

TIME FOR A CHECK-UP



In the Covenant we believe that God wants every congregation to be a healthy, missional church. By “healthy” we mean pursuing Christ. By “missional” we mean pursuing Christ’s priorities in the world.

Each church is unique. Not one size or style fits all. However, there does appear to be four types of established churches* in the Covenant when it comes to degrees of missional health and vitality. These typologies transcend size, ethnicity, location and style.

This packet is designed to help pastors and leaders identify which "type" best describes their current reality. This is not a technical diagnostic tool. Rather it is designed to give people a "feel" about the health of their church and to start conversations that are civil, compassionate and Christ honoring.

In the Covenant we have a saying: "There is no vitality without reality." Discerning one’s current reality may be probing and painful, but is it critical to moving forward. Jesus said in John 8:32, You shall know the truth (that's reality) and the truth will set you free (that's vitality). As leaders, we confront the facts with faith, honesty, hope and graciousness.

As you process this material, please keep in mind the following questions:

Which "type" most closely describes your congregation now?

What are some reasons for your assessment?

What do you see, feel and hear in your congregation?

How would your congregation assess itself?

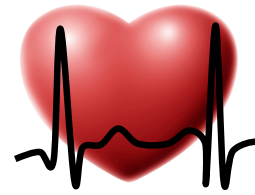
George Bullard writes, “One of the most important questions you can ask around your congregation on a regular basis is, ‘What are the current signs of health and strength in our congregation on which we can build an excellent, effective future?’ ”

Part of reaching your *full kingdom potential* is to affirm what is good, right, and loving about your congregation, and seek to build on these characteristics.

**Our definition of an established church is a church born before 1993*

The Healthy Missional Church

Vital Signs:	Strong
Frequency of Exercise:	Consistently (80-100%)
Intensity of Exercise:	High
Stress Response:	Rises with Reserves
Stress Recovery:	Rapid
Level of Awareness:	Conscious



What do we see?

We See People CONSISTENTLY...

- ... coming to Christ
- ... integrating scripture into life and ministry
- ... engaging God in worship
- ... growing in Christ
- ... serving with their gifts
- ... loving and caring for each other
- ... rallying around a compelling vision
- ... praying together
- ... working collaboratively with other ministries
- ... trusting one another and working in harmony
- ... living and giving generously and sacrificially
- ... helping hurting people
- ... living with a sense of hunger for God
- ... believing in the leaders and the leaders believing in the people
- ... working through conflict constructively
- ... embracing evaluation as normal and natural

What do we feel?

Anticipation
Gratitude
Accomplishment
Enthusiasm and energy
Engaged
Unity and love
Chaotic at times

What do we hear?

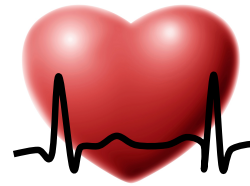
We sense the presence of God here.
We are glad to be a part of something special.
We are making a difference in this community and beyond.
We will do whatever it takes.
How can we keep moving forward with God?

Spiritual Discernment Question:

Lord, how do you want us to excel even more?

The Stable Church

Vital Signs:	Steady
Frequency of Exercise:	Occasionally (50-79%)
Intensity of Exercise:	Moderate
Stress Response:	Quickly Winded by Current Capacity
Stress Recovery:	Slow
Level of Awareness:	Semi-Conscious



What do we see?

We See People OCCASIONALLY...

- ... coming to Christ
- ... integrating scripture into life and ministry
- ... engaging God in worship
- ... growing in Christ
- ... serving with their gifts
- ... loving and caring for each other
- ... rallying around a compelling vision
- ... praying together
- ... working collaboratively with other ministries
- ... trusting one another and working in harmony
- ... living and giving generously and sacrificially
- ... helping hurting people
- ... living with a sense of hunger for God
- ... believing in the leaders and the leaders believing in the people
- ... working through conflict constructively
- ... embracing evaluation as normal and natural

What do we feel?

Safe and comfortable for most
Low level of frustration for others who want more
Self sufficient
All in order organizationally
Satisfied

What do we hear?

We're doing fine.
Who wouldn't like our church?
We're a warm-and-friendly church.
Let's talk about it at the next meeting.

Spiritual Discernment Question:

Lord, how do you want us to break out of stability into vitality?

The Critical Moment Church

Vital Signs:	Weak
Frequency of Exercise:	Inconsistently (15-49%)
Intensity of Exercise:	Low
Stress Response:	Requires Outside Assistance
Stress Recovery:	May not recover from stress
Level of Awareness:	Conscious



What do we see?

We See People INCONSISTENTLY...

- ... coming to Christ
- ... integrating scripture into life and ministry
- ... engaging God in worship
- ... growing in Christ
- ... serving with their gifts
- ... loving and caring for each other
- ... rallying around a compelling vision
- ... praying together
- ... working collaboratively with other ministries
- ... trusting one another and working in harmony
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What do we feel?

Anxious
Inadequate
Fearful
Confused

What do we hear?

We are on a trajectory that we do not feel good about.
Why are people leaving?
Something is wrong.
When we look in the mirror we are not what we used to be.
This is our moment of truth.

Spiritual Discernment Question:

Lord, how do you want us to use this desperation to become a healthy missional church?

The At Risk Church

Vital Signs:	Faint/Unreadable
Frequency of Exercise:	Rarely or Never (0-14%)
Intensity of Exercise:	Feeble
Stress Response:	Overwhelmed & Paralyzed
Stress Recovery:	Can't recover from the stress
Level of Awareness:	Conscious/Unconscious



What do we see?

We See People RARELY...

- ... coming to Christ
- ... integrating scripture into life and ministry
- ... engaging God in worship
- ... growing in Christ
- ... serving with their gifts
- ... loving and caring for each other
- ... rallying around a compelling vision
- ... praying together
- ... working collaboratively with other ministries
- ... trusting one another and working in harmony
- ... living and giving generously and sacrificially
- ... helping hurting people
- ... living with a sense of hunger for God
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What do we feel?

Angry and blaming
Sullen
Inferior
Grief and loss
Denial
Betrayed
Defeated
Poor congregational self image

What do we hear?

Why even bother?
No one is going to take my church away from me.
If we only had _____ (fill in whatever) we would grow again.
All we have to do is hang on and God will help us.
Remember the good old days?

Spiritual Discernment Question:

Lord, do you want us to become a living legacy church or a life transformation church?

Established Church Typology



Church Type	Healthy Missional	Stable	Critical Moment	At-Risk
Vital Missional Health Signs	Strong	Steady	Weak	Faint/Unreadable
Frequency of Missional Exercise:	Consistently (80-100%)	Occasionally (50-79%)	Inconsistently (15-49%)	Rarely/Never (0-14%)
Intensity of Missional Exercise:	High	Moderate	Low	Feeble
Stress Response to Missional Threats*:	Rises with reserves to face the challenge	Quickly winded by current capacity	Requires outside assistance	Overwhelmed & paralyzed
Stress Recovery from Missional Threats*:	Quickly returns to normal	Slowly returns to normal	May not recover from the stress	Can't recover from the stress
Level of Awareness	Conscious	Semi-Conscious	Conscious	Conscious/Unconscious

A missional threat is anything – external or internal – that stressed the church to the point of threatening their capacity to stay the course:

External threats:

- Persecution or opposition to the Gospel
- Loosing a lease and being forced to relocate
- A major employer leaves the area resulting in loss of jobs for church members
- Changing demographics that alter the relevance of existing ministry strategies

Internal threats:

- Leadership conflicts
- Moral failure of a leader
- Financial pressures/stewardship
- Facility limitations that hinder growth