where you are on the Shepherd-Rancher spectrum<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Berry Bucket Theory</li> <li>• Break specific barriers: 200, 400, 800</li> <li>• Break the Care Barrier: a system of lay led small groups<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
<b><i>Purpose Driven Church</i></b>	Warren	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myth: If you are dedicated enough, your church will grow<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Church growth is the natural result of church health through the five purposes of the Church seen in Acts 2:42-47<sup>10</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Worship</li> <li>-Evangelism</li> <li>-Discipleship</li> <li>-Ministry</li> <li>-Fellowship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Natural Church Development</i></b>	Christian Schwartz	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on research in 70,000 churches on all 6 continents</li> <li>• Health leads to growth</li> <li>• 8 Essential qualities of healthy churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empowering Leadership</li> <li>- Gift-oriented ministry</li> <li>- Passionate spirituality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Functional structures</li> <li>- Inspiring worship service</li> <li>- Holistic small groups</li> <li>- Need-oriented evangelism</li> <li>- Loving relationships</li> <li>• The NCD process<sup>11</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work with an NCD National Partner</li> <li>- Conduct your survey with up to 30 people</li> <li>- NCD Survey Results: celebrate strengths and move to the minimum factor (lowest score on 8 elements)</li> <li>- Create an action plan on minimum factor until see results then survey again</li> <li>- Identify new minimum factor and action plan</li> <li>- Repeat process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>One Size Doesn't Fit All -Typology of Church Sizes</i></b>	McIntosh	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churches are small (80%), medium (10%), or large (10%)</li> <li>• Small 15-200, Medium 201-400, Large 401+</li> <li>• Different sizes = Different needs</li> <li>• "Typology of Church Sizes"</li> <li>• Relational vs. Programmatical vs. Organizational</li> <li>• Pastor: Lover vs. Admin. vs. Leader</li> <li>• Decisions: Cong. Vs. Committees vs. Staff and leaders</li> </ul> <p><u>Companion references:</u>  McIntosh <i>Taking Your Church to the Next Level</i>  Malphurs <i>Leading Leaders</i>  Osborne <i>Sticky Teams</i></p>
<b><i>Advanced Strategic Planning</i></b>	Malphurs	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategy is the process that determines how your ministry will accomplish its mission<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Developing a Mission</li> <li>• Developing a Compelling Vision</li> <li>• Discovering Core Values</li> <li>• Reaching the Community</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Mature Disciples</li> <li>• Building a Ministry Team</li> <li>• Assessing the Ministry Setting</li> <li>• Raising and Managing Finances</li> <li>• Launching / Implementing the Strategy</li> <li>• Evaluating How We Are Doing</li> <li>• 14 Supplemental Appendices</li> </ul>
<b><i>Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry</i></b>	Macchia	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field tested in 100's of churches</li> <li>• Survey of 1,899 evangelicals</li> <li>• Accompanying evaluation tool created by Vision New England</li> <li>• CHAT Survey 72 questions online</li> <li>• Ten Traits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level 1: How I Relate with God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>God's Empowering Presence</li> <li>God-Exalting Worship</li> <li>Spiritual Disciplines</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Level 2: How I Relate with My Church Family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning and Growing Community</li> <li>Commitment to Loving/Caring Relationships</li> <li>Servant-Leadership Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Level 3: How My Church Ministers and Manages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Outward Focus</li> <li>Wise Administration and Accountability</li> <li>Networking with the Body of Christ</li> <li>Stewardship and Generosity</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>The Habits of Highly Effective Churches</i></b>	Barna	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six Pillars of Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-worship</li> <li>-evangelism</li> <li>-Christian education</li> <li>-community among believers</li> <li>-stewardship</li> <li>-serving the needy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barna research: 10-15% are effective</li> <li>• The Nine Habits That Matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rely on strategic leadership</li> <li>-Organize to facilitate effective ministry</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Emphasize developing significant relationships within the congregation</li> <li>-Congregants invest in genuine worship</li> <li>- Engage in strategic evangelism</li> <li>- Get people in systematic theological growth</li> <li>- Utilize holistic stewardship practices</li> <li>- Serve the needy people in the community</li> <li>- Equip families to minister to themselves</li> </ul>
<b><i>Discipled Warriors and The Church Health Survey</i></b>	Lawless	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Church Model Biblical/theo. Foundation, 6 pillars, defining personal walk, family, church, and work</li> <li>• Church Model is Disciplemaking</li> <li>• 6 Pillars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exalting God: Worship</li> <li>- Evangelizing the World: Evangelism</li> <li>- Equipping Believers: Disciplemaking</li> <li>- Edifying Others: Ministry</li> <li>- Encountering God: Prayer</li> <li>- Encouraging One Another: Fellowship</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Church Health Survey</li> </ul>
<b><i>Church of Irresistible Influence</i></b>	Lewis	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconnect the Church and Culture</li> <li>• Postmodern World wants real vs. words</li> <li>• Great Commandment balance with Great Commission</li> </ul>
<b><i>Ten Indicators Equipping Guide</i></b>	Fann	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Guide to help church leaders apply the EFCA Ten Leading Indicators of a Healthy Church</li> </ul>
<b><i>7 Practices of Effective Ministry</i></b>	Stanley/ Joiner/ Jones	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify the Win</li> <li>• Think Steps, Not Programs</li> <li>• Narrow the Focus</li> <li>• Teach Less for More</li> <li>• Listen to Others</li> <li>• Replace Yourself</li> <li>• Work on It</li> </ul>

<b><i>Reveal: Where Are You?</i></b>	Willow Creek Association	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-year study of their congregation</li> <li>• 6000 surveys</li> <li>• 300 people who had left</li> <li>• 5000 more surveys three years later</li> <li>• 120 in depth interviews</li> <li>• Focus: Spiritual Formation</li> <li>• Close to Christ and Christ centered often stalled and dissatisfied <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- limited Bible reading</li> <li>- 25% considering leaving the church</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Church helps young believers but not mature</li> <li>• Follow up called <i>Follow Me</i></li> <li>• Church can be more effective if it coaches the Christ-centered people</li> </ul>
<b>Preparing for Change Reaction</b>	Whitesel	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the church – types of leaders</li> <li>• A Biblical Theology of Change</li> <li>• Changing Methods</li> <li>• Change in the Future</li> </ul>
<b><i>The 2010 Church Consulting Future Trends Report (and 2017 update)</i></b>	Society for Church Consulting	2010, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common reason churches use consultants: get a new vision (49%)</li> <li>• The second most common reason: Conflict that could not be resolved</li> </ul>
<b><i>Transformational Church</i></b>	Rainer and Stetzer	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a new scorecard to get away from bodies, budgets, and buildings</li> <li>• LifeWay Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phase 1: 7000 pastors, 123 denominations.</li> <li>- Interviewed 250 leaders from the top 10% qualifying as Transformational churches</li> <li>- Developed a survey tool</li> <li>- 15,000 church member surveys</li> <li>- Analysis and developed principles</li> <li>- Church Assessment Instrument online</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Definition</u>: <i>A Transformational Church is a congregation that joins God’s mission of sharing the gospel and making disciples. Those disciples become more like Jesus, and church thus acts as the body of Christ</i></li> </ul>



			<p><i>transforming their communities and the world for the kingdom of God</i> <sup>13</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 7 Health Categories</li> <li>- Missionary Mentality</li> <li>- Vibrant Leadership</li> <li>- Relational Intentionality</li> <li>- Prayerful Dependence</li> <li>- Worship: Actively Embrace Jesus</li> <li>- Community: Connect People with People</li> <li>- Mission: Show Jesus through Word and Action</li> </ul>
<b><i>Closing the Back Door in Churches: Four Keys Article</i></b>	Rainer	2011	<p><a href="https://thomrainer.com/2011/10/closing_the_back_door_in_churches_four_keys/">https://thomrainer.com/2011/10/closing_the_back_door_in_churches_four_keys/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Based on LifeWay Research</li> <li>● Four Keys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Membership High Expectations Membership classes, church discipline, expecting involvement</li> <li>- Small group involvement</li> <li>- Ministry/missions involvement</li> <li>- Relational connections</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>The Other 80%</i></b>	Thumma and Bird	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research shows most churches 20% do 80% of the work</li> <li>● The church needs strategies to bridge the gap from there to “every member does its part”</li> </ul>
<b><i>Simple Church</i></b>	Rainer and Geiger	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research of over 400 churches</li> <li>● Simple Church Revolution</li> <li>● Growing and Vibrant churches practice simplicity</li> <li>● Eliminate the unnecessary so the necessary may speak</li> <li>● <i>A simple church is a congregation designed around a straight-forward and strategic process that moves people through the stages of spiritual growth. The leadership and the church are clear about the process (clarity) and are</i></li> </ul>

			<p><i>committed to executing it. The process flows logically (movement) and is implemented in each area of the church (alignment). The church abandons everything that is not in the process (focus).<sup>14</sup></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process Design Survey (online)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Cure for the Common Church</i></b>	Whitesel	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 39 Assessment categories</li> <li>• 4 Cures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grow Out                      Outreach</li> <li>- Grow Small                      Small groups</li> <li>- Grow Learners                      Make disciples</li> <li>- Grow New                      Transformational life</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Look Before You Lead</i></b>	Malphurs	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church health is often a disconnect between our statements of faith and our behavior</li> <li>• The missing link is actual versus aspirational values</li> <li>• Apple analogy</li> </ul>
<b><i>Nine Marks of a Healthy Church</i></b>	Devers	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>But this book is not an exhaustive ecclesiology....common errors in these particular nine matters are responsible for so much that goes wrong in our churches.<sup>15</sup></i></li> <li>• The Reformation brought on discussion of the nature of the church and the “marks” of a church were discussed.</li> <li>• The 9 Marks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expository Preaching</li> <li>- Biblical Theology</li> <li>- The Gospel</li> <li>- Biblical Understanding of (BUO) Conversion</li> <li>- BUO Evangelism</li> <li>- BUO Church Membership</li> <li>- Biblical Church Discipline</li> <li>- A Concern for Discipleship and Growth</li> <li>- Biblical Church Leadership</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Five Sources for a Comprehensive Health Assessment

### Source #3: Church Assessment Survey Tools

<u>Source</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment Categories or Significant Concepts</u>
<b><i>12 Keys to an Effective Church</i></b>	Callahan	1983	<p>Appendix C in the book has an action plan guiding a church to strengthen one characteristic and to add a new one. Each should have written objectives and a person assigned with a timeline for each objective.</p> <p>There is a Planning Workbook and a Leaders Guide which leads to four Phases of Assessment and Planning.</p>
<b><i>Ten Leading Indicators of a Healthy Church</i></b>	Fann		<p>There is workbook instructing how to construct a spreadsheet to capture survey information to assess each area. But to my knowledge there no tool that can be ordered.</p>
<b><i>Purpose Driven Church</i></b>	Warren		<p>Rick Warren has more recently promoted “Twelve Characteristics of a Purpose Driven Church” <a href="https://pd.church/news/12-characteristics-purpose-driven-church/">https://pd.church/news/12-characteristics-purpose-driven-church/</a></p> <p>These characteristics will lead to a balance of the five biblical purposes.</p> <p>No survey offered. Invitation to conferences and help through their website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Characteristics:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose Statement with 5 Purposes</li> <li>- PD Strategy</li> <li>- PD Structure</li> <li>- Prayer by purpose</li> <li>- Staff by purpose</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preach by purpose</li> <li>- Groups by purpose</li> <li>- Calendar by purpose</li> <li>- Budget by purpose</li> <li>- Build buildings by purpose</li> <li>- Evaluate by purpose</li> <li>- Build from the Outside- In</li> </ul>
<b><i>Natural Church Development</i></b>	Schwartz	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NCD Process <a href="https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/process">https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/process</a></li> </ul> <p>Use an NCD consultant and coach Survey up to 30 of your people</p>
<b><i>Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry</i></b>	Macchia	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the CHAT survey online 72 questions <a href="https://www.healthychurch.net/chat.php">https://www.healthychurch.net/chat.php</a></li> </ul>
<b><i>The Habits of Highly Effective Churches</i></b>	Barna	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No survey. Consulting available at: <a href="https://www.barna.com/consulting/">https://www.barna.com/consulting/</a></li> </ul>
<b><i>The Healthy Church Model and Church Health Survey</i></b>	Lawless	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey available at: <a href="http://thelawlessgroup.com/church-health-survey/">http://thelawlessgroup.com/church-health-survey/</a></li> <li>• 15% sample recommended</li> <li>• 160 questions</li> <li>• 25 questions each for worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and prayer</li> <li>• 10 other orthodoxy questions</li> </ul>
<b><i>Reveal</i></b>	WCA	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REVEAL for Church: Spiritual Life Survey</li> <li>• 2000 churches have taken the survey <a href="https://revealforchurch.com">https://revealforchurch.com</a></li> </ul>
<b><i>Transformational Church Assessment</i></b>	Rainer and Stetzer	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey available by church size at: <a href="https://www.lifeway.com/en/searchpage?searchTerms=Transformational%20Church%20Assessment%20Tool">https://www.lifeway.com/en/searchpage?searchTerms=Transformational%20Church%20Assessment%20Tool</a></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 questions for the 7 categories</li> </ul>
<b>Simple Church</b>	Rainer and Geiger	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Process Design Survey (Free)</li> <li>• 20 questions  <a href="http://ericgeiger.com/process-design-survey/#.UyNdj4XEQqg">http://ericgeiger.com/process-design-survey/#.UyNdj4XEQqg</a> </li> </ul>
<b>9Marks</b>	Devers	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No surveys or assessments</li> <li>• Podcasts, mailbag, conferences  <a href="https://www.9marks.org/">https://www.9marks.org/</a> </li> </ul>

**Five Sources for a Comprehensive Health Assessment**

**Source #4: Secular Books or Research**

One of the best examples of looking to secular leadership books to improve the Church is the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit. For example, at the 2017 Summit, speakers included Marcus Buckingham (The Marcus Buckingham Company), Laszlo Bock (Google), and Angela Duckworth (University of Pennsylvania). Each of these is a well known secular author and the Summit selected them expressly for enhancing church leadership skills.

This falls under the philosophical category of thinking that, “All truth is God’s truth”, and that wisdom from secular authors can be of excellent value in the Church. It is not unlike Paul, who in Acts 17 quoted non- Christian poets. I believe it is also what was true of the tribe of Issachar prompting the Holy Spirit to put it in our Bibles that the men of Issachar were, “men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chronicles 12:32). They were sensitive to culture and not just the internal values and workings of the people of Israel.

Accordingly, I maintain that approaching a topic as important as assessing church health would not be complete without considering at least some non-Christian authors. I have frequently referenced each of the following in my church consulting.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Assessment Categories or Significant Concepts</u>
<i>Diffusion of Innovations</i>	Rogers	1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes occur in an organization when there are change agents, innovators (2%), and opinion leaders (14%)</li> <li>• Change agents are external to the organization</li> </ul> <p>Early adopters (34%) follow Opinion Leaders, then Late Adopters (34%) follow, and then maybe Laggards (16%).</p>
<i>Percept Ethos Study of Leadership Style Preference</i>	Percept Group, Inc.	1991, 1993, and 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In American culture, people prefer a leader who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Works with them and helps them (79%)</u></b></li> <li>Lets them and supports them (12%)</li> <li>Lets them and stays out of the way (5%)</li> <li>Tells them what to do (4%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>This survey is based on the dual dimensions of task and relationships. The “Works with them” leader has a blending of relationships and task.</p> <p>Comparative research: See the Hawthorne Studies and Theory X and Y Management</p>
<i>Leading Change</i>	Kotter	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow a process when leading change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish Urgency</li> <li>- Create a Guiding Coalition</li> <li>- Develop a Vision and Strategy</li> <li>- Communicate the Change Vision</li> <li>- Empower Employees for Action</li> <li>- Generate Short-Term Wins</li> <li>- Consolidate Gains</li> <li>- Anchor New Approaches in the Culture</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Designing Organizations</i>	Galbraith	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The form and structure of an organization should be dictated by its mission, values, vision, and strategies</li> <li>• The STAR Model</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People should be recruited to fit the objective needs of the structure not for subjective reasons</li> </ul>
<b><i>Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch</i></b>	Coffman and Sorenson	2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book title from something Peter Drucker said once (father of modern management)</li> <li>• Concept: Not easy to change culture of any organization, but it is possible</li> <li>• If you want to change culture you need 3 emphases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic Planning</li> <li>- Coaching of participants to engage their emotions and strengths</li> <li>- An Annual Cultural “P&amp;L”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Five Sources for A Comprehensive Health Assessment**

**Source #5: Church Experience**

Earlier, in my pyramid depiction of sources for a comprehensive assessment, I promoted church experience as least important, but nonetheless important. On the one hand, the other four sources are more foundational for a variety of reasons. The authority of Scripture, and the discipline of theologians, researchers, and authors is difficult to argue with. On the other hand, there is value in looking through a more pragmatic lens to see what is working and what is being prioritized by healthy churches.

In this first edition, I am going to share some thoughts from my own lens but would like to expand upon that in future editions. My lens has been shaped by my education, personal ministry, informal consulting, formal consulting, and the oversight of a professional organization that trains and equips church consultants. My professional involvement in the latter has included the privilege of rubbing shoulders with board members who have broader and deeper experience than I do.

From my experience and exposure, the following list of characteristics of healthy churches is worth noting. I could affirm many of the things we see in the other four sources, and I will comment on those in the next section, ***Creating a Comprehensive Church Health Assessment***. And there is some overlap with the other four sources.

However, my purpose here is to share eight additional insights. Two of these are observations about unhealthy churches. Six are about healthy churches. For ease of reference in the next section, I will number these 1– 8.

### **Two Practices of Unhealthy Churches**

1. They are sometimes rationalizing a lack of growth, sometimes seeing it as God's will, sometimes blaming their context, and they may be suspicious of others who talk about church growth. While some who are focused on growth have egocentric motives and focus on transfer growth, church growth is God's idea.
2. They are often blind to multiple reasons for a lack of growth. They either do not know how to overcome the barriers, or they understand them intellectually, but cannot develop the necessary leadership consensus to lead change.

### **Five Practices of Healthy Churches**

3. They develop a philosophy of growth which affirms the health of having a goal of growing on site, through church planting, through multi-site ministry, or some combination of the three.
4. They know how to balance having a DNA that compels them to seek a vision and simultaneously execute practices that lead them to that vision.
5. They intuitively streamline their structure and require their constitution and/or bylaws to serve them and not vice versa.
6. They develop a culture where knowing your spiritual gifts and using them is part of the normal Christian life. As such, even within congregationalism, people find their



identity more in ministry than in whatever their role might be in the governance of the church.

7. They develop strong assimilation or onboarding ministry. This ensures that new people are warmly welcomed and coached in practical ways into the life of the church community and ministry, and the old-timers are more prone to not go out the back door.
8. They anticipate the need for and they develop more leaders, more facilities, more finances, more IT support, and other resources to support the ministry.

### **Part 3: Creating a Comprehensive Church Health Assessment**

The goal of this section is to allow the Five Sources to inform the content of a new form of comprehensive health assessment. It will be a synthesis of the sources prioritizing what they prioritize and ensuring that their best contributions are represented. It must also be a manageable tool, meaning that it will communicate what is important without getting bogged down by the detail behind it. More detail will be necessary to use the tool, but too much will inhibit communication and its usefulness.

The Fishbone Diagram will be the tool visual. But the purpose of this section is to work on the content of the fishbone.

#### **Synthesizing the Five Sources**

To synthesize what the Five Sources are saying, I will share 15 analytical observations. These observations will then lead to conclusions which define the head, the sides, and the individual bones of the Fishbone Diagram.

However, not all observations will have the same weight. If an observation can be made subordinate to another category of health, the higher-level concept will rise to the top as a consideration for a conclusion. The conclusions in turn will allow us to construct the Fishbone Diagram.

I will cite references to the Five Sources for each observation. For each of these references, I will state, “Refer to:” and then list the authors associated with that concept. When a church experience is referenced, it will state Exp followed by a number, such as Exp #1.

## The 15 Analytical Observations

1. **Church health assessments are backed by varying degrees of research and not all have published their research.**

Refer to: Callahan, Warren, Schwartz, Macchia, Barna, Lawless, Reveal, Rainer and Stetzer, Thumma and Bird, Rainer and Geiger, Devers

2. **Mt 28:18-20 defines health as leading to growth, which leads to the need for more health and more growth. Leaders need to understand that church growth is God's idea.**

Refer to: Biblical Theology, Schwartz, Warren, Exp. #1 and #3

3. **Acts 2:42-47, while descriptive, is prescriptively taught throughout the New Testament and is featured in several assessments. The functions or values and practices of the early church help us understand multiple reasons why a church may be unhealthy.**

Refer to: Biblical Theology; Lawless Church Health Survey; Purpose Driven Church, Exp. #2

4. **While popular, biblical, and influential, Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church purposes was preceded by theologians dating all the way back to the Reformation. The interchangeable terms used have been "marks", "functions", and "purposes".**

Refer to: Both Erickson and Grudem theologians and Warren

Purposes (Warren): worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship

Purposes (Grudem): worship, nurture of believers, evangelism, mercy

Functions (Erickson): evangelism, edification through fellowship/instruction/gifts, worship, and social concern

Marks of church according to Luther and Calvin(Grudem): preaching, baptism, Lord's Supper

5. **Not all health assessments or surveys or leadership books purport to be a comprehensive assessment of church health. Some are specifically targeted at an area or several areas of health.**

Refer to: Devers, Warren (the five purposes are now supplemented on a website by the 12 characteristics of a healthy church), Reveal

6. **Evangelism and outreach must include faith sharing, gospel presentation, as well as good deeds or mercy.**

Refer to: Systematic Theology, Lewis, Barna

7. **There are both organic and organizational dimension to some of the assessments including attention to facilities, organization structure, coaching and developing leaders, role definitions, and developing finances.**

Refer to: Callahan, George, McIntosh, Schwartz, Coffman and Sorenson, Macchia, Barna, Galbraith, Exp #5, Exp #8

8. **Strategic planning, with annual follow-up, can lead to both organic and organizational health. Normal components of such planning are both vision and execution.**

Refer to: Malphurs, Coffman and Sorenson, Stanley/Joiner/Jones, Rainer and Geiger, McIntosh and Martin, Exp. #4 and Exp #8

9. **Church size is a very significant contextual factor for defining “health”.**

Refer to: McIntosh and companion books by McIntosh, Malphurs, and Osborne

10. **Conflict resolution skills, including church discipline, is both biblical and necessary for health.**

Refer to: Sande and Society for Church Consulting Future Trends Studies, Rainer (back door)

11. **Awareness of cultural context is important for church health.**

Refer to: Biblical Theology; Percept Leadership Style Preference, Malphurs

12. **Research shows that 20% doing 80% of ministry is common. Healthy churches work at mobilizing volunteers to seek the biblical ideal of every member doing its part.**

Refer to: Thumma and Bird, Exp. #6

13. **Churches have intellectual beliefs, but values may be aspirational not actual.**

Refer to: Malphurs

14. Change leadership begins with change agents and/or innovators which influences opinion leaders, then early adopters, then late adopters, then laggards. It also follows a path from urgency, through a guiding coalition and short-term wins.

Refer to: Rogers, Kotter, Exp #2

15. Assimilation or “onboarding” systems are an important part of the ministry of healthy churches. These systems help people come in the front door and keep them from going out the back door. (Some object to the term assimilation from my experience).

Refer to: McIntosh and Martin, Rainer, Exp. #7

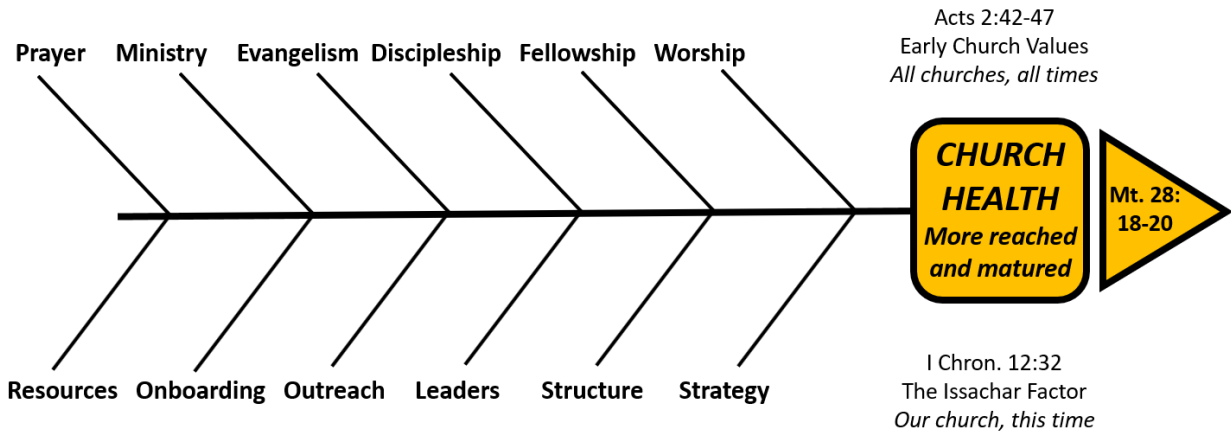
**Concluding Thoughts Before Constructing the Fishbone Diagram**

My first conclusion is that not all the observations require attention in arriving at a comprehensive church health assessment. For example, number 1 and 5 are simply a matter of general awareness. In addition, with the popularity of *Purpose Driven Church*, the objective insight in number 5 is also helpful background information, but it doesn’t reach the level of being a building block for an assessment tool.

However, each of the other observations are compelling and they clearly inform how to achieve the original objective of this paper. How they do that will be discussed below.

**The Head of the Fishbone Diagram**

It seems appropriate at this point to show the Fishbone Diagram to give a reference diagram for the following comments.



The guiding Scripture for the head of the Fishbone Diagram must be Mt. 28:18-20. The analytical observation I am referring to is #2. But the selection of that passage goes much deeper than simply having a commonly used biblical foundation. This passage defines church health for us and it therefore also gives us the starting place for a comprehensive assessment of health.

A comprehensive assessment of a church must define health as the reaching of more people with the gospel, maturing them in the faith, which includes reaching more who can be matured. Stated another way, a church is only truly healthy if it has some form of philosophy of growth and it is growing. That growth may come on site, through planting, or through multi-site ministry. But health must include a measure of growth.

The head is then supported by the fishbone structure. By that, I mean that a comprehensive assessment tool that measures health which includes growth, must then include church practices that lead to reaching more who are matured. Based on the remaining Analytical Observations, this leads us first to the two sides of the Fishbone Diagram and then to the 12 individual bones on each side.

## **Two Sides of the Fishbone Diagram**

Observations #3, #7, and #11 carry a higher-level weight than the other observations. The universal use of Acts 2:42-47 to define health, and the contextual and organizational concerns of Scripture, various authors, and experience help us to categorize the two sides.

On the top of the diagram, this side of the Fishbone is devoted to the early church values seen in Acts 2 that are more relational and organic, but also timeless for all churches in all times. I have experience with and prefer the Lawless Church Health Survey with six categories: Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry, and Prayer.

When I attempt to construct the other side, I think there is value in contrasting the timeless nature of Acts 2 with the contextual nature of each church in its time. We are told that the men of Issachar were commended for understanding the times and knowing what the people of Israel should do (1 Chron. 12:32). Similar church leaders today need to know their times and what their church should do in these areas:

- Strategy, vision and execution, change leadership, and moving from aspirational to actual values Observations #8,13, and 14
- Structure #7 and 14

- Leadership development and opinion leaders #7
- Great Commandment outreach serving the community #6
- Assimilation or onboarding practices that also close the back door #15
- Development of resources: facilities, finances, Information technology in addition to leadership development #7

## The 12 Components of the Fishbone Diagram

There is value in seeing how the many assessments that have been published in the past 30-40 years support the conclusion that we should use the 12 components in the Fishbone Diagram. The following is detailed listing showing each of the 12 components, or fishbones, and where those are found in the published assessments.

### Worship

The Lawless Group Survey: Worship is one of the six functions of the church.

Rick Warren: Worship is one of the five purposes. In his 12 characteristics of a Purpose Driven Church he also lists Preach by Purpose.

TCAT: Worship is one of seven Categories of Health.

9Marks: Expository Preaching and Biblical Theology are 2 of the 9.

Seven Practices (Stanley, Joiner, Jones): Teach Less for More: Define minimums and repeat them over and over. Evaluate your worship services for focus.

Macchia 10 Traits: God-Exalting Worship (How I Relate to God)

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Inspiring worship Services with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Callahan 12 Keys: Corporate (sense of belonging) Dynamic (inspiring preaching and music which includes staffing this ministry; shepherd first before preacher) Worship.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Centrality of God's Word and Spirit-filled Worship (generational and subcultures, regularly celebrate Lord's Supper).

Systematic Theology: Erickson and Grudem include Worship

## **Fellowship**

The Lawless Group Survey: Fellowship is one of the six functions of the church.

Rick Warren: Fellowship is one of the five purposes and Groups by Purpose is one the 12 Characteristics of a Purpose Driven Church.

TCAT: Community and Relational Intentionality are two of seven Categories of Health.

9Marks: Biblical Understanding of Membership and Church Discipline are two of the nine.

Barna 9 Habits: Building Lasting, Significant Relationships is one of the nine.

Macchia 10 Traits: A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships is one of the ten.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Loving Relationships is one of the eight. Inviting one another, laughter, real love.

Callahan 12 Keys: Significant Relational Groups and Visitation (Shepherding)

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Loving Relationships is number ten on the list. Holistic ministry, cross-cultural, interdependent relationships.

Sande The Peacemaker: How to assess and resolve conflict biblically.

## **Discipleship**

The Lawless Group Survey: Fellowship is one of the six functions of the church.

Rick Warren: Discipleship is one of the five Purposes and Groups by Purpose is one the 12 Characteristics of a Purpose Driven Church.

TCAT: Community and Relational Intentionality are two of seven Categories of Health. (Same as above both of these address Fellowship and Discipleship).

9Marks: A Concern for Discipleship and Growth is one of the nine.

Simple Church: "A process design is how you have structured and designed your church to move people towards spiritual maturity." (From the simple Church Process Design Survey).

Reveal: A church can be more effective if it coaches the Christ-centered people.

Barna 9 Habits: Get people in systematic theological growth; Equip families to minister to themselves.

Macchia 10 Traits: Spiritual Disciplines; and Learning and Growing Community

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Passionate spirituality, prayer life; Holistic small groups: apply learning, discuss other of the 8 qualities, develop new leaders, multiply

Callahan 12 Keys: Significant relational groups

Whitesel Cure for the Common Church: Grow Small meaning small groups. And Grow Learners meaning make disciples. And Grow New meaning a transformational life.

## **Evangelism**

The Lawless Group Survey: Evangelism is one of the six functions of the church.

Rick Warren: Evangelism is one of the five purposes

TCAT: Missionary Mentality: A geographic, contextual calling to reach the community; Showing Jesus through Word and Action.

9Marks: The Gospel; Biblical Understanding of Evangelism; and BUO Conversion

Barna 9 Habits: Engage in strategic evangelism: study, analyze options, seek God's direction, choose option, prepare people, put plan into practice.

Macchia 10 Traits: An Outward Focus quotes Hybels and Mittleberg formula for influencing world for Christ as  $HP + CP + CC = MI$ . Maximum Impact comes from high potency (power of God), close proximity (relationships), and clear communication.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Need-oriented evangelism (i.e., focus on questions and needs of non-Christians).

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Fruitful evangelism; Church Planting

## **Ministry**

The Lawless Group Survey: Ministry is one of the six functions of the church.

Rick Warren: Ministry is one of the five purposes

TCAT: Relational Intentionality includes clarity about how to serve in ministry and Community includes a responsibility to serve one another in ministry.



Simple Church: Movement includes helping people get involved in ministry.

Reveal: The need for coaching volunteers who are mature is a high need.

Seven Practices (Stanely, et al): Classes and ministry need to be Steps to help people go somewhere. Think Steps not Programs.

Macchia 10 Traits: God's Empowering Presence includes fostering discovery and use of Spiritua gifts. Servant-Leadership Development is about every member a minister as well as leadership development.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Gift-oriented ministry is one of the eight. Knowing and using your gifts and receiving ministry training.

Callahan 12 Keys: Several Competent Programs with One Major One.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Intentional disciplemaking includes service in ministry.

Thumma and Bird The Other 80%: Research shows 20% do 80% but that is not the biblical ideal.

## **Prayer**

The Lawless Group Survey: Prayer is one of the six functions of the church.

TCAT: Prayerful Dependence is one of the Seven Health Categories.

Macchia 10 Traits: God's Empowering Presence. Teach the presence of the Holy Spirit. Prayer to submit to God.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Passionate spirituality is partly about quantity and quality of prayer life.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Passionate spirituality is about presence of the Holy Spirit and prayer life dependence upon God.

## **Bottom Side Bones:**

## **Strategy**

Rick Warren 12 Characteristics: PD Strategy, Calendar, Evaluate.

TCAT: Have a Missionary Mentality.

Simple Church: Have a strategic process; have clarity; eliminate what is not a fit. Measure, have a visual, focused leaders, hiring people committed to process.

Reveal: Be strategic about how you do spiritual formation with attention to coaching the mature.

Seven Practices (Stanely, et al): Define the win, Think steps, Focus, and Work on it are all strategic actions. Work on it: step back to assess your plan and your performance.

Barna 9 Habits: Strategic Leadership – highly effective churches are led by strong leaders with these qualities: vision, team relationship, communication skills, strategic mind, purposeful courage, unquenchable passion about the outcome they are committed to.

Macchia 10 Traits: Networking in the Body of Christ; collaborating; sharing experiences; training; etc. ; Wise Administration and Accountability – Strategic Planning/goals/ongoing assessment and evaluation.

Callahan 12 Keys: Book Preface says the book is designed to help churches with their strategic long-range planning. Strong Leadership Resources: leaders lead the church toward meaningful objective. Achievement versus activities.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Great Commission Driven includes having a mission and vision, communication and member ownership, ministries and decisions aligned with mission, a willingness to change and take risks.

Malphurs Advanced Strategic Planning: How to develop your mission, vision, values, strategies.

Malphurs Look Before You Lead: understand culture and the difference between aspirational values versus actual values. Analogy of an apple.

Rogers Diffusion of Innovations: understand how change occurs.

Kotter Leading Change: follow an 8-step process when leading change.

Whitesel Preparing for Change Reaction: Strategic, Tactical, and Operational Leaders.

Culture Eats Strategy for Lunch: To change culture follow three practices - strategic planning, coaching, and annual “P&L”.

Dale To dream again : Understand church life cycle, how to assess, how to motivate a desire to grow again.

## Structure

Rick Warren: 12 Characteristics includes PD Structure. Structure gives balance to five purposes. Team-based versus hierarchy,

Barna 9 Habits: Structuring the Church for Impact. Decentralize decision making and pastor only involved in major decisions, minimize paid staff; one staff per 75-100 is too low, train lay leaders.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Functional Structures, leaders develop leaders, structural self-renewal, lack of traditionalism, healthy understanding that structure supports life.

Callahan 12 Keys: Decisions are made on important / urgent and on important / not urgent. Participatory decisions. Use a 20-30-50 Rule: 20% of decisions are strategic and accomplish 80% of results; 30% delegated to key leaders; 50% delegated to small task forces and individuals.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Great Commission Driven where mission guides decisions and structures facilitate biblical purposes of the church.

Erwin McManus (From Bethel Seminary Transformation Church Series): Structure must submit to Spirit.

McIntosh One Size Doesn't Fit All: Necessary changes as church grows in role of Pastor and how decisions are made.

Galbraith Designing Organizations: STAR Model. Strategy defines structure. Recruit people to fit strategy, structure, and processes.

## Leaders

Rick Warren: 12 Characteristics includes Staffing by purpose.

TCAT: Vibrant Leaders, know vision and purpose, empower others, system to raise up other leaders.

9 Marks: Biblical Church Leadership, congregational context (not a democracy but congregation is involved in major decisions), biblical qualifications, men, leaders must be a BOSS, Boss – authority, Out Front – example, Supply – equip, Serve – self sacrifice.

Seven Practices (Stanely, et al): Listen to Others, and Replace Yourself.

Macchia 10 Traits: Servant Leadership Development “the healthy church identifies and develops individuals whom God has called and given the gift of leadership and challenges them to become servant-leaders.

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Empowering leadership- equip, support, motivate and mentor. Both goal and relationship oriented. Delegation and multiplication.

Callahan 12 Keys: Strong Leadership Resources where leaders have objectives that are written, leaders own the objectives, objectives are specific and measurable, realistic time horizons, achievable, objectives mutually reinforce one another.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Leadership Multiplication leadership development of members who develop others and release them to ministry.

George and Bird How to Break Growth Barriers: by 200 must become a Rancher versus a Shepherd.

McIntosh One Size Doesn't Fit All: Necessary changes as church grows in role of Pastor and how decisions are made.

Percept Leadership Style Preference: based on survey of preferences for leaders who are task or relationship driven. 79% prefer a balance where leaders will work with them.

## **Outreach**

TCAT: Missionary Mindset – caring about community, local community benefits because the church exists, leaders at local institutions express gratitude; and Show Jesus – intentionally provide service opportunities to be involved with unchurches, build a reputation with the city and share faith story.

Barna 9 Habits: Serve the Needy 1. Permission to engage in social service etc. , learn from others.

Macchia 10 Traits: An Outward Focus 1 Pet 3:15 be prepared but go beyond your points of contact (social concern and bridge building)

NCD 8 Essential Qualities: Need Oriented Evangelism (i.e., focus on questions and needs of non-Christians).

Callahan 12 Keys: Specific Missional Objectives – meeting human needs; Pastoral and Lay Visitation to the unchurched (as well as the church) not to get them in church but to serve and help them.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Stewardship of Resources – adopt God’s heart for those who are hungry, hopeless, and hurting in their allocation of available resources.

Lewis Irresistible Influence: Postmodern world wants real vs. words. Balance Great Commission with Great Commandment.

Systematic Theology Erickson: functions of the church include social concern.

Systematic Theology Grudem: functions of the church include Mercy.

Whitesel Cure for the Common Church: Grow Out meaning outreach to assess and meet community needs.

## **Onboarding**

Simple Church: Movement- Simple churches require new member classes. Retention rates are higher (footnote reference to p. 120 of Rainer’s book *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched* ...). Teach your process and ask for commitment.

McIntosh and Martin Finding Them, Keeping Them: Develop strategies for evangelism and assimilation. Bring people in the front door and keep them from going out the back door.

Rainer Article Closing the Back Door in Churches: Four Keys: membership high expectations; small group involvement; ministry/missions involvement; relational connections.

## **Resources**

Rick Warren 12 Characteristics: do Budgets and Buildings by Purpose. Categorize expenses by the five purposes. Buildings are tools for the five purposes.

Barna 9 Habits: Holistic Stewardship – in teaching, pastors talk about it, keep church informed of financial position of church.

Macchia 10 Traits: Wise Administration and Accountability – facilities, equipment, and systems; Stewardship and Generosity – teaching and challenging members to sacrificial generosity.

Callahan 12 Keys: # 8. -12 all fit here: Open Accessibility; High Visibility; Parking, Land, and Landscaping; Space and Facilities; Solid Financial Resources.

EFCA 10 Leading Indicators: Stewardship of Resources – education, pastors address time, money, skills.

In addition to demonstrating how the various assessments support the 12 Components of the Fishbone, it is just as valuable to list the health elements in the various assessments and cross-reference those to the 12 Components. The following provides such a cross-reference and also documents how many of the 12 Components are included in each of the assessments.

### **Cross-referencing the Church Health Assessments to the Fishbone Diagram**

**12 Keys to an Effective Church – Kennon Callahan** 10 of the 12 Fishbone Components

All but: Evangelism and Prayer

1. Specific missional objectives serving the community	Outreach
2. Shepherding Visitation (hospitals, homebound, assisted living, nursing homes. Shepherding one another. Events, tough times. Shepherding unchurched.	Outreach Fellowship
3. Stirring, helpful worship: music, preaching, greeters, ushers, warm space (80% is full), large vestibule for gathering, multiple venues, integrated themes	Worship Resources
4. Significant relational groupings: warm, welcoming, open, some closed. New join new groups.	Discipleship Fellowship Onboarding
5. Strong Leadership Team (love listen learn lead)	Leaders
6. Solid Decision Process (simple structure)	Strategy Structure
7. One Major Program (serves many, connected to mission)	Ministry
8. Open Accessibility (site access, fitting natural traffic patterns, points of ingress/egress, spacious entrances,	Resources
9. High Visibility (from road, signs, communications (phone, web, email, advertising) people involvement in community.	Resources

10. Land, Landscaping, Parking adequate, developable, attractive; parking 10 best Sundays capacity	Resources
11. Adequate space and facilities balance between worship, education, fellowship	Resources
12. Generous Giving	Resources

**Rick Warren 5 Purposes of The Church – 5 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

5 of the top 6 bones except Prayer. None of the bottom 6.

But when you combine it with his 12 Characteristics, he covers all but 1, Onboarding

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

**Rick Warren 12 Characteristics of a Purpose Driven Church – 10 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

See above combined summary

1. Purpose Statement with 5 Purposes	Strategy
2. PD Strategy	Strategy
3. PD Structure	Structure
4. Prayer by purpose	Prayer
5. Staff by purpose	Leaders
6. Preach by purpose	Worship
7. Groups by purpose	Discipleship Fellowship
8. Calendar by purpose	Strategy
9. Budget by purpose	Strategy Resources
10. Build buildings by purpose	Resources
11. Evaluate by purpose	Strategy
12. Build from the Outside- In	Evangelism Outreach

**Christian Schwartz NCD 8 Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches – 9 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Strategy, Onboarding, and Resources. (Although use of the assessment is strategic)

1. Empowering Leadership	Leaders
2. Gift-oriented ministry	Ministry
3. Passionate spirituality	Worship Prayer
4. Functional structures	Structure
5. Inspiring worship service	Worship
6. Holistic small groups	Leaders Discipleship Fellowship Evangelism Ministry
7. Need-oriented evangelism	Evangelism Outreach
8. Loving relationships	Fellowship

**Stephen Macchia 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry – 8 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Ministry, Strategy, Structure, and Onboarding

1. God’s Empowering Presence	Prayer
2. God-Exalting Worship	Worship
3. Spiritual Disciplines	Discipleship Prayer Worship
4. Learning and Growing Community	Fellowship Discipleship Worship
5. Commitment to Loving/Caring Relationships	Fellowship
6. Servant-Leadership Development	Leaders
7. An Outward Focus	Evangelism Outreach
8. Wise Administration and Accountability	Leaders Resources
9. Networking with the Body of Christ	Fellowship
10. Stewardship and Generosity	Discipleship Resources



**George Barna 9 Habits of Highly Effective Churches – 10 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Prayer and Onboarding

1. Rely on strategic leadership	Strategy Leaders
2. Organize to facilitate effective ministry	Structure
3. Emphasize developing significant relationships	Discipleship Fellowship
4. within the congregation	
5. Congregants invest in genuine worship	Worship
6. Engage in strategic evangelism	Strategy Evangelism Outreach
7. Get people in systematic theological growth	Worship Discipleship
8. Utilize holistic stewardship practices	Ministry Discipleship Resources
9. Serve the needy people in the community	Outreach
10. Equip families to minister to themselves	Discipleship

**Chuck Lawless - Pillars of a Healthy Church – 6 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but the bottom bones: Strategy, Structure, Leaders, Outreach, Onboarding, and Resources

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

**Jim Fann EFCA 10 Leading Indicators of a Healthy Church – 11 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Onboarding

1. Centrality of God’s Word	Worship Discipleship
2. Passionate Spirituality	Worship Prayer
3. Fruitful Evangelism	Evangelism

	Outreach
4. Spirit-filled Worship	Worship
5. Great Commission Driven	Strategy Structure Ministry
6. Leadership Multiplication	Leaders
7. Church Planting	Strategy Evangelism Outreach
8. Stewardship of Resources	Discipleship Resources
9. Intentional Disciplemaking	Disciplemaking
10. Loving Relationships	Fellowship

**Stanley, Joiner, Jones 7 Practices of Effective Ministry – 4 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Prayer, Evangelism, Discipleship, Fellowship, Structure, Outreach, Onboarding, Resources

1. Clarify the Win	Strategy
2. Think Steps, Not Programs	Ministry
3. Narrow the Focus	Strategy
4. Teach Less for More	Worship
5. Listen to Others	Leaders
6. Replace Yourself	Leaders
7. Work on It	Strategy

**Rainer, Stetzer TCAT 7 Health Categories – 9 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Strategy, Onboarding, Resources

1. Missionary Mentality	Strategy Evangelism
2. Vibrant Leadership	Leaders
3. Relational Intentionality	Fellowship
4. Prayerful Dependence	Prayer
5. Worship: Actively Embrace Jesus	Worship Prayer
6. Community: Connect People with People	Discipleship Fellowship Ministry
7. Mission: Show Jesus through Word and Action	Evangelism Outreach

**Mark Devers 9 Marks of a Healthy Church – 5 of the 12 Fishbone Components**

All but Ministry, Prayer, Strategy, Structure, Outreach, Onboarding, Resources

1. Expository Preaching	Worship
2. Biblical Theology	Worship Discipleship
3. The Gospel	Worship Discipleship Evangelism
4. Biblical Understanding of (BUO) Conversion	Discipleship
5. BUO Evangelism	Discipleship Evangelism
6. BUO Church Membership	Discipleship Fellowship
7. Biblical Church Discipline	Fellowship
8. A Concern for Discipleship and Growth	Discipleship
9. Biblical Church Leadership	Leaders

One last step seems appropriate. Interestingly, there are some parallels, or complimentary concepts on the two corresponding sides of the fishbone. If I condense the six organizational and cultural practices above to six one-word descriptions, this gives me an order for both sides as follows:

<i>Top Side of the Fishbone</i>	<i>Bottom Side of the Fishbone</i>	<b>Complimentary Concept</b>
<b>Worship</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	Organic vs. organization
<b>Fellowship</b>	<b>Structure</b>	Organic vs. organization
<b>Discipleship</b>	<b>Leaders</b>	Leadership development is a subset of discipleship
<b>Evangelism</b>	<b>Outreach</b>	Great Commission vs. Great Commandment
<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Onboarding</b>	Serving vs. Sticking
<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Resources</b>	Dependence vs. Action

We can overemphasize the complimentary nature of these individual bones in the Fishbone Diagram. However, the descriptions above may help us emphasize that the top side is organic and timeless while the bottom side is organizational and timebound based on the context and size of the church. Both dimensions are needed for a church to achieve and maintain health.

There is also a logical progression to the six bones on the Bottom Side of the Diagram. That progression is this:

- Strategy should lead to Structure: I.e., who we are, where we are going, and how we get there should inform how we design our structure and processes.
- Structure should inform our need for Leaders and the people we need to fill the Structure
- Leaders are needed to design, oversee, and direct Outreach ministries, Onboarding ministries, and Resource development.

Finally, if the Fishbone Diagram is truly a comprehensive representation of all the referenced church health books and assessments in this paper, then we should be able to test that. I have taken each of 12 health assessments and plotted its characteristics of health on the fishbone. The Fishbone Diagram does capture the content of all 12.

## **Part 5: Using the Fishbone Diagram Church Health Assessment**

### **Simplistic Use of the Tool**

Keep in mind that the Fishbone Diagram is designed to help you analyze reasons for health or unhealth in your church. If you are stalled or declining that is an indication of unhealth in one or more than one area, and it is likely more than one area.

If you need help defining the top bones of the diagram I recommend that you use The Lawless Group Church Health Survey.

To ensure that you are working with similar definitions, here are 5 questions for each of the bottom side bones in the diagram. In all cases, a positive answer is an indication of health

<i>Strategy</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has your church conducted strategic planning in the last five years?</li> <li>2. Is there agreement on the mission, values, and vision of your church?</li> <li>3. Does the leadership team of your church have agreement on what your aspirational values are that you are seeking to change to make them actual values?</li> <li>4. Does the leadership team of your church see themselves as the opinion leaders who can lead others through change for greater health?</li> <li>5. Does your leadership team annually refresh your strategies and assign a timeline and a person to each strategy?</li> </ol>
<i>Structure</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has your current structure been designed considering your mission, vision, values and strategies?</li> <li>2. Do you feel that your Constitution and/or your Bylaws serve you instead of the opposite?</li> <li>3. Is every ministry in the church clearly assigned to a leader and are all leaders overseen by someone else?</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Do you have written job descriptions for all paid staff and all lay position in the church?</li> <li>5. Do you have a written Policy Manual and/or a set of Processes that describe how things work in your church?</li> </ol>
<i>Leaders</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you recruit leaders (paid and unpaid) based on character and skills?</li> <li>2. Do you recruit leaders based primarily on the need of the church (vs. based on friendships or the need of the person recruited)?</li> <li>3. Do you have an expectation that all leaders will receive ongoing feedback and coaching in their position?</li> <li>4. Do you have leaders set at least annual goals for their ministry?</li> <li>5. Do you have a leadership forum that meets at least 6 times a year for training, vision casting, prayer, and encouragement?</li> </ol>
<i>Outreach</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you have a definition of outreach that is distinct from proclamation of the gospel and includes love and good deeds?</li> <li>2. Is someone assigned to develop ministry that reaches out to the community to serve them in some way?</li> <li>3. Has your church worked on developing relationships with community social service agencies and other community organizations?</li> <li>4. Does your church work with what it has to serve the community (versus becoming immobilized because you have too little resources for this)?</li> <li>5. Has your church had a sermon series on serving the community in the last two years?</li> </ol>
<i>Onboarding</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is someone that is knowledgeable about the church responsible for contacting visitors within 24 hours of when they visit the church?</li> <li>2. Does your church have a forum at least quarterly where new people are invited to meet the pastor and other staff and learn about the church?</li> <li>3. If someone visits your church more than once, do you do something different for them the second time they visit such as send a gift or offer to help them?</li> <li>4. Do you have someone specifically assigned to be the leader of your assimilation or onboarding ministry?</li> <li>5. Do you have a process for following up with people whose attendance has declined or ceased?</li> </ol>
<i>Resources</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are each of these areas less than 80% full in each worship service: sanctuary, parking, education spaces, and fellowship gathering space?</li> <li>2. Is your facility clean and attractive?</li> <li>3. Do you have reserves of cash equal to at least 12% of your annual budget?</li> <li>4. Has your church information technology (computers, network, wifi) been upgraded in the last three years?</li> <li>5. Do you have an ongoing emphasis of financial stewardship including a way for people to give online through your website or an app?</li> </ol>

The Fishbone Diagram Church Health Assessment is a tool that church leaders can use to do a rough assessment of their church with their primary boards or staffs or both. For example, here are two exercises for your consideration.

- Exercise #1 Organic or Organizational?

Give each member of your team the diagram. Have a brief discussion to ensure that everyone is using the same definition of terms. Then have each person mark each one of the twelve fishbones as a Strength with an S or as a Weakness with a W. On a whiteboard or flipchart, have each person report how they marked each fishbone. Add up the S's and W's for each one. If 4 people called worship a Strength and 3 people called it a Weakness, call that a Strength

Then compare the number of S's on the top side to the S's on the bottom side. Which side came out stronger? Is your church more organic or organizational? Why or why not.

- Exercise #2 Total Strengths and Total Weaknesses

Look at the detail and see how each of the 12 came out. Do that for all 12 and then see how many in total come out Weaknesses. Discuss your thoughts and feelings about what these Weaknesses may be saying about the health of your church.

## **Comprehensive Survey and the use of a Consultant**

For a much more detailed assessment of each of the 12 bones in the Fishbone Diagram, I recommend the following:

For an assessment of the top side, I highly recommend that 160-question Church Health Survey available from the Lawless Group at <http://thelawlessgroup.com/church-health-survey/>. This survey produces a 42-page report allowing you to drill down and see how each person answered the questions. I recommend as the Lawless Group does that you sample 15% of the average worship attendance of your congregation. If you need help processing the result of the survey, ask your denominational consultant or find an independent church consultant that is familiar with how to do that. Certified consultants can be found here: <https://churchconsulting.org/search-consultants/>.

For an assessment of the bottom side, your pastor may be able to design an assessment for you. Otherwise, I recommend that you work with a denominational leader or a certified consultant and ask them what tools they use to do this kind of an assessment.

## Notes

1. Ariana Saeger, *The Ishikawa Diagram for Risk Management* (Business 50MINUTES.com), Kindle location 28.
2. Ibid, Kindle Location 44.
3. Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (Baker Books, 2013).
4. Robert D. Dale, *to dream again* (Wipf & Stock, 2004)
5. Thom Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Zondervan, 2005) 45; See also Aubrey Malphurs, *Doing Church* (Kregel, 1999) 7.
6. <https://thomrainer.com/2017/06/dispelling-80-percent-myth-declining-churches/>
7. Carl F. George, *How to Break Growth Barriers* (Baker, 1993) 103.
8. Ibid, 186.
9. Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church* (Zondervan, 1995) 56.
10. Ibid, 49.
11. See <https://ncdchurchsurvey.org/process>
12. Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Baker, 2005) Kindle Location 3484.
13. Thom Rainer and Ed Stetzer, *Transformational Church* (B&H, 2010) 42.
14. Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (B&H, 2006) 67-68.
15. Mark Devers, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Crossway, 2013), 25.