

What follows is a sample of the components of the RE cohort for revitalization pastors and replanters. We have provided 1) the scope and sequence for the training; 2) a sample online lesson for pastors; 3) a sample facilitators session for cohort; 4) a sample mentor guide.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact our team at hopeforchurches@scbaptist.org.

Welcome to RE



RE is a movement of God's leadership seeking to strengthen God's Church and transform a community through the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. RE is not a manual for church revitalization, but rather a journey to help you fulfill your calling as pastor seeking to lead an at-risk church toward a hopeful future.

RE seeks to create the right conversations for revitalization pastors and replanters to focus on elements essential to strengthening the church by examining Biblical truth and wisdom from others to apply in any context.

TRUTH - Thirteen lessons over 16 months moving participants from Biblical truth to contextual application. Developed by practitioners for revitalization pastors & replanters.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Pastoral Qualifications & Pursuing God | 6. Evangelism/Missional Engagement in Community |
| 2. Prayer | 7. Preaching & Teaching |
| 3. Biblical Leadership & Pastoral Assessment | 8. Discipleship & Member Care |
| 4. Gospel Centrality & Marks of a Healthy Church | 9. Worship |
| 5. Vision & Values | 10. Developing Leaders |
| | 11. Policy & Processes |
| | 12. Adversity, Perseverance, & Partnerships |
| | 13. Multiplication & Sending |

Online Bible Study → Primary Resource Review → Contextual Application

WISDOM - Pastor's Learning Path

Utilizing online lesson delivery, pastors will complete one essential per month in preparation to gather with five to seven other revitalization pastors and replanters for an interactive regional

cohort. Guided by a facilitator, participants will be challenged to grow as leaders, lead their congregations toward greater strength, and apply Biblical truths in their context.

Each pastor will also meet with a pastoral mentor of his choosing during the entire process.

CONTEXT - Church Consultation Process (Optional)

As pastors are developed, the leadership and members of the congregation will also be engaged in a church consultation process focused on assessment, vision development, alignment, and implementation. Pastors, leaders, and members will be mobilized to implement God's unique vision to ADVANCE the Gospel starting in their community.

Pastor Training → Lead Team Development → Mobilize the Congregation → ADVANCE the Gospel

Each Lesson at a Glance

Pre-Work

Each lesson begins with online pre-work for pastors to complete prior to their cohort attendance. Each lesson includes:

- Inductive Bible study
- Recommended reading
- Contextual application

Pastors will be expected to obtain the required resources in advance as many lessons include reading multiple chapters of a recommended book. The online portal provides a step by step guide for each lesson and assists the participant with preparing in advance. Each lesson can be downloaded and completed according to the pastor's schedule.

The pastor can then bring his completed lesson with him to cohort for further interaction and feedback. Many of the elements in the pre-work will be incorporated in the cohort session, so advance completion is essential.

Cohort Sessions

Cohorts will meet monthly for approximately three hours. The facilitator will utilize a guide to engage participants in discussion and interactive learning to help them complete and refine the desired outcomes for each lesson. Participant will often share their pre-work with their peers to gain feedback and further the development of their preparation to lead the church through a revitalization process.

Each session will move through **Warm-Up -> Biblical Foundation -> Wisdom to Consider -> Contextual Application -> Prayer.**

Guided by a range of learning engagements and applications, each session will be unique using training techniques to help each participant explore, experience, evaluate, and be equipped as revitalization pastors and replanters.

It is highly recommended that facilitators complete their training and work through all lessons before leading a cohort.

List of Training Techniques Utilized in RE:

- Strategic Narrative
- Field Expert Interview
- Directive Teaching
- Demonstration
- Guided Debrief
- Brainstorming
- Design Analysis
- Self-Assessment
- Group Coaching
- Strategy Development
- Scenario
- Practice

As participants learn new skills and further develop their ideas, they will also form a peer community among pastors and practitioners lending support and wisdom extending well beyond the scope of the cohort.

Post-Session

Each participant is encouraged to spend time with a mentor in addition to the cohort sessions and pre-work. Chosen by the pastor, this mentor will help him process the content and provide wise counsel for the revitalization journey. Ideally, pastor/mentor meetings should occur monthly.

Overview

Bowhunting is a big deal in my community. For weeks, guys will spend hours getting ready for the first few weeks of deer season, where they will be able to add to their bow, its strategic plan on where the best spot to shoot a deer will be, and the desire to be able to fill the freezer with some venison! Being a bowhunter I know will allow you that you can have all these things, and still never shoot a deer if you are missing the most important part: accuracy. The best bow, the most state-of-the-art arrows with the most accurate heads, and the very best spot for hunting will yield nothing but frustration if you cannot shoot with accuracy and hit your intended target!

Church revitalization is very similar. You can have the best strategies, a congregation that has expressed willingness, and all the available resources you need, and still the church will fail to breathe new life if it is missing the most important aspect: accuracy. You need to know where you are headed, what you are shooting at, and you need to be able to aim accurately at the target. The target? A healthy church.

The goal of this lesson is to be able to fire the arrow of church revitalization accurately, shooting at the target, or goal, of a healthy church. What is the arrow that hits the target's center? Gospel Centrality. In order to do this, we will do three things. First, we will define what it means for a church to be focused on the gospel. Second, we will define what a healthy church is. Finally, we will think through how to fire the arrow of gospel focus at the target of a healthy church.

Learning Path

Objective #1: Gain a deeper Biblical understanding of how a gospel-focused church is a healthy church.

Objective #2: Consider and apply what it means for a local church to have gospel centrality.

Objective #3: Prayerfully reflect on what the marks of a healthy church in your context.

Objective #4: Pastor will identify initial steps for leading a congregation toward greater gospel centrality and health

Revitalization Outcomes Through this study, the participant will create an overarching strategy for revitalization by learning to view all aspect of church health and life through the lens of the gospel.

Resources related to objectives:

1. "What does means to be gospel-centered?" Video produced by Crossway Publishers ([Link](#))
2. What Does it Mean to be a Gospel-Centered Church by Ray Ortlund ([Link](#))
3. Your Church May Not Be as Gospel-Centered as You Think by Tony Merida ([Link](#))
4. [The Gospel: How the Church Portrays the Beauty of Christ](#) by Raymond C. Ortlund Jr.
5. [9 Marks of a Healthy Church](#) (2004 expanded edition) by Mark Dever.

What is the primary resource that you will be used in this lesson?

1. The Bible
2. Video Teaching Series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>

Objective #1: *Gain a deeper Biblical understanding of how a gospel-focused church is a healthy church.*

“I want my church to be healthy.” This phrase has been uttered from the lips of every well-intentioned pastor who desires to see his church change and grow. But what does it mean to be healthy? To think about church health, let’s look at the metaphors the Bible uses for the church.

1. Read John 15:5.
 - a. How does Jesus describe believers?
 - b. Based on this passage, how would you describe a healthy church?
2. Read the following passages: Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23, 30.
 - a. What is the metaphor being used to describe the church?
 - b. Now, think about your own body. What is going on when your physical body is healthy?
 - c. Based on these passages, how would you describe a healthy church?
3. Read the following passages: 2 Corinthians 6:18; Matt. 12:49-50; Ephesians 2:19. What is the metaphor being used to describe the church?
 - a. What is going on when a family is healthy?
 - b. Based on these passages, how would you describe a healthy church?
4. Read the following passages: Hebrews 3:6; 1 Timothy 3:14-15. What is the metaphor being used to describe the church?
 - a. What is going on when a house is healthy?
 - b. Based on these passages, how would you describe a healthy church?
5. Now, using everything you have journaled so far, make your own definition, thinking about what all these metaphors have in common:

A healthy church is....

So, how can you get there? We focus on the thing that is, according to the Apostle Paul, “of first importance” (1 Corinthians 15:3).

Objective #2 – Consider and apply what it means for a local church to have gospel centrality.

Now that we have defined what a healthy church is, how do we get there? Before we can think about individual aspects of revitalization, we have to think about the overarching mission of the church. What is the church about? That’s where “gospel centrality” comes into play.

The idea of gospel centrality has gained traction over the last 10 years in church life. But the whole Bible moves us as individuals and churches towards a single-minded focus on the gospel. Let’s think through what that might mean.

1. The word we translate gospel literally means “good news.” Consider the everyday information that floods your world from news, online posts, etc., what would you consider to be good news from any of these sources of information?
2. What elements are essential that differentiate “good news” from any other news?

Let’s define gospel centrality based on 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. Paul is writing to a very troubled church, reminding them to lay aside their divisions, repent of their sins, and focus on the gospel as they strive towards unity. Sounds like a familiar scene in many of our modern churches, doesn’t it? Before chapter 15, Paul has exhorted them in several ways, hoping to correct sinful behaviors in the church. But now, he stops, to remind them of the single most important thing: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 and think through the following questions:

1. Look at verses 1 and 2. Pay special attention to the action words in these verses describing the gospel Paul preached. What do you learn about the importance of the gospel?
2. Read verse 3 again. What does Paul mean when he says the gospel is “of first importance?”

3. Now, read verses 4 and 5. What are the contents of this gospel Paul is preaching?
4. Why was it so important for Paul to help the Corinthian church to focus on the gospel? What do you think he was hoping to achieve?

So, as we think through 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, we see that unity in the church comes through being focused on the gospel. Max Lucado says, “Everything about you finds its purpose in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.” If that is so, then we can expand that out a bit more:

Everything about *the church* finds its purpose in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Objective #3 – *Prayerfully reflect on what does it mean to be a healthy church in your context?*

So, now, we have just one more question: How do we fire the arrow of gospel centrality at the target of a healthy church? Let’s take a look at the marks of a healthy church and see what we can learn.

Mark Dever outlines nine marks of a healthy church that have been widely considered and applied by pastors in almost every context. While there are varying ideas of church health, we will review and interact with the marks proposed by Dever to help you clearly define the marks of a healthy, gospel-centered church.

1. **Expositional Preaching**

- a. Watch the video for “Expositional Preaching” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.
- b. Dever says an expositional sermon “takes the main point of a passage of Scripture, makes it the main point of the sermon, and applies it to life today.” Why is this type of preaching central to biblical church revitalization?
- c. What would help you preach the main point of a sermon in practical ways more confidently and consistently?

2. **Biblical Theology**

- a. Watch the video for “Biblical Theology” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.

- b. What is the connection between expositional preaching and biblical theology?
- c. What are the best ways to communicate the importance of theology to your church members?

3. The Gospel

- a. Watch the video for “The Gospel” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.

- b. Mark Dever comments “everything in a church flows from its understanding of the gospel, whether preaching, counseling, discipleship, music, evangelism, missions....” Choose one of the above listed ministries of the church and fill in the blanks in the sentence:

“Gospel-centered _____ is _____.

For example, “Gospel centered *preaching* is _____.”

Repeat this exercise with a second ministry of the church you deem essential for revitalization.

“Gospel-centered _____ is _____.

Repeat this exercise with a third ministry of the church you deem essential for revitalization.

“Gospel-centered _____ is _____.

4. Conversion

- a. Watch the video for “Conversion” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.

- b. What happens when a person is saved? Use 2 biblical examples to support your view.
- c. What are some false beliefs about conversion?
- d. Why is it essential in church revitalization to work to correct these false beliefs?

5. Evangelism

- a. Watch the video for “Evangelism” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.

- b. What details of the gospel must someone include to properly and effectively evangelize another person?
- c. What are the details that we are most tempted to leave out?

6. Church Membership

- a. Watch the video for “Church Membership” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>.
- b. How would you communicate the value of membership to a potential member at your church?
- c. Why is a biblical view of church membership essential to biblical church revitalization?

7. Church Discipline

- a. Watch the video for “Church Discipline” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>
- b. Do you think this is an essential mark of a healthy church? Why or why not?
- c. Describe the circumstances surrounding when church discipline was practiced in the Bible?
- d. Why do churches not practice this today?

8. Discipleship

- a. Watch the video for “Discipleship” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>
- b. How do you know when someone is growing as a Christian?
- c. How (other than preaching) are you personally helping people in your congregation mature in their Christlikeness and faith?

9. Leadership

- a. Watch the video for “Leadership” from the online teaching series: “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” at <https://www.9marks.org/about/the-nine-marks/>

- b. How is the role of a deacon different than the role of a pastor/elder?
- c. What impact can a misunderstanding of the roles of Biblical leadership have in the life of a church?

Are there any marks of a healthy church that you disagree with? If so, what would you change about them?

Are there any you would add?

Objective #4: Pastor will identify initial steps for leading a congregation toward greater gospel centrality and health.

Church health comes through gospel focus. It is that simple. In future cohort sessions you will consider how to consider how to strengthen specific ministries and functions of your church and refocus everything on the gospel and its transforming power.



For now, let's consider the current health of your church from your perspective. Imagine each of the following ministries were arrows in a target with the gospel at the center. Where would they land? Using a scale from 1 (outer ring of target) -10 (bullseye) rate their gospel focus.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ Prayer | ___ Partnerships w/Other Organizations |
| ___ Preaching/teaching | ___ Church Vision / Mission |
| ___ Discipleship | ___ Outreach Events |
| ___ Worship / Music | ___ Mercy Ministries / Benevolence |
| ___ Budget / Expenditures | ___ Adult Ministries |
| ___ Facility Usage | ___ Church's Website, Social Media |

Let's end by identifying two initial steps you can personally take to begin to lead your church towards greater gospel centrality and health. Reflect the above assessment and answer the following questions:

1. Which areas of your leadership and ministry need greater gospel centrality?
2. Which ministry needs your immediate attention to become more gospel-centered?

Be prepared to share your findings with your mentor and next cohort session.

SESSION FOUR: Gospel Centrality & Marks of a Healthy Church

Written by James
Nugent, SC Baptist
Convention

Objectives:

1. Gain a deeper Biblical understanding of how a Gospel-focused church is a healthy church.
2. Develop key markers for Gospel centrality and church health.
3. Evaluate the current degree of health in the local church.
4. Develop a strategy for moving a congregation towards health through Gospel centrality.

Session at a Glance:

- Warm-up
 - Guided Debrief: Good News
- Biblical Foundation
 - Guided Debrief: Biblical Marks of a Healthy Church
 - Analysis: Gospel Centrality in Philipians 1
- Wisdom to Consider
 - Guided Debrief: Gospel Centrality and Church Health (video)
 - Analysis: Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches in America in 2013
 - Brainstorm: Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches of Today
- Contextual Application
 - Self-Assessment: How Healthy are We?
 - Strategy Development: Punch List for a Healthier Church
- Prayer

Materials:

- Prepare to watch “*What Does It Mean to Be Gospel-Centered?*” Video produced by Crossway Publishers ([Link](#))
- Copies of *Analysis of Philipians 1*
- Copies for each participant of Rainer’s article, “*Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches in America in 2013*”

Warm-up

Opening

Welcome back! It's great to see everyone again. Let's start off today by having everyone give a quick update. What's one thing we can celebrate with you personally since we met last?

Prayer

What is one thing we can pray for together as you continue to lead your church to bear the marks of a healthy church focused on the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Lead a time of prayer.

Overview

Last session we focused on the need for healthy leaders that are called to lead God's people to be on mission for His glory in their local context. Churches cannot get healthier or stronger without healthy leaders. Today we continue the conversation on spiritual health and start to build the foundation for building a healthy church in your context.

Church health has been a conversation among pastors and consultants for years, but sadly very little lasting fruit has been produced. For many years, leaders focused on how to grow the church. By that standard, if the church was growing, we considered it healthy. Then came post-modernism and other cultural shifts and many of these same churches are struggling to keep their relevance in the community.

Recently the prescription for church health has shifted to Gospel centrality and away from church growth models. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that gives life to everyone who believes and life to the local church. Immediately after Peter's confession, Jesus said, **"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"** (Matthew 16:18). Jesus will build the Church not us.

Today's cohort will consider how refocusing on Gospel centrality can lead to church revitalization.

Guided Debrief: Good News

The idea of gospel centrality has gained traction over the last 10 years in church life. But the whole Bible moves us as individuals and churches towards a single-minded focus on the gospel. Let's think through what that might mean.

Directions:

- Using your journal, answer two opening questions:
 1. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, that the gospel is of “first importance.” So, how would you define the “gospel”?
 2. How do you define “gospel-centrality”?
- Give participants a few minutes to record their responses before debriefing.
 1. How did you define the gospel?
 2. How did you define gospel-centrality?

Let's watch a short video from Crossway Publisher answering the same question, “What is gospel centrality?”

Two more questions before we read Scripture together:

1. Is gospel centrality essential to being a healthy church? Why or why not?
2. What challenges could we anticipate as we seek to lead a congregation to orient its mission around being gospel centered?

As we consider the truths of God's Word together and remind ourselves of the power of the gospel to transform lives and strengthen God's Church, we trust fully in God's faithfulness with every step of faith we take on our revitalization journey.

Note: Have the following linked video ready before cohort starts.

Video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0350Y>

Biblical Foundation

Guided Debrief: A Healthy Church

Let's walk through the Bible passages in your self-study and begin to identify several marks of a healthy church. As we identify each mark, we'll add them to our "Marks of a Biblically Healthy Church" tear sheet.

1. Read John 15:5. Based on this passage, how did you describe a healthy church?
2. Reviewing your notes from Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 5, what marks of a healthy church would you add to our list?
3. What other marks would you include based on your review of 2 Corinthians 6, Matthew 12, and Ephesians 2.
4. Let's reread Hebrews 3:6 and 1 Timothy 3:14-15. What is the metaphor being used to describe the church?
5. What additional marks, if any, can we add to our list?
6. Are there any other marks from other passages of Scripture that you deem essential to add to our list?
7. So, if all these marks (and I'm sure a few others that we may have missed) are characteristics or natural outcomes of a "healthy church," how would you define a healthy church?

Prepare an example tear sheet as follows:

Marks of a Biblically
Healthy Church



Analysis: Gospel Centrality in Philipians 1

Directions: Provide a copy of Philipians 1 per participant for analysis.

Instruct them to do the following:

1. Circle any time the word "gospel" appears in the chapter.
2. Underline any reference to the impact the gospel makes in individual lives or the church.

After they have had enough, ask the following questions:

1. How many times did the word "gospel" appear in your chapter? (Add up the references to get a total count)
2. In what ways did the gospel impact individuals or the church as a whole?

Let's conclude this Bible study by completing the sentence,

"Gospel centrality in the early Church was marked by...."

The simple text of Philipians is provided for you at the end of this lesson.

Wisdom to Consider

As a means to create a conversation around gospel centrality and marks of a healthy church, we asked you to view a series of videos from Mark Dever's book, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*. By no more are we prescribing these marks as the ONLY way to define a Biblically healthy church, as each one of us will have to develop a definition to guide the mission of our local church.

In the *Gospel* video Dever states, **“Everything in a church flows from its understanding of the gospel, whether preaching, counseling, discipleship, music, evangelism, missions....”**

- Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- Is there any essential function or ministry of the church that does not derive its purpose from the gospel?
- What might be a 10th mark that could be added to the list?
- Using the marks as a reference, which in your ministry and context are most consistently centered on the gospel? Which are least centered on the gospel?

Analysis: Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches in America in 2013

Let's look back at an article written by Thom Rainer in 2013, “Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches in America” and see how the conversation of “church health” has shifted. These “rules of thumb” were once new ideas for pastors and leaders to consider and they may still be prevailing thoughts among your membership.

Directions: Provide a copy of Thom Rainer's article for each participant to read before dialoging with the following questions:

1. What seems to be Rainer's desired outcome for this article?
2. What “rules of thumb” are helpful to our discussion on church health?
3. How does this article contrast with “9 Marks of a Healthy Church” video series?

There is no shortage of wisdom for pastors to consider as they seek to lead their churches to be healthier. **How you define church health will inevitably determine which strategies you employ to accomplish the mission of God in your context.** As pastor, you must develop a definition for church health that will guide your next steps toward revitalization.

Let's pause for a moment and allow you to capture your thoughts in your journal before we continue.

Note: As facilitator, be sensitive to the array of theological frameworks in your cohort. You are creating a conversation, not endorsing a position or stirring up a controversy. Keep focused on the gospel yielding a healthier congregation.

Pause: Encourage participants to reflect on what they have discussed and write down any thoughts or action steps before continuing to contextual application.

Contextual Application

Many older homes have shifting foundations that expensively have to be restored. The same can be said of most churches as time has allowed for the mission to drift and cracks to form in the structures of ministry. Most of us are in contexts that have been fed a steady diet of “church growth” (bigger is better, attractional ministries, numbers driven) strategies for a healthier church. Often these strategies can compete with the gospel centrality focus we previously considered.

Using the provided tear sheet, make two marks on the continuum of church growth to gospel centrality to share your current reality with your peers. In this safe community we can lend support and encouragement with understanding and grace for all pastors seeking to lead their church toward greater health and mission. We are all at different starting points and the goal of this cohort is not to create conformity, but to help you lead your church in your context to fulfill God’s mission. Understand?

- Each of us will write the initials of our church (FBC) on the *congregation* continuum of church growth to gospel centrality to indicate where you believe they currently are as of today.
- Then, you will write your personal initials on the *pastor* continuum of church growth to gospel centrality to indicate your current focus as a pastoral leader.

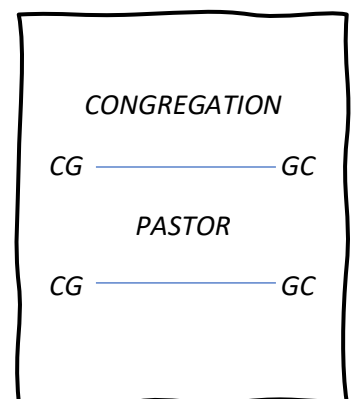
The church exists to accomplish God’s mission of making disciples and bringing glory to Him. Connecting the dots between the gospel, our doctrine, and our practice are essential to becoming a Biblically healthy congregation in our community.

Tony Merida, Pastor of Imago Dei, writes, “So let’s seek to create a gospel-centered culture in our churches and ministries. Exemplify gospel centrality in your personal life. Apply the gospel in your teaching. See the gospel in the church’s ordinances. Pray the gospel. Sing the gospel. Saturate your groups and classes with the gospel. Advance the gospel through evangelism and church planting. Celebrate the gospel as lives are changed. Evaluate your ministry by carefully noting how the gospel is being proclaimed and magnified.”¹

Let’s seek to sure up our foundations personally and corporately as we seek to fulfill God’s mission in our community.

This is a judgement free exercise. Help participants feel safe as we are all products of our education and environments. We are all in process of being changed.

Further explanation may be needed for the differences between church growth (numbers driven, program oriented) and gospel centrality.

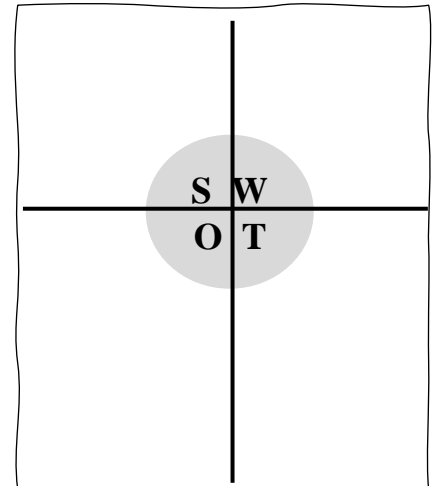


¹ Source: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/your-church-gospel-centered-think/>

Self- Assessment: Church Health S.W.O.T. Analysis

A S.W.O.T. analysis gives you the opportunity to complete a four-fold assessment for church health. Using the marks of a healthy church, identify which are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (as you perceive them). Allow your definitions for healthy church and gospel centrality to guide your assessment.

- **S IS FOR STRENGTHS**
 - What are we doing well as a church?
 - Who is making the biggest Kingdom impact?
- **W IS FOR WEAKNESSES**
 - Where can we grow?
 - Where are we spending time and energy without results?
- **O IS FOR OPPORTUNITIES**
 - Where is our untapped potential?
 - What is something new or innovative we could consider?
- **T IS FOR THREATS**
 - What hurdles do we need to overcome?
 - What are the potential external threats?



Directions:

1. Using a blank sheet of paper, create four quadrants and label them S, W, O, T in the center (show them an example).
2. Using our results of our previous brainstorm “*Marks of a Biblically Healthy Church*”, choose several marks and place them in one of the four quadrants according to your self-assessment.
3. We will debrief in a few minutes.
4. Questions for debrief:
 - a. Choose one strength and explain why you placed it in that category.
 - b. Choose one opportunity and explain why you placed it in that category.
 - c. Choose one weakness and explain why you placed it in that category.
 - d. Choose one threat and explain why you placed it in that category.
 - e. Is there any of the marks that you would like to discuss further with your peers to gain their feedback?

Strategy-Development: Punch List for a Healthier Church

The remaining lessons of your cohort training will give you ample opportunity to consider and develop focused strategies for revitalization.

For now, let's consider what your next steps will be and attempt to prioritize them in preparation for the subsequent lessons.

Directions: Based on your S.W.O.T. analysis and the topics discussed in today's cohort, make a punch list of "To Do" items by completing the following sentence:

For our church to be "Biblically Healthy and Gospel-Centered", we must....

Record your list in a notebook or file for future reference as you work through the remaining cohort lessons and study material.

Debrief with punch list with the following questions:

1. Would anyone like to share their list with us as we prepare to pay together?
2. Which one of these items is of most importance to you? Why?
3. Which item can you begin to work on now?

Prayer & Closing

Today we will conclude our cohort by praying together and reflecting on Paul's prayer for the Church in Philippians 1:3-11,

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Let's use this prayer as a model for our closing prayer. I'll guide us through a few focused prayer times and ask for your help in voicing a prayer for the group.

One at a time, enlist participants to offer the following prayer points on behalf of the group:

- *Prayer of thanksgiving for our church members and partners in the gospel*
- *Prayer for God to continue His work in our church members*
- *Prayer for God would deepen our love for our members*
- *Prayer that our love would abound more and more*
- *Prayer for wisdom and discernment for our church leadership*
- *Prayer for increasing holiness and righteousness in our lives as pastors.*

As facilitator, close the time by praying a blessing on the participants and their churches.

Analysis of Philippians – Chapter 1

¹ Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, ⁴ always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. ¹⁴ Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word fearlessly. ¹⁵ To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. ¹⁶ These preach out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. ¹⁸ What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice ¹⁹ because I know this will lead to my salvation through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. ²⁰ My eager expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

²¹ For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. ²³ I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better—²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵ Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting in Christ Jesus may abound. ²⁷ Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, contending together for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ not being frightened in any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of your salvation—and this is from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are engaged in the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches in America

By *Thom S. Rainer*

March 4, 2013

Using rules of thumb to gauge church health is problematic because they are, well, rules of thumb. There will always be exceptions, extenuating circumstances, and even disagreements on the right metrics.

I thus realize I am taking a risk when I publish these broad guidelines. There is the greater risk that someone will take these numbers as infallible and perfectly suited for his or her congregation. Please let wisdom prevail. So many factors, such as demographics, multiple sites, and history will always provide better insights than mere numbers.

Nevertheless, I provide you these ten rules of thumb as a starting point. You can then wisely discern how well and specifically they apply to your situation.

1. **Number of acres needed for church site:** one acre for every 125 in attendance. This ratio is based on useable acres. That number is affected by zoning requirements, water retention requirements, and property shape, to name a few.
2. **Parking Spaces:** one space for every 2 people in attendance.
3. **Parking Area:** 100 spaces for every acre used for parking.
4. **Evangelistic effectiveness:** 12 conversions per year for every 100 in average attendance. Different congregations used different terminology: conversions, baptisms, professions of faith, salvations, etc. In this metric, the number refers to those in the past year who became Christians and became active in that specific congregation.
5. **Seating space per attendee:** 27 inches. That number was 20 inches at one time. It has changed due to larger posteriors and greater cultural space desires.
6. **Maximum capacity of a facility:** 80% full. This old tried and true ratio is still good. When a facility is 80% full architecturally, it feels 100% full.
7. **Retention effectiveness:** For every 10 new members added per year, average worship attendance should increase by 7.
8. **Effective giving;** For every person in average attendance, including children and preschool, \$26.00 in budget receipts. For example, a church with an average worship attendance of 100 should average at least \$2,600 in weekly budget giving. This ratio is obviously greatly impacted by demographics.
9. **Maximum debt payment budgeted:** 33 percent of annual income for most churches. Up to 40 percent for fast-growing churches.
10. **Maximum debt owed:** 2.5 times the annual income of the church for the previous year.

Source: <https://churchanswers.com/blog/ten-rules-of-thumb-for-healthy-churches/comment-page-3/>

SESSION FOUR: Gospel Centrality & Marks of a Healthy Church

Lesson Objectives:

1. Gain a deeper Biblical understanding of how a gospel-focused church is a healthy church.
2. Develop key markers for gospel centrality and church health.
3. Evaluate the current degree of health in the local church.
4. Develop a strategy for moving a congregation towards health through gospel centrality.

- Questions for Your Coaching Session:

- What did you learn about what a healthy church is? How will that change your focus as a leader?
- What do you feel like you need to study further about how to lead a church towards a gospel-centered focus?
- Share your strategy for aligning your congregation to be focused on the gospel. Where will you start? Who will you recruit to help you?
- How can I help you as you move through this process of gospel-focus?
- How can I pray for you as a leader as you do this?
- How can we pray together for your congregation?



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