Church Health Assessment

Name of Church
Street Address
City/State

Contact Person

Taking the Pulse of Your Church

"It is God at work as Christians are brought back to values reflecting the biblical culture of the New Testament Church."

Faith Community Church
908 Oak St.
Anytown, MI 55555

Dear Friends,

As leaders of Church Doctor Ministries, we want to sincerely thank you for the privilege of serving your congregation through the *Church Health Assessment.* It is our prayer that this helps launch a conversation within your church about how you can build upon your strengths and start removing any ceilings that may be inhibiting your church's effectiveness. As you review these results, please remember that Church Doctor Ministries is your partner for a healthy and growing church!

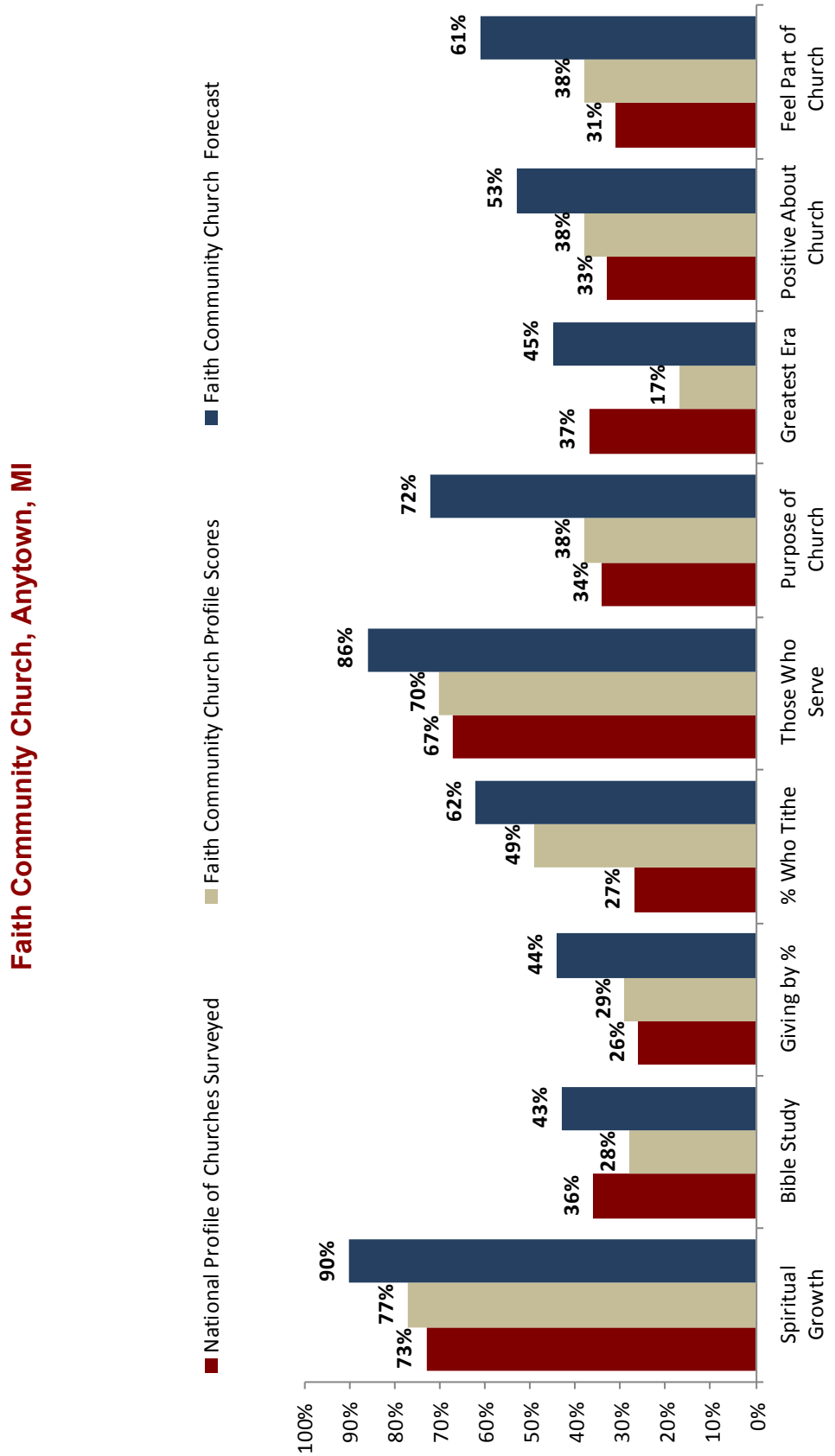
Dr. Kent R. Hunter
Founder

Tracee J. Swank
Leader

The results in this report collectively represent an area few other consultation services, denominational programs, or resources approach. This is the corporate culture, or ethos, of the local church. These categories represent the values, beliefs, attitudes, priorities, and worldviews of church members and leaders. Information is received through an anonymous questionnaire distributed to everyone in worship.

Please see the next page for a graph representing your church's results to the *Church Health Assessment* survey, compared to the national results, and projected change resulting from a *Diagnostic Consultation*

Faith Community Church, Anytown, MI



These nine categories represent the foundation for church transformation. The church is a living organism. Change comes as a movement, not a program. It is a process focused on the biblical concept of repentance, which technically means "changing your mind." Changing minds changes direction. People don't behave differently until they think differently. If significant change takes place in these 9 categories, recommendations made to improve the local church are seeds planted in fertile soil. This soil is the culture, or ethos, of a congregation, represented by these nine categories. 1 Peter 4:1-2, in the *Message* version, translated by Eugene Peterson, reads, "Since Jesus went through everything you're going through, and more, learn to *think* like him…then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want" (emphasis mine). These nine categories also represent results from the Church Doctor Ministries' *Diagnostic Consultation Process*, which establishes a transformational change in thinking. This is the foundation for healthy churches.

The bar graph on page 4 shows the scores of your church. These are compared to national averages for each category, with commentary, in the material below. The blue bar on the graph shows the forecast potential for increase in six months for your church. These forecasts are based on the research averages of those churches who participated in a *Diagnostic Consultation Process* in the national research.

Number 1: Spiritual Growth

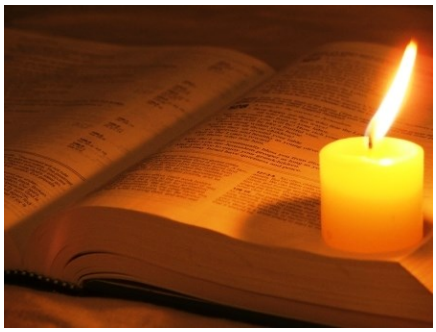
In this area, those in the church are asked:

> As a result of this church's ministry this past year, would you say your spiritual life could be described as:
>
> - Healthy — growing faster than before
> - Stable — continuing at a steady pace
> - Growing more slowly than before
> - Critical — declining
> - I'm not sure how to answer this

The research benchmark of potential increase for churches is a growth of 13% among those who say their spiritual growth is "healthy" or "stable." Note that among churches in the national survey, the spiritual growth is already high, at 73% — prior to the *Diagnostic Consultation.* Compare this to your church's score in the tan bar graph under Spiritual Growth on page 4. This level of response reflects the type of church with leadership that recognizes the value of a church consultation, which is the next logical step following the *Church Health Assessment*. A forecast of 13%, represented by the blue bar, provides a stronger platform for increased response toward effective ministry.

Number 2: Bible Study

Related to the general question of "spiritual growth" is this issue of Bible study. This is a specific and measurable result activity. Those at the church, both leaders and members, are asked:



- Do you attend a regularly scheduled Bible study either at church or in a home?
  - Yes
  - No

The increase here from 36% to 51% reflects a 15% increase in this area. The research base for most churches is 36%. (Compare your church in category #2 on page 4.) The forecast is a 15% increase for your church in this area, which is likely should your church participate in a *Diagnostic Consultation*. Since those in Bible study are most often the best recruits for leadership and involvement in the church, this is an important element of spiritual health and vitality for a church.

Number 3: Giving by Percentage

To approach giving from the concept of a percent rather than a monetary figure represents proportionate giving. It reflects the biblical view that Christians should "give as the Lord has given to you." The only possible way to approach that is by percentage, or proportionate giving. While often overlooked in the ministry of churches, the end result of this approach to giving has significant impact over history. Since most people, as they grow older, increase in earning power until retirement (excluding fluctuations in the economy), proportionate giving results in far greater revenue to be used for Kingdom purposes than when people operate from a mentality of "giving a few dollars more" each year or responding to funding appeals. This is a key element in God's design for funding the mission and ministry of the church. The questionnaire asks the following:

- When you figure how much money to give to God through your church, do you decide the amount by choosing a percentage to give or just a dollar amount?
  - A percentage
  - A dollar amount

The research baseline for churches is 26%. (Compare your church on page 4 under category 3. The forecast for potential increase is 15%, if your church were to engage in a *Consultation Process*. This increase, compounded over time, will help a church reach greater potential and provide financial stability. Further, as this worldview approach to stewardship becomes a pattern of life, it often influences others in the congregation, with ongoing teaching.

Number 4: Percentage of Those Who Tithe

While the previous question asked about one's approach to giving — a percentage or a dollar amount — this question focuses on the benchmark of "ten percent or more."

- Relative to your household income, which of these options best describes your regular giving to this church?
  - More than 10%
  - About 10%
  - 6% to 9%
  - 3% to 5%
  - 1% to 2%
  - Currently less than 1%

The responses to this multiple-choice question include 6 categories, starting (at the low end) with "currently less than 1%." The focus of measurement here is those who respond "about 10%," or "more than 10%." Research shows the average for churches

is 27% who indicate they give a tithe or more. The forecast potential for your church, participating in a *Diagnostic Consultation*, is a 13% growth in this category. This increased giving, multiplied each Sunday, 52 weeks a year, represents a growth in income that, in most congregations, is more than the entire cost of the *Consultation Process*.

Number 5: Those Who Serve

The data in this graphic reflects how often respondents serve in a ministry of their church.

- Do you serve in a ministry at this church?
  - Yes, regularly
  - Once in a while
  - Not now, but I did in the past
  - Never

The focus here is on those who say they serve "regularly" or "once in a while." The research baseline average for churches is 67%. Compare this to your church's results on page 4. The forecast of increased people who serve is 16%, achievable in a 6-month time frame, should your church participate in the *Consultation Process*. This not only represents a mindset of willingness to serve, but it also reflects those who have actually become active in serving. Consider the number of those who serve in your church and add 16%. It reflects the impact of this particular category.

Number 6: Purpose of the Church

A key element of challenge in an increasingly secularized culture is the number of Christians who do not understand the primary purpose of the church. The questionnaire asks:

The first 2 of these options are put into the possible response categories as "filler

- Choose one statement that BEST describes the main purpose of the church.
  - To teach people how to live the golden rule
  - To be the moral backbone of society
  - To make disciples
  - To provide a place of fellowship, to share God's love with one another

items" to provide 4 choices. They provide responses of 3% or less in most congregations. The key issues measured are reflected in the last 2 choices, "to make disciples," and "to provide a place of fellowship, to share God's love with one another." "Making disciples" is the declared purpose statement of most churches and denominations. The response "to provide a place of fellowship, to share God's love with one another" reflects more of a consumer mentality that excludes those

who are outside church. It is the "country club" worldview that limits missional receptivity among church members. (There is a margin of error of 3% to 4% of those who read this item and actually think outside the existing church membership, but select the last choice, "To provide a place of fellowship….")

The baseline average for churches nationally is 34% in this category. Compare this to your church's rating on page 4. The forecast of increase for those clearly articulating the purpose of the church for your congregation is 34%. The *Diagnostic Consultation Process* often increases the number of people in congregations who "get it." This issue of purpose is fundamental. Peter Drucker, the great management and leadership teacher and author, said, "When you have forgotten what business you're in (what is your purpose), you're about to go out of business." While speaking primarily about purpose of secular businesses, Drucker, an active Christian, understood the value of this for the churches as well. The purpose of the church is a lens through which we prioritize

expenditures, develop staff, utilize our volunteer energy, choose priorities, and operate our churches. This is an element of primary importance for churches to become more effective for the Great Commission. An increase of those who "get it" often provides a tipping point for a church culture that changes from maintenance to mission.

Number 7: Greatest Era

In this item, members were asked:

- What do you think is the greatest era of this church?
  - 40-60 years ago
  - 20-40 years ago
  - 10-20 years ago
  - The last 10 years
  - The next 10 years
  - Starting 10 years from now

With the inclusion of the last 2 categories, this item changes from a history question to an attitude issue. Those who focus on the first 3 responses remember the "good ole days" and often wish the church was like it used to be. With this attitude, they are often opposed to any change. This was the issue Jesus addressed, reflecting on the need for "new wineskins." Those included in this graphic are future-oriented, answering "the next 10 years" or "starting 10 years from now." They are open to appropriate innovation and change. They are "Early Adopters" and are important for any renewal within a congregation. This is an extremely important dynamic for transformation within the church. The old joke, "How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb?" has the answer, "Only one, if he/she wants to!" Another humorous response is this answer: "Who said anything about change?"

The research benchmark national average is 37%. Compare your church's rating on page 4. The forecast potential increase for your church is 28%. This can be another critical tipping point. Without influencing this area, the momentum for mission is very difficult in a local congregation. This shows how outside intervention through a *Diagnostic Consultation Process* provides the climate for positive change within a church.

Number 8: Positive about the Church

In this item, those in your church were asked to respond in this way: "For the statement listed below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree."

- Statement: "I have a very positive attitude about this church. I would recommend it to my friends." The categories for response are:
  - Strongly disagree
  - Mostly disagree
  - Not sure how to answer
  - Mostly agree
  - Strongly agree

Those who have a positive outlook about the church are more likely to financially sacrifice, serve, and speak more positively about the church to their friends. This is another key momentum issue. The national baseline average for churches is 33%. On page 4, look at category 8 and compare the results for your church. Through the consultation process, the percentage of those in your church who say they "strongly agree" and are

very positive in their attitude toward your church rises by 15%. This increases the critical mass of people who would recommend your church to their friends. In the first 6 months of the *Diagnostic Consultation Process*, the number moves to a point of critical mass for most congregations.

Number 9: Feel A Part of the Church

In this item, respondents are asked to identify to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement:

- I really feel like I am a part of this church.
  - Strongly disagree
  - Mostly disagree
  - Not sure how to answer
  - Mostly agree
  - Strongly agree

This research reflects the percentage of those in the church who said "strongly agree." The baseline for churches in the research for this category is 31%. See page 4 for your congregation's results. The forecast for your church, 6 months after the *Diagnostic Consultation Process* is an increase of 23%.

This is the issue of ownership. Ownership is critical for developing momentum to move forward. The ability to develop "buy-in" is highly influenced by the level to which people feel like they are a part of their church. This is another important dimension of church culture providing a platform for positive movement toward effective results.

Summary

Most churches that do not achieve optimal productivity are led by those who are challenged in four strategic areas:

- They fail to grasp the value of biblical culture.
- They jump at quick-fix programs, overlooking the importance of values, beliefs, attitudes, priorities, and worldviews.
- They spend energy, time, and money on symptom-solving rather than getting to the causative issues that drive behavior.
- They work hard at change, but fail to utilize the catalytic power of intervention from an outside source.

The exciting potential for many congregations can be summarized around several issues:

- 95% of what most churches do is effective. The other 5%, while proportionately small, makes almost 100% of the difference for the church to achieve its missional goals.
- Primary to what churches do is the way members think. Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by a complete renewal of your mind” — the way we think.
- Evidence shows that many members, with intervention help, can and will change the way they think. When this happens, there is a tipping point in momentum because the cultural environment, by God’s power and grace, has been transformed and achieves critical mass.
- This happens through a process of intervention, not a program or event. Yet, within 6 months, measurable changes can and do occur. This provides the platform for appropriate innovation and change toward more productive ministry. The second 6-month segment of the *Diagnostic Consultation Process* builds toward a “vision-to-action” model. Church members respond to tangible recommendations made by the consultant, write Action Plans, are held accountable, and are coached by the consultant.
- This is more than a technique or strategy. It is God at work as church members are brought back to values reflecting the biblical culture of the New Testament Church.

Source: This research is based on churches served by Church Doctor Ministries (www.churchdoctor.org) using the *Diagnostic Consultation Process*. It represents all churches, not a selected few. It represents churches from several different denominations, movements, and fellowships. The churches are of various sizes. They include churches in various "life situations:" inner-city, rural, and suburban. They are geographically distributed throughout the U.S. Research leadership provided by Kent R. Hunter (Ph.D, D.Min), founder and Tracee Swank, Leader. Support team: Jason Atkinson and Kenzie Hackelberg.
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Pray about these possible next steps:

- Host a day-long workshop:

"Turning Your Church Inside Out" - A workshop outlining an approach to Christian ministry that engages the culture to help reach people for Christ.

"Missionary Outreach Clinic" - A workshop teaching missionary training to reach 21st Century young adults and biblical principles for more effective outreach in your culture.

- Consider a *Special Focus Consultation* to address a specific area of this report.

- Consider a next-step consultation such as a *Diagnostic Consultation* for a more intensive and extensive diagnosis of core competencies or ceilings limiting your church's effectiveness.

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