



# BECOME A CHURCH WITH IMPACT!

## INTRODUCTION TO TAKE YOUR CHURCH'S PULSE® TOOL

Take Your Church's Pulse is a diagnostic tool that leads to healthy conversations for congregational change. Included in this manual is an overview of the tool; how it can be used to strengthen your church; and worksheets.



## OVERVIEW OF THE TOOL

Take Your Church's Pulse (TYCP) is an instrument that can help you diagnose your congregation's health by evaluating several key areas of church life. It serves as a tool for self-evaluation and planning in the local church, two important processes for churches that seek both quantitative and qualitative growth.

In addition to serving as a measuring instrument that reveals vital information about the state of a congregation's health, the purpose of TYCP is to encourage dialogue and deep reflection among leaders, members, and pastors of local churches regarding the important elements that determine a congregation's development and health.

The following ten characteristics of a healthy church are described in the book *Take Your Church's Pulse*.<sup>1</sup> They are divided into two groups: five key commitments and five vital functions.

5 KEY COMMITMENTS	5 VITAL FUNCTIONS
A clear and inspiring vision	Compelling witness
A mobilizing leadership	Comprehensive discipleship
A motivated ministering body	Compassionate service
Proper stewardship of resources	Caring and welcoming community
Integration of text and context	Dynamic worship and prayer

### CHURCH LIFE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

- A. Past: The History Timeline will help a congregation understand its past.
- B. Present: The TYCP survey will provide a picture of the present.
- C. Future: The Strategic Planning Process & Hopes and Dreams looks forward.

# TIMELINE | A tool to help you understand the past and have a vision for the future.

Before analyzing the results of the Take Your Church's Pulse questionnaires, it is helpful to create a timeline of your church's history. Gather your congregation's leaders together and review the history of your congregation so you can see where you are at the present. Understanding the past will also help you envision what God wants you to be and do in the future. To create the timeline we recommend putting some large sheets of paper on the walls or using a chalkboard or whiteboard. Put a long horizontal line on the paper and follow these steps:

- 1. Individually.** Ask all the participants to write down on a small sheet of paper what they believe are the most important moments in the congregation's history. Have people think about the beginnings, the transitions of leadership, successes, conflicts that left a mark on the congregation, etc. Include also events in the community or country that were significant.
- 2. Form groups of 4-7 people and share your lists in the groups.** Share your individual lists, talking about the importance of each event or person in the history of the congregation. As a group, put each important person or event on a sheet of paper (8½ x 11 sheet). These will be hung on the large timeline on the wall in step 3.
- 3. Gather the whole group together.** Put an X on the timeline on the wall to signify the start of the church. Invite people to talk about the founding of the church using the questions below. (For things far in the past, you'll need to find older people who can help you remember how the church started!)

Ask these questions about the founding of the church:

- a. What was the spirit and purpose of the church at its start?
- b. Who were the key people who started the church?
- c. What marks did the founders of the church leave on its ministry?
- d. What were the strengths and weaknesses of that time?

Put the important events and people identified by the groups on the timeline in the correct place. If different groups mention the same things, put the papers on top of each other on the same part of the timeline. Examples of items for the timeline:

Changes of pastor	Times of growth or decrease
Changes in location or construction	Key people, etc.
Changes in name or council	Changes in the community or country
Changes in leadership	Divisions, debates, conflicts, controversies, etc.

Answer the following questions for each event:

- a. What was the importance of this event for the congregation?
- b. What marks did that event leave on the ministry of the church?
- c. What were the strong points and weak points of that time?

After you have placed the events on the timeline, put a "P" to indicate the present and use these questions to describe what the church is like in the present.

Answer these questions:

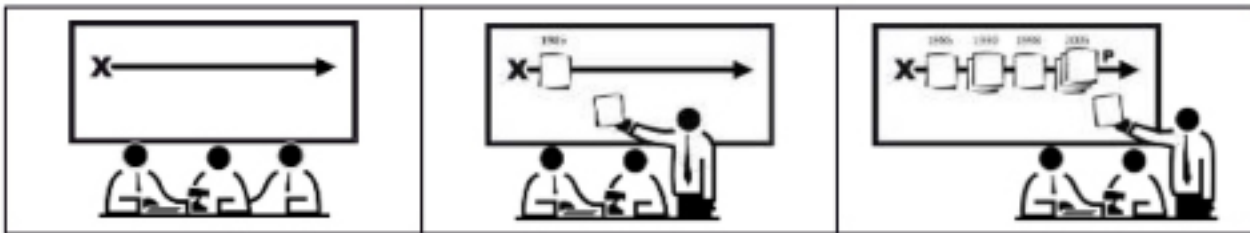
- How has the past influenced who we are today?
- What aspects of the past do we want to celebrate and continue?
- What aspects of the past require healing and reconciliation?
- What aspects of the past do we want to leave behind and change?

Celebrate the good aspects of your congregation’s history and God’s faithfulness to the church. Pay attention to the good parts as much as to the painful parts of the church’s past. Both are important.

Spend time in prayer: thank God for what He has done in and through your congregation in the past; confess sins that you have become aware of in the congregation’s life; ask God to bless the evaluation process (Take Your Church’s Pulse Questionnaires) so you can work toward an even better future for His glory. You can pray in small groups first and then as a whole group.

Finish this process by answering these questions. Be sure to record your answers so they can be used in the strategic planning process that follows the Take Your Church’s Pulse Evaluation process.

- When we look toward the future, what do we see? What do you think God wants us to be or do?
- What obstacles do we have?
- What institutional factors (of the church) should we take into consideration?
- What contextual factors (of the community) should we take into consideration?
- What advantages and resources do we have?



## Example of the “New Jerusalem Church”

X

1985	1990	1998	2005	2008
Founding of the church by Rev. Henderson Urban area with much growth	Construction & accelerated growth Over 200 people in attendance	Conflict over music styles 11 families leave with the co-pastor, Rev. Burton Some important factories close Difficult economy for the church	Stability and reconciliation Little growth in the church Evaluation of the ministry	Rev. Henderson dies

# THE TAKE YOUR CHURCH'S PULSE PROCESS

The survey is a conversation starter between the leadership of the church and the members. The key idea is to discover where the Church has been, by God's grace, and where it is going. These tools will help a congregation have healthy conversations about their **IDENTITY** and their **VOCATION** in Christ in a given community.

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

### General Recommendations for the User

- This is a process rather than an activity.
- The questionnaire should be filled out by as many church members as possible.
- The form should be filled out by all of the leaders who participate in the process.
- The spirit of the process should be constructive.

### Suggested Steps for the Process

1. Explore the tool by downloading it from the website.
2. Secure agreement from your church leadership to begin the process.
3. Sign up - have your pastor go to <http://cogop.org/cbl/course-descriptions-and-resources/> and find the survey. There is an option to sign up online that will provide an electronic survey for everyone to fill out.
4. Share the survey link with leadership first.
5. Share the link with the congregation and encourage everyone to fill it out.
6. Look at the results and determine a strategy for selecting priorities for your goals.
7. Share the results with the congregation and discuss them.
8. Decide the next steps for your church's future.

Note: This tool is only worth the healthy conversation that it engenders among leaders who seek to make prayerful changes led by the Holy Spirit to be a better witness for the Kingdom of God in their community. Remember that becoming a healthier church is a process that needs to be rooted in God's Word and will.

## OPTIONS IN CONDUCTING THE SURVEY

- A. Paper Option
- B. Digital Online Option

## PRACTICE FILLING OUT THE FIRST TWO VITAL SIGNS

If you have not filled out the survey already this is the time to fill out a couple categories of the tool right on to the TABULATION SHEET provided.

# 1. VISION

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The church leadership gathers every year to evaluate the ministry and plan for the future.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Our church has a clear and defined vision for a preferred future.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Our church leadership knows where it wants to take the congregation two years from now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The pastor and the leaders communicate the vision clearly to the congregation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I feel inspired by the vision of the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. I know the vision and plan of the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. I feel a sense of enthusiasm over the future of our church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. LEADERSHIP

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The leaders create opportunities for developing new leaders.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are leaders being trained and prepared for future positions of leadership.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I feel that the leadership circle of the church seeks to reproduce itself and grow.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I can identify at least two new leaders who have been developed in the past year.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The leaders help and guide those desiring to become active in the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The quality of our leaders in the church is very good.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The leaders are decisive in the direction they want to lead the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. BODY MOBILIZED ACCORDING TO GIFTS

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The church helps members to discover their gifts for ministry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The church leadership trains members according to their gifts to serve.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The church provides clear information to those who would like to serve in their area of giftedness.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I feel the church has made it possible for me to use my gifts appropriately.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I've been trained to serve or lead in the congregation and community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. There are ample opportunities of service and ministry for those who wish to get involved.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Our ministry structure is functional for mobilizing people into ministry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_



## 4. RESOURCES

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. Our facilities are appropriate for carrying out our calling and ministry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Our church practices good stewardship in terms of handling the budget well.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Most people give willingly of their time to serve the church and its ministry.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Our church teaches regularly about stewardship and tithing.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I feel personally motivated to contribute resources to the ministry of our church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The leaders keep the members sufficiently informed about the use of the church's finances.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The congregation takes care of the pastor and its leaders.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

# 5. CONNECTION BETWEEN TEXT AND CONTEXT

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. Leaders apply Kingdom values to the daily challenges in the community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The Word of God is the main guide for the leadership of the Church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. It is evident that the Word of God is used in the church's meetings and services.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The Bible guides us in trying to resolve the problems in our community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Our church is aware of the needs in our social context.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Our church tries hard to build relationships in the community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. People see our church as a positive agent of change in our community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. EVANGELISM

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. Our church has a clear plan to reach the community with the Good News of the Kingdom.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Our church is active in building relationships with the unbelievers of our community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Our church trains and equips its members to give witness in the community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. I've been personally trained to contribute to the evangelistic efforts of the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I feel personally involved in the evangelistic task of our congregation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. I can identify new people in our church that came in the past year as a result of my evangelistic efforts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Our church participates in world mission efforts.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

# 7. EDUCATION AND DISCIPLESHIP

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The church promotes practices of education and discipleship appropriate to all ages.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Our teachers are effective in discipling/teaching our members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When a new person accepts Christ he or she is immediately disciplined by someone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. As time goes on it becomes increasingly evident that the members live under the guidance of the Spirit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The church is helping me grow spiritually.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. I am a member of a small group that helps me grow spiritually.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Our church promotes a life of prayer.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. SERVICE WITH THE COMMUNITY

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. Our church helps people with their physical needs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Our church helps people find work, clothing, and food as necessary.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Our church provides sufficient training to its members to serve with the community with its needs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The church has referral agreements with other organizations that can lend practical services to those in need.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The church provides counseling for people that need it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. The people of the community know that we want to demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The church works together with community leaders to improve the social context.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

# 9. FELLOWSHIP

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The ministry of the church helps members grow in friendly relationship with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Visitors and new members are intentionally welcomed into the church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. When someone visits our church we follow-up with them that same week.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Our church has good counseling and pastoral care available for members who need emotional and relational help.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. There is a positive fellowship in our church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Members gather to share a meal or visit each other regularly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Conflicts in the congregation are resolved biblically.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

# 10. WORSHIP

COMPLETELY DISAGREE

COMPLETELY AGREE

1. The worship in our church nurtures and strengthens us for the Christian life.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The music used in services helps the congregation experience the living presence of God.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The messages preached are appreciated by the congregation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Our worship services attract youth.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I feel comfortable inviting a friend or relative to Church.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Looking at the whole worship experience, I feel satisfied overall.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. In our worship services the triune God is recognized: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_



	COMMITMENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH							FUNCTIONS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH				
	VISION	LEADERSHIP	MOBILIZED BODY	RESOURCES	TEXT AND CONTEXT	EVANGELISM	EDUCATION & DISCIPLESHIP	SERVICE	FELLOWSHIP	WORSHIP		
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
TOTAL ADD												
<b>DIVIDE</b>												
NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		
<b>EQUAL</b>												
AVERAGE												

BECOME A CHURCH WITH IMPACT!

TAKE YOUR CHURCH'S PULSE  
TABULATION



# VITAL SIGNS OF THE HEALTHY CHURCH

