

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

M.A. in Missional Leadership

Henrik Andersen

Springdale College

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Declaration

I confirm that this work and its wording are my own, the word count is approximately 21,801 words¹ and that I have given due acknowledgement to sources used. I have retained a hardcopy of this work and have received and read copies of the Springdale College and University of Wales unfair practice, verification and appeals procedures.

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¹ Excluding Abstract, Bibliography and Appendices

MA Missional Leadership

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

Abstract

The Church in the Western world faces a missionary challenge. An increasing part of the population have had no real interaction with any kind of church and it seems unlikely they in any great numbers ever will cross the threshold of the church in the course of their normal everyday life. Many churches are struggling to face this challenge. Church Growth programmes have come and gone with limited effect, beyond perhaps moving Christians from one church to another. The missionary church discussion argues for a totally different approach. The church is not commissioned to call people to church, but it is sent to be a foretaste, sign and witness of the Kingdom of God in the world. If the church is to reach people with the good news of the Kingdom, they need to be mission-shaped.

This study suggests a number of indicators of mission-shape and examines whether implementing the concept known as Natural Church Development naturally leads a church to becoming more mission-shaped and therefore better equipped to face the missionary challenge. Through analysis of the literature published by Natural Church Development and research carried out in three churches engaging with the concept it is concluded that Natural Church Development does help churches with the missionary challenge. Based on the findings of the research it is concluded that when a church implements a Natural Church Development approach, then mission-shaped development happens all by itself.

MA Missional Leadership

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And finally, to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The motivation for this dissertation grows out of my long involvement with Natural Church Development (NCD). In the early and mid-nineties I was involved with the DAWN (Discipling A Whole Nation) strategy in my native Denmark. As in the UK, we did our research, convened a conference and boldly set goals for the number of churches to be planted by the year 2000. While we did manage to put church planting on the agenda of the churches in Denmark and churches were planted, we had to realise that we did not come anywhere close to realising those goals, nor see the wave of churches planted hoped and prayed for. Reflecting on the process one conclusion was that we had not considered the state of many churches in Denmark and that *healthy parents were needed to have healthy children*. Interestingly it seems that Booker and Ireland comes to a similar conclusion concerning the UK scene (Booker & Ireland, 2003, p. 157).

Our conclusion led us to engage with Natural Church Development and launch a 2-year process of training church leaders from 7 different denominations in the concept and implementation of NCD. The initiators of the process and the denominations behind it were the same as those involved in the DAWN strategy. The original motivation for our NCD involvement was one of preparing the churches in Denmark for mission and church planting, which is significant in the light of this dissertation.

Since then I have been involved in establishing NCD ministry in Denmark and Latvia, and in developing it in the UK. The reason for mentioning this is to explain my approach to the subject, but also from the beginning to 'declare an interest.' I cannot claim to approach the subject from a disengaged or purely academic angle. I do, however, have a sincere wish to find the answer to the question below and have no reason to defend or justify NCD, should the findings of this study not be supportive of the concept in a missional perspective.

Research Question

The idea of looking into the relationship between NCD and missionality developed early in my studies in Missional Leadership. It is motivated not only by my NCD engagement, but by a foundational interest in mission. I had never considered any tension between an NCD approach and mission, and was not aware of the critical attitude of several missional proponents towards NCD. My motivation was not to counter these proponents, but to explore what, if any, the relation is between NCD and the missionality of a church.

The title chosen for the dissertation is

Mission-Shaped Church Development – does it happen all by itself?

and the aim of the dissertation is to consider whether increase in quality in a church also results in a more mission-shaped church.

Background

With the publication of *Natural Church Development* (Schwarz C. A., 1996) a new approach to church development was introduced. Not only were new concepts and words brought to the table, but also, probably for the first time ever, an empirical tested way of measuring church quality was introduced. Since then 84,824 church surveys have been conducted in more than 60 countries round the world and local churches have been able to evaluate their quality in the eight quality characteristics defined by Natural Church Development (NCD).²

In 2005 NCD published the results of all churches worldwide that had conducted 3 surveys or more. It might not be surprising that they on average had increased their quality as defined by NCD, but other results appeared astounding: Over a period of 31 months these

² http://www.ncdnet.org/ncd/ncd_portal.html accessed 19. May 2013

churches (on average) had increased their growth rate with 51% and at the same time the leaders of these churches confessed to their workload having been diminished. Based on the research Schwarz estimated that due to the increase in growth rate an additional 1.3 million people have joined these churches. Some of this growth naturally stems from transfer growth, but according to Schwarz the NCD research also reveals that the percentage of conversion growth has increased (Schwarz C. A., 2005, pp. 12-13).

At the same time as NCD was introduced and received round the world the missional conversation that had grown out of especially the work of Lesslie Newbigin was also developing. *Natural Church Development* was first published in 1996 and *Missional Church* was published in 1998. While they were contemporaries, and both recognised the challenges of post-Christendom society posed to the Church (Schwarz C. A., 1999, p. 264), their approaches appeared very different and their roads never crossing. Indeed, while there in the NCD literature is no reference to the missional movement, there is in the missional “camp” an explicit scepticism towards church growth and renewal programmes, of which NCD was perceived to be a part. Moynagh is of the opinion that many of what he calls the “touted strategies to promote church growth” only works in limited cases (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 1808-10) and Eddie Gibbs agrees when claiming that a succession of programmes have come and gone “without being able to deliver on their promises, unable to reverse the downward numerical trends” (Gibbs, 2009, p. 41).

There is an obvious discrepancy between these claims and those of NCD. It is, however, interesting to note that Schwarz seems to agree with them, at least to some degree. He encourages churches to say goodbye to “human success programmes” and proposes that it is not the motivation of proponents of such programmes that are necessarily wrong but their approach, the “problem is that their *methods* are insufficient because they are inconsistent

with God's plan." He then goes on to claim that Natural Church Development fundamentally has a different approach to the growth of the church (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 8).

While neither Moynagh nor Gibbs refers to NCD, other advocates of the missional movement have been more explicit. Gelder sees NCD as a development of traditional church growth approaches and places it in the "market driven" category (McIntosh, 2004, p. 79) and he uses Natural Church Development as an illustration of church renewal programmes which is focussed more on attracting people into the church rather than the Kingdom of God (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 163). Snyder is generally positive towards NCD, but warns that "church health can focus too narrowly on the church and miss the fact that the church exists not for itself but for God's mission in the world" (McIntosh, 2004, p. 215). Engen and Roxburgh are probably the most explicit critics of NCD. Roxburgh and his co-author Boren refer directly to NCD when questioning the idea that a focus on church health would lead to engagement in mission and claim that this is not the case. According to them "we just get more focused on ourselves in a different way," and the "belief that internal renewal or health leads to missional life is false" (Roxburgh & Boren, 2009, p. 83). Engen goes even further and says that NCD can "move the church toward introversion and irrelevance, which can increase the illness of the church rather than its health" (McIntosh, 2004, p. 235).

The results published by NCD do not prove mission or an increased mission-shape in and of themselves. They do, however, raise the question of what happens when a church pursues a NCD approach and whether the "all by itself" principle supported by NCD naturally leads to mission. The answer from at least part of the missional movement is a resounding *no*. They agree on the ineffectiveness of NCD, although they do not refer to any research that actually has proven this or refute the results published by NCD. To them NCD is apparently just another church growth programme moving the focus from, or maybe even denying, the missionary reality of the church. Schwarz on the other hand seems to acknowledge that reality

and that people have left the “sphere of the influence” of the established church and yet he sees Natural Church Development as a way to meet this challenge, not ignore it.

This tension is the background to this dissertation. Is NCD just another programme that cannot deliver on its promises, an approach that results in the church becoming introvert and irrelevant? Or is it, as Schwarz writes, a way of realising the potential imparted by God into the church, of equipping believers to influence with the gospel their “sphere of influence”, and of helping churches to “fulfil their God-given purpose, [to] develop their own individuality, [and to] influence and transform society” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 7)?

Context

The research part of this dissertation will focus on Salvation Army churches in the UK. The reason for this is both practical and strategic. My engagement with The Salvation Army is life-long and I have been an officer (pastor) since 1986. From 2006 to 2009 I was placed in the UK and involved in supporting and developing the implementation of NCD on a national scale in The Salvation Army. This involvement made it possible and relatively easy for me to identify churches to participate in the research and also to have the recommendation of the national leadership when approaching the churches.

The decision is, however, also strategic. I minister in The Salvation Army, which is my primary sphere of influence. As a national leader with some international influence I am at a stage where I question whether I serve the mission of The Salvation Army right by promoting NCD, or whether there are better ways of investing our resources into the Kingdom of God and hopefully this research can help to clarify this.

Missionary, Missional or Mission-shaped?

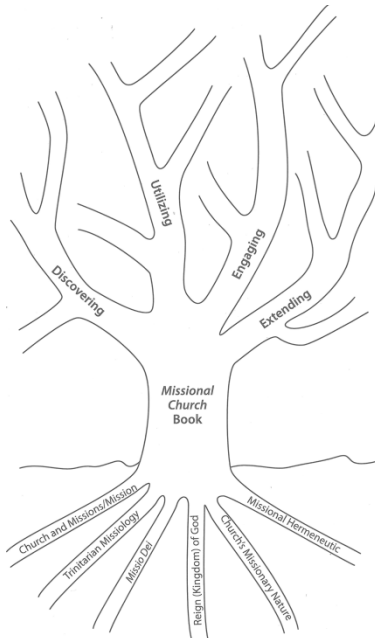
When approaching the subject chosen one is faced with the choice of what vocabulary to use. With Natural Church Development there is no real issue; it is well defined and the

vocabulary consistent. It is not quite as straightforward when it comes to mission. Newbigin used the term *missionary Church* (Newbigin, 1995), as does Engen (Engen, 1991). Since the publication of *Missional Church* (Guder, 1998) numerous books have adopted the term *missional church*, even to a degree where Roxburgh claims that the word missional “seems to have travelled the remarkable path of going from obscurity to banality in only one decade” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 1). The Anglican Church published a report on church planting and fresh expressions in 2004 and used *missionary church* in the report, while entitled it *Mission-shaped Church* (Cray, 2009). Since then, a number of publications in the UK have used *mission-shaped* in their titles and with a tendency to primarily use missionary in the text (Robinson, 2006; Croft, 2008).

All three terms are variations on a theme and can be used interchangeable as can be seen in Reggie McNeal’s definition: “A missional church is a church that is shaped by participating in God’s mission” (McNeal, 2009, p. 21). For this dissertation, however, I have chosen to follow *Mission-shaped Church* framework and primarily use the terms *missionary* and *mission-shaped*. This is not motivated by the *banality* threatening the word *missional*, but for three main reasons:

1) Although the term *missional* was not invented by the authors of *Missional Church*, Gelder and Zscheile sees the book as highly influential in “popularizing the word ‘missional’” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 41). The book addressed the situation in North America (Guder, 1998) and together with subsequent “missional books” influenced by it have a tendency to assume an American context in their discussion. While this is natural, it can be unhelpful in a European setting, at least if approached uncritically.

2) There is a tendency towards the authors of the *Missional Church* wanting to monopolise the missionary church conversation. This is illustrated by Gelder and Zscheile use of a tree to “map the missional conversation in terms both of its original sources and its current expressions.” A number of roots are identified together with 4 main branches that are



Missional Conversation Tree
(Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 11)

extended into sub-branches. The stem of the tree, between the roots and the branches, is identified as “*Missional Church Book*.” Taken at face value it gives the impression that inspiration from e.g. Barth and Newbigin only flows to the church at large through the book *Missional Church*. *Mission-shaped Church* is in the explanation to the illustration placed in a sub-branch of the *extending branch*. Again, taken at face value this suggests, that *Mission-Shaped Church* developed out of what was presented in *Missional Church*. This is quite a claim, especially as the word missional

does not appear in *Mission-shaped Church* or any references to *Missional Church*.

3) Finally, the missional approach seems to be more exclusive than a mission-shaped approach. The tendency is to talk about *the* missional church, whereas it tends to be *a* mission-shaped or *a* missionary church in the mission-shaped church literature. Maybe this is just semantics; but one can from the missional literature sometime get the impression that almost a specific model is being presented or at least an understanding with limited possibility for variations.³

³ While the above outlines the motivation for using mission-shaped language and framework it is not to be taken as a general critique of the content of *Missional Church* or *The*

Content

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The subject at hand will be introduced together with an explanation of the motivation for the dissertation. The research question will be presented and as will an initial overview of some of the issues involved.

Chapter 2 –Mission-shaped Church

It will first be explore why the issue of a missionary church has come into focus as widely as is the case. Following this it will be discussed whether mission is *the* essence of the church or *of* the essence of the church. Then the actual question of what a mission-shaped church is will be approached, suggesting 5 characteristics of a mission-shaped church. Finally, a number of indicators of a mission-shaped church will be suggested to be used when evaluating the influence of NCD on a church.

Chapter 3 – Introducing Natural Church Development

After a short historical introduction, focus will be given to the main components of NCD. The presentation of NCD will be based on the writings of Christian A. Schwarz, primarily on the book *Color Your World with Natural Church Development* (Schwarz C. A., 2005) and a number of the so called *3 Colour* books⁴. Reference will also be made to earlier books, especially *Natural Church Development* (Schwarz C. A., 1996) and *Paradigm Shift in the Church* (Schwarz C. A., 1999).

Missional Church in Perspective. Both are excellent and influential books and will be quoted liberally through-out this dissertation, but within the mission-shaped framework.

⁴ Most of Christian Schwarz' books are not published in UK editions and so the title of most books by him used in this work contains the word "color". Throughout this work the American spelling will be used when referring directly to a title, but otherwise the English spelling (colour) will be used.

Chapter 4 – The research

The research project carried out in 3 local churches will be introduced, explained and evaluated.

Chapter 5 – The findings

This chapter will present the actual findings of the research including an evaluation to what extent the previously identified indicators of a mission-shaped church can be found in the participating churches and whether their NCD engagement has had any influence on this.

Chapter 6 – Discussion

First an analysis of the main teaching of NCD will be evaluated and discussed in a mission-shaped perspective, seeking to show to what degree there are similarities or disagreement between the two. This will be followed by an evaluation of the findings of the research project and to what extent a NCD engagement has led to a more mission-shaped church.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

The final conclusion to the research question will be made. Areas for new research and study relating to the relationship between NCD and a mission-shaped church will be suggested, and proposals for improving the NCD approach will be given.

Chapter 2: Mission-shaped Church

The origins of the missionary church discussion

While Europe, as Newbigin has pointed out, never was a Christian society, where every person's or even the majority of the population's lifestyle and behaviour was in accordance with the Christian Gospel, then it was Christian in the sense that "its public truth was shaped by the biblical story with its centre in the incarnation of the Word in Jesus" (Newbigin, 1989, p. 222). Today that scene has changed dramatically. The *Mission-shaped Church* report refers to research showing that 40% of the UK population can be described as "Non-churched," describing this group as "the increasingly large proportion of society that has no history of church attendance – perhaps for several generations." The report furthermore claims that in urban areas the percentage of non-churched can be as high as 80% (Cray, 2009, pp. 37-39). The consequence for the Church is that it is no longer sufficient for it to operate in a pastoral mode, nor is it any longer relevant to think of mission as calling people 'back to church.'

While the above development partly is a consequence of the growing secularism in the Western society, it would be a misreading of the situation if all blame was placed outside the church. There are European churches which in the same period have experienced significant growth. While this could be ascribed to transfer growth and/or reaching the de-churched, there is also an increasing number of people attracted to e.g. Islam and various New Age expressions. With this in mind one has to conclude that the decline in church attendance and affiliation may not solely be ascribed to the influence of secularisation (Gibbs, 2001, p. 23). Moynagh picks this up and doubts whether the premise, that a consequence of modernisation always will be a decrease in need for religion is valid and goes on to ask the poignant question:

"...might the falling demand for religion be due to deficiencies in what the church offers – not shortcomings in the Christian story, but

in how the church embodies the story? Has the church lost its appeal because it has failed to adapt to people's changing needs and concerns? By implication, if the church did adapt, might the decline be reversed?" (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 2332-2334)

The context for the Western Church has changed significantly and the Church has failed to respond in an adequate way. According to Moynagh "a cultural blizzard has transformed the landscape, and the church must engage with the world as it now exists" (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 4268-4269) and Hirsch remarks that "we have now reached the vexing situation that the prevailing expression of church (Christendom) has become a major stumbling block to the spread of Christianity in the West" (Hirsch, 2006, p. 63).

It is on this background that missiologists since the first half of the 20th century have discussed the need to see the church as "*God's missionary people in a local context*" (Engen, 1991, p. 27). While it would be wrong to claim that the thoughts underpinning the missionary or missional development exclusively came from Lesslie Newbigin, he more than anyone "brought into public discussion a theological consensus that had long been forming among missiologists and theologians" (Guder, 1998, p. 3). Newbigin pointed out that the Church in the West found itself in a missionary setting and that there could be no higher priority in the area of missiology than to "ask the question of what would be involved in a genuinely missionary encounter between the gospel and this modern Western culture?" (Newbigin, 1986, p. 3).

What is a Mission-shaped Church?

The essence of the Church

Before attempting to answer what a mission-shaped church is one has to be aware of what is implied in the question. If one instead asks: *What is a missionary Church?* It should immediately raise a counter question: *Is there such thing as an un-missionary Church?* Dietrich Bonhoeffer is often quoted for saying "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others" (Engen, 1991, p. 74) and Newbigin expressed the same sentiment when he a few years later

stated that “when the Church ceases to be a mission, then she ceases to have any right to the titles by which she is adorned in the New Testament” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 193). This understanding echoes the words of the Nicene Creed, which describes the Church as *apostolic*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Latin *missionary*. The understanding of the missionary nature of the Church will be developed below, but it would not be wrong to claim that an *un-missionary church* is a theological oxymoron. In other words, when asking what a missionary Church is, one might as well ask what a Church is.

This immediately raises two other issues. While theologically it is possible to argue that every church is a missionary church, it might also be argued that a lot of what is called church today shows limited evidence of being missionary. It could be tempting to conclude they are not churches, but Newbigin warns that “The Church exists, and does not depend for its existence upon our definition of it.” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 177). It probably is more helpful to talk about what the church is and what the church is becoming or, in the words of Karl Barth ask:

“How far does [the Church] correspond to its name? How far does it exist in a practical expression of its essence? How far is it in fact what it appears to be? How far does it fulfil the claim which it makes and the expectation which it arouses?” (Engen, 1991, p. 27).

The Church is missionary, but it is relevant to ask how missionary it is and therefore also what we understand by missionary. What is the “practical expression of its essence?” How does a church look when it is mission-shaped?

The second issue raised by the understanding of the fundamental missionary nature of the Church is that of the essence of the Church. Is mission *the* essence of the church or is it *of* the essence of the church? When Engen states that the “essential nature of the local congregation is, in and of itself, mission, or else the congregation is not really the Church” (Engen, 1991, p. 70) or the writers of *Missional Church* claim that “the church's essence is

missional, for the calling and sending action of God form its identity” (Guder, 1998, p. 82) they are very likely attempting to remedy a perceived imbalance by highlighting the centrality of mission. The result, however, can be a new imbalance where mission “in and of itself” is made *the* essence of the Church. If mission is *the* essence, then it is easy to view the Church as purely *instrumental* in God’s mission. The danger is that if the Church is merely instrumental and mission is *the* essence of the Church, then wherever there is mission, there is the Church, and also, whether intended or not, lead to an understanding that what is important is mission, not the Church. Such an understanding would be detrimental to both Church and mission, because it is “precisely because [the Church] is not merely instrumental that she can be instrumental” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 200). While mission is undoubtedly *of* the essence of the Church, it is not *the* essence, because church is more than mission (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 3067-3068). It is not a question of either/or, because by “its very nature, the church is *both* the product *and* the vehicle of God’s mission in the world” (Gibbs, 2009, p. 35 *italics added*). In the words of Newbigin:

“The Church is both a means and an end, because it is a foretaste. It is the community of the Holy Spirit who is the earnest of our inheritance. The Church can only witness to that inheritance because her life is a real foretaste of it, a real participation in the life of God Himself. Thus worship and fellowship, offering up praise and adoration to God, receiving His grace, rejoicing in Him, sharing one with another the fruits of the Spirit, and building up one another in love are all essential to the life of the Church” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 200).

It is essential to keep the balance between *mission-shaped* and *church*. Just as mission is essential to the church, so the church is essential to mission – neither can exist without the other. It should, however, be kept in mind that Church is more than mission. Graham Cray adds worship and indirectly community to mission as the essence of the Church (Cray, 2009, p. 85) and Steven Croft is on the same line naming worship, fellowship and mission as the essence of the life of church (Croft, 2008, p. 189). Above reference was made to the Nicene

Creed, which talks of the church being “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” and in *Mission-Shaped Church* it is suggested that these four attributes can be understood as the church having an UP (worship and holiness), an IN (community and unity), an OUT (mission), and an OF (connected to the wider Church) dimension (Cray, 2009, p. 99). Moynagh refers to these as “four sets of interlocking relationships” which is the essence of the Church (Moynagh, 2012). This does not diminish the importance of mission, but it does give a more balanced view of Church and stresses how the four dimensions are interdependent. In a missionary church e.g. prioritising worship results “not in the *marginalizing* of mission but is the *energizing* of it” (Gibbs, 2005, p. 76 *Author’s italics*). When the issue of mission is being stressed in the missional conversation, it is because an imbalance has been perceived and the missionary dimension of church has been less developed or evident than the others. In this context it is natural and right to focus on mission, although not at the expense of the other dimensions, but rather seeking a healthy symbiosis and fruitful balance.

A sent church

It is possible to claim that when Jesus spoke the words “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you,” the missionary church was born. (John 20:21). This commission was linked with the promise of the Holy Spirit and at Pentecost a centrifugal movement of Christian mission is launched “as the Spirit impels God’s people to join in and move out” (Atkins, 2008, p. 18). The Church has from its very birth been missionary, and this notion of *sentness* lies at the heart of the missional church understanding (McNeal, 2009, p. 21). Mission did not begin with or from the Church, but with God, the supreme missionary, sending the Church (Atkins, 2008, p. 17). God’s missionary purpose is all-encompassing, to “reconcile all things to himself” (Col. 1:20) or as Andrew Murray explains it:

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

“...cosmic in scope, concerned with the restoration of all things, the establishment of shalom, the renewal of creation and the coming of the Kingdom as well as the redemption of fallen humanity and the building of the Church” (Cray, 2009, p. 85)

It was for this the Father sent Jesus and now Jesus, through the Spirit, is sending the Church. The mission of the Church should be understood, can only be understood, Newbigin claims, in a Trinitarian model (Newbigin, 1989, p. 118). This model or understanding was developed in the ecumenical discussions in the middle of the 20th century and David Bosch explains the development as

"The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world" (quoted in Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 102)

It is, however, important to be aware that a “Trinitarian model” of mission needs to more than a theological understanding and framework. In fact, if a well-developed Trinitarian theology and understanding is deemed necessary to be missionary, then the early church poses a problem. It is hard to argue that they were not mission-shaped, but their Trinitarian-theology was less than developed. However, their Trinitarian *experience* was real and vital - this was what formed them, not their understanding or lack of the same. What the disciples received from being with Christ, Newbigin points out, was not an introductory course in divine truth, but “an introduction into the intimacy of His Spirit.” Theological understanding and reflection are important and necessary in missionary development, but it needs to grow out of and lead to real practice and experience or, as the German theologian Helmut Gollwitzer has expressed it, “theory between practice and practice” (Schwarz C. A., 2009, p. 7). Gibbs has noted that this is a challenge for the missional church movement, which he claims is strong on theory, but “struggles to transfer its insights into the life of local churches” (Gibbs, 2009, p. 35).

The Church is sent “as the Father has sent me” and here the key for a mission-shaped church is found. A missionary church will demonstrate the same priorities found in the ministry of Jesus (Gibbs, 2005, p. 132). In the following, five characteristics of Jesus’ mission and therefore also of the mission-shaped church, is suggested. They are, as the four dimensions of the essence of the Church, interdependent. There are no clear demarcation lines between them, but for the sake of clarity they will be treated separately.

As the Father sent Jesus, the Church is sent to

- proclaim the Kingdom of God
- live incarnationally
- minister Spirit-empowered
- be disciple-making
- and community creating

Proclaiming the Kingdom of God

In the New Testament the kingdom of God is the primary missional perspective (Atkins, 2008, p. 19). It is the overarching theme that all other themes relate to and if this theme is lost we end up with a radically different gospel than what is presented in the Gospels (Wright, 2012, p. 158). The Kingdom of God was the central aspect of Jesus’ ministry and “all else in his message and ministry serves a function in relation to that proclamation and derives its meaning from it” (Norman Perrin quoted in Guder, 1998, p. 89).

Jesus of course not only proclaimed the Kingdom, he proclaimed it had “come near” (Mark 1:15) and invited people to receive it. In the same way the Church is called not just to proclaim, but to live the Kingdom, to become a foretaste, sign and witness of that Kingdom in

the middle of the church's neighbourhood and invite people to receive the Kingdom (Roxburgh & Boren, 2009, p. 71).

It is beyond the scope of this section to give a comprehensive treatment of the Kingdom of God, which George Elton Ladd explains as

“...the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish his rule among human beings, and that this Kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver people from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign” (Ladd, 1993, p. 89)

It is the Church's mission to witness to this Kingdom and to invite people to receive it. The Kingdom of God is intrinsically linked to God's *shalom* – his peace, justice and mercy. It follows that a missionary Church cannot preach a gospel of purely individual conversion and the hope of going to heaven, but a gospel with social and communal consequences. It however also follows, that a missionary Church cannot “forget any God-dimension at all and to try simply to make life better within the continuation of the world as it is” (Wright, 2007, p. 222). In the New Testament the Kingdom of God only comes when Jesus is acknowledged as king and it is not true to the biblical evidence to call any social change the coming of the Kingdom of God (Chester, 2004, p. 74 & 80).

There is in some the missional literature expressed a tension between the growth of the Kingdom and the growth of the Church. Snyder suggests that there in Church Growth thinking has been a tendency to define mission too much in terms of the church, and therefore its growth and success, and too little in terms of the kingdom (McIntosh, 2004, p. 63). While this might be so, there are equally tendencies in the missional church movement to make the church purely instrumental and therefore the growth of it of lesser importance. The authors of *Missional Church* express how they have accepted the definition of the church as “God's instrument for God's mission” and see it not as the purpose or goal of the gospel, but its

“instrument and witness”. Interestingly, they see a necessity to qualify this saying that this “does not mean the church is not essential to God’s work of salvation – it is.” They apparently also need to qualify that as they begin the next sentence with a “But” (Guder, 1998, pp. 5-6). Such an understanding has led to some of the missional movement becoming suspicious of numerical growth and any mention of it.

Moynagh seeks a more balanced view and warns against seeing the church as “simply a means or agent of the kingdom” and of prioritising the kingdom at the expense of the church. That would, he says, ignore the fact that belonging to the church “is an essential part of the kingdom” (Moynagh, 2012, p. 3029). While Frost has a case when he claims that sometimes, maybe even often, evangelism has been reduced to recruiting and mission to salesmanship, it would be wrong to equate any numerical growth with such abuses (Frost, 2011, p. 65). Gibbs highlights the real issue when describing the effects of Church Growth teaching as “Thousands of pastors [becoming] skilled in growing a church numerically, [resulting] in larger crowds but untransformed lives” (Gibbs, 2005, p. 68). It is, Gibbs points out, not the numerical growth as such, but the kind growth that is the problem. While numerical growth should not be the focus of mission, it should be the natural outcome of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Both Engen and Newbigin hold that a “*yearning for numerical growth*” is a normal and essential sign of a church (Engen, 1991, p. 81 *Author’s italics*) and so, if there is no numerical growth, we at least need to consider, whether the Kingdom is being proclaimed and received (Chester & Timmis, 2007, p. 190).

Incarnationally

When God sent his son to the world, when he “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14) he did not only appear in “human likeness” (Phil. 2:7), but it is clear from the gospels he appeared as a first century Jew. He took the form of the culture he was

sent to, of the people he was sent to reach. This is of course a huge theological concept, but for the purpose of this dissertation the above will be taken as granted.

As Jesus identified with the Jewish people and nation, so a missionary Church is called to identify with its surrounding culture or to quote the authors of *Missional Church*: “there is but one way to be the church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting” (Guder, 1998, p. 11). Graham Cray makes the perceptive observation that the “gospel can only be proclaimed in a culture, not at a culture” (Cray, 2009, p. 87) and incarnational is not about making the Church more attractive to the surrounding culture, but of being submerged into that culture, “to become 'wombs of the divine' and completely rebirth the Church into a host culture” (Kester Brewin quoted in Drane, 2008, p. 47). Cray demystifies this somewhat when he explains that for a long established church incarnational will mean that the church “evaluates itself in relation to the culture of the community it serves, and strips away whatever is not required by the gospel” (Cray, 2009, p. 81). While incarnational reflects the theological language describing how God became man, it might be helpful to use the term ‘contextual’ and ‘contextually’ when referring to the church to illustrate the issue in more approachable way.

It is not a matter of studying a culture or gathering demographic information, but “it's about entering their lives, sitting at their tables, and listening to the way the Spirit is inviting a new imagination about being church in that context” (Roxburgh & Boren, 2009, p. 85). To do so faithfully the missionary Church needs to live in a creative tension between culture and gospel, and cultivate an open and critical engagement with culture (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 134). In the view of Moynagh incarnation or contextualisation is imperative if the church is not to become counter-productive in its kingdom mission:

“When church is not contextualized, it fails to make the connection between the kingdom and culture. It suggests that the kingdom is divorced from ordinary life. In so doing, instead of being an instrument of salvation, it becomes an obstacle.” (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 4393-94)

There are definitely challenges involved in such an engagement. Newbigin made the Church aware of the two-fold danger of either falling into syncretism in the attempt to be relevant or to become irrelevant when trying to avoid syncretism, but also points out that there never has been, nor never will be a gospel not embedded in culture (Newbigin, 1986, pp. 4-7). A missionary church lives in this tension,

“...continually shaped by its inner dynamic: the flow of Apostolic Tradition, with Scripture as its norm. The Church is, however, also shaped by the kind of world in which it finds itself. This must mean a constant receiving of the Gospel into our particular context. (Michael Azir-Ali quoted in Cray, 2009, p. 91)

The natural consequence of this *dual shapening* is that mission-shaped churches will have different shapes depending on the context they find themselves in (Cray, 2009, p. 73). It is, however, not a question of the Church becoming identical with the surrounding culture. The church will always be a “contrast or alternative community” (Guder, 1998, p. 9) which, rather than “conforming to the pattern of this world” (Rom. 12:2), will maintain “a distinctive identity while participating deeply in the life of the world” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 109). Doing so a missionary church realises that being incarnational or contextual relevant, is not giving people what they think they want, but that “the church is called to be what they really need: a foretaste of God's new creation, a movement of people who change the world, not escape it” (Roxburgh & Boren, 2009, p. 77).

Holy Spirit empowered

When Peter was speaking to Cornelius' household of the ministry of Jesus, he told them how “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power” (Acts 10:38) and

even a quick and casual reading of the New Testament will show how central the Holy Spirit must be to any thinking or practice of mission (Newbigin, 1995, p. 57). Atkins quotes Patriarch Athengoras, who says that without the Holy Spirit

“God is far away. Christ remains a figure of the past, the Gospel a dead letter, the Church a mere organization, authority a means to exercise power, mission a propaganda machine, worship becomes outdated and morality the action of slaves” (Atkins, 2008, p. 21).

An emphasis on the Holy Spirit is very much part of the missional literature, which is natural with the Trinitarian understanding and foundation. It is though, with an emphasis on the creation and community forming aspect of the Spirit and on the transformational development of the fruit of the Spirit (Guder, 1998, p. 142ff). The presence of the Spirit in the world as going before the Church is stressed, as is the guiding of the Spirit into the world (Roxburgh & Boren, 2009, p. 115ff), but there seems to be some reluctance to include a more Charismatic understanding of the power of the Spirit. Gelder and Zscheile hold that what is required in a Western context is “a retrieval of a biblical imagination for the Spirit's presence and power in our midst” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 120), but it could be questioned whether it is not so much a *biblical imagination* of the Spirit that is needed, but rather a *biblical experience* of the Spirit. Newbigin notes that the Holy Spirit “may be the last article of the Creed but in the New Testament it is the first fact of experience” and that to the New Testament writers the gift of the Spirit is an event that can be “unmistakeably recognised” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 114 & 188).

Disciple-making

Whereas the Great Commission was central for the modern missionary movement beginning with William Carey's challenge to the church to participate in world mission (Nikolajsen, 2012, p. 10), it does not appear to be so in the missional movement. As noted above the missional framework is the Trinitarian model of mission and a focus on the Church

as sent to participate in the mission of God. There is limited, if any, explicit mentioning of the Great Commission in much missional literature⁵ and one of Gelder's critiques of the church growth movement is that it is a missiology founded on the Great Commission (McIntosh, 2004, p. 81). Gelder and Zscheile refer to a sub-branch of the missional conversation, framing their understanding within "obedience to the Great Commission" and see this, together with "the central role Christology plays for most of them" as limiting their usefulness for a missional understanding (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 75). As seen above in relation to the discussion of the essence of the Church, Gelder and others are probably trying to rectify what they, rightly so, perceives as an imbalance, where a Great Commission emphasis had led to a separation of evangelism and social involvement or an emphasis on Christology has led to a limited pneumatology and downplay of the role of the Spirit (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 75). Howard Snyder questions, however, whether the missional church movement is creating a tension, where there really is no need for it, resulting in a new unbalance. As part of their commission the disciples were to teach new disciples to "obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20) which includes seeking the righteousness and justice of the kingdom and praying for God's will to be "done on earth as it is in heaven" (McIntosh, 2004, p. 63).

The imbalance and one-sidedness have opened up for criticism of especially the *Christ and Our Culture Network* for excluding the "winning [of] individuals to Jesus Christ and planting other churches" from their understanding of mission (Elmer Towns in McIntosh, 2004, p. 111) and lacking an emphasis on conversion in their publications (Engen in McIntosh, 2004, p. 106). This imbalance is not found in neither Newbigin nor the Mission-shaped literature. For Newbigin the call to be converted and follow Jesus, and to be involved in a congregation

⁵ A statement, which is difficult to support by references, but which is the impression gained in the reading for this dissertation

must be central to mission (Newbigin, 1995, p. 121), but he maintains a balanced view claiming that any

“preaching of the gospel that calls men and women to accept Jesus as Saviour but does not make it clear that discipleship means a commitment to a vision of society radically different from that which controls our public life today must be condemned as false” (Newbigin, 1986, p. 132).

Cray has as one of the five values of a missionary church that it makes disciples, and explains this includes calling people to faith in Jesus Christ as well as developing a “consistent Christian lifestyle appropriate to...the culture...in which [the church] operates.” He goes on to state that a missionary church is concerned about the transformation of individuals as well as of communities (Cray, 2009, p. 82). The necessity for a missionary church to keep the balance in this aspect of discipleship is pointedly noted by Tom Wright, when he asks the searching question: “If the gospel isn't transforming you, how do you know that it will transform anything else?” (Wright, 2007, p. 283).

Jesus not only called people to follow him, but he prepared and equipped his disciples to carry out his mission in the world and a vital part of a discipleship focus must therefore be the mobilisation of believers for ministry and mission. Robinson and Smith see this as the most important factor in deciding the effectiveness of the church in mission (Robinson & Smith, 2003, p. 103). Engen agrees and highlights that an ordained leader is not called to ministry in any higher degree than all followers of Christ, but he or she is called to enable each member to minister (Engen, 1991, p. 157). In this context it is relevant to mention the discussion within the missional movement on the so called attractional church. For many it is the very antithesis of missional and yet, as Robinson points out, there are some seemingly attractional churches that manage not only to gather in non-believers, but also see them converted and mobilised for mission (Robinson, 2006, p. 39). Moynagh questions whether there has been made too much of the difference between ‘go’ and ‘come’ mission and that

‘go’ naturally must lead to ‘come’, which then should be followed by a ‘go’ (Moynagh, 2012, p. 523). It would probably be more correct to target the criticism towards what could be called consumer-churches; churches that manage to draw in people, but only to give them spiritual entertainment and not seriously seek to mobilise them to go into the mission field outside the door of the church. Such a mentality is seen by Gibbs as one of the biggest challenges for a church to move towards becoming missional (Gibbs, 2009, p. 51). The issue seems not to be whether a church is attractional, but what it does with the people it attracts, whether a church sees more attenders as a goal in itself, or understand that “the mission of the church is to allow the Spirit of God to redeem spiritual consumers and transform them into a kingdom people” (Boren, 2007, p. 101).

Community forming

It is, as Newbigin noted,

“surely a fact of inexhaustible significance that what our Lord left behind Him was not a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life, but a visible community.” (Newbigin, 1953, p. 24)

The focus on creating community is seen right from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry as he appointed the apostles “that they might be with him” (Mark 3: 14). The same verse makes it clear, that it was also so he could send them out to preach, but the community aspect was apparently as central as the sending part. Gelder and Zscheile acknowledge this and see the understanding of the sending Trinity and the emphasis of the sentness of the Church as having “significant limitations and liabilities if it is not integrated with insights about the church as a social community in the image of the Triune God” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 106). Rather than seeing any tension in this issue Moynagh, while emphasising that “creating a community of love is one of the purposes of mission”, succinctly sums it up by saying that “a Trinitarian-inspired ecclesiology will speak of the church as ‘a communion-in-mission’.” (Moynagh, 2012, pp. 4010-11).

The community envisioned is not a matter of individual people united by having their name on a church register, but a visible community, living as a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom, sharing life together in *koinonia* fellowship where “holy living, mutual support, and sacrificial service” are a reality and the fruit of the Spirit is developed and visible (Guder, 1998, p. 145ff). Such community will not be exclusive, but welcoming and see hospitality as a defining practice (Atkins, 2008, p. 27). Community forming is essential for mission, not only because it is in a community the disciples will experience the presence of Christ, be equipped and built up so they can live kingdom lives in their daily contexts, but also because, as Francis Schaeffer expressed it “Christian community is the final apologetic,” the criterion by which the world will decide if our message is true (Boren, 2007, p. 126).

How to recognise a Mission-shaped church?

The five characteristics of a mission-shaped church are hopefully biblical and also representative of the missionary church understanding. They are, however, not necessarily all easily measured in a specific church. The *Gospel and Our Culture Network* published first 12 indicators of a missional church (Gibbs, 2009, p. 201), and later “8 patterns in Missional Faithfulness” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 85). Cray suggests 5 values for a missionary church, while also acknowledging the *Five Marks of Mission* of the agreed by the Lambeth Conference (Cray, 2009, p. 81). All this seems to imply there is a need for indicators to look for to help churches develop their mission-shape. These are not 'pass' or 'fail' criteria, but helps to assessing the missionary qualities of a church (Cray, 2009, p. 82). Based on the above description of a mission-shaped church and taking especially the *Five Values of a Missionary*

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

Church into consideration,⁶ the six indicators of a mission-shaped church found below will be suggested and looked for in the research part of this dissertation:

Indicators of Mission-shape	
Living faith:	A faith that builds not only on acceptance of belief and imitation, but participation and experience of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.
Community Lifestyle:	Seeks to build up an open, welcoming and hospitable community of faith, with a distinct Christian lifestyle, where the members interact and develop each other beyond the bounds and programmes of the physical church
Discipleship Focus:	Calling people to faith in and obedience to Christ. Equipping people to live out their Christian life Monday to Saturday. Emphasis on personal transformation and development of spiritual life.
Member mobilisation:	Take serious that all believers are called to ministry. Seeks to help them discover and develop their unique gifting and calling. Trains and empowers them to minister – within or without the church
Neighbourhood Engagement:	Aware of needs and movements in the local community. Engaged in meeting needs and involved, either as a fellowship, through individuals or small groups of believers, in doing works of healing, reconciliation, deliverance, peace-making and justice.
Adaptable Structures:	Seek to let shape, expressions, forms and activities be influenced by the culture(s) it is sent to. Willing to question what is “non-negotiable” and to change what is not to become relevant to the surrounding culture.

⁶ The Five Values of Missionary Church is included in Appendix A

Chapter 3: Natural Church Development

Origin and history⁷

Natural Church Development is inseparably linked with Christian A. Schwarz. In 1984 he, with his father Fritz Schwarz, a Superintendent in the Lutheran Church, published the book *Theologie des Gemeindeaufbaus* (A Theology of Church Development). As Martin Luther centuries before, the book pointed out that the kind of people needed to put into practice what the church was supposed to be and do, was lacking. In Luther's introduction to the *German Mass*, he admitted he would like to see a very different form of church life, but viewed it as impossible, as the people needed for such a church was not available. He added *yet* to the statement, but ended up developing a Church paradigm, which did not depend on the kind of people he dreamed of.

Christian and Fritz Schwarz' conclusion was the opposite. Rather than settling for less, the focus had to be on how to develop the people and the church so it could become the influence and change agent in the world it was supposed to be. They saw the need to focus on conversion, visible community, deepening spirituality, character development, sanctification, the quality of the church and so on. to this end. While some might see this as introversion (McIntosh, 2004, p. 235), it was for them a question of being realistic: If the church is to do and be what it is supposed to, then it is needed to begin where it is now and develop it towards where it should be.

Christian Schwarz co-authored three books with his father, all on aspects of mission and church development. The books were critical and for some controversial, but according to Schwarz:

⁷ The following section is based on an interview with Christian A. Schwarz conducted over Skype Friday 30. August 2013.

“Our harsh criticism was always directed against those who formulated wonderful demands of what Christianity could/should/must be, without proving within their own area of responsibility how they bring people together and work on their personal changes, so that there is a chance to see the desired (and well-formulated) impact in the world.”⁸

Interestingly they originally used the term *Missionary Church Development* as a heading for their work, but decided against it since, in their opinion, the only development a church could have was missionary, as the church by definition was missionary.

Later Schwarz travelled to the USA to study at the Fuller Seminary and was introduced to the Church Growth movement. This not only inspired him, but also made him aware that to a large degree nobody really knew the clear distinction between what were principles, models, myths or even misleading teaching. This motivated him to commence studying churches in German-speaking Europe. Several questionnaires were developed and used to analyse churches. Later Schwarz teamed up with Christoph Schalk, an organisational psychologist, and a new questionnaire with “rigorous standards for objectivity, reliability, and validity” was developed and “approved methods from social sciences for the analysis of the data” employed (Schwarz C. A., 1996, p. 21). This was the basis for the international research project mentioned in the introduction of this paper and the results were published in the book *Natural Church Development* in 1996.

One area, where NCD from the beginning had a different approach was that it sought to be truly international. The research was worldwide and only principles that were found to be universal applicable, were presented. NCD, Schwarz writes, is not European, African nor American, or rather, it is all of them (Schwarz C. A., 1996, p. 5).

⁸ From private e-mail from Christian Schwarz of 30. August 2013.

NCD characteristics

In the following section the central elements of Natural Church Development will be given, primarily as it is presented in the writings of Christian A. Schwarz.⁹

The “all by itself” principle

The “all by itself” principle is central to all things NCD. The terminology comes from Mark 4:26-29 where the soil produces corn “all by itself.” Schwarz sees this parable as an illustration of what people can and should do and what they cannot do. God intends his church to grow and we neither can nor should produce the growth. Our part, however, is to remove the obstacles that hinder the work of the Spirit. Schwarz stresses that all by itself, the Greek word used by Mark is *automate*, is the work of God. “The ‘automatism’ is really a ‘theomatism!’” and the focus of NCD is to release “the divine growth forces by which God himself grows his church” (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 14).

Trinitarian Compass

When *Color Your World with Natural Church Development*¹⁰ was published in 2005 a major development of the NCD concept had taken place. The *Trinitarian Compass* and 3 Colours illustration not only was introduced, but now permeated all the central aspects of NCD (Schwarz C. A., 2005, pp. 45-79). This new concept developed and enlarged the understanding of the other concepts previously introduced and probably made more explicit, what for Schwarz had been implicit, but not fully formulated even for himself. Already in *Theologie des Gemeindeaufbaus* theses 11 of 95 stated that church development must be “Trinitarian in its essence and practical outworking,”¹¹ but this had not been developed previously in the original

⁹ The presentation of NCD will be based on the books by Christian A. Schwarz listed in the bibliography. Direct quotes will be referenced, but otherwise the entire section should be seen as referenced to the mentioned books.

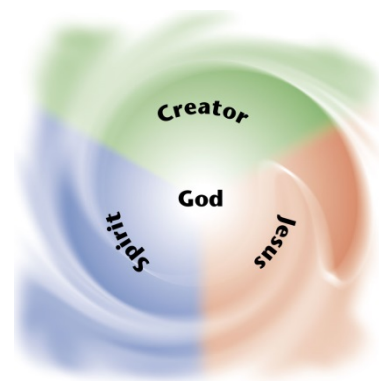
¹⁰ From this point on the book will be referred to as *Color Your World*

¹¹ Quoted by Christian Schwarz in a Skype interview conducted 30. August 2013

NCD introduction. Indeed, Schwarz admits that at the time of writing *The Threefold Art of Experiencing God*, where he first presented the concept, he did not imagine how it would come to influence the totality of NCD in the years to come (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 48).

Schwarz makes the bold statement that it is not so much a question of whether we believe in the Trinity, but whether we believe in a Trinitarian way. He argues that the doctrine of the Trinity was for the first Christians an “experiential category”. They knew God as the Creator, experienced Christ as God through prayer and felt the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Their threefold experience of God resulted in thinking of the Trinity and later formulating it as a doctrine. Central to the *Trinitarian Compass* is that the focus is not on the internal relationship of the Godhead, but the relationship we have with God; how the Trinitarian God reveals himself to us, with the aim of establishing a relationship and how we experience this revelation (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 51).

The Trinitarian Compass is developed round the biblical teaching that “God is light.” (1. John 1:5) and presents it graphically. Light, Schwarz points out, is colour, or rather a combination of the colours green, red and blue.¹² When these colours are present and in total balance, there is pure light, when they are absent there is darkness. When they are unbalanced there is still light, but showing a distorted or incomplete version of reality (Schwarz C. A., 2004, p. 24). With this understanding it is easy to see how it can be related to the Trinity. God has let his light shine as Creator, Son and Spirit, in what Schwarz refers to as creation, salvation, and personal revelation. The purpose of



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 53)

God's revelation is always to establish a relationship and although we encounter the same one

¹² It is important to note that colours of light (self-luminous colours) function different than object colours, where there are four basic colours.

and true God in all three revelations, we encounter him differently. Schwarz sees this understanding and experience as fundamental to Christian life and ministry:

“Whenever one of the three dimensions is neglected, we have an incomplete experience of God. Most of the problems that we experience in the everyday life of our churches are, in the final analysis, based on an incomplete understanding of the threefold revelation of God.” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 52)

The aim, whether as individuals or churches, is a biblical balance. Schwarz calls it “radical balance”, where the goal is to be as committed as possible in all three areas “radically Christ-centred (red zone), radically ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit (the blue zone) and radically focused on God’s creation (green zone)” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 54).

8 Quality Characteristics

Through the international research project mentioned in the introduction NCD identified eight areas or quality characteristics where on average growing churches have significant higher quality than declining churches. All eight areas were seen as universally essential for a growing church. According to Schwarz there is “no one single factor which leads to growth in churches”, but rather it is “harmonious interplay of all eight elements” that is the deciding factor (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 41). When asked why exactly these eight characteristics were chosen, Schwarz makes it clear, that these were the eight characteristics that evolved out of the research and for which there is a proven correlation between the quality in the area and the numerical growth of the church, independent of culture, continent or church persuasion.

Each characteristic is made up of a noun for example leadership and an adjective, in this instance empowering. It is the adjective that is the qualitative indicator; the issue is how empowering the leadership is. Schwarz emphasises that the characteristics do not present models, but explain principles. They tell a church what it should do, but not how it should be done. An Inspiring worship service will very likely be very different in a Russian Orthodox

Church as comparison to a Charismatic Vineyard one. The question, in this instance, is not what kind of style the worship service has, but how inspiring it is.

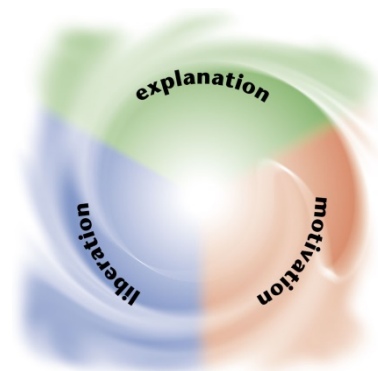
In the following a short presentation of each of the eight characteristics will be given. Each presentation will begin with quoting a question from *Color Your World* (Schwarz C. A., 2005) which focuses on the essential character of the characteristic. With reference to the section on the *Trinitarian Compass* each will be illustrated by a 3 colour graphic showing the Trinitarian dimension of the characteristics and finally brief comments of further explanation will be added to expand the explanation.

Empowering leadership

“Are your leaders focused on equipping believers for ministry?”

Leadership is important, but it is not important to be a superstar or even a powerful visionary. Leaders in healthy churches “equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals to become all that God wants them to be.”¹³ In *The 3 Colors of Leadership* Schwarz makes it clear that empowerment is not one style among many in leadership, but a core principle of leadership, essential no matter what leadership style a leader might have or adhere to (Schwarz C. A., 2012, p. 17).

The 3 Colour dimensions of Empowering leadership are: explanation, motivation and liberation.. Liberation is described as “investing yourself into people so that they can fulfil their God-given visions.” This resembles the emphases on equipping and mobilising found in the missionary church



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 107)

¹³ Unless noted all quotes in this section is from *Color Your World with Natural Church Development* (Schwarz C. A., 2005)

understanding. Robinson and Smith for instance talk of how it is the goal of leadership is to “bring the whole membership of the body of Christ to the maturity of its purpose” and that the “equipping of the saints to be active participants in the mission of God is a primary principle of mission” (Robinson & Smith, 2003, p. 103 & 104).

Gift-based ministry

“Are tasks in your church distributed according to the criterion of gifting?”

It follows naturally from the above that if people are to be liberated to be all that God wants them to be, it should be based on their spiritual gifting. The 3 Colour explanation makes it clear, that this characteristic is not just about identifying the individual’s gifts, but ministering according to them in a wise, committed and (Holy Spirit) empowered way. For a church the essential factor is that its ministry is based on the gifting present in the church.



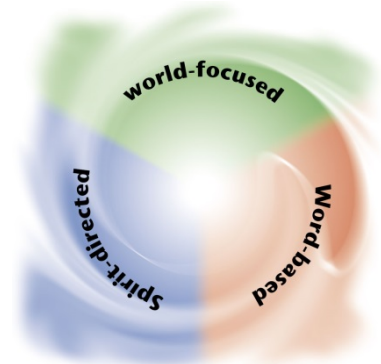
(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 109)

There is at least some affinity to a missional approach e.g. when Gelder and Zscheile describe the function of leadership as to “cultivate and steward the faithful participation of the whole community and its gifts in God's mission” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 155).

Passionate spirituality

“Is the spiritual life of the church members characterised by passion?”

It is not the particular style of spirituality that is important but “the degree to which faith is actually lived out with commitment, passion, and enthusiasm. In the 3 Colour scheme Passionate spirituality is presented as being Word-



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 111)

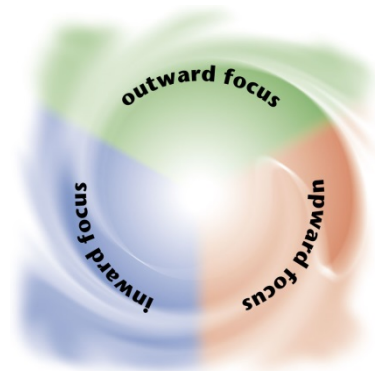
based, Spirit-directed and world-focused, and the “secret” as striving towards radical balance between all three dimensions. While all are essential, it is in the context of this dissertation interesting to note the focus on a “worldly” spirituality. While this does not prove that an NCD approach actually develops a church towards an outward focus and community engagement, it definitely gives reason to believe it is the intention of NCD.

Effective structures

“Do the structures of your church contribute to growth?”

Whatever structures are in place in a church they should regularly be evaluated as to their effectiveness, do they actually help the church to do and become what it is supposed to do and be? Relating to the 3 Colours a church should ask whether whatever structures are in place in the church “help people experience God (upward dimension)...strengthen the fellowship of the believers (inward dimension)...[and] are focused on ministering to the world (outward dimension)?”

These three dimensions represent an understanding which basically is identical with the UP, IN and OUT which both Cray (Cray, 2009) and Moynagh (Moynagh, 2012) use to explain the essence of the church and, in the case of Cray even talks of them as “marks that help us with the task of healthy growth as well as validation” (Cray, 2009, p. 99).¹⁴



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 113)

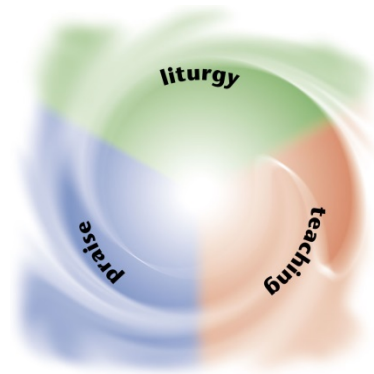
¹⁴ Cray and Moynagh has a fourth dimension, namely OF and use this to explain the relationship of a given church both to other churches and the historic church. While this is not included in Schwarz' diagram, it does not alter the similarity of these descriptions.

Inspiring worship service

“Are your worship services an inspiring experience for the members?”

As mentioned in the introduction to the quality characteristics it is not a matter of a specific style, but whether the service is an inspiring experience for the participants. In *Natural Church Development* it is explained that inspiring should be taken in the literal sense of *inspiratio* or breathed upon by the Holy Spirit. An Inspiring worship service is when the Holy Spirit moves and the people present experience his breath or touch.

The three dimensions of Inspiring worship service are teaching, praise and liturgy. These terms will mean very different things to different groups, but as Schwarz remarks, even most non-liturgical churches have a distinct liturgy, though it is not written down.

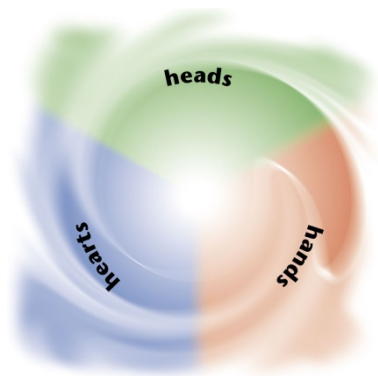


(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 115)

Holistic small groups

“Do the small groups address the life issues of their members?”

A characteristic of healthy and growing churches is that they have not only developed a system of small groups, but these groups help nurture the heads, hands and heart of the



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 117)

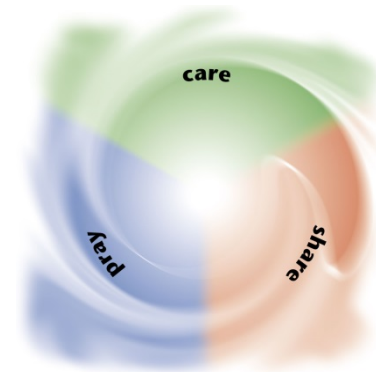
individual believers. They are groups where participants can find “intimate community, practical help, and intense spiritual interaction” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 116) and are not a supplement to church, but rather “much of the essence of true church life is worked out in small groups” (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 35). This is further developed in *The 3 Colors of Community*, where, referring to Luke 10:27, Schwarz shows

how small groups should help believers develop their relationship to God, to others and to themselves.

Need-orientated evangelism

“Are the evangelistic activities related to the needs of those you are trying to win?”

Schwarz points out that it does not take an international research project to know that evangelism is needed if a church is to grow. Again, though, it is the adjective, which is the qualitative decider. The gospel should be shared, but it should be done in a need-orientated way, where the real life issues, questions and needs of people are taken seriously and addressed, through practical ministry and through Holy Spirit guided prayer. The “lighthouse movement” is credited with the terminology of pray, care and share, which fits perfectly into the 3 Colour



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 119)

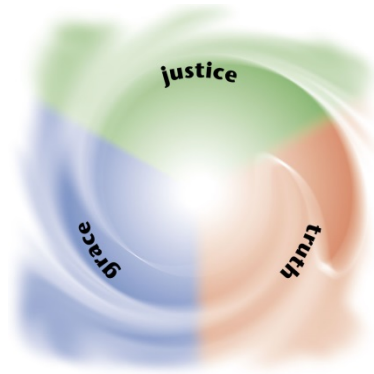
scheme for Need-orientated evangelism. Schwarz stress, that while every believer is not an evangelist “all of us are responsible for fulfilling the Great Commission by investing our specific gifts into the area of evangelism” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 119).

Loving relationships

“Are the relationships of the members characterised by love?”

Schwarz very emphatically differentiates between what he calls a “secular-romantic” notion of love and what the Bible teaches about love (Schwarz C. A., 2004, p. 9). Love is not primarily about feelings, but about fruit, action and deeds. This is one of the characteristics where there has been published a special workbook. In this the focus is on the fruit of the Spirit and how to develop this in your life and relationships. The fruit is presented in relation to the *Trinitarian Compass* and the three dimension of love is given as justice, truth and grace.

The subtitle of the work book sums up what Schwarz sees Loving relationships being all about: *The art of giving and receiving justice, truth and grace* and it is made clear that this does not just relate to the relationships between Christians, but the Church and the world (Schwarz C. A., 2004).



(Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 121)

The Church Profile

Through conducting a NCD church survey a church can receive their unique church profile, showing the church's quality in each of the eight characteristics.¹⁵ While the NCD survey is a helpful tool, there is an inherent danger in it. Schwarz tells of how people frequently will tell him that their church has “done NCD” yet it quickly becomes apparent what they mean is not that they have implemented NCD principles or adopted the NCD paradigm. Rather, they have done a NCD church survey. This should be kept in mind when attempting to evaluate the effects of a NCD approach. It is not given that because a church has done a church survey it actually has implemented NCD. It could be that they have used whatever aspect of NCD they feel comfortable with and “the end result is nothing other than a reorganisation of their old, bad habits around a new terminology” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 89).¹⁶

The Minimum Factor Strategy

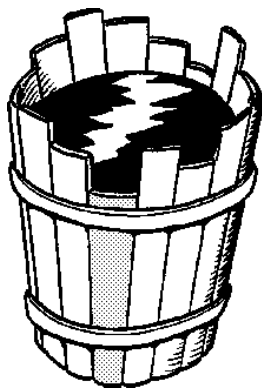
As with other components of NCD the background and inspiration for the minimum strategy is found in the world of agriculture. The *Sprengel-Liebig Law of the Minimum* holds that growth is controlled not by how many resources (nutrients) are available, but by the availability of the scarcest essential resource (nutrient). The law has been expanded to include

¹⁵ More information about the church profile is given in the next chapter in relation to the research carried out in three local churches for this dissertation.

¹⁶ An example of a church profile report is included as Appendix B. A more technical description of the scoring is found on page 52

the understanding that any essential factor for life that is below the critical minimum will limit the potential for growth and development (Schwarz C. A., 1996, p. 56).

Schwarz introduced the NCD minimum strategy and the illustration of the minimum barrel, where the water flows out at the lowest stave, in the original introduction to NCD



(Schwarz C. A., 1998)

(Schwarz C. A., 1996, pp. 52-64).¹⁷ It was applied to the 8 quality characteristics and stated that a church should concentrate on what at any given time was the least developed area, the minimum factor, as this characteristics would limit the growth of the church. It was also used to explain why it often is futile for a church to copy programmes or initiatives from another (successful) church, as they might end up just adding more of sufficient available 'nutrients' rather than

addressing the limiting minimum factor for their situation.

A natural consequence of both the principle and the illustration is that the minimum factor will not only vary from one church to another, it also does not remain static within a church. If a church works on developing their minimum factor sooner or later it is to be expected that this characteristic no longer will be the shortest stave and so a church should regularly asses what their present minimum factor is by conducting a new church survey as described above. The principle is also illustrated by a *Helix diagram* emphasising that the NCD approach is "a cyclical process that, once one cycle has been completed, continues on to the next highest level, thus forming a never-ending growth spiral" (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 107).

Interestingly Alan Hirsch has adopted the minimum factor approach in his *mPulse Assessment*. He does so with a clear acknowledgement of the work of Christian Schwarz and

¹⁷ The minimum strategy, but not the illustration of the barrel, was introduced by Schwarz in *Paradigmenwechsel in der Kirche* published in Germany in 1993.

credits Schwarz with having brought *system thinking* into to the area of church development (<http://www.theforgottenways.org/mpulse/> accessed 2. Sept. 2013).

It is important to note that the minimum factor should not be understood primarily as a weakness or deficiency. Even the healthiest church will have a minimum factor. The minimum factor it is the strategic point that helps a church focus their energy and invest their resources wisely for further developing the church. It is, however, important to understand, that a minimum approach is not the wisest strategy in all areas. This actually goes right back to the original *Sprengel-Liebig Law of the Minimum*, which is valid when addressing “any essential factor for life.” It follows that if the factor is not essential, the law does not apply; likewise in Natural Church Development. If one is dealing with essentials, such as the eight quality characteristics, the Trinitarian Compass or for example the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5; 22-23) a minimum approach is needed. Here it does not matter how well developed some areas are, the lowest area will determine the extent to which God can bless and release growth. If, however, we are dealing with non-essentials, for example music or preaching styles or gifts of the Spirit¹⁸ Schwarz encourages to do “God and the congregation a favour and apply the maximum factor approach!” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 127).

Improving the quality

Compared to the original NCD introduction it was made much more explicit in the *Color Your World* book what was meant by improving the quality of a church. Schwarz highlights that a church is people, and what determines the health of a church is the people that make up the church. It follows that when one speak of increasing the quality or health of the church, what one really is saying is that one need to develop the quality of the people or,

¹⁸ The gifts of the Spirit are in one way essential to the Church, but it is not essential for a believer, or probably even a church, to experience and use *all* of the gifts. Paul makes it clear that no-one has all the gifts (1. Cor. 12)

in the terminology of Schwarz, to enhance the health of their heads, hands and hearts (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 7). Gelder and Zscheile seem to agree when saying that “developing and deepening the Christian identity of every disciple must be at the forefront of the church’s focus” (Gelder & Zscheile, 2011, p. 148).

Chapter 4: Research Project

As part of this dissertation a research project was designed to evaluate whether implementing a NCD approach in a local church has any effect on the mission-shape of the church. In this chapter it will be described how the research project was planned and carried out, and the participating churches will be introduced.

Identifying churches

It was decided from the outset that the research would focus on Salvation Army churches in the UK and two criteria was set by which to choose 3-4 churches to participate in the process. The church

1. Should have conducted 3 NCD church surveys over a period of no more than 4 years
2. Should have conducted the latest survey in 2012 or 2013

The number of 3 surveys was chosen for purely pragmatic reasons as there would not be enough Salvation Army churches in the UK that have conducted more than three surveys to choose from.¹⁹ The 4 year period was set in an attempt to ensure that the church had worked fairly focused with implementing an NCD approach and the 2012 – 2013 window so that the experience and results would be up-to-date. It would have been preferable to carry out the research in churches with a longer engagement with NCD, but this was not practical possible due to the lack of churches that would fulfil such a criteria. The reasonable short engagement with what is a long-term, life style changing process should therefore be taken into consideration when evaluating the effect of the NCD approach.

¹⁹ I was aware of this due to my previous engagement with The Salvation Army and their NCD engagement in the UK

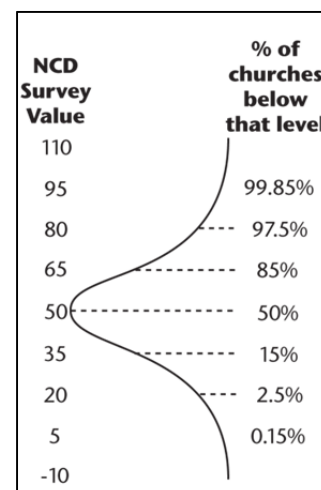
The Salvation Army headquarters provided a list of all churches that had done one or more surveys and of these, nine fulfilled the criteria listed above. Of the nine, four churches had experienced an increase in average scores above 10 points and they were approached to participate in the research project. Three agreed, one did not respond to the request.²⁰ In the approach to the churches they were informed that the research was aimed at clarifying what happens in a church when it implements a NCD approach. They were, however, not informed that the aim of the study also was to evaluate the missional impact of such an approach.

Research methodology

As NCD builds on research carried out in the churches it seemed obvious to take advantage of this. The churches participating in the research made their NCD surveys available for this study and these formed the basis for the research. In addition to an analysis of the NCD research, a semi-structured interview was carried out with the corps officers (pastors) of the three churches. The components and structure of the research project is outlined below.

Analysis of church surveys

The first part of the research will be an analysis of the three churches NCD Church Profile and the result presented in their survey report. The survey report is based on a questionnaire with 91 questions that should be answered by 30 people²¹ fulfilling three simple criteria²² and who are demographically representative for the church. The survey is a standardised comparative analysis tool. The



scoring of the survey is not in percentages, but index values based on a standardised bell curve

²⁰ E-mail sent to the churches included as Appendix C

²¹ Can be less in small churches, but no need for more, even in larger churches

²² People filling in the questionnaire should be involved in some form of ministry, have some kind of small group experience and regularly attend the worship service

distribution with a standard deviation of 15. As indicated on the graph while a score of 50 means this is average, a score above 65 means it is among the 15% highest scoring in this characteristic or question, while 70% of all churches will score between 35 and 65 in any given area.²³

Mission-shape indicators

From the NCD Church Survey a number of questions were identified as being directly relevant to one of the indicators of mission-shape defined in the previous chapter.²⁴ For all but one indicator, five to six questions were found to be relevant, while only one question was deemed directly relevant to the indicator *Community Engagement*. For each of the churches the average score of the questions allocated for each of the five indicators were calculated for their first and latest profile, so both the present quality and the development from the first survey would be shown. It should be recognized that these questions were not developed with the above in mind, but it seemed both relevant and practical to adapt them for this use, as the data already was gathered.

Interviews

Each interview consisted of three major parts:

1. A number of questions concerning the NCD background and involvement of both the churches and the pastors²⁵
2. A review of the churches NCD profile, focusing on the areas/questions highlighted in the preceding analysis of the profile asking two simple

²³ The explanation of the survey scoring and the graph is taken from a standard survey report, see Appendix G

²⁴ Questions organised according to indicators included as Appendix D

²⁵ See Appendix E

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questions: *What have you done to see this increase?* and *How can you tell the difference this seems to imply?*

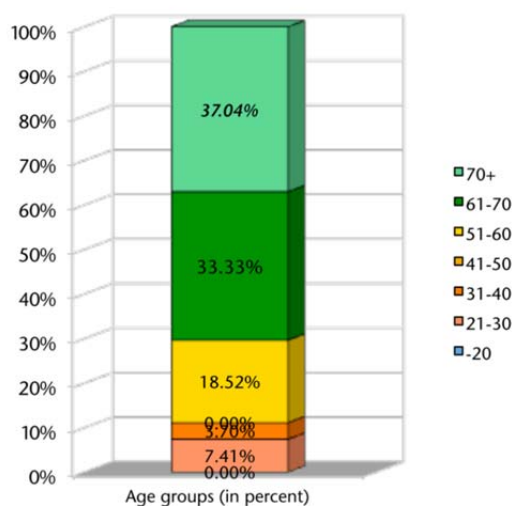
3. A number of questions specifically relating to the indicators of a mission-shaped church.²⁶

The participants

The three churches chosen for the reason were, as indicated, chosen entirely due to their engagement with NCD and the increase in their NCD quality between the first and latest survey. It turned out that two of the churches were placed within 30 miles of each other, had a similar age profile and both had changed pastors since the beginning of their NCD engagement. Below follows a brief introduction of the three churches.

Church A

Situated in a small market town of 16,000 people. The church was established in 1885. The average worship attendance is 30, which is an increase by 20% since three years ago and



over the last two years they have made 6 new members. The age profile, as shown below, is quite ageing, with more than 70% being above the age of 61 and less than 10% below 30. The church got involved with NCD due to the encouragement of the Divisional Director of Evangelism (DDE)²⁷ and carried out their first church survey in August 2010 as part of their participation in the national

²⁶ See Appendix F

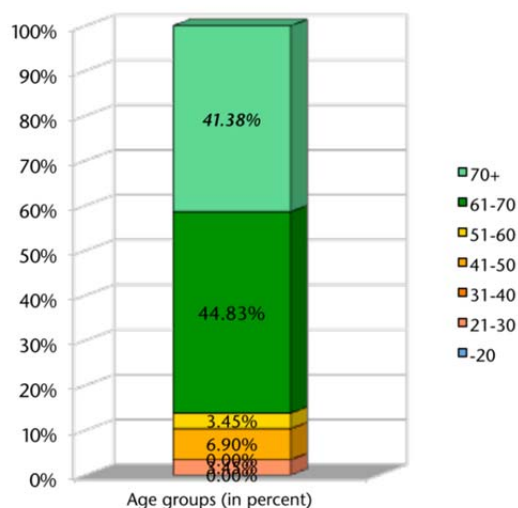
²⁷ Regional mission development officer

process arranged by NCD-UK named *Transforming Churches*. The church has established a *Health Team* to be responsible for the NCD process, but they do not meet regularly.

The present pastors, a married couple, arrived in the church in August 2011. They had no prior engagement with NCD and, according to their own words, were “thrown in at the deep end” when it came to a NCD approach. They had been given an initial introduction presentation to NCD by the DDE, and also went to the final seminar in the *Transforming Churches* process, which they found “confusing”. According to the couple they had “scanned” *Color Your World* and read a bit in *3 Colors of Leadership*, but otherwise not studied any NCD materials or done any of the *3 Colour Tests*.

Church B

Situated in a seaport town of 90,000 people. The church was established in 2007, when two existing churches were amalgamated. The average worship attendance is 60, which is an increase of 20% since three years ago. The age profile is very ageing, with more than 86%



above the age of 61 and less than 7% below 30.

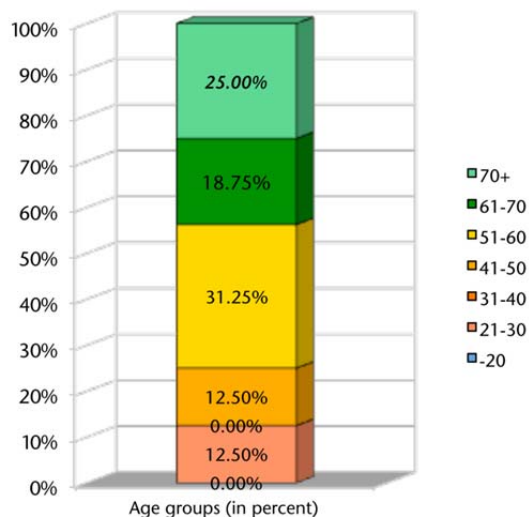
The church got involved with NCD due to the encouragement of their DDE as part of the *Transforming Churches* process and conducted their first survey in September 2010. The corps has a *Health Team* in place with a very passionate *NCD Champion*²⁸.

The present pastors, a married couple, arrived in the church in August 2012. They had no experience of NCD prior to coming to the church, although they were aware of it. They tell they have read both *Natural Church Development* and *Color Your World*, but not participated in any NCD training or seminars.

²⁸ A local lay-leader in charge of the health team

Church C

Situated in a town of 100,000 people just outside the Greater London area. The church was established in 1969 as part of a new town development. The average worship attendance



is 28, a figure that has remained fairly stable over a number of years although, according to the pastor, there has been a significant number of influx of new and younger people and corresponding departures of others. Many of the new attenders and members can be categorized as transfer growth, due to people moving into the area, but during the last year 3 new members

have been enrolled, with no prior church history. The age profile of the corps is predominantly middle aged. 43% is above the age of 61, 44% between the age of 31 and 60 and 13% below the age of 21. The church began their NCD engagement due to the encouragement of the DDE and conducted their first survey in February 2008. The church participated in the *Transforming Churches* process, but had already conducted two surveys prior to the process.

The pastor, a single lady, arrived in the church in August 2008 and had no prior knowledge or experience of NCD, but received “good schooling” from DDE, who was a “big influence in the beginning.” She tells she has read the two basic textbooks and also *3 Colors of Your Spirituality*. The church was part of the *Transforming Churches* Process and the pastor participated in all the three seminars and had found the whole process very helpful.

Evaluation of research project

Conducting a research project in the UK while living and working in Denmark, caused some challenges. The actual interviews had to be conducted in the beginning of July 2013, where I for other reasons was in the UK. While this did not pose a problem for the interviews

as such, it did mean that the questions for interview had to be formulated prior to writing any of the material in chapters two and three of this dissertation. This was not ideal and it is fair to expect that better and more focused questions could have been developed, had it been done on the basis of more substantial writing.

When deciding that a major part of the interviews would be to go through the church profiles and ask what the story was behind the developments in specific areas, it was done with an expectation that the pastors would know their profile reports in depth and have spent time in reflection on them when implementing NCD in their church. As it turned out this was not the case. In two of the interviews there was limited evidence of prior reflection on and work with the profile. This limited the value of that part of the interview.

It is generally suggested that as part of designing a research project one or more pilot projects are carried out (Bell, 2010, p. 151). While this would have been a logistic challenge, as it would have to be done in the UK (due to language) and with a Salvation Army church engaged in NCD, a pilot project would at least have uncovered some of the limitations in the actual questions asked and maybe also made aware of the challenge with reflection on the church profile.

An unforeseen limitation was that it turned out that the pastors of two of the participating churches had arrived in the churches after the NCD process had begun and only been in the church for one or two years. This naturally meant their knowledge of the process and development was somewhat limited. This could have been countered by conducting interviews with other leaders in their churches, had I been aware of this before planning the interviews.

The three churches were selected purely on the criteria stated at the beginning of this chapter. While this makes the choice unbiased, it was perhaps not helpful that two of the

churches turned out to be fairly similar, at least when it comes to geographical location and especially age profile. It would have given a more varied research base if the research had included a church with a more balanced age profile. It would have been possible to make this part of the original selection criteria, as it is part of the NCD church profile and the information there available.

While the above indicates that the research project could have been better prepared and executed, it would be wrong to conclude that it was a failure. Even with the limitations mentioned above, this research project could still be considered a success because it does provide indications of the relationship between a NCD approach and mission-shape, which can then be used as the base for more informed research to build on.

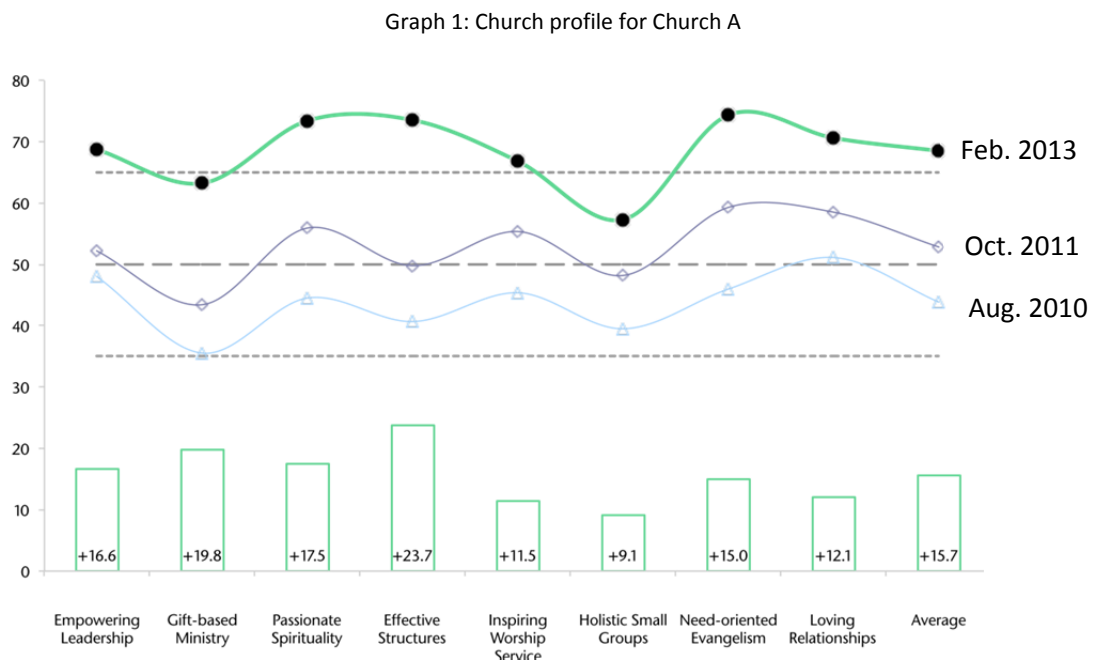
Chapter 5: Findings

In the following the findings will be presented. Each church will be presented individually and in similar format. First the NCD survey of the church will be presented and commented on. Then a graph showing how the church scores in the questions especially chosen in relation to the indicators of mission-shape defined in chapter 2 will be presented. This will be followed by presenting findings relating to each of the mission-shape indicators. For each of the indicators the section will begin with a presentation of the questions relating to the indicator, the scoring for the first and latest profile and a calculation of the difference between the two. This will be followed by a narrative presentation of the relevant findings from the interview with the pastors. Finally, based on the interviews, an evaluation of the actual NCD engagement of the church will be made.

Church A

Church survey

The NCD profile for Church A is in many ways a typical Salvation Army profile, with Holistic small groups as the minimum factor and Need-orientated evangelism as the maximum factor, although the church has managed to break another denominational tendency and gone from having Effective structures as one of the lowest to the second highest quality characteristic. (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 140) Over the two and a half years between their first and latest profile they have gone from being below average in every characteristic but one, to now scoring above 65 in all but two.²⁹ According to the NCD profile it is a healthy church,



which has gone through a very positive development. The increase in the average score between the second and third survey is almost double of what happened between the first and second survey. This is significant because the present pastors arrived just prior to the

²⁹ See page 52 for explanation of the scoring index. The same index is used for the indicators of mission-shape.

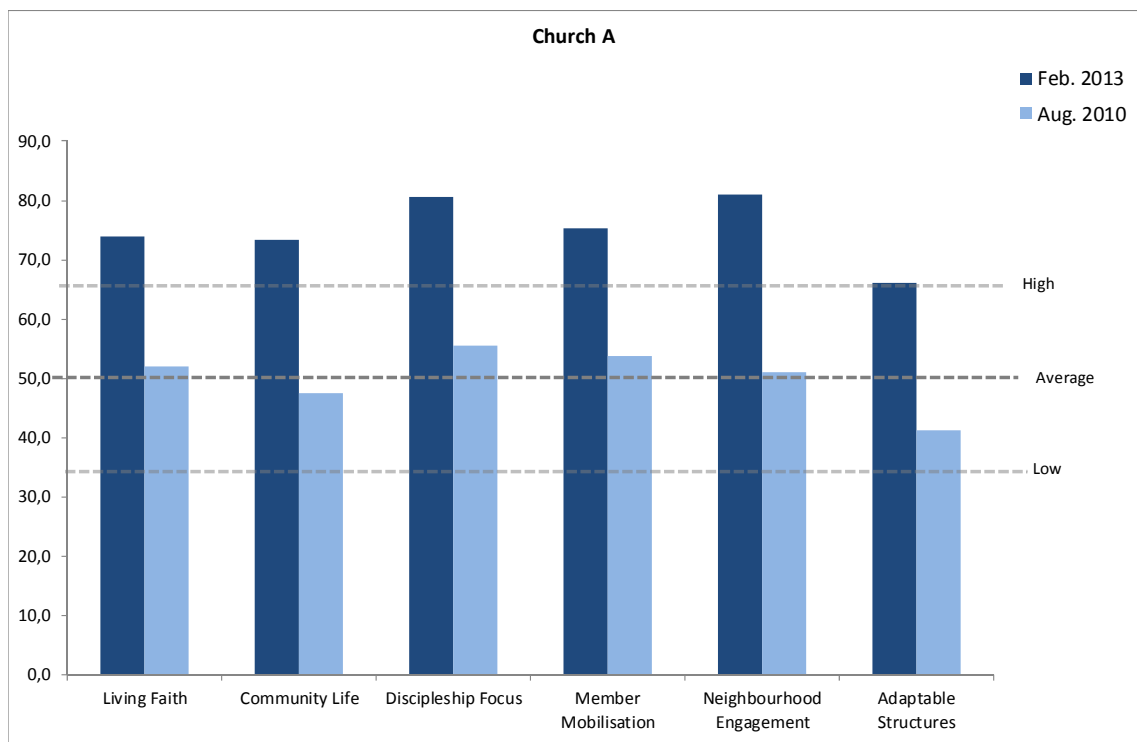
Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

second survey being carried out, making it probable that they personally have influenced the development without necessarily realising, it by what they have brought to the church by being themselves. This is even more likely when taking into consideration it is a fairly small church with a congregation of approximately 30 people.

It would, according to NCD teaching, be reasonable to expect a church with an average score of 68.5 and with all but two characteristics above 65, to experience “all by itself” growth (Schwarz C. A., 2006, p. 41). This is confirmed by a twenty per cent increase in worship attendance over three years and that the church has enrolled 6 new members during the last 2 years. For an elderly church with more than 70% of the congregation above the age of 61, this is quite remarkable growth.

From the development seen in graph one it is reasonable to expect the church also has

Graph 2: Indicators of mission-shape, church A



become more mission-shaped, at least if there is any relation between NCD quality and mission-shape. This expectation is further confirmed when looking at the questions chosen to

relate specifically to the indicators of mission-shape. While graph two cannot be taken as evidence of mission-shape, partly due to how it has been developed, it does seem to indicate a church that has increased its mission-shape over the last 3 years.

Indicators of mission-shape

*Living Faith*³⁰

Table 1: Indicators of Living faith. Church A

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2010	Diff.
I experience God's work in my life.	61	52	9
Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me	91	53	38
I enjoy reading the Bible on my own	78	55	23
I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.	77	58	19
I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me	60	46	14
Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me	77	48	29
Average	74	52	22

According to the pastors, their reason for considering NCD in their previous church was due to a desire for numerical growth. After having been introduced to and worked with the concept their focus shifted to spiritual growth and relationships.

There has been a special focus on prayer in the church. Several members participated in a *prayer school* arranged in another church in the area and later a similar school was arranged in the church itself. The church has organised a prayer diary and established a prayer board in the church. IN every service there is time for prayer, always with a focus on issues in the world, meaning not the church and people are encouraged to pray for each other, for people who do not know Jesus, for special needs and more.

³⁰ The scoring of the individual statements are taken from the NCD index (see page 52), so 50 is the average, above 65 is very high, below 35 is very low.

Pastors cannot explain the increase relating to the Bible, but believe it would be even higher now, due to participation in The Salvation Army's New Testament Challenge, reading through the New Testament in a year.

The pastors have personally gone through a process to come to realise how their teaching and preaching should be relevant to people's lives.

Community Life

Table 2: Indicators of Community life. Church A

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2010	Diff.
My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.	63	52	11
I know that other church members pray for me regularly.	92	61	31
In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.	71	53	18
My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.	72	46	26
In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.	76	22	54
I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.	68	44	24
When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.	71	54	17
Average	73,3	47,4	25,9

Respondents clearly see the church as much more open and welcoming than it used to be. The pastors tell of a couple, who came to a carol service a year ago, who after Christmas came back and asked for the pastors to marry them and subsequently t have been attending church ever since. The reason they came back was they were made feel so welcome at the carol service. They have since become adherent members of the church.

The church runs a coffee shop, which is situated quite literally at the centre of the church. It is a natural meeting hub. Several groups and activities, with a very high emphasis on

relationships and fellowship, for example *Knitter-natter* a new fellowship group of women that meet weekly and knit for special projects. They also chat, share some scripture and pray. This is an open group, where people from the town have been incorporated.

The pastors tell of an atmosphere where people look after each other and care for each other. They met the son-in-law to a lady who is new to the church and he tells how welcoming she had found the church. The church has recently begun to regularly arrange fellowship meals and also coffee mornings.

Discipleship Focus

Table 3: Indicators of Discipleship Focus. Church A.

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2010	Diff.
We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.	91	62	29
I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.	93	64	29
I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).	74	45	29
The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.	59	48	11
I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus	83	51	32
Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.	84	63	21
Average	80,7	55,5	25,2

The pastor's report how they realised that what they needed to do was to help the people develop and grow; that what people do in church should be impacting their daily life. They often ask the question in church "When we leave this hall will people see we are different?" Prayer reflections are purposely done so people will think about what they will do the coming week.

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A small group with focus on bible study was started by a church member, which interestingly has a number of people from other churches participating. The leader was somewhat sceptic about this, as she felt it was unlikely they would join the church through the study. This had been discussed with the pastors and an understanding was reached that the focus was to enable also these participants to grow spiritually, not attract them to the church.

Member Mobilisation

Table 4: Indicators of Member Mobilisation. Church A

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 10	Diff.
I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.	63	50	13
Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.	94	61	33
I feel that my church supports me in my ministry	83	64	19
Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.	83	51	32
I know my gifts.	51	48	3
The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries	78	49	29
Average	75,3	53,8	21,5

For the first two church surveys the minimum factor was *Gift-based ministry*. The church had run gift discovery days, but seemingly without any great effect when it comes to knowledge of personal gifting. A major impact on the development had been tackling of a power issue, where a very controlling member had limited what people were allowed to do and also felt they could do. The power and influence of this member had been severely diminished and given new freedom and liberty. Interestingly the second highest change of any in the latest NCD church survey is to the statement “I enjoy the tasks I do in our church” (an increase of 40 points to a level of 78), which also speaks of a changed atmosphere in the church.

At the initiative of members several new activities had begun, with support and encouragement from the pastors. The pastors had between the second and third profile also established a leadership group that now was involved in leading the church. This had not been in place before where all formal leadership was placed in the hands of the pastors.

Neighbourhood Engagement

Table 5: Indicators of Neighbourhood Engagement. Church A

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2010	Diff.
Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).	75	62	13

There is only one question in the NCD survey that seems to relate to this indicator, which limits the usefulness of using the survey in this specific area. Nevertheless, 75 points is very high and at least indicates involvement in the needs of the community. The Anglican Church in the town runs a food larder, and the church actively support and sponsors this community activity. Due to the size of the town the church does not receive many calls for food parcels, as the need is covered by the larder, but it is involved with helping people with counselling, furniture, temporary accommodation and so on.

When the pastors were asked what they imagined the inhabitants of the town would qualify as the main issues or challenges in the community, they paused for an extended time before answering that they were not sure people would recognise any serious issues. After some reflection they talked about Saturday nights and trouble with youths and drinking in the streets. The church was not actively involved in meeting this challenge, which is not surprising taking the average age of the congregation into consideration.

There was no hesitation when asked about how they would react if an active church member decided to cut down on their church involvement to become engaged in a non-

Christian community programme. “Good on them” was the immediate answer, “because they would be out there, and hopefully they would be able to put some Christian influence there”.

The church is just about to start up a computer group. The initiative has come from a church member and is focused on elderly people, where a need to learn basic computer skills has been perceived. In addition to the programme running in the church they also rented out their facilities to several groups from the community. Rather than seeing this as an end in itself, church members had volunteered to man the coffee shop during the time other groups were in the building both serving them and building relationships to the people participating in the groups.

Adaptable Structures

Table 6: Indicators of Adaptable Structures. Church A

Church A	Feb. 2013	Aug. 2010	Diff.
The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	58	35	23
It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)	68	72	-4
In our church we often try new things.	61	25	36
There is a lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church	77	33	44
Average	66,0	41,3	24,8

This is the indicator where Church A scores the lowest, but still well above average and the increase has taken the score from well below average to just into the top fifteen per cent bracket. As mentioned above a new leadership structure had been put in place, new activities had also been started, based on evaluation of need. Other activities had been closed down because they were not seen as meeting the right needs anymore. Additionally one of the community groups in the corps had decided to meet outside the church hall to interact with the local community.

When asked for their reaction to the claims that an NCD approach could lead a corps toward introversion and becoming insular the pastors responded immediately that it definitely was not the case in their church and continued “if anything it has promoted focus outwards, we used to be so insular.”

NCD engagement

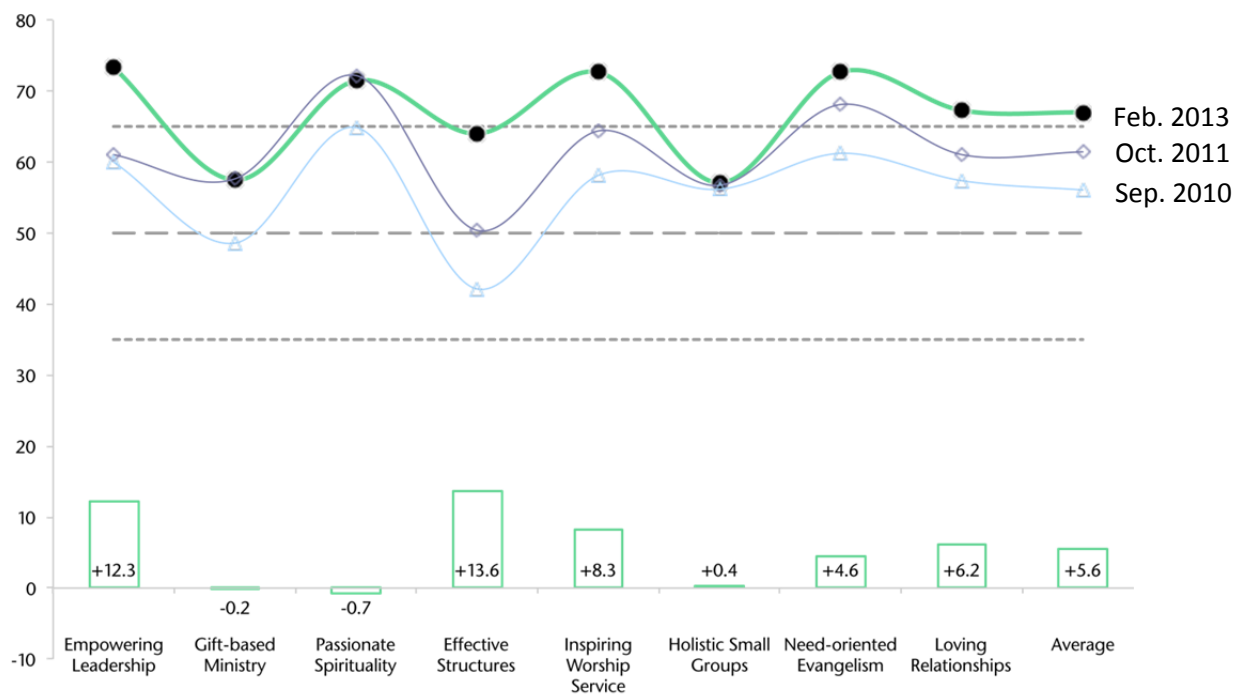
The pastors had arrived in the church a year after the NCD process had begun and with no prior experience of working with NCD. The pastors had attended a couple of NCD conferences and training events, but had only scanned the NCD books. While it appeared that there had not been specific plans and goal setting in relation to the NCD process, the survey results had been shared with the church, there had been various events focussed on NCD with outside presenters coming to the church and whether by intent or chance e.g. the prayer school had influenced the quality of the church.

Overall the impression through the interview was of a church and pastors who were influenced by NCD and willing to become more involved, but needing support from an outside coach or similar to guide them in the process.

Church B

The shape of the latest NCD profile for Church B is almost identical to the one for Church A, but the first profile, and therefore the development, differs. The average increase from the first to latest profile is ten points and for six of the quality characteristics the increase

Graph 3: Church profile for Church B

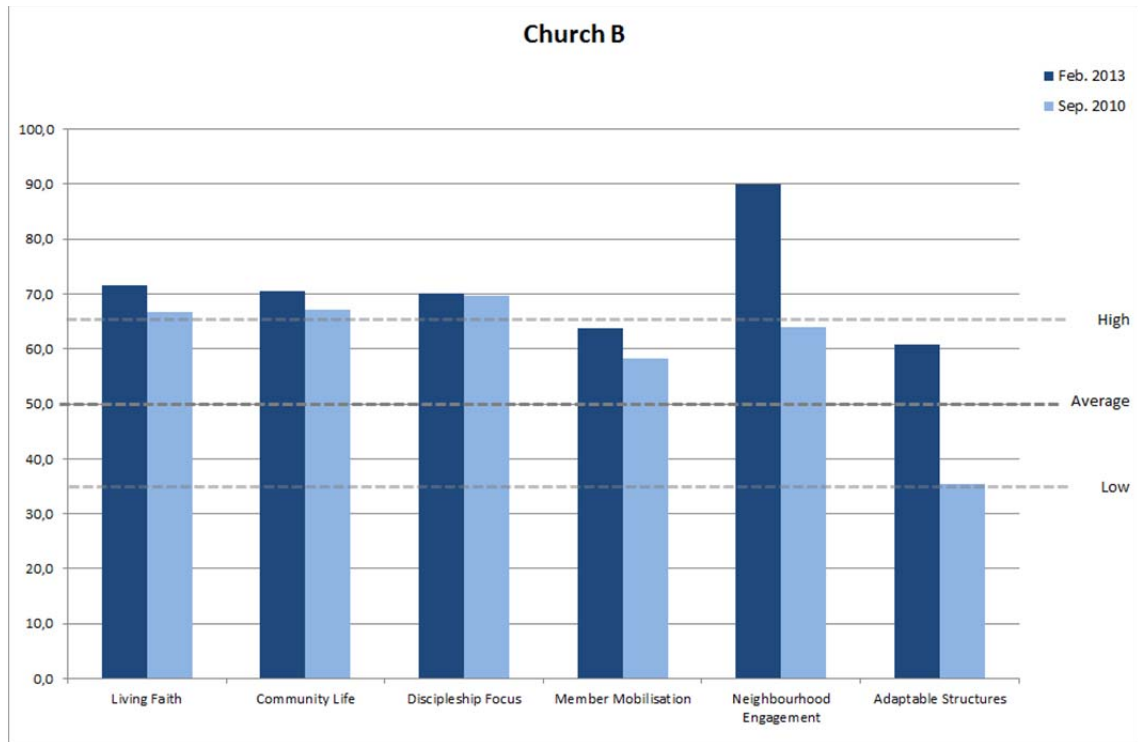


is similar. *Holistic small groups* have seen no increase, whereas *Effective structures*, which was the minimum factor for the first two profiles, have seen a significant increase of more than twenty points. The latest profile was conducted six months after the new pastors had arrived and when looking at the development within each characteristic it becomes apparent that especially the increase in *Empowering leadership* and *Inspiring worship service* probably is more a direct consequence of this than of any change in the culture of the church.

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

When isolating the questions relating to the mission-shape of the church it is interesting to notice that most areas have a limited increase, but the scores for *Neighbourhood Engagement* and *Adaptable Structures* have increased significantly. Especially the low starting

Graph 4: Indicators of Mission-shape. Church B



point for the latter could indicate a church that has been somewhat set in its way, with little openness to change and adaptability, but which have seen a significant change in this area.

Indicators of mission-shape

Living Faith

Table 7: Indicators of Living Faith. Church B

Church B	Feb. 2013	Sep. 2010	Diff.
I experience God's work in my life.	69	62	7
Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me	81	72	9
I enjoy reading the Bible on my own	64	84	-20
I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.	80	70	10
I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me	65	58	7
Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me	70	54	16
Average	71,5	66,7	4,8

While the average increase is below five, it should be noted that this is due to a significant drop in the question relating to Bible reading. The increase in the other questions is of such a character that it should be noticeable within the church. The pastors confirm this and tell of how they perceive a growing spirituality in the church. They gave the example of how recently a choir practice had turned into a prayer meeting due to specific needs and how the process the church had been through have changed the spiritual temperature of the corps.

There is no apparent explanation why it seems like people enjoy reading the Bible less. This is weighed up by the general increase in relation to the experience of the worship service.

A new initiative was a mid-week monthly worship service called 'Praise, Power and Prayer.' The worship style is more informal and creative than Sunday worship, i.e. with prayer stations and so on. The focus is very much on helping people both to experience God, but also challenge them to think of the consequences of this in their everyday.

Community Life

Table 8: Indicators of Community Life. Church B

Church B	Feb. 2013	Sep. 2010	Diff.
My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.	68	68	0
I know that other church members pray for me regularly.	91	78	13
In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.	69	66	3
My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.	61	72	-11
In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.	62	53	9
I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.	69	66	3
When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.	73	67	6
Average	70,4	67,1	3,3

As with Bible reading the pastors could give no explanation as to fall in score concerning help from small groups to spiritual growth. There was a new focus on prayer in the church. One new initiative was *This Time Tomorrow* during Sunday worship. Every week a member of the congregation would be asked to come forward and share what they would be doing this time tomorrow and after that people would be encouraged to pray specifically for this person, but also generally for each other.

The church is experienced as warm and welcoming and the pastors describe them as a very caring congregation. Not long ago a young lady, who as a child had been connected to the church returned after many years for a special event. She later told of how anxious she had been coming, not knowing how she would be received, but that she had been overwhelmed by the warmth and care she was met with. She subsequently began coming to Mums and Toddlers with her son and now participates every Sunday in the worship together with her children.

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

Another example given was of an alcoholic man with a dysfunctional life that used to come in quite late during the worship service and was somewhat disruptive. For the last couple of months he had participated in the service, coming from the beginning and joining in what was going on. The pastors attributed this to his experience of being valued and accepted by the congregation. Last week he had been quite upset because of the death of a friend, but the congregation had ministered to him and been allowed to pray for him.

Overall the church acts like a family and members are very involved with each other's lives, also during the week.

Discipleship Focus

Table 9: Indicators of Discipleship Focus. Church B

Church B	Sep. 2010	Feb. 2013	Diff.
We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.	72	80	-8
I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.	88	81	7
I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).	58	57	1
The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.	66	68	-2
I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus	67	69	-2
Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.	70	63	7
Average	70,2	69,7	0,5

The pastors tell of how they have emphasised that while it is good to be a disciple in the church building “you also have to be a disciple out there, tomorrow”. There is a growing understanding that it is not just about being in church, but about conversations at the bus stop, sharing a cup of coffee with a neighbour and so on.

Connected to this has been an emphasis on the church existing for reaching the lost. The growth in people actually praying for friends and colleagues, as seen in table 9, is a likely outcome of this.

Mobilised Members

Table 10: Indicators of Mobilised Members. Church B

Church B	Feb. 2013	Sep. 2010	Diff.
I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.	63	63	0
Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.	79	67	12
I feel that my church supports me in my ministry	85	59	26
Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.	66	59	7
I know my gifts.	38	53	-15
The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries	52	48	4
Average	63,8	58,2	5,7

There is a significant decrease in people indicating that they know their gifts, which cannot be explained. After the latest profile a gift discovery day had been conducted, which had been very well attended and received. Now the challenge is to deploy people according to their gifts, which the pastors are working at.

There is a leadership team in place that meets regularly. Recently it has been decided every second meeting will focus entirely on mission. There has been an influx of children and families into the church and a Sunday school has commenced. For this a team had been established and trained and they were about ready to take full responsibility now.

According to the pastors approximately eighty per cent of the congregation are involved in some kind of ministry and about half of those would be in ministries focused outside the church.

The very significant increase in how supported people feel in their ministry is ascribed primarily to recognition and expressed gratitude. The pastors have made a point of mentioning various ministries and the people involved in them from the platform, thanking them for their ministry. This had the extra benefit of making people aware of what is going on outside the Sunday worship. The church newsletter also regularly highlights various ministries.

Neighbourhood Engagement

Table 11: Indicators of Neighbourhood Engagement. Church B

Church B	Feb. 2013	Sep. 2010	Diff.
Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).	81	51	30

As seen in table 11, a very significant increase has occurred for this question, which is confirmed by the pastors. The church is placed within a very deprived area. The ward, where the church physically is placed, has been named the poorest area in East England and the pastors identify the lack of jobs and the reduction of social benefits as the main challenges. The church has commenced a food parcel ministry to alleviate some of the needs. This has led to a few people beginning to attend the church and all have been well received and cared for. One way the whole church has been involved in this ministry is by changing the harvest service, so instead of bringing produce, people now bring a “tin harvest” and in this way participants in bringing food to be used in the food parcels.

One of the local leaders in the church is head of literacy at the local school. Many of the children struggle to learn to read; one reason being no one would sit and listen to them read, helping them to develop their reading skills. A group of people from the church now go into the school every week and sit and listen to the children read. Another outcome of this is the pastor being invited to become a governor of the school.

The church runs a weekly jumble sale and coffee morning, where people from the immediate community come and share fellowship. A member of the corps has for several years gone regularly to the market to sell The Salvation Army War Cry in a neighbouring town. This has evolved to arranging an annual very well attended Carol Concert in the town and the engagement will soon be extended with opening a charity shop in the town. The church sees this as the first step towards actually planting a church in that town.

Adaptable Structures

Table 12: Indicators of Adaptable Structures. Church B

Church B	Feb. 2013	Sep. 2013	Diff.
The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	65	40	25
It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)	66	46	20
In our church we often try new things.	47	20	27
There is a lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church	65	36	29
Average	60,8	35,5	25,3

While not identical to what this dissertation has defined as adaptable structures, the church has for their two first profiles had the NCD quality characteristic *Effective structures* as their minimum factor and worked consciously on improving this. The above questions indicate an increased relevance and creativity. The pastors feel that “NCD has done a great job in sorting some of the internal issues....but hadn’t focused their attention beyond the door”. At the same time they however acknowledge this process actually have made the corps ready for a more outward focus and say that “if it had been two-three years ago, we couldn’t have done what we are going to do now, they would not have been ready for it.”

NCD Engagement

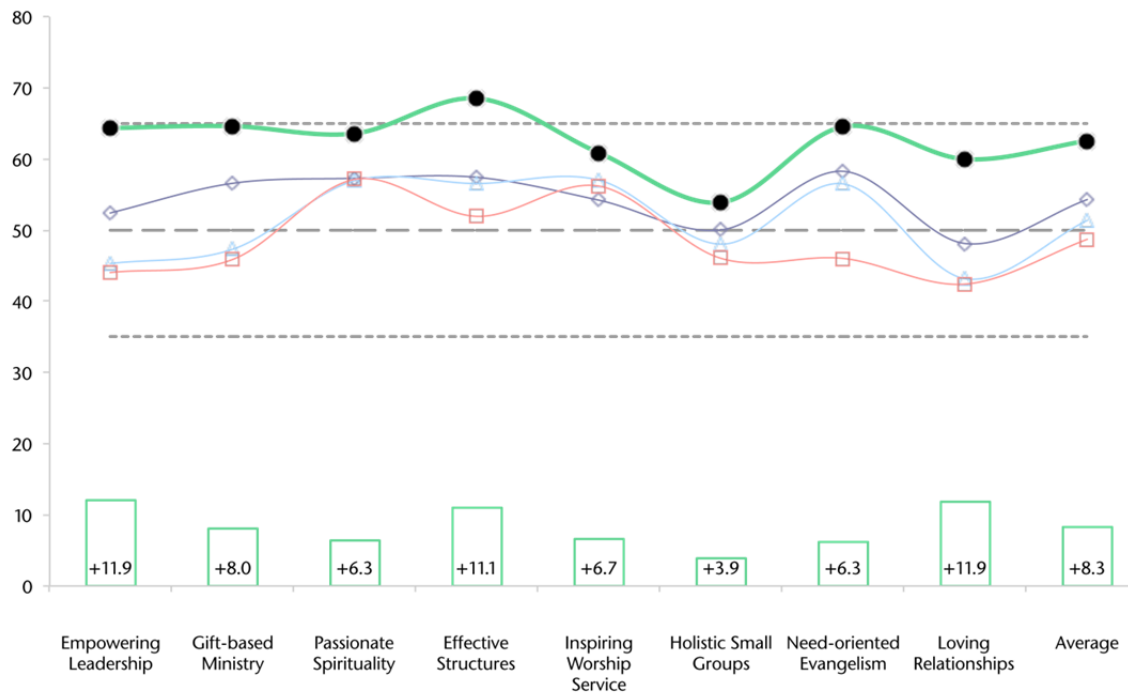
It is difficult to assess the depth of NCD engagement of Church B, especially due to the pastors having been in the church for less than a year. This meant they had limited experience of what actually had been going on and were not able to tell the full story behind the development. They themselves did not give the impression of any real involvement with NCD and expressed some scepticism towards it. They expressed some worry that NCD could lead to navel gazing and were not clear how it would help the church to do mission.

The pastors had not participated in any NCD training events or conferences; they had read the main text books, but not any of the resource books and did not relate to the *Trinitarian Paradigm*. At the same time they talk about a very passionate *NCD Champion* in the church and a good health team, who had participated in NCD training and also in implementing NCD in the church.

Church C

Church C differs from the other two churches by having been involved with NCD for more than 5 years and having done a total of five church profiles so far. It also differs because

Graph 5: Church profile for Church C



this is the only one where the pastor has been in the church for more than two years and she has, even if the first survey was done before she arrived, been part of the development shown in the profile.

In Church C's first profile, which is not included in the Graph 3, no quality characteristic was above average, three were below 35 and the average only 38.5. Part of the background to this was the church had been affected by a marital breakdown in the leadership and also some unhealthy relationships between leaders. At this point an interim pastor came for a year to bring a healing ministry to the church and as part of this process NCD was introduced.

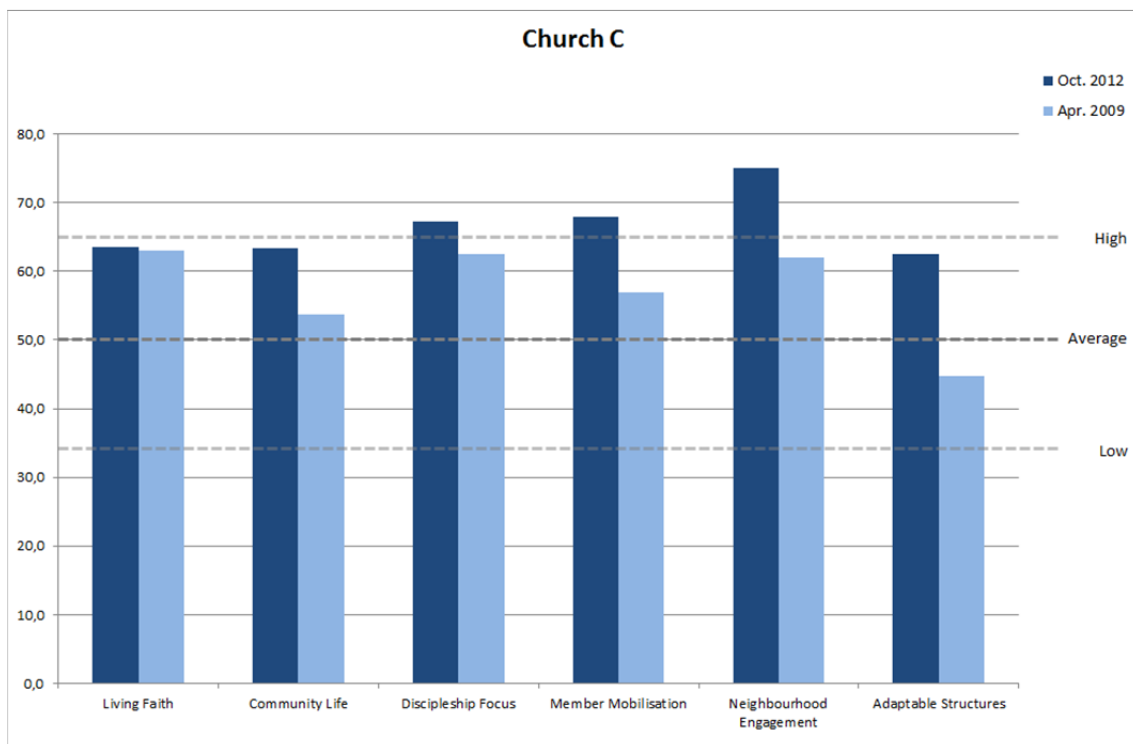
From the first to the latest profile the average quality has increased with 24.1 points and according to the present survey Church C is a healthy and balanced church. *Holistic small*

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

groups, which traditionally is a challenge in Salvation Army churches, is the only factor below 60 and all other a very balanced just around 65 points. Interestingly the largest increase by far between the profiles shown in the graph is between the latest and the one before that. As this has not been influenced by a change of pastor, it could seem that the church culture has changed and real change is happening.

The scores for the mission-shape indicators are similar, although with a tendency to be higher than the NCD church profile. The increases in most of the indicators are significant and seem to imply a much more mission-shaped church today than previously.

Graph 6: Mission-shape indicators. Church C



Indicators of mission-shape

Living Faith

Table 13: Indicators of Living Faith. Church C

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff
I experience God's work in my life.	50	58	-8
Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me	78	79	-1
I enjoy reading the Bible on my own	76	78	-2
I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.	63	63	0
I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me	58	44	14
Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me	56	56	0
Average	63,5	63	0,5

Before the actual interview with the pastor began, she expressed how interesting she found the timing for it. She had a week previously conducted a service at another church and told how that had made her aware of how far her own church had come in depth of spirituality. This perceived change is not seen directly in the statements above and it does seem interesting that while there is a significant increase in how people feel the service influences them positively, at the same time they experience God's work in their life to a lesser degree than before. It is worth noting that the decrease actually has taken place between the second and third survey, and so there is an increase over the last couple of years.

Nevertheless, the pastor several times referred to a renewed and deepened spirituality within the church. "Everything we do is based on prayer" she tells and goes on to explain how, on a Sunday, when entering the worship hall one would experience "a buzz, there is an excitement, people are just chatting and expectant, which wasn't there before".

There have been some negative experiences, where a couple of church members have negatively influenced the Sunday prayer meeting, using it to voice their discontent of the

church through prayer. This, the pastor feels, have negatively influenced some people experience of prayer and God and also diminished the participation. Simultaneously there is a new prayer meeting during the week, which specifically focuses on the spiritual life of the church. It is a prayer meeting where “we often just sit in total silence”. This waiting on God and focus on the spiritual life is seems as having made a marked difference in the church.

Community Life

Table 14: Indicators of Community Life. Church C

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff.
My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.	49	59	-10
I know that other church members pray for me regularly.	79	58	21
In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.	67	46	21
My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.	56	64	-8
In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.	58	34	24
I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.	69	60	9
When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.	65	55	10
Average	63,3	53,7	9,6

Again there are areas where the quality drops, while the overall tendency is a clear increase. Both statements with a decrease in quality refer directly to small groups. If compared to the quality characteristic *Holistic small groups* the two statements chosen above are the only ones relating to the characteristic that has decreased in quality. Generally people indicate the groups have become more relevant and especially open.

For the first four surveys *Loving relationships* were the minimum factor, but in the latest this is no longer the case and the quality score is 60 (in the first profile it was 34). When asked how the church had worked with this the pastor responded “Well, we obviously had

three years worth's of goals here," and while it was difficult to remember specifics she talked about preaching, many fellowship activities and a lot of hard work. The original low score she relates to the crisis the church had gone through, but also tells of the painful experience of several members (20% of the congregation at the same time) not being able to cope with the growth and development of the corps and choosing to transfer to other churches. The fellowship is now deeper and much more open. The church used to be what the pastor describes as an insular club, but now new people have come in and the church is "totally different."

Once a month, during a service, people would pick a note with someone's name on it and commit to pray for that person during the coming month. This had resulted in people sharing prayer needs and also meeting up outside church. Earlier on people had not been too keen on inviting people to their homes, but this was beginning to change and there would occasionally be fellowship in someone's house now.

Discipleship Focus

Table 15: Indicators of Discipleship Focus. Church C

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff.
We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.	71	57	14
I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.	81	68	13
I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).	42	65	-23
The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.	67	64	3
I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus	79	66	13
Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.	63	55	8
Average	67,2	62,5	4,7

It is again worth noticing that the very significant drop to the third statement above happened between surveys two and three and have been increasing over the two latest surveys. It does nevertheless raise the question of why and what has changed, which cannot be fully addressed through the research carried out for this dissertation.

There has been a big turnover of the congregation, but the pastor explains that much of the influx has been transfer growth of people moving into the area and likewise. After reflecting she does remember how the church has made three new member during the last year, all people who have come into the church through community outreach or likewise and made a commitment. While three does not sound of much in itself, it is more than ten per cent of the present worshipping congregation.

When asked what the evangelistic activities in the church are, she responds “I like to think everything” and tells of how they seek to involve people, who are not yet part of the worshipping congregation, in the community programmes the church runs. She tells the story of a lady, whose husband was in prison and she herself was in trouble, and who would not come to an activity, even if it would have been helpful to her. Instead she was invited to join as a helper and now have become part of the fellowship and church members are involved in supporting her.

While there are no youths in the church presently, there are young people approaching adolescence. The pastor tells of plans of establishing a small group for these and while talking about it seems to realise she is describing a holistic small group, where there will be teaching, community focus, fellowship, but for youths. She is also eager that this should not take place in the church building.

Mobilised Members

Table 16: Indicators of Mobilised Members. Church C

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff.
I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.	59	62	-3
Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.	73	66	7
I feel that my church supports me in my ministry	74	50	24
Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.	67	53	14
I know my gifts.	64	68	-4
The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries	71	43	28
Average	68,0	57,0	11

The church is quite small and so there is a need for everyone to be involved, and this is also the reality. The pastor expresses it in this way: “Everyone who can, does.” People do not just come and sit on a Sunday and go home, but participates in ministry, in caring and in noticing each other. When directed to the increase in how supported they feel in their ministry the immediate reaction is “That is good, isn’t it,” but she struggles to explain what has changed. The pastor tells of how she encourages people, thank them, and also send them on relevant courses, but otherwise attributes it to the Holy Spirit.

The pastor likes to involve people in the service and is finding people more and more willing to do so, also without being asked. She is keen to have the young people in the church do something every week.

Neighbourhood Engagement

Table 17: Indicators of Neighbourhood Engagement. Church C

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff.
Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).	90	64	26

The church runs an extensive community programme during the week, such as a lunch club for people with physical and learning disabilities, Parents and Toddlers, Baby Song, a Kid's Club and Women's Fellowship Group aimed at younger retired women from the community. They also rent out their facilities and with especially one of the groups, a theatre school for teenagers and young adults with learning disabilities, they have linked up and got involved, so the group probably would see itself as part of the church.

When asked about the increase in the scoring above the pastor explains it cannot be due to new activities or programmes as such, but more a fact that the people have become more aware and engaged with the mid-week programmes and especially that the quality of those activities has increased. One new activity though is mentioned, a tap dancing fellowship, which was started specifically aimed at one young person with family ties to the church.

When asked how she would react if a church member decided to stop an engagement in a church activity to instead get involved in a non-Christian community project, the reaction came immediately that she would be pleased that they would. If it was a new Christian, she would still support it, but probably "supervise" him or her. When asked how the church would react she predicted they also would be supportive and make it a subject for prayer.

The church is physically located among some very needy estates, with what is described as a transient community. This makes it difficult to build any kind of relationships with the closest community, but there are individuals from the community that have found a safe place within the church during the week. One example given is of a lady, who will come and curl up and fall asleep in the corner of the pastor's office, while she is there. The church also has a ministry of helping, in the pastor's words, "lots of people" with food parcels.

Adaptable Structures

Table 18: Indicators of Adaptable Structures

Church C	Oct. 2012	Apr. 2009	Diff.
The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.	71	39	32
It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)	73	52	21
In our church we often try new things.	50	50	0
There is a lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church	56	38	18
Average	62,5	44,8	17,75

The main thing to note from the interview is the, according to the pastor, total change of focus the church has gone through. When asked at the beginning how NCD has influenced the pastor, she tells of how it has changed her personally, to looking out instead of in and given her a new focus. When later asked of the danger that a NCD involvement could lead a church to become introvert and insular the response came immediately “Quite the opposite. My experience of this one church is that it has turned from being in on itself to totally out and totally open”.

NCD Engagement

Both due to the longer involvement from the church and based on the interview with the pastor it is clear this is a church that has adopted a NCD approach and seeks to apply NCD principles. When asked of how NCD teaching has influenced her and her ministry the answer flows out immediately:

“It has totally. It has given me focus. It has changed me as a person, made me more aware of a lot of things; it definitely has changed the church. It has changed me personally, from looking out instead of in, it has given me focus.”

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

The church has purposely worked on improving their minimum factors, setting goals and making plans to the extent that the NCD process just have become a normal part of church life. The pastor has also adopted the Trinitarian Paradigm. While the pastor has not used it overtly, she tells of how, due to how it has influenced her personally, it has also influenced the church through her preaching and teaching. One of the effects is she consciously seeks to be more balanced in her approach, especially taking the green and red aspects more into consideration.

Chapter 6: Discussion

In this chapter an analysis of the main teaching of NCD will be evaluated and discussed in a mission-shaped perspective, seeking to show to what degree there are similarities or disagreement between the two. This will be followed by an evaluation of the findings of the research project and to what extent a NCD engagement has led to a more mission-shaped church.

NCD and Mission-shaped Church – friends or foes?

A Trinitarian approach

It is interesting how both NCD and the missionary church understanding have a Trinitarian basis and focus. The language used is different and where the missionary church discussion have tended to emphasis the sending of the Church by the Trinity, Schwarz relates a Trinitarian approach to the areas of personal growth and church development. There is not, however, necessarily any tension between these two emphases and it could be interesting to further examine if and how these two Trinitarian approaches complement each other. In his *Five Values for a Missionary Church*³¹ Cray lists as the first, “Focused on the Trinity” and explains that “Worship lies at the heart of a missionary church, and to love and *know God as Father, Son and Spirit* is its chief inspiration and primary purpose” (Cray, 2009, p. 81 *Italics added*). While Cray does not in any way refer to NCD, this emphasis on the Trinity seems to come very close to the emphasis of Schwarz and the Trinitarian Compass.

It is worth noting that it appears as if the missional authors, who are critical towards NCD, are not aware of the Trinitarian development in NCD. While it is dangerous to base an argument on silence, the limited references to NCD literature in the various books indicate

³¹ See Appendix A

that the authors only have been aware of the original *Natural Church Development* and, in the case of Engen, also *Paradigm Shift in the Church*. This needs to be taken into consideration when assessing the scepticism and also the relationship between NCD and a Mission-shaped church.

The essential question

As noted it appears as if there is some divergence as to whether mission is *of* the essence or is *the* essence of the Church. It is, however, not helpful to exaggerate this difference, as even those authors that have mission as *the* essence within the same work discusses and acknowledges other essentials of the church. It seems they in their eagerness to emphasise the missional aspect, at times end up giving an impression of church, which they themselves are not totally comfortable with. This is illustrated by Gelder and Zscheile who in the reflections on *Missional Church* and the missional conversation tries to bring balance to the emphases on the sending Trinity with bringing the dimension of the social Trinity in the conversation. Even in *Missional Church* the authors, when reflecting on the Kingdom of God, writes of receiving fresh insight that “the first mission is always the internal mission: the church evangelized by the Holy Spirit again and again” (Guder, 1998, p. 96). This could be taken as an acknowledgement of how the renewal and development of the church is essential, even from a missional perspective.

The apparent imbalance is not found in the mission-shaped literature, where the four dimensions of UP, IN, OUT and OF are presented as the essence of the church. If all dimensions are essential, then it must also be essential to grow and develop in all of them. Such an understanding resembles what previously was presented as *radical balance* in this area, where Schwarz argues that the church should be “radically Christ-centred (red zone), radically ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit (the blue zone) and radically focused on God’s creation (green zone)” (Schwarz C. A., 2005, p. 54). Earlier it was noted that Schwarz did not

include the OF dimension in the Trinitarian diagram of *Effective structures*. While this is so, it is however also the case that NCD builds on research carried out in all kinds of churches all over the world, and in *Color Your World* Schwarz includes a section on how we should learn from different cultures³² and also how we should learn from churches with tendencies in different colours (i.e. liberal, evangelical, charismatic). From this perspective it definitely can be argued that the essence of NCD is “OF”.

If it is agreed that the church is more than instrumental, and therefore essential to develop all the dimensions of the church, then the question put to NCD should not be why the development of the church is emphasised, but rather if such an approach neglects developing any of the essentials of the church, and by doing so makes the church unbalanced and introverted. It could be advisable for NCD to consider whether consistently using the term “in my church” in the questionnaire can cause the respondents to think that any real worthwhile engagement towards developing the church must happen ‘IN’ the church and in this way unintentionally and subconsciously diminish the ‘OUT’ dimension in people’s perception.

Community engagement

Looking at the eight quality characteristics, it could appear that the OUT dimension is under-represented and reduced to only one of the eight characteristics (Need-orientated evangelism), and even here the focus is on evangelism rather than community engagement. While there definitely is some truth in this, it should also be remembered that the same could be said about leadership or worship and that NCD holds that each of the characteristics are essential and interdependently linked. It is, however, interesting that only one of the ninety-one questions in the NCD questionnaire was found directly relating to what in this dissertation has been called community engagement. It could be argued that one question is enough.

³² Globally, but also from Christian churches from other global cultures

When a church scores low in that one question, it will sooner or later have to address the issue behind it and consequently could be led to increased community engagement. There is, however, a weakness in the way the question, or rather statement is phrased: “Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, and so on)”. As mentioned it is not unusual for a Salvation Army church to score high in the area of Need-orientated evangelism and also in this specific question. My personal experience is that it sometimes might be more due to an engagement through professionally run community services, which can be staffed by non-church members, or to the engagement of the pastors, rather than the church itself. In this case it is likely a church would still score high in this area as the members know of the engagement, but it could be questioned how engaged the church, understood as the worshipping congregation, actually is and therefore how mission-shaped it really is in this area.

It is nevertheless also noticeable that with the introduction of the *Trinitarian Paradigm* the OUT dimension became much more explicit in NCD and not only in the characteristic *Need-orientated evangelism*. As mentioned in chapter 3 the green dimension of *Passionate spirituality* is “world-focused,” in *Effective structures* it is “outward focus,” and in *Loving relationships* it is “justice.” To some extent these dimensions are not reflected in the questionnaire and therefore neither in the church survey report. This is natural, as the questions were developed prior to the Trinitarian dimension in NCD. The danger, however, could be if a church only relates to its survey results and not the general teaching of NCD, the OUT dimension and especially the community engagement might be ignored. Whether this actually would lead to neglecting the OUT dimension of the church will have to be tested in real life, but it could be worthwhile for NCD to consider how to bring the Trinitarian explanation of each of the eight characteristics more to the forefront of the church profile to ensure this will not happen.

Maybe it was the terminology of “Need-orientated” that led Gelder to categorise NCD as “market driven” (McIntosh, 2004, p. 79), but when reading what Schwarz writes about this characteristic it seems like it has more in common with an incarnational/contextual approach than marketing. To be need-oriented, to be caring (the green dimension), a church needs a dimension of cultural identification and engagement with the people they are reaching out to. However, there is yet to be published a specific book on Need-orientated evangelism by NCD and it will be interesting to see whether this will develop a more explicit incarnational/contextual understanding of this characteristic.

The effects of a NCD approach

If one were to evaluate the effects of an NCD approach by asking whether the three churches researched for this dissertation are more mission-shaped today than before their NCD involvement, it does seem, based on both the analysis of their NCD questionnaires and interviews with the pastors, that the answer is positive. All three churches have increased in every indicator of mission-shape, a development that is supported by the interviews with the pastors.

In the introduction Engen was quoted for claiming that a NCD approach would “move the church toward introversion and irrelevance” (McIntosh, 2004, p. 235) but no support for this claim was found in any of the churches researched. Even when the pastors of church B, who only had been in the church for a year, expressed concerns that NCD could lead the church to become too navel-gazing, they at the same time stated, that the process the church has gone through has prepared it for mission and what the church presently is involved in, would have been impossible before the NCD process. In churches A and C the pastors tell how the churches have moved from being insular to be open and outward focused.

Taking the size, and for churches A and B also the age profiles of the congregations, into consideration, the development and growth in the churches are very encouraging. It is difficult to envision a relatively small church with seventy per cent of the congregation above the age of sixty-one getting engaged in innovative ministry to for example a Goth culture, especially in a small market town in the Midlands. However, starting a computer skills club for elderly people seems very contextual and relevant, as does going into the local school to help disadvantaged children learn to read. No evidence is found of lacking or diminishing community engagement in any of the three churches, but their Salvation Army background has to be taken into consideration here. Whether this also would be the case in churches less historically disposed for such an engagement this study gives no indication of.

It does appear that much of this growth has been either transfer growth or de-churched people reconnecting with a church. This raises the question of how missionary the churches actually have become, and whether a NCD approach has equipped them to minister in a context and future where it is to be expected there will fewer de-churched people to reach. On the basis of this study this question has to remain open, partly because the research did not include the background of people reached, but also because of the relatively short period the churches have been involved with NCD. A church should not be criticised for reaching the de-churched and it can be seen as a step in the right direction, but in a missionary context as that of the Western church, it is necessary to develop beyond that and reach the non-churched. In all three churches there were people with no previous church background that had been reached, so there is a little indication of this being the case, but further studies, with churches with a longer NCD engagement will have to be carried out to investigate if this is a natural consequence of a NCD approach.

Taking the limitations of the research project into consideration, it still seems to show that engaging with NCD does make a church more mission-shaped. The churches had been

Mission-shaped Church Development – Does it happen all by itself?

turned from inward looking to outward focussed, from insular to open and welcoming. There was evidence of new and creative community engagement and in one instance conscious and committed work towards church planting in a neighbouring town. In all churches there was new spiritual life and a focus on developing and equipping the congregation for living as disciples outside the walls of the church.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to evaluate the effect of NCD on the mission-shape of a church asking the question of whether mission-shaped church development comes all by itself when engaging with NCD. This study gives reasons to believe that the effect is positive and that implementing an NCD approach will not only lead to an increase in quality as defined by NCD, but also in the mission-shape of the church. Only a theological reflection prevented *Natural Church Development* to become known as *Missionary Church Development*.³³ According to the findings of this dissertation it can be concluded, that even if Christian Schwarz found it theological unnecessary, it would not have been misleading to retain the name.

The missionary dimension of NCD becomes most apparent in the Trinitarian Paradigm and it could be worth considering for NCD whether this could be linked stronger up with the actual church survey to enforce this focus. It could be recommended that the wording of some of the questions on the questionnaire be revised to avoid the tendency that several of them use the phrase “in my church” or similar, and also to include questions more directly relate to the “OUT” dimension of church highlighted in the Trinitarian Paradigm, especially questions relevant to the indicator this dissertation has called Community engagement.

Finally it could be fascinating to have leaders and theologians from the mission-shaped approach, or what is known as *Fresh Expressions* in the UK, sit down with Christian Schwarz and other NCD thinkers and practitioners to discuss if and how the two Trinitarian approaches could complement each other to prepare the church to become more mission-shaped.

It is recognised that the field study of the dissertation was limited to three churches from the same denomination. A wider study, where churches from various background and

³³ According to Christian Schwarz, see page 35

especially churches with a longer NCD engagement are included, will be necessary and useful to validate the findings of this dissertation on a broader scale.

Finally

In *Invading Secular Space* Robinson and Smith asks what it would look like for a church not being focused on just attracting people into the church, but on developing people in their relationship with God, equipping them for discipleship in Christ and able to take that life and reality into the world (Robinson & Smith, 2003, p. 111). While there is no final answer to that question, it very likely would look like a healthy church and it could be the result of engaging with NCD.

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Appendices

A: 5 values of a missionary church (Cray, 2009)

A missionary church is focused on God the Trinity

Worship lies at the heart of a missionary church, and to love and know God as Father, Son and Spirit is its chief inspiration and primary purpose. It worships and serves a missionary God, and understands itself to share in the divine mission. All of its life and activity is undergirded by prayer.

A missionary church is incarnational

A missionary church seeks to shape itself in relation to the culture in which it is located or to which it is called...If a church is long established, then it evaluates itself in relation to the culture of the community it serves, and strips away whatever is not required by the gospel. An incarnational church seeks to be responsible to the activity of the Spirit in its community.

A missionary church is transformational

A missionary church exists for the transformation of the community that it serves, through the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit. It is not self-serving, self-seeking or self-focused. The kingdom of God is its goal, and church is understood as a servant and sign of God's kingdom in its community, whether neighbourhood or network.

A missionary church makes disciples

A missionary church is active in calling people to faith in Jesus Christ, and it is equally committed to the development of a consistent Christian lifestyle appropriate to, but not withdrawn from, the culture or cultures in which it operates. It engages with culture, but also presents a counter-cultural challenge by its corporate life based on the world view and values of the gospel. It encourages the gifting and vocation of all the people of God, and invests in the development of leaders. It is concerned for the transformation of individuals, as well as the transformation of communities.

A missionary church is relational

In a missionary church, a community of faith is being formed. It is characterized by welcome and hospitality. Its ethos and style are open to change when new members join. Believers are encouraged to establish interdependent relationships with fellow Christians as they grow into Christ. As a community it is aware that it is incomplete without interdependent relationships with other Christian churches and communities. It does not seek to stand alone.

B: Request for participation

Dear ,

I am contacting you to inquire whether you and [Name] corps would be interested and willing to participate in a research project into the effects of NCD in a corps setting. I am conducting the research as part of my MA in Missional Leadership and Commissioner Clive Adams as well as [Divisional Commander] has kindly approved I contact you in this matter. The findings of the research will be published in my dissertation, but names of the corps and officers will not be published. I will of course be more than happy to share the findings with you, also any insights that will not be included in the dissertation.

I have attached a short intro of myself with an emphasis on my "NCD credentials" for your information and you are of course very welcome to contact [Divisional Commander], who hopefully will verify who I am and maybe even recommend me.

[Name] corps has together with three corps other been chosen for the project based on the following criteria:

- I. Have conducted at least 3 church surveys during a period of no more than 4 years
- II. Latest survey conducted in 2012 or later
- III. Have experienced significant increase in quality according to the church surveys
- IV. Situated in at least two different divisions

I am still in the process of planning the research part of the studies, but I expect there will be three phases:

- I. Analysis of church surveys
- II. Interview with CO
- III. A simple questionnaire (10-15 questions) to be filled in by 20-30 members of the corps

I would estimate that the total time investment required from you will be no more than a day's work all included. While it will be a great help to me if you were to participate, I hope it would also prove to be beneficial to both you and the corps.

Distance is a bit of a challenge. I would prefer to conduct the interviews with you face to face and unfortunately I am not in a position to offer to fly you to Copenhagen. If you are participating in the NCD conference in July, it might be possible to conduct the interview at King's Park, but otherwise I would like come to you either during the week before or after the conference. The questionnaire part of the research can be carried out anytime during July and should not take much time to organise

If you need more information or have any questions to be answered before you can decide whether it is possible for you to participate I am of course more than willing to supply this to the best of my ability. This can be done by mail, Skype or phone as you would prefer.

I would appreciate if you could respond to this mail as soon as possible. If you on the basis of the above is able to say yes to participate it would be great if you could attach your latest Profile Plus to the mail. When I have your reply I will contact you again to setup a date for the interview.

Thank you for taking time to read this mail. I look forward to receiving your response. Blessings! Henrik

C: Indicators of Mission-shape – NCD Questions

Indicators of Mission-shape - Questions from NCD Survey	
Living faith:	<p>Q71. I experience God's work in my life.</p> <p>Q77. Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me.</p> <p>Q84. I enjoy reading the Bible on my own</p> <p>Q12. I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.</p> <p>Q15. I feel the worship service has a positive influence on me</p> <p>Q47. Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.</p>
Community Lifestyle:	<p>Q11. My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.</p> <p>Q29. I know that other church members pray for me regularly.</p> <p>Q30. In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.</p> <p>Q34. My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.</p> <p>Q54. In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.</p> <p>Q59. I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.</p> <p>Q86. When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.</p>
Discipleship Focus:	<p>Q19. We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.</p> <p>Q33. I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.</p> <p>Q42. I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).</p> <p>Q72. The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.</p> <p>Q75. I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus</p> <p>Q87. Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.</p>
Member mobilisation:	<p>Q07. I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.</p> <p>Q20. Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.</p> <p>Q26. I feel that my church supports me in my ministry</p> <p>Q37. Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.</p> <p>Q46. I know my gifts.</p> <p>Q58. The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries.</p>
Neighbourhood Engagement:	<p>Q36. Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).</p>
Adaptable Structures:	<p>Q21. The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Q60. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it.</p> <p>Q63. In our church we often try new things.</p> <p>Q69. There is a lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church</p>

D: NCD Background Questions

Why did you initially decide to begin a NCD process?

How have you organised the implementation of NCD in the corps?

What and/or who has supported you in the process?

Have you been assisted by a coach?

How or where did you identify the coach?

How has the coach been involved?

How would you evaluate the benefit of working with a coach?

What were, from your perspective, the main benefits of the Transforming Churches process?

What have been the minimum factors in your last three profiles, and how have you worked on raising the quality in those specific areas?

If you were to give me an impression of your corps, how would you describe it?

How is that different to the time of your first profile?

How has the Trinitarian paradigm/3 Colour Compass influenced your approach to implementation of NCD?

How has the Trinitarian paradigm/3 Colour Compass influenced your ministry generally

Which NCD books/material have you read?

How helpful did you find them?

In what way?

Which NCD books have you used in the corps?

How did you use them?

How helpful did you find them?

In what way?

F: Mission-shape Questions

If I lived in the neighbourhood of your corps, how would I most likely become aware of the corps?

If you think of the latest three to five people who have been integrated into the corps, what was their first point of contact with the corps?

How do people in the corps participate in each other's lives?

If we were to ask the people in the corps neighbourhood about what they think are the main problems/challenges in the neighbourhood, what do you think they would answer?

How is the corps/corps people engaged in these issues?

Imagine I had been part of your corps 4 years ago and not been back since. What would I experience as different if I moved back today?

What new initiatives taken in your corps the last 3-4 years were initiated by an individual member or group of members, rather than the established corps leadership?

If a member of the corps told you they would stop participating in a corps programme, because they felt led to become engaged in a non-Christian community project, how would you feel?

How do you think people in the corps would feel?

G: Sample NCD Church Report

See the following pages



NCD *status* guide for

Salvation Army

February-2013

Pastor for 2 years: **100%**

Profile	Date	Minimum Factor	Maximum Factor	Min - Max Difference	Average
3	Feb-13	57.3 Holistic small groups	74.3 Need-oriented evangelism	17.0	68.5
2	Oct-11	43.4 Gift-based ministry	59.3 Need-oriented evangelism	Change 2 - 3	+15.7
1	Aug-10	35.5 Gift-based ministry	51.1 Loving relationships	Change 1 - 2	+8.9

43.9

Welcome!

Welcome to your first (or next) NCD cycle. It is a process for transforming the spiritual journey of your church, helping you learn to partner with God in increasingly fruitful ways.

This NCD Status Guide is one of four guides received by your church. These guides present your NCD results from different perspectives. Each guide is based on the same information but with a different emphasis in each instance. You could think of it as similar to sitting down to read a passage from the Bible in a paraphrased, an amplified and a life-application version (see the overviews below).

NCD is a process, so your pastor has been encouraged NOT to discuss all the guides in one sitting. Instead, they are asked to allow each guide discussion and the action that follows to nurture, within themselves and the leadership, higher levels of observation, understanding and practical action - aspects of growth that completely depend on each other.

On the following page is a map that will give you an overview of the process. Specific instructions follow on page 4.

Please embrace the celebration points and challenges ahead and may God richly bless you on this journey of partnership with him.

NCD *Summary* guide

Aim: presents a non-detailed overview of the health and influence of your church.

Will appeal to: all who would like a general picture of your church's strengths and challenges.

NCD *Story* guide

Aim: presents your results as everyday themes of church life.

Will appeal to: more relational people who view and talk about church life through their and other's real life experiences and stories.

Who might they be?

NCD *Status* guide

Aim: presents the detailed data from your surveys as well as progress information if this is a repeat survey.

Will appeal to: analytical people who like to understand the background and come to their own conclusions.

Who might they be?

NCD *Strategy* guide

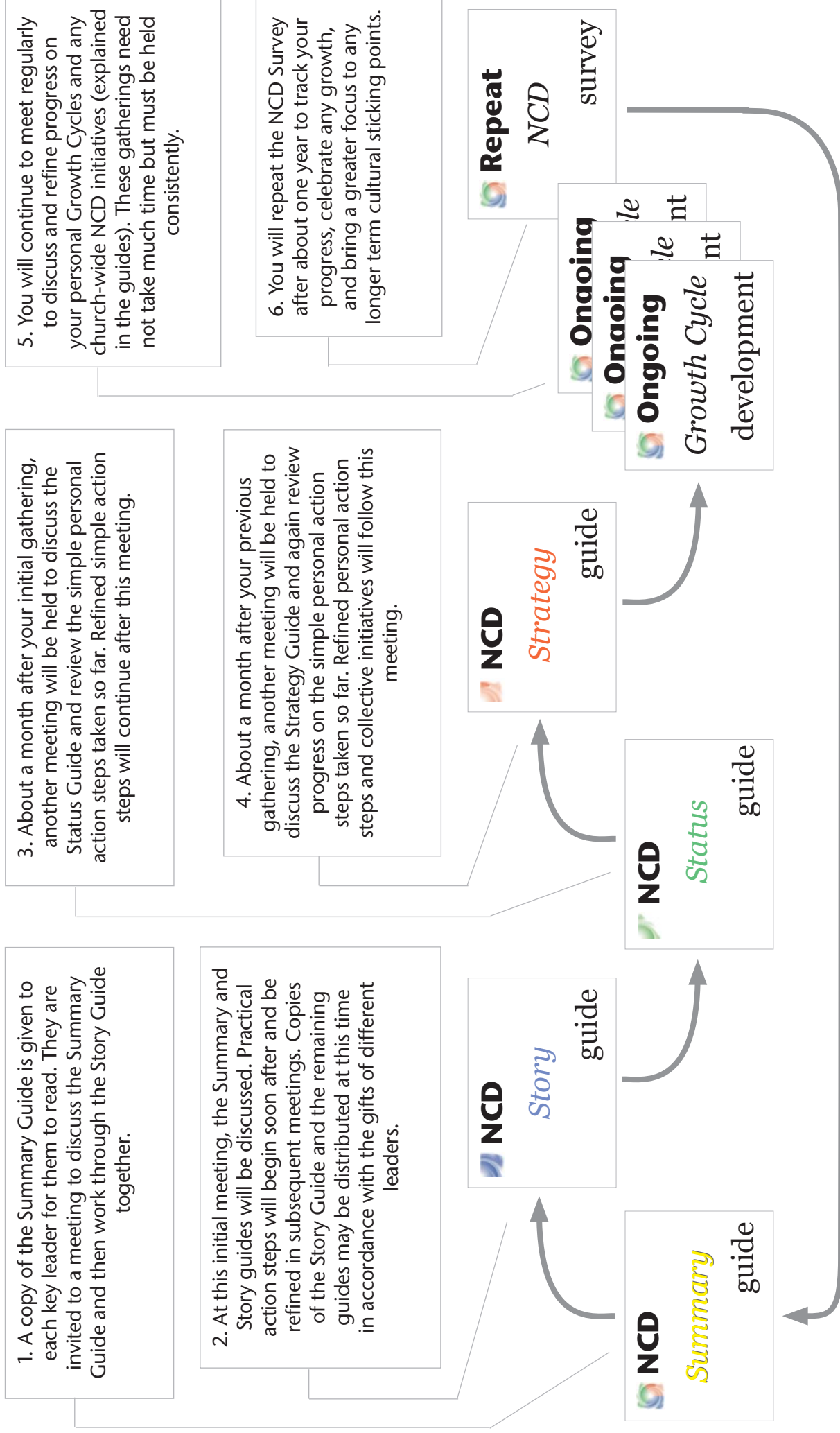
Aim: presents growth projections as well as principles for helping your whole church act on your results.

Will appeal to: task-oriented future-focused people who are about taking action and staying on track.

Who might they be?



NCD Process Map



Status Guide Instructions

By way of preparation for your ongoing NCD result discussions, **please work through the explanations and charts on the following pages.** Ask yourself the associated questions while imagining the responses others may have to the various topics. While your first pass through the guide is to help you establish a personal response to the results, the following important points will help you relate your findings to the stories and strategies put forward by others along the way.

The importance of your work with this guide

In the same way as the church depends on different parts of the body working together, the NCD process works best when unique, complementary contributions are encouraged. Your role in working with or presenting this guide is to **bring objectivity to the discussions as well as background information that will help to move the group forward.**

For many people, soberly seeing their church in comparison to the wider Christian Church can be quite a challenge. After all, given enough time, everything in even a very *unhealthy* church can appear normal! The normalisation of your church's results against national benchmarks, as presented in this guide, will help you establish this objectivity.

Pragmatic analysis

Given the volume of information, **you will need to be selective in using the data in this guide** based upon what will be most helpful to your process right now. Look for the insights that will both sharpen the perceptions of the group and move them through to simple, refined, practical action.

Even if you feel that objectivity and detail are sometimes being compromised by this apparent "pragmatism", keep in mind that NCD is a process based on continuous, relatively short, cycles of development. That means it will never be too long before your important deeper insights are finally recognised by others, or that perhaps others will help you to make new discoveries that further deepen everyone's understanding. **At all times, try to bring a new level of clarity to discussions and actively respond to the very real feelings and practical concerns of others.**

If facilitating group discussion...

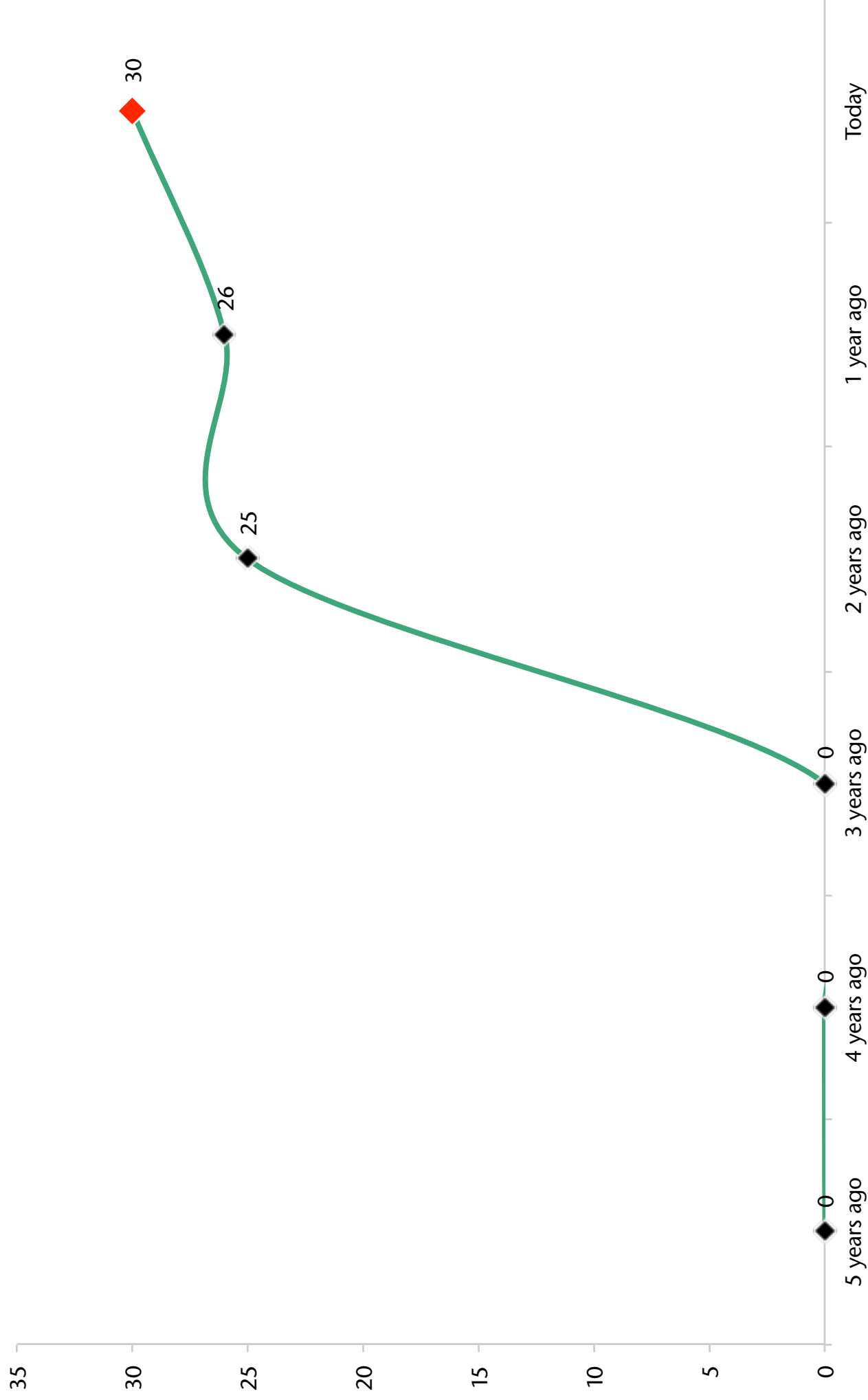
It may be that your pastor has asked you to provide insights from this NCD Status Guide. If so, when you gather to discuss the results, (in consultation with your pastor) **you will need to have arranged for the relevant pages to be available to the rest of the group** either on paper or on a screen. The PDF file can simply be displayed in full screen mode on most computers connected to a projector.

Priority discussion points

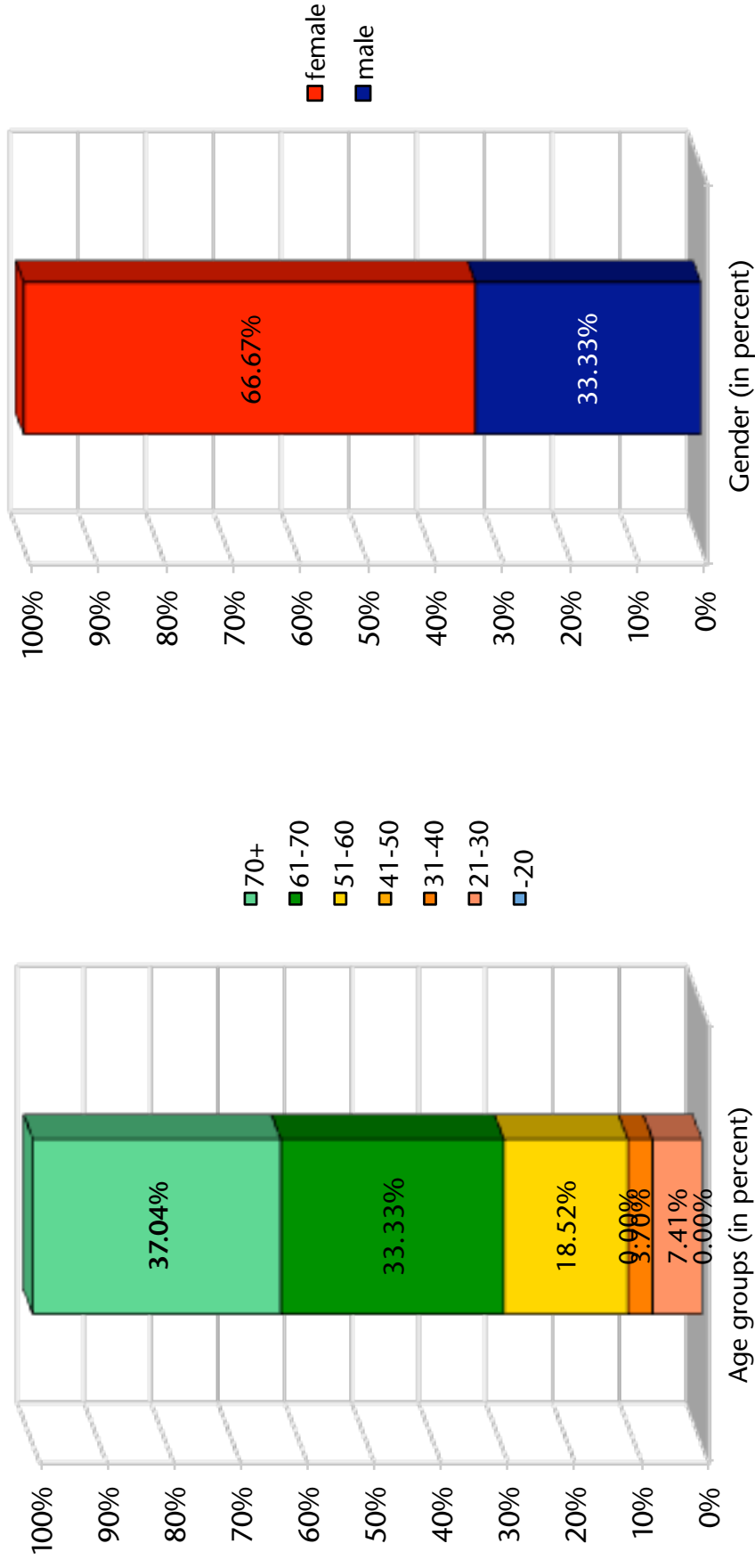
You will have many more opportunities very soon to share additional thoughts in subsequent cycles of the process. But for now, (in addition to the two mandatory topics) **tick two or three topics below that you believe will help move the group to the next level of understanding about your results and then present those points.** For your preparation, you can start reading through the charts from the next page, or systematically work through the explanations for the topics below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The background to your results (pages 30-31)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age and gender demographics (page 32)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainability (page 33)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Progress charts (page 34)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural 'sticking points' (page 35)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Minimum factor detail (page 36)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lowest and highest 10 questions (page 37)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current capacity (page 38)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Understanding the facts beyond reasonable doubt (page 39)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cycling together through our personal growth options (page 41)

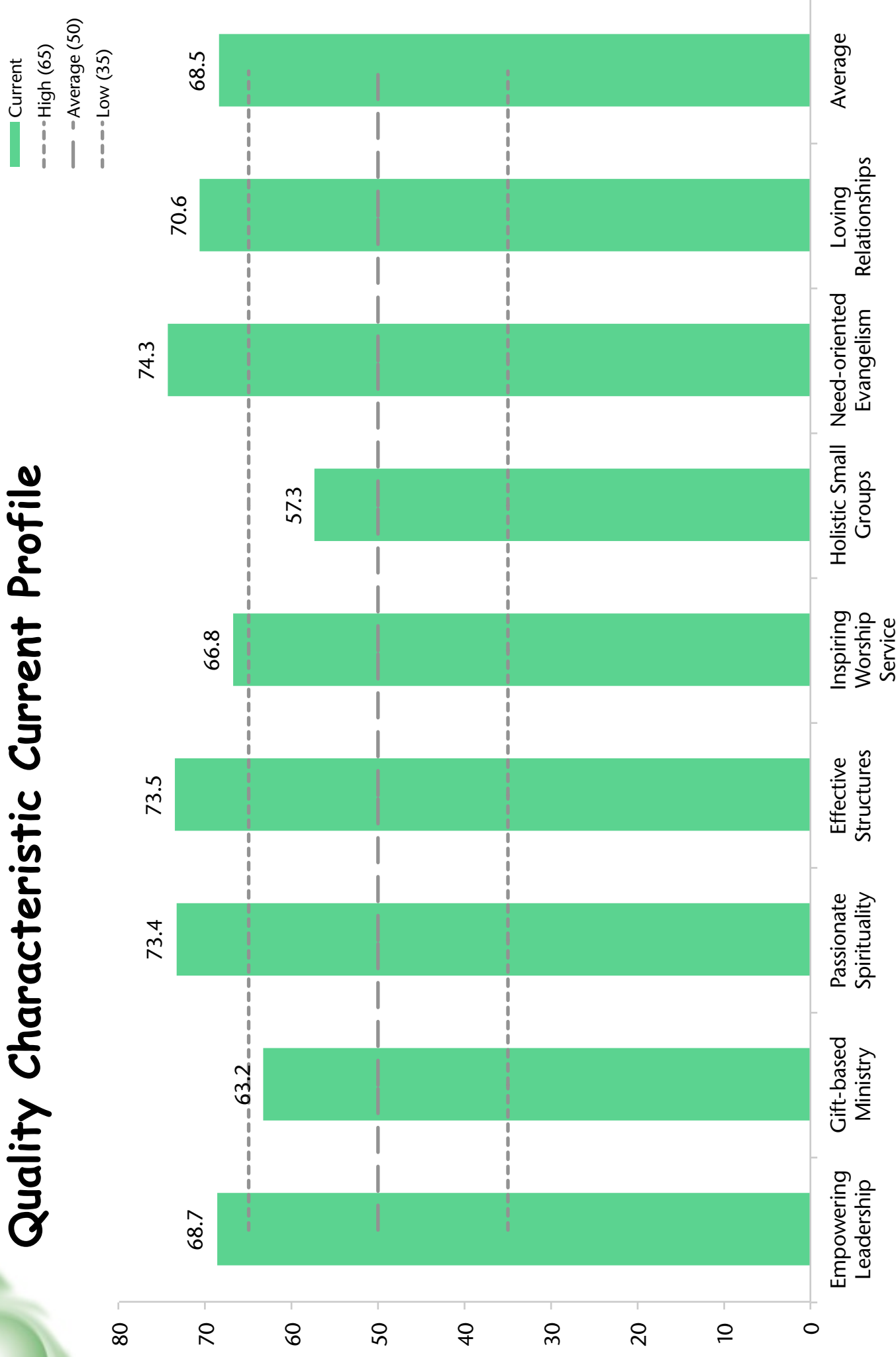
Adult Attendance Growth



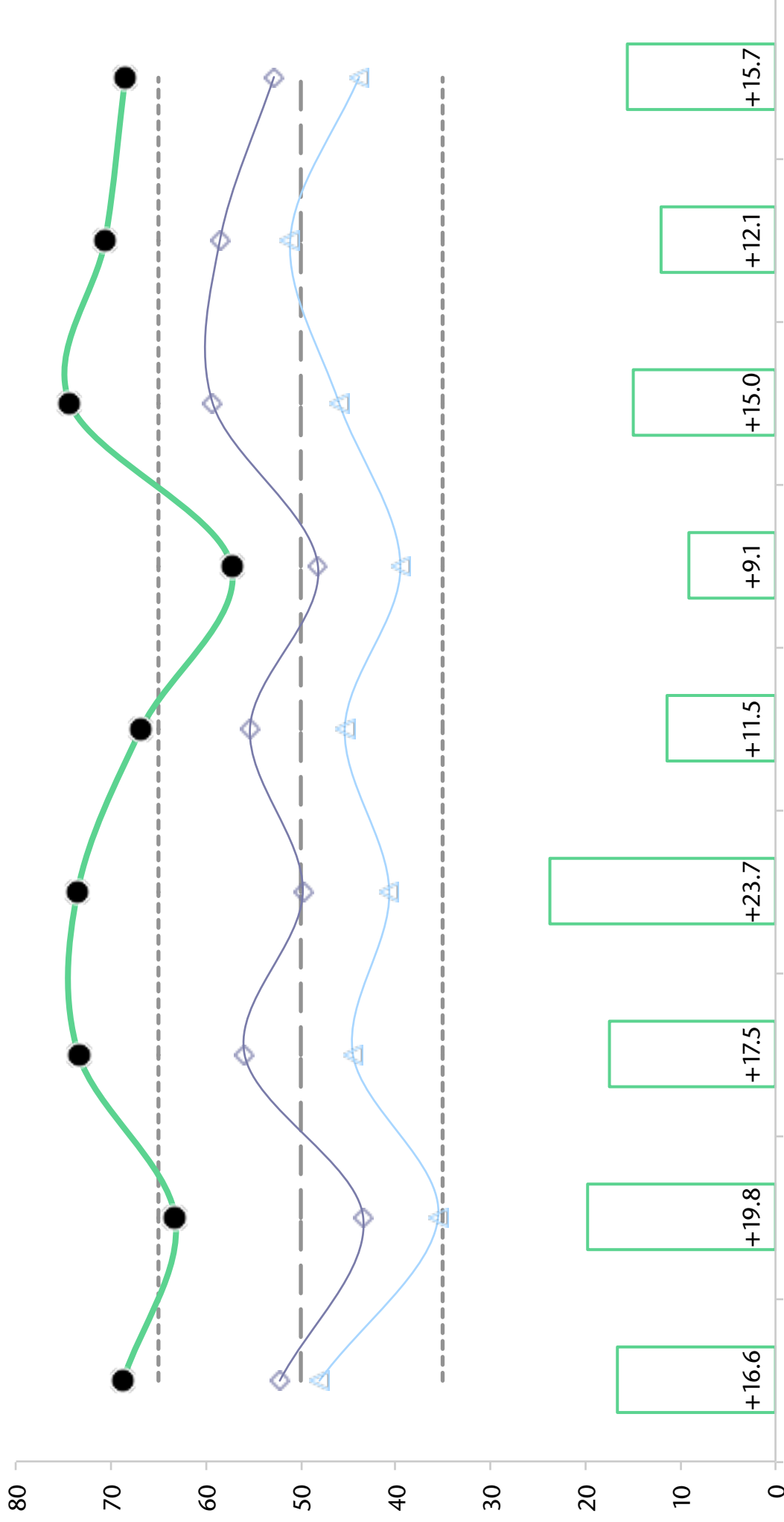
Survey Participants by Age Groups and Gender



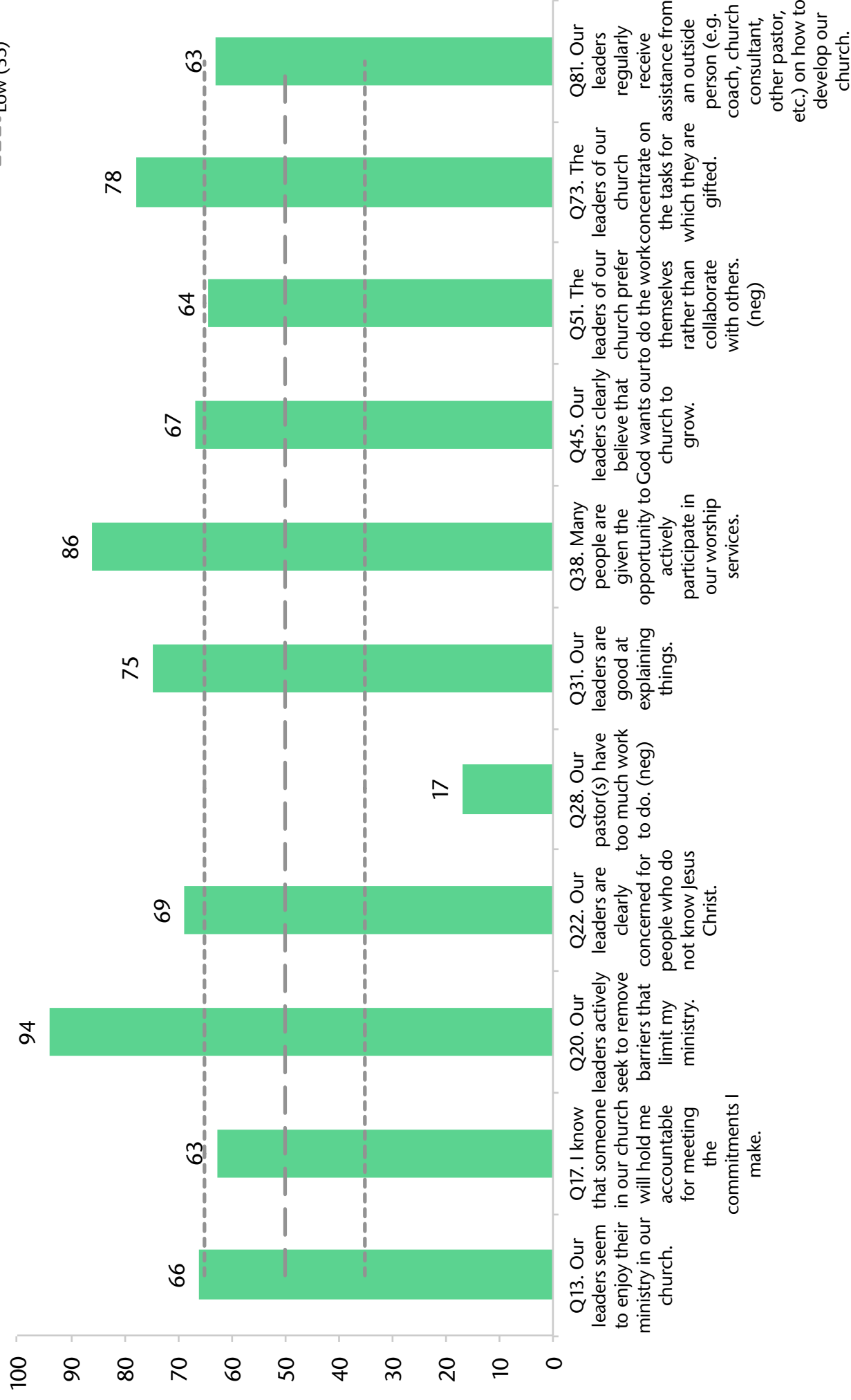
Quality Characteristic Current Profile



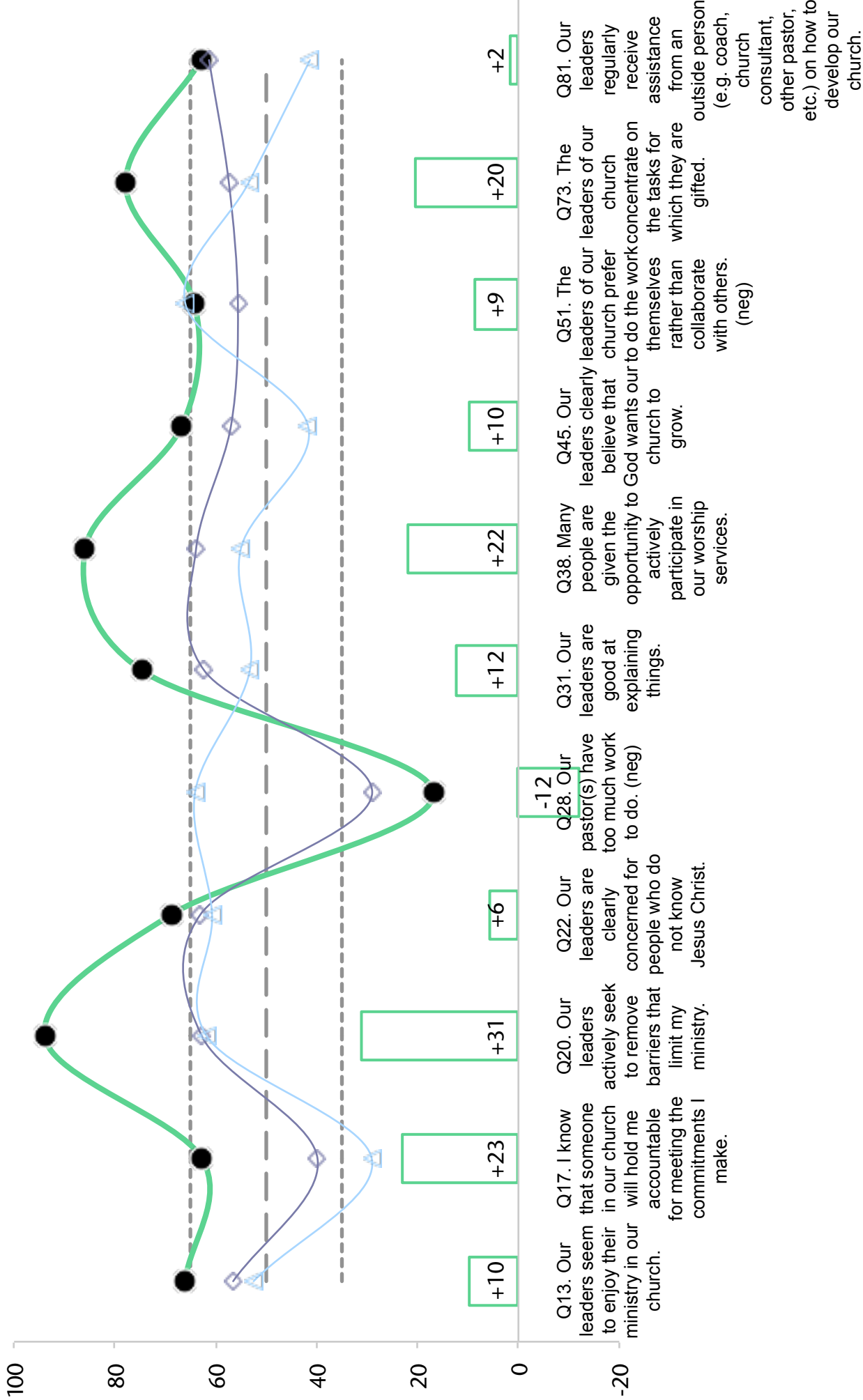
Dynamic Progress



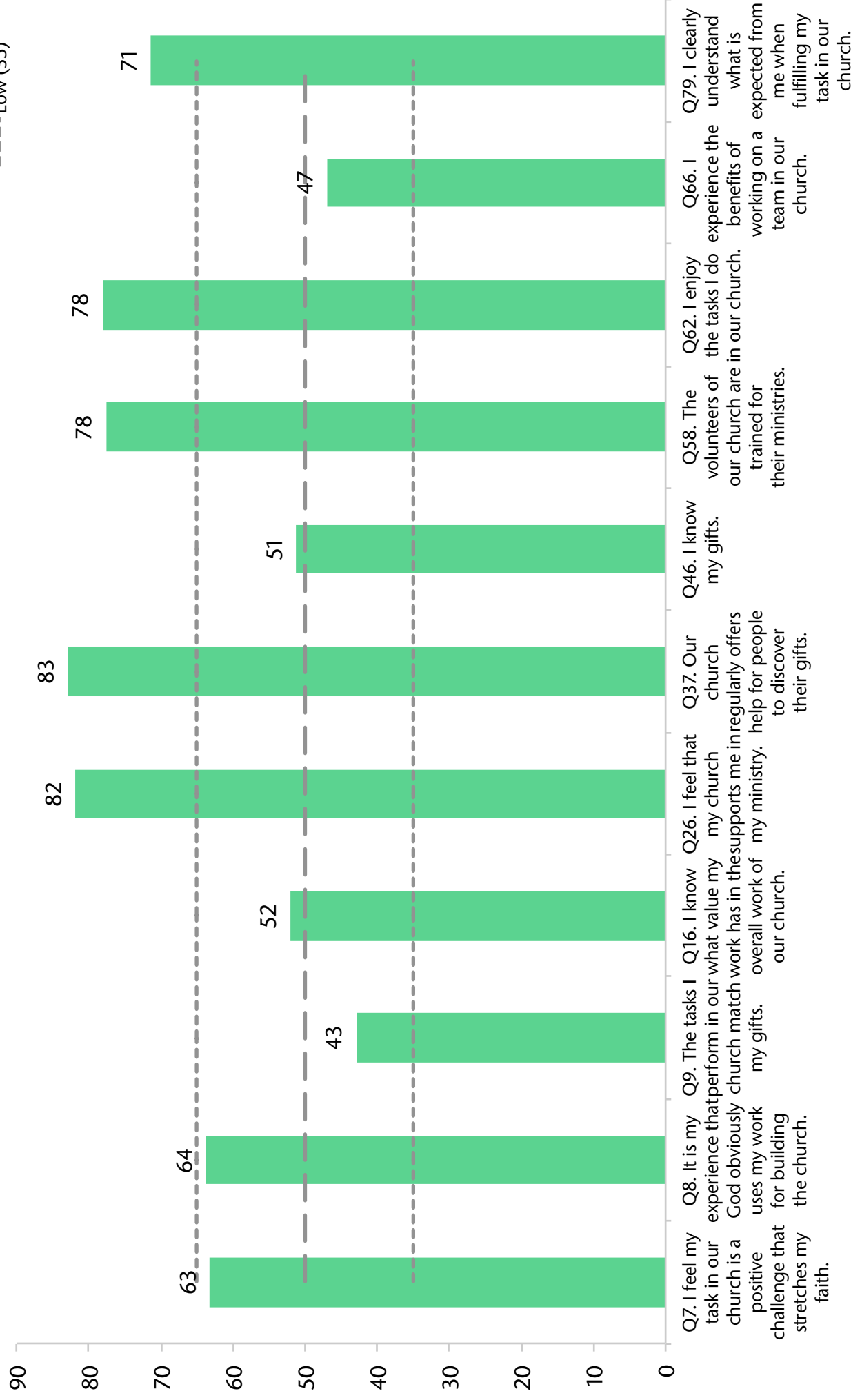
Empowering Leadership Current Profile



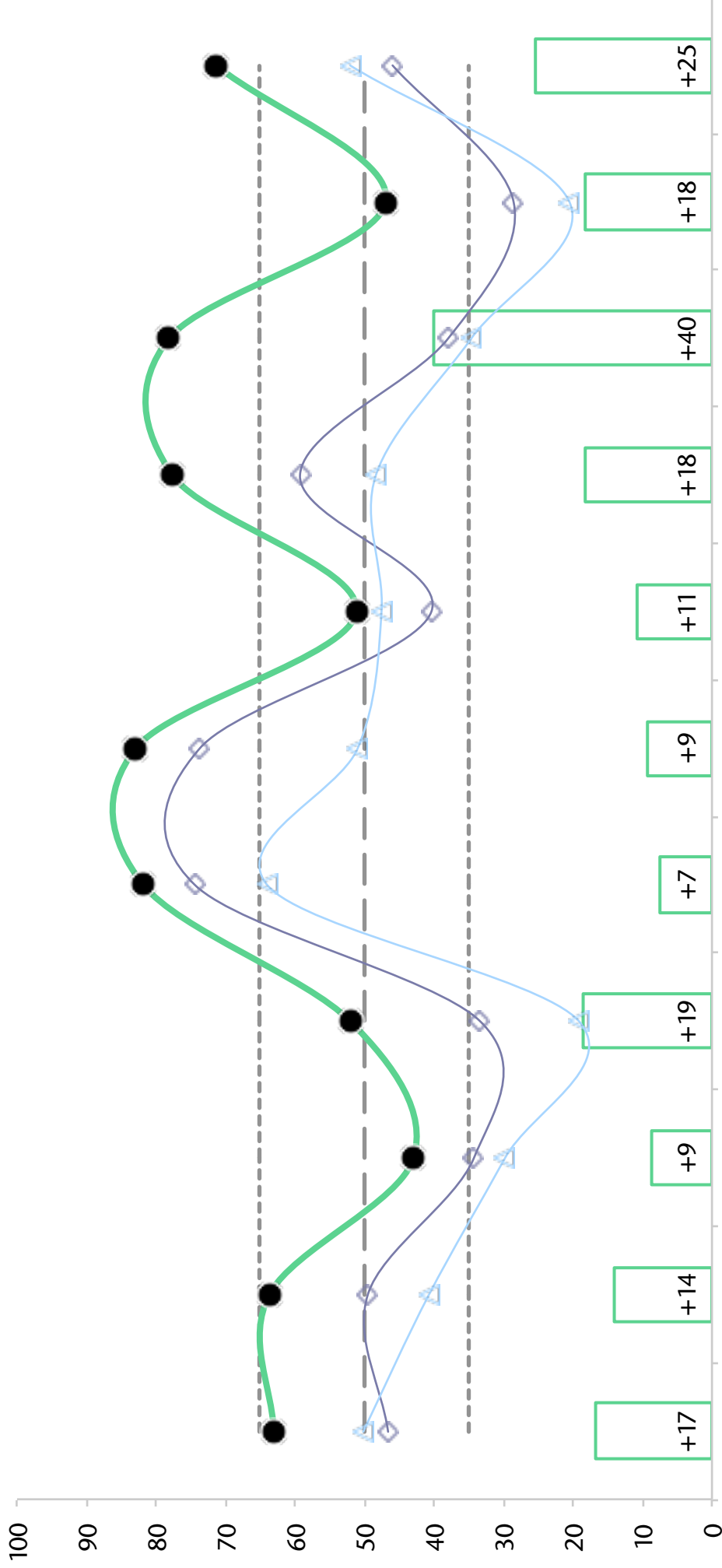
EL Dynamic Progress



Gift-based Ministry Current Profile



GbM Dynamic Progress



Q7. I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.

Q8. It is my experience that God obviously uses my work for building the church.

Q9. The tasks I perform in our church match work my gifts.

Q16. I know what value my church has in the overall work of our church.

Q26. I feel that my church supports me in my ministry.

Q37. Our church help people to discover their gifts.

Q46. I know my gifts.

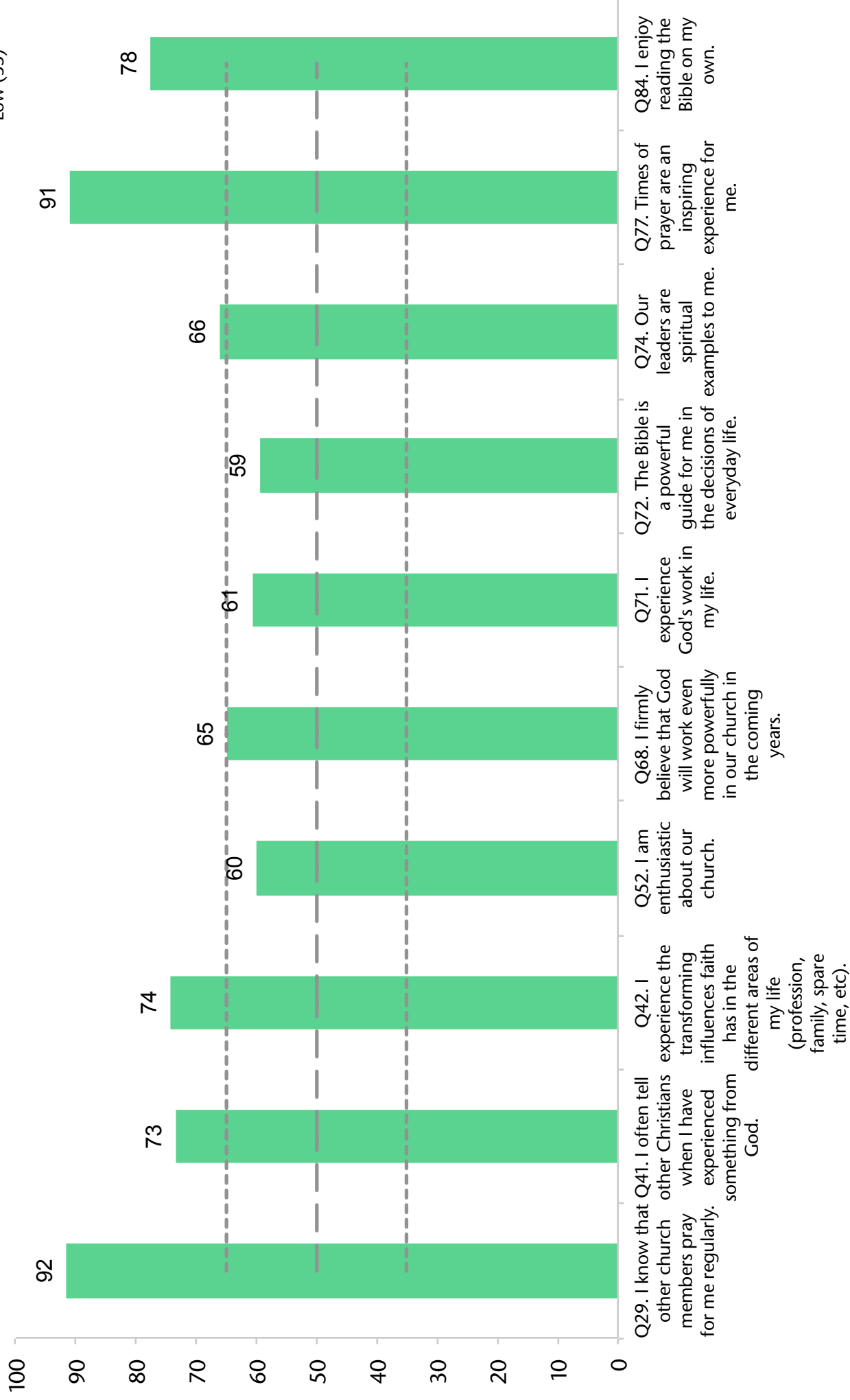
Q58. The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries.

Q62. I enjoy the tasks I do in our church.

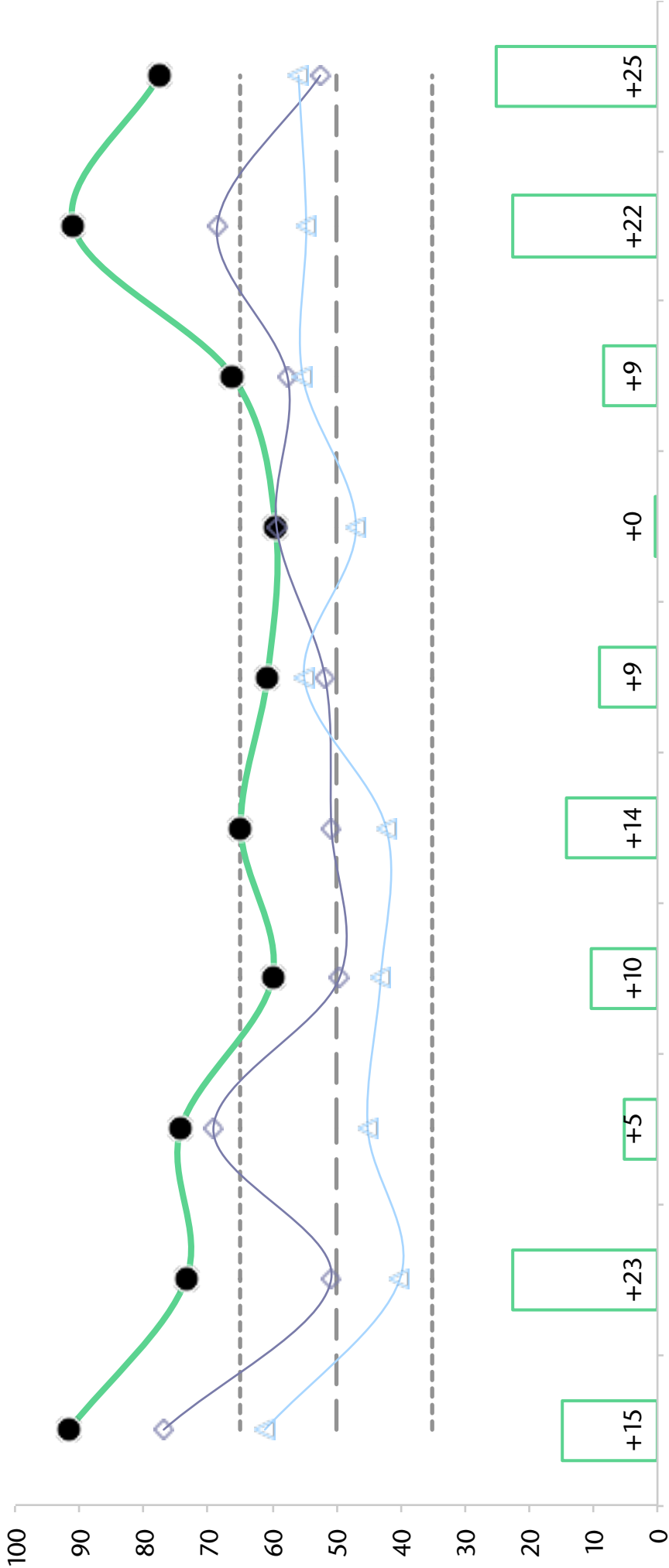
Q66. I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church.

Q79. I clearly understand what is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our church.

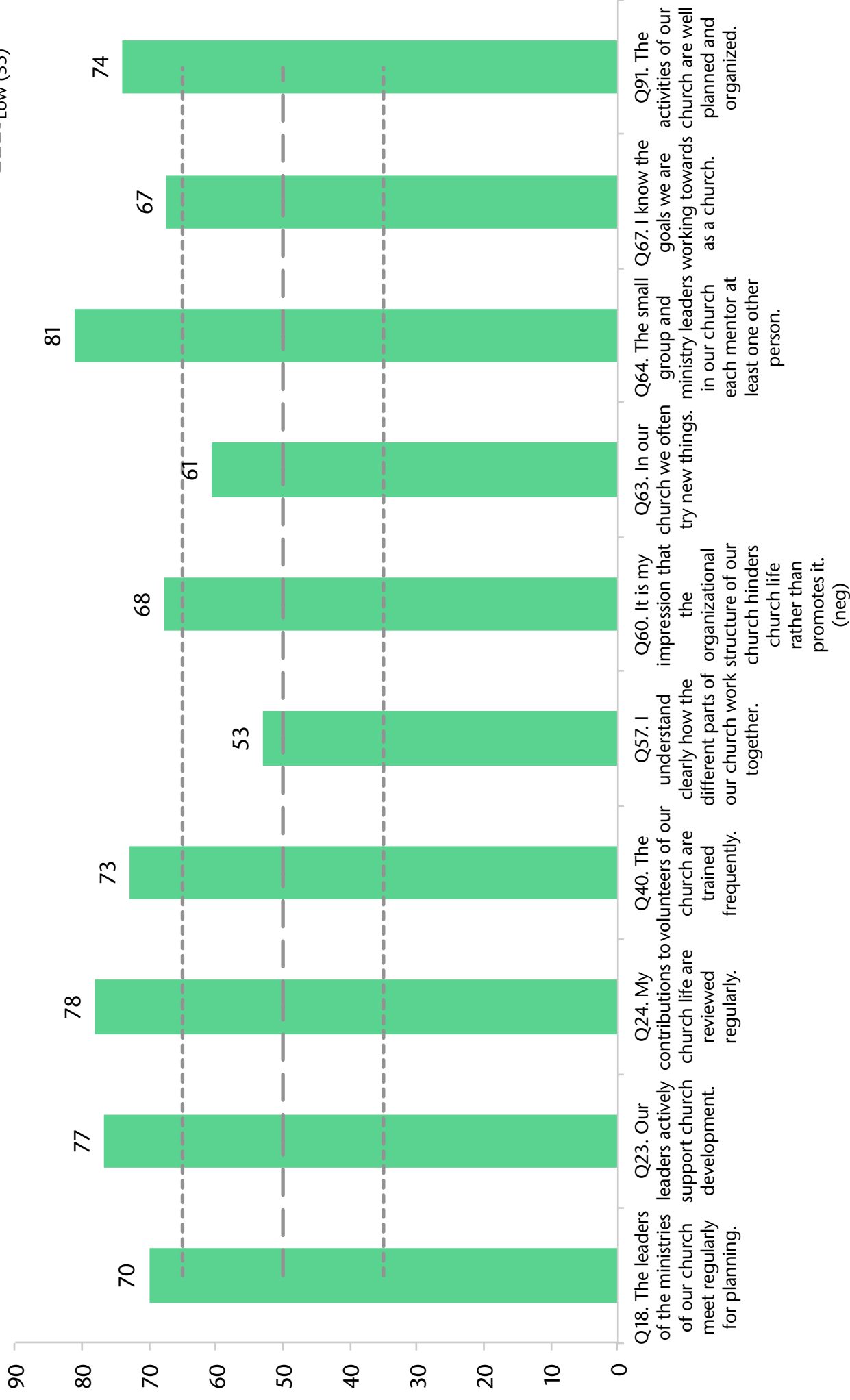
Passionate Spirituality Current Profile



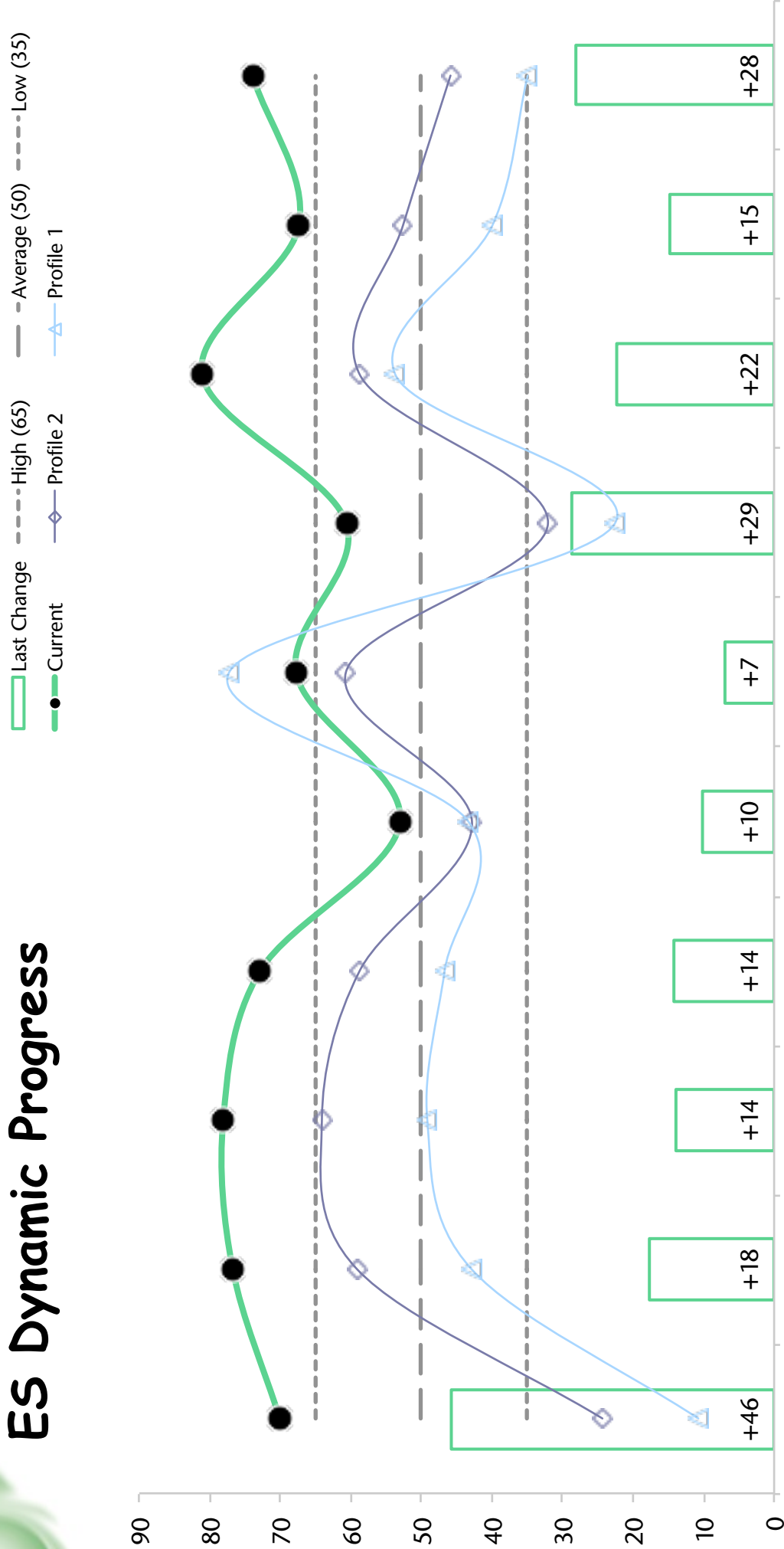
PS Dynamic Progress



Effective Structures Current Profile

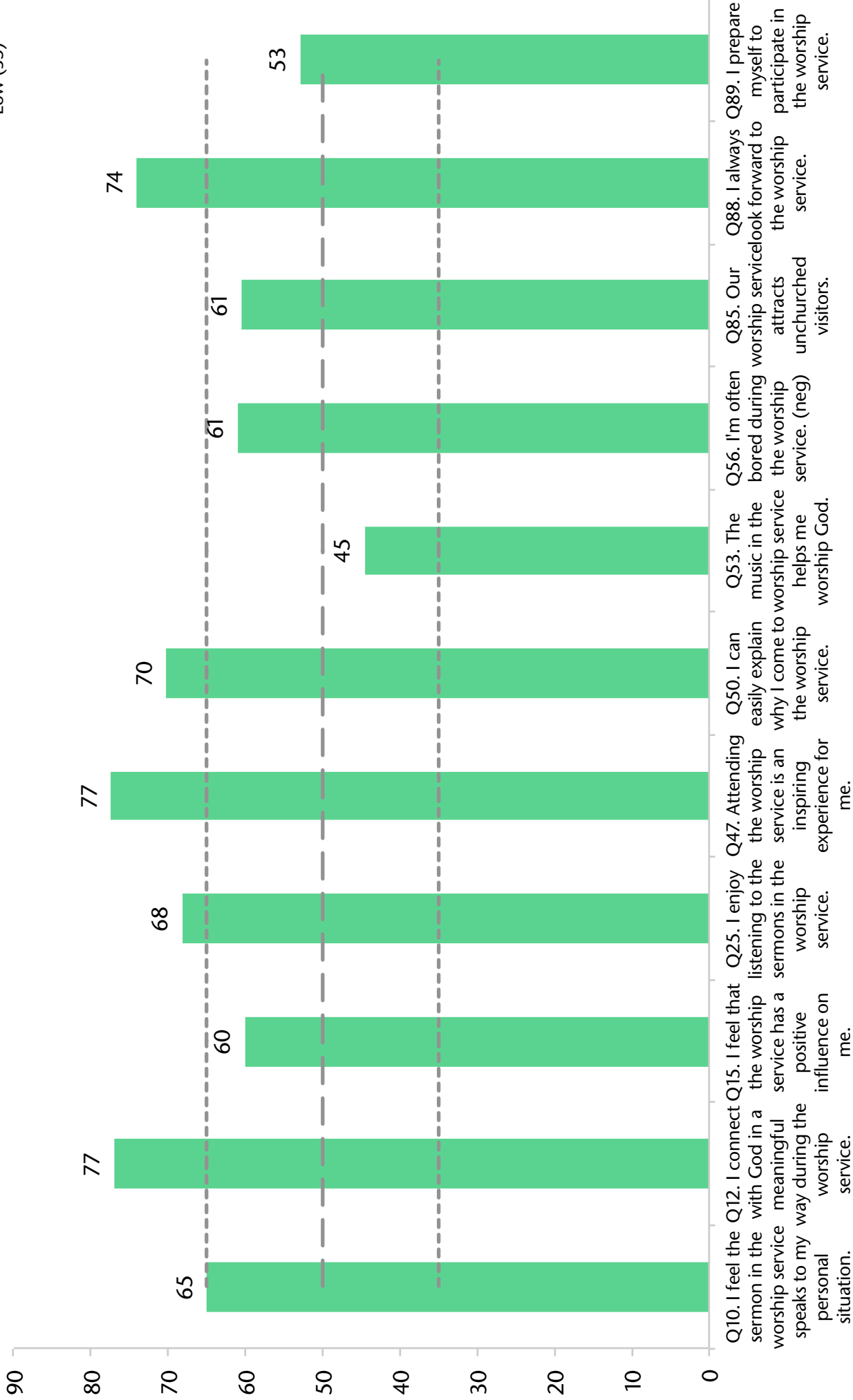


ES Dynamic Progress

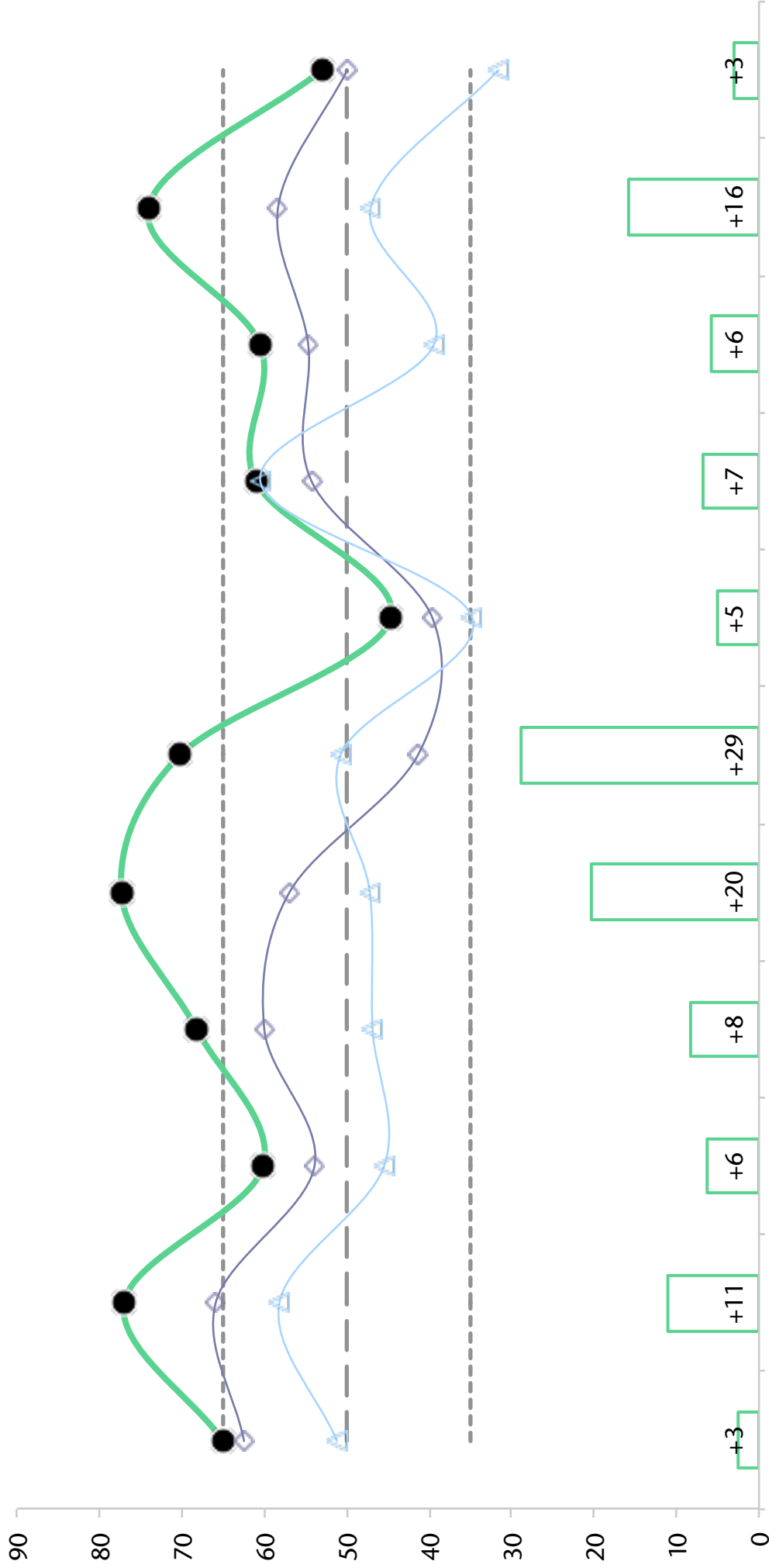


Q18. The leaders of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning. Q23. Our leaders actively support church development. Q24. My contributions to church life are reviewed regularly. Q40. The volunteers of our church are trained frequently. Q57. I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together. Q60. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg) Q63. In our church we often try new things. Q64. The small group and ministry leaders working in our church as a church. Q67. I know the goals we are working towards as a church. Q91. The activities of our church are well planned and organized.

Inspiring Worship Service Current Profile

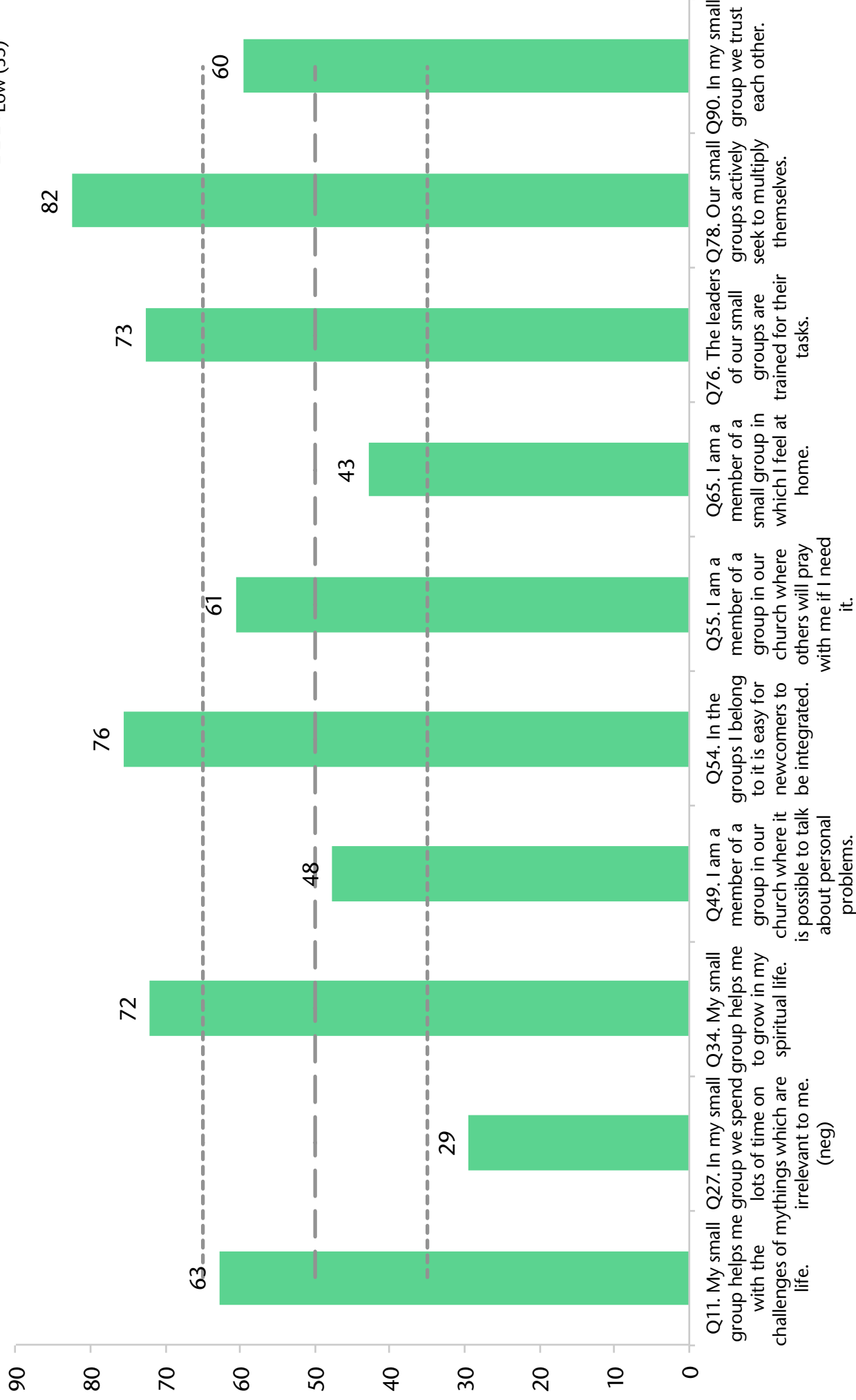


IWS Dynamic Progress

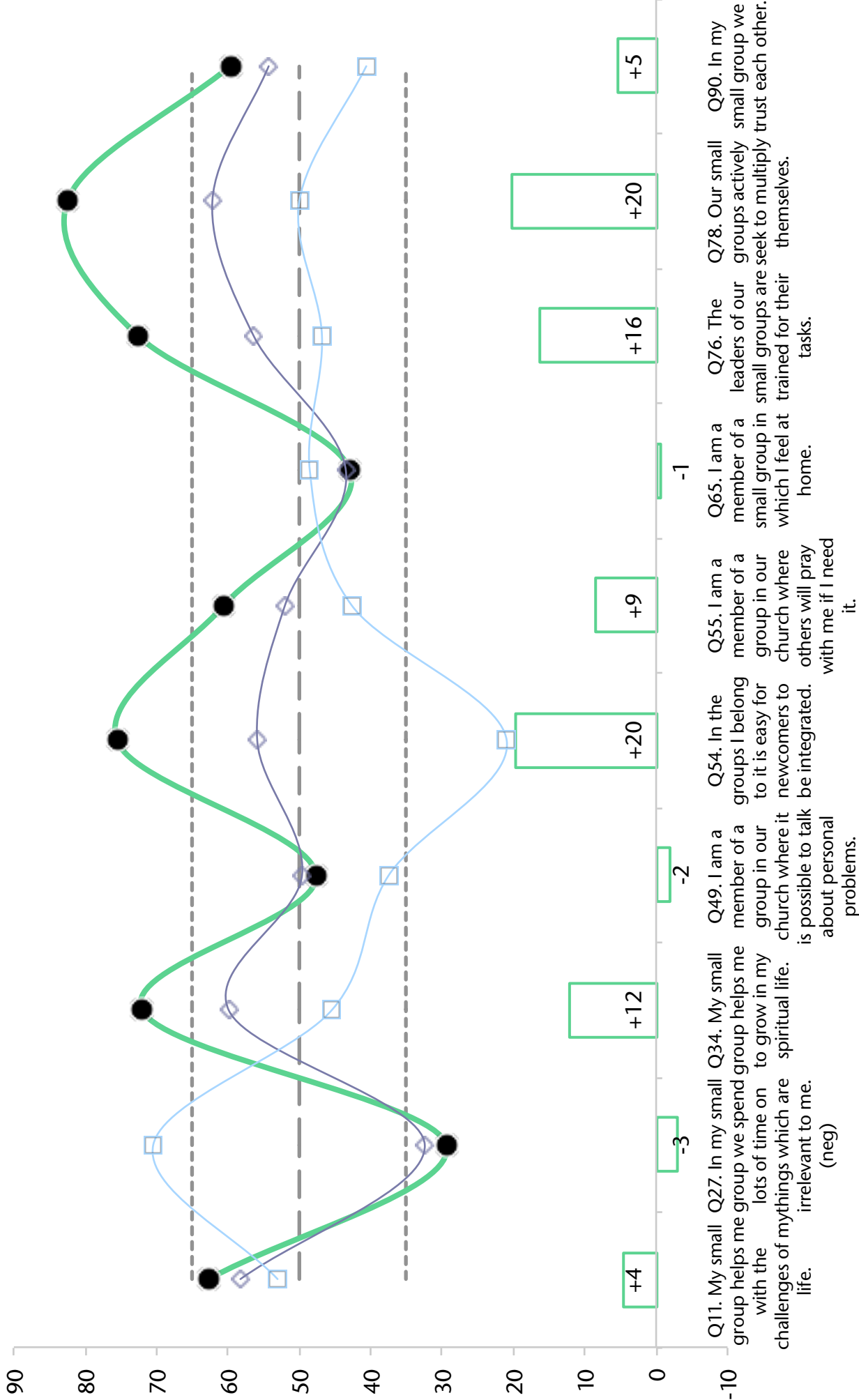


Q10. I feel the Q12. I connect Q15. I feel that the worship listening to the service has a positive influence on me.
 sermon in the with God in a the worship service has a positive influence on me.
 worship service meaningful service has a positive influence on me.
 speaks to my way during the worship service.
 personal worship service.
 situation.

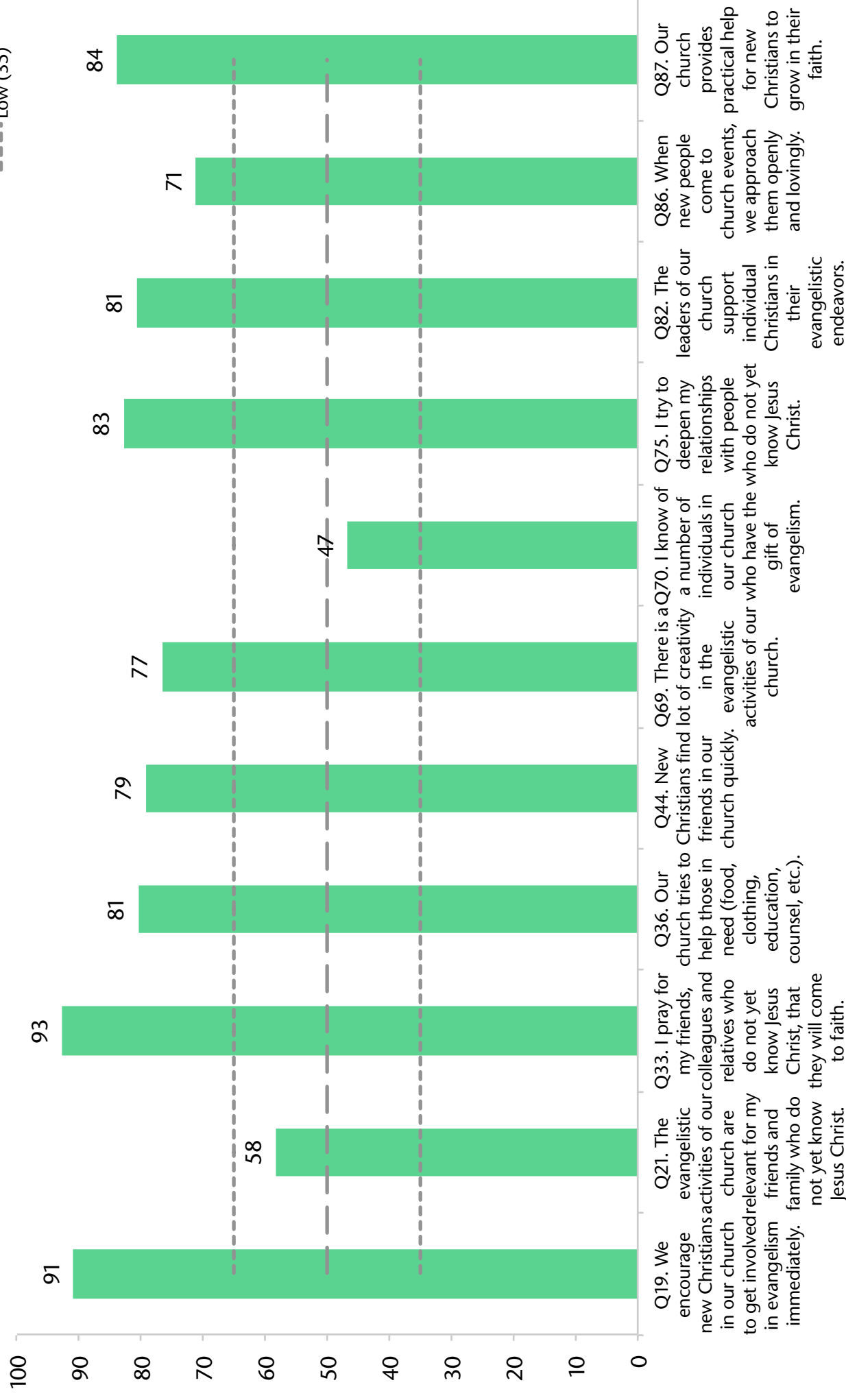
Holistic Small Groups Current Profile



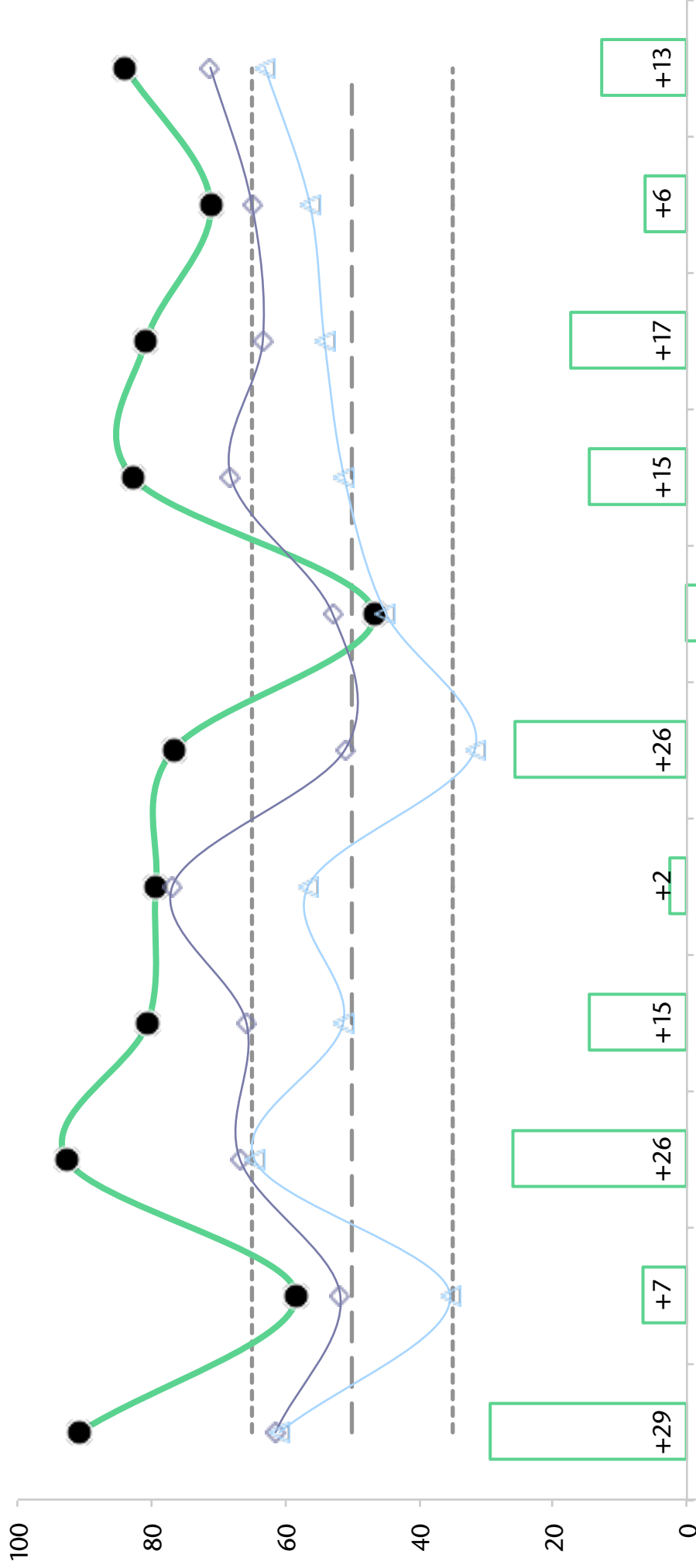
HSG Dynamic Progress



Need-oriented Evangelism Current Profile



NoE Dynamic Progress



Q19. We encourage new Christians activities in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.

Q21. The church are friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

Q33. I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.

Q36. Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).

Q44. New Christians find lot of creativity in the church quickly. evangelistic activities of our church.

Q69. There is aQ70. I know of a number of individuals in our church who have the gift of evangelism.

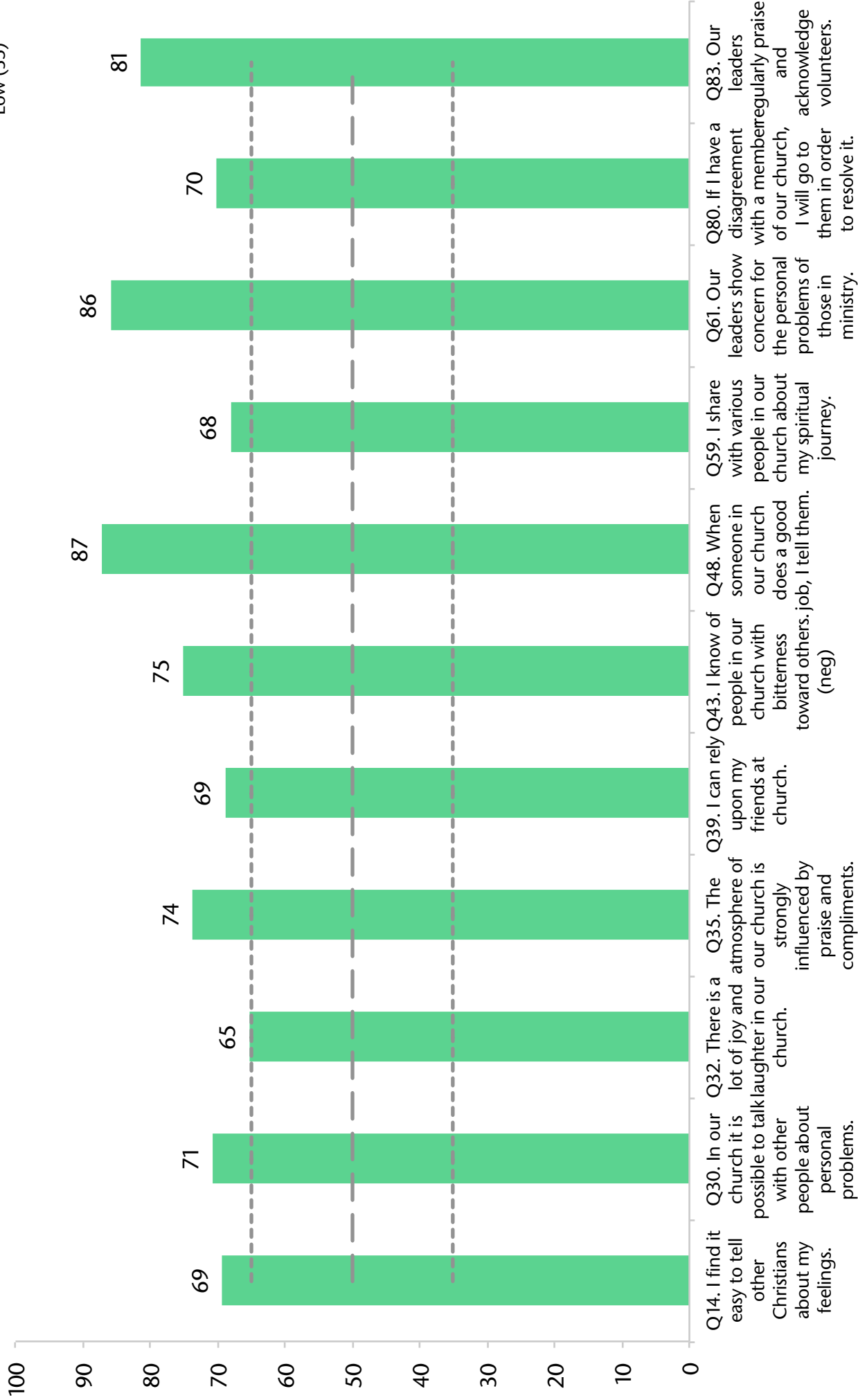
Q75. I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

Q82. The leaders of our church support individual Christians in their evangelistic endeavors.

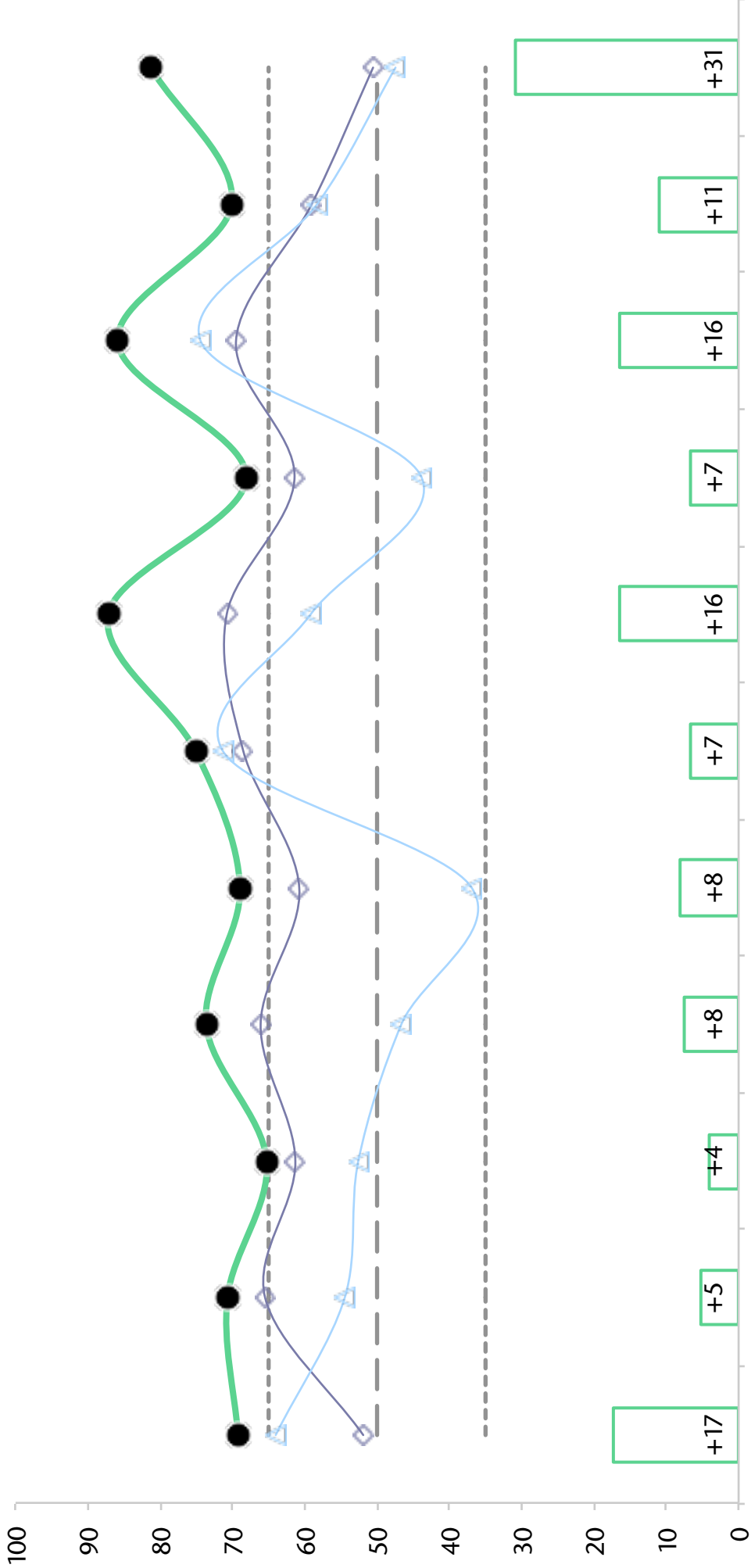
Q86. When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.

Q87. Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.

Loving Relationships Current Profile



LR Dynamic Progress



Q14. I find it easy to tell other Christians about my feelings.

Q30. In our church it is possible to talk laughter with other people about personal problems.

Q32. There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church.

Q35. The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments.

Q39. I can rely upon my friends at church.

Q43. I know of people in our church with bitterness toward others.

Q48. When someone in our church does a good job, I tell them.

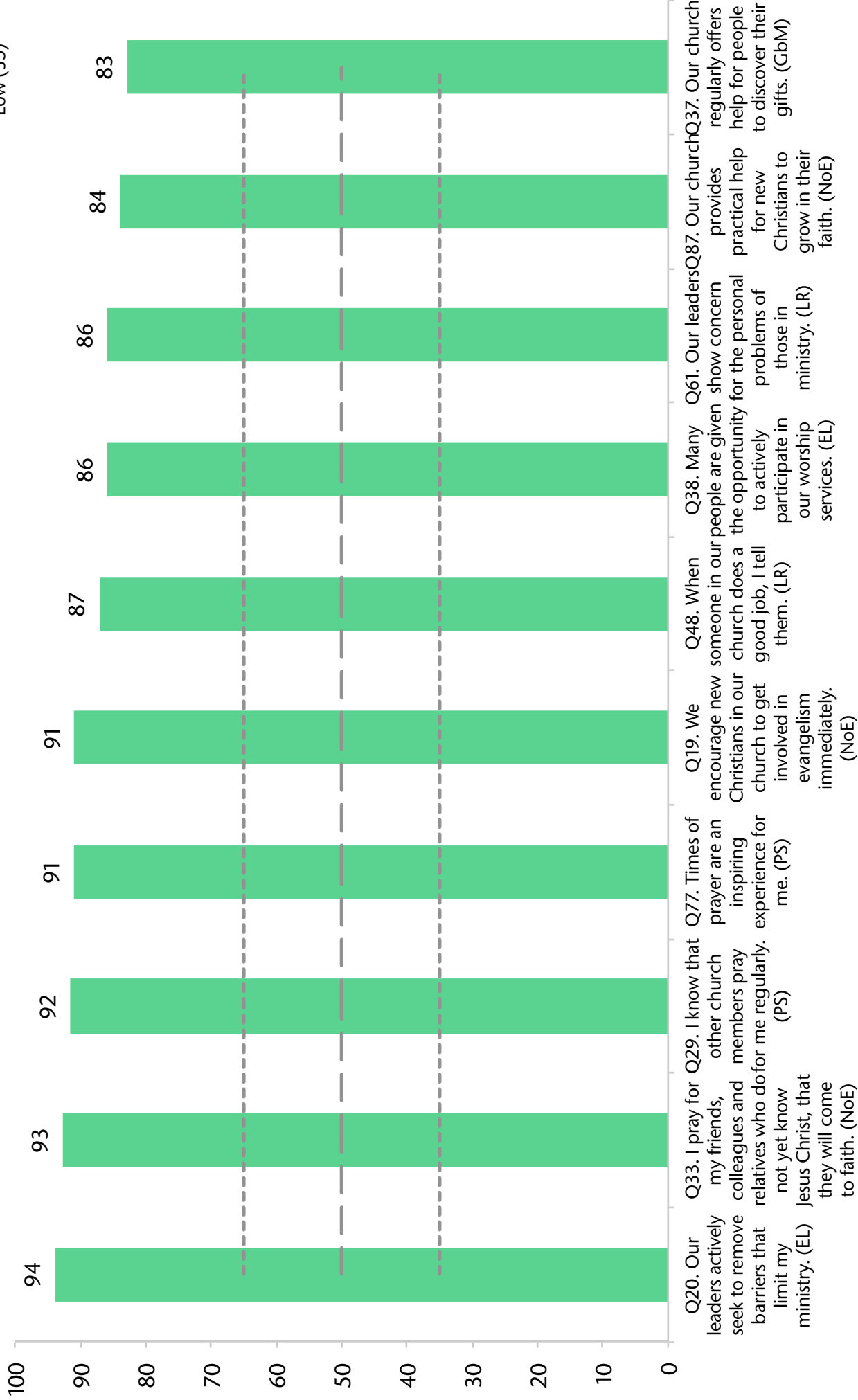
Q59. I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.

Q61. Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry.

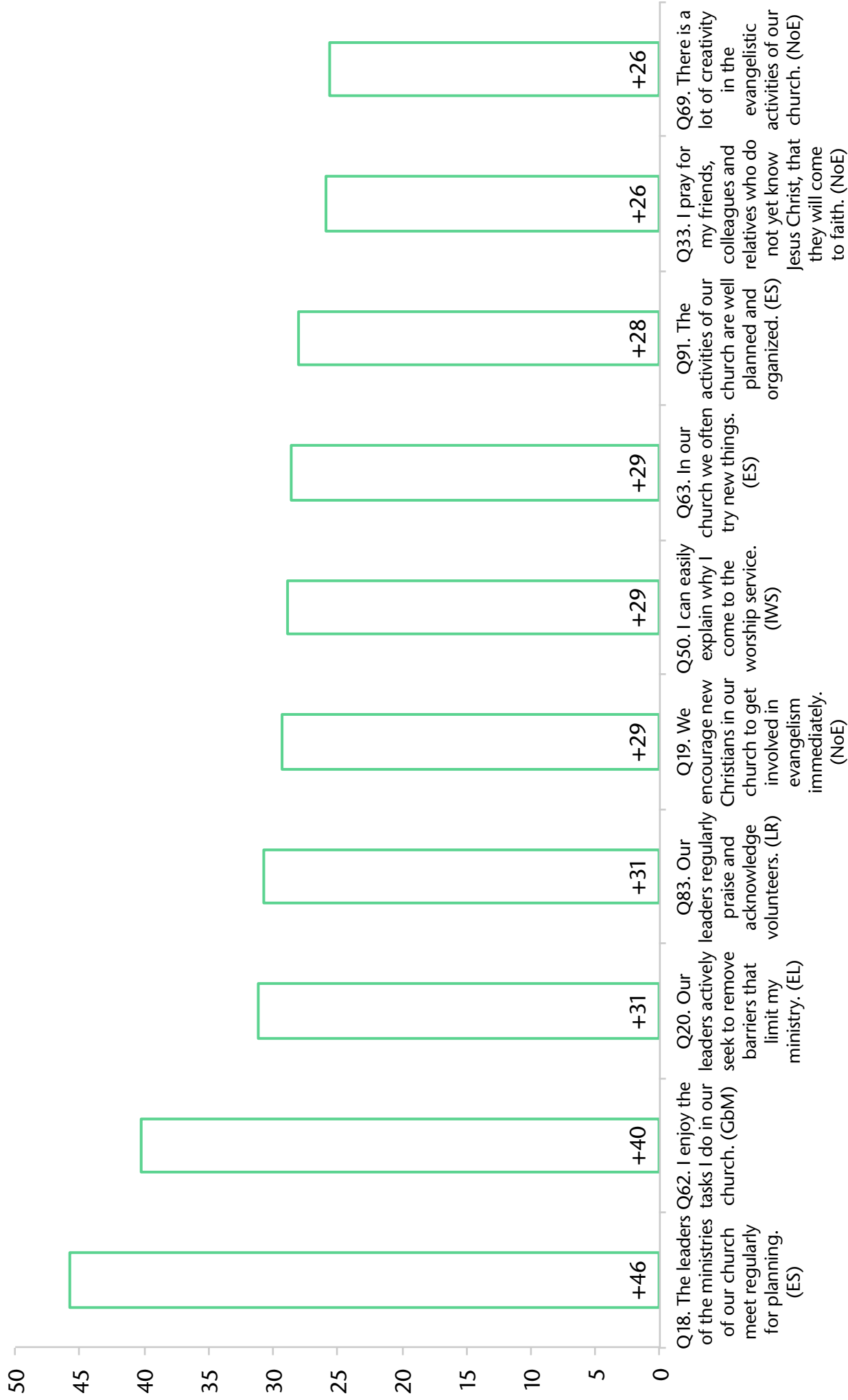
Q80. If I have a disagreement with a member of our church, I will go to them in order to resolve it.

Q83. Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry.

Current Highest 10



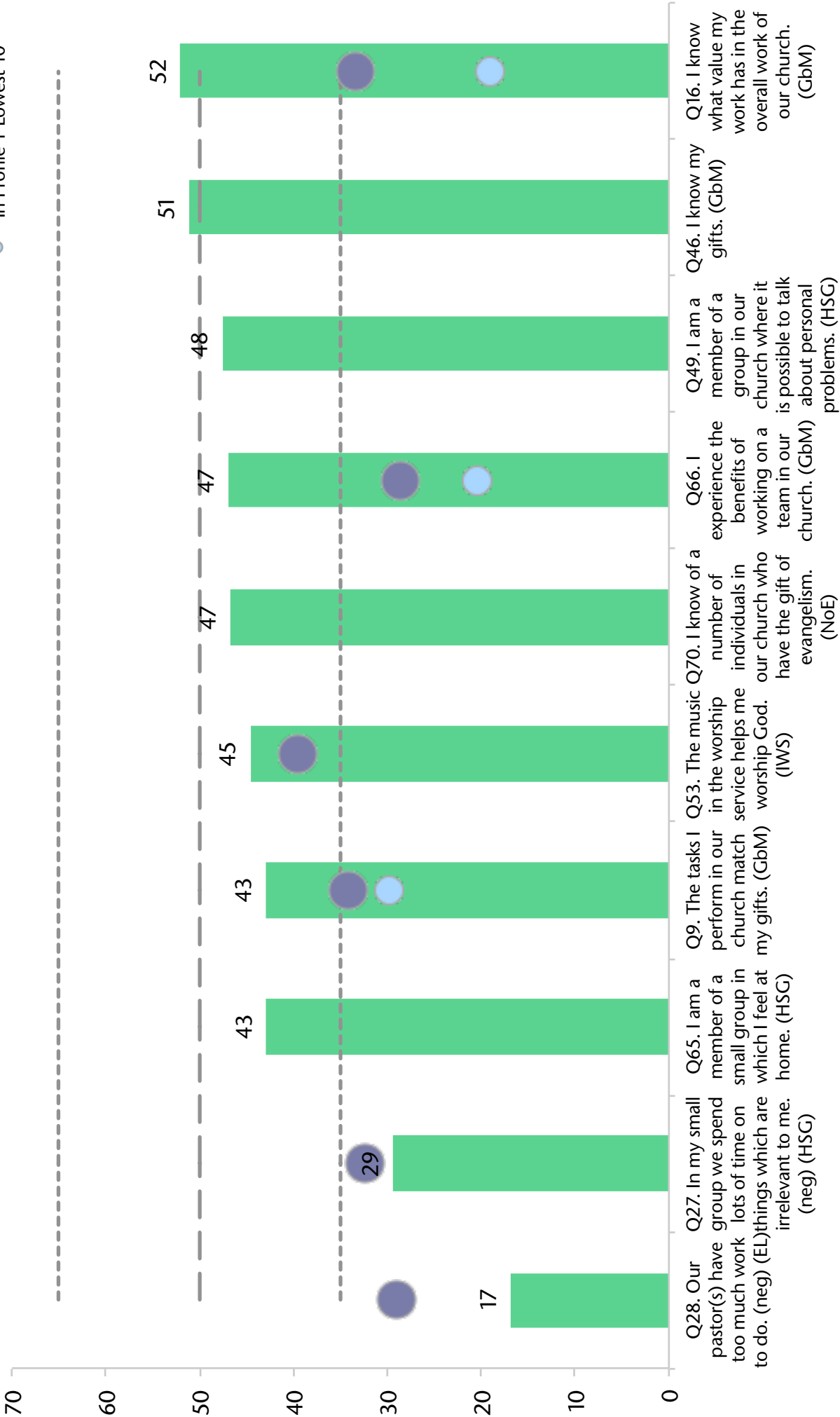
Highest 10 changes from previous to current



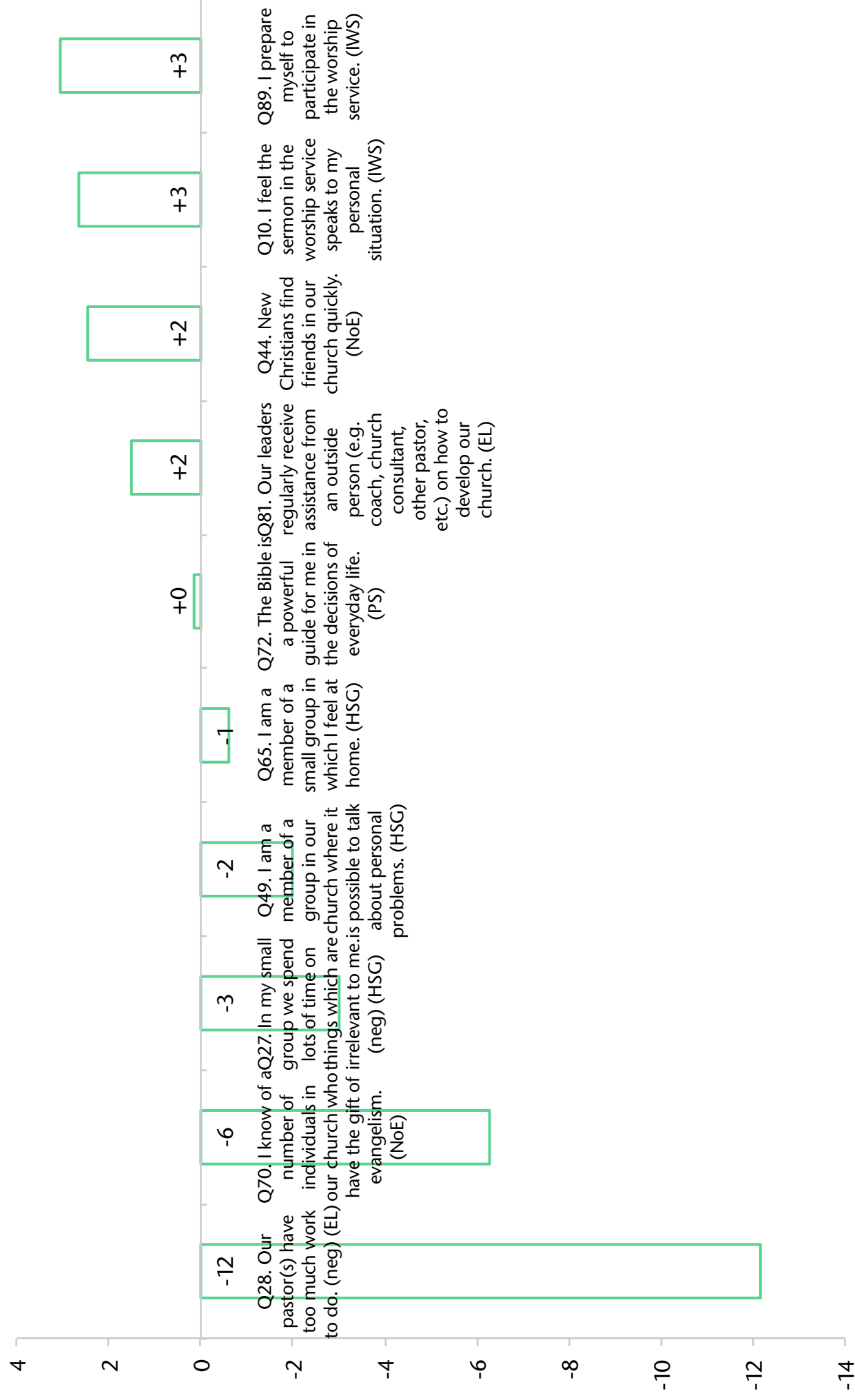
Current Lowest 10

- Lowest 10
- High (65)
- Average (50)
- Low (35)

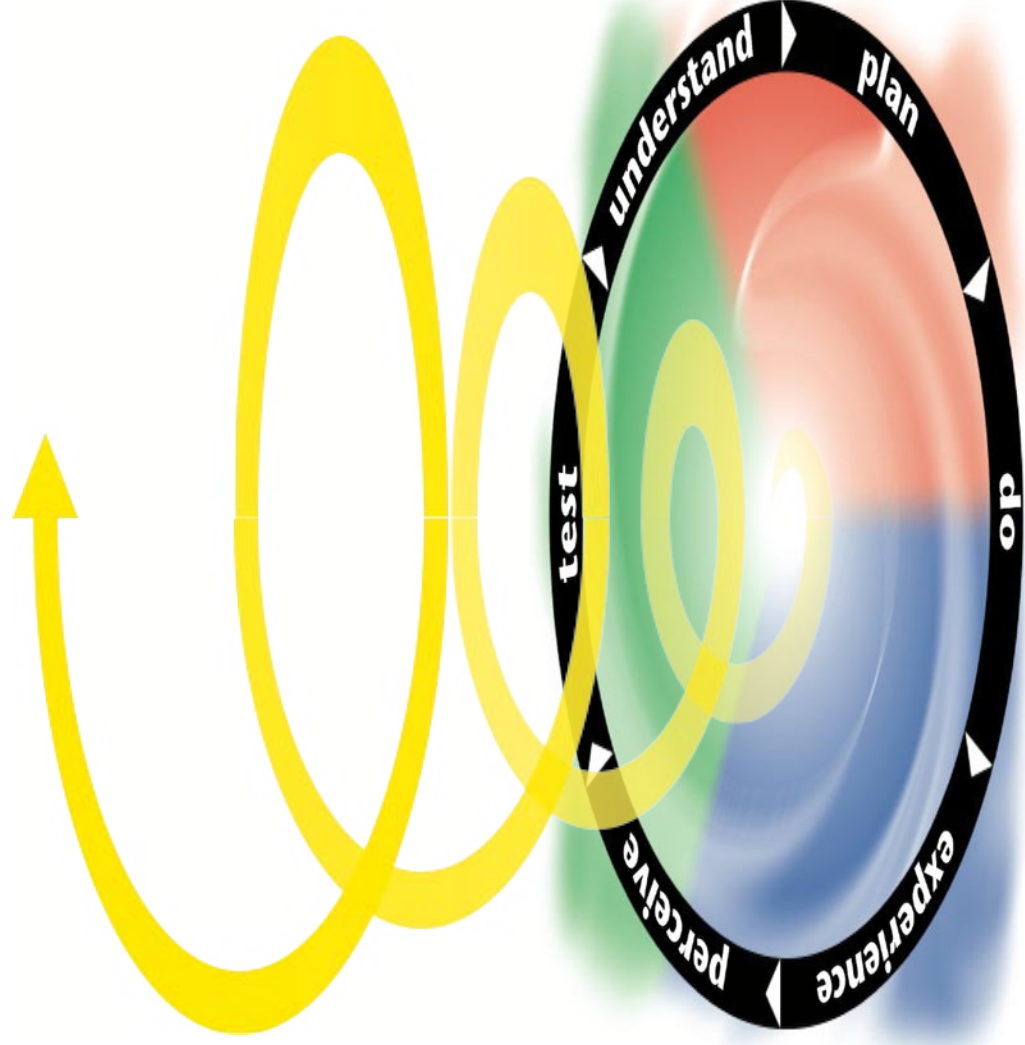
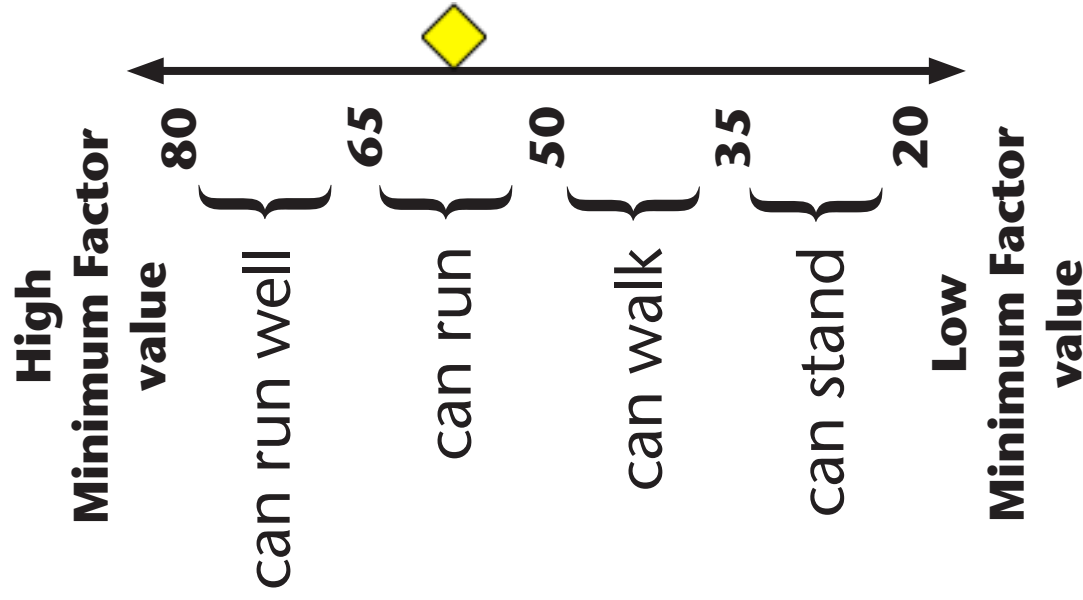
- In Profile 2 Lowest 10
- In Profile 1 Lowest 10



Lowest 10 changes from previous to current



Current Capacity



Holistic small groups

The background to your results

As you read through the various charts in your NCD results, it will be important to understand what the numbers mean as well as how the results came about. Consider the following.

The research of NCD

The initial research of NCD was based on 1000 churches in 32 countries on all continents (now 60,000 surveys, 70 countries). It was aimed at, for the first time, **determining the universal principles of long-term church growth regardless of nationality, denomination, culture or worship style.**

Many theories about church growth were evaluated against the external benchmark of sustained numerical growth (growth of at least 10% per year for five years). This filters out gimmick driven growth or momentary spikes in attendance. It also **provides us with the most important answers as to what should be in place when God chooses to add people to the church and for those people to want to stay there and encourage others to be part as well.** Put another way, the overall question posed and answered by NCD research is, "What should each church and every Christian do to obey the Great Commission in today's world?" Collectively, the eight quality characteristics of NCD, and the partnership with God that they nurture, are the answer to the question.

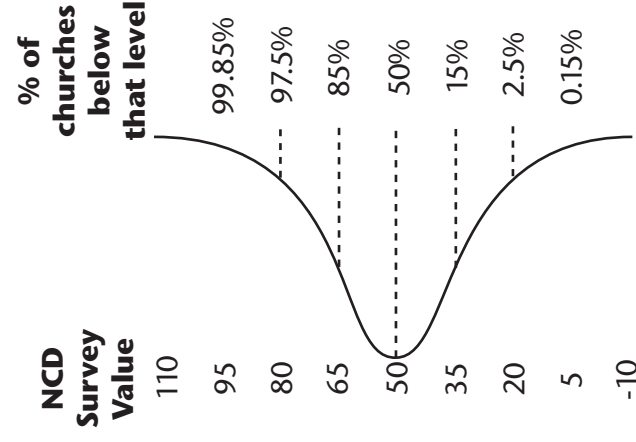
How your results were calculated

The NCD Survey is a standardised comparative analysis tool. This means it compares 'apples with apples' with reference to the average quality of apples in a given country. To do this, **the responses of a representative sample of those in your church with some form of ministry, small group involvement and who attend worship services, were compared with the responses in the national database from people who fit the same broad criteria.** Your result for each question and quality characteristic was then plotted on the charts in this guide relative to that national average. Because the results are standardised around an average, it means that for every church that has a result on one side of the average, there are about as many churches in your country with a result just as far on the other side of the average.

The numbers

The average value for any question or quality characteristic in this guide is 50. Coincidentally, this corresponds with the 50th percentile for churches in your country. However **the numbers shown on each page are not percentages, but index values based on a standard bell curve distribution with a standard deviation of 15 points.** To convert a given NCD value to a percentage, see the table to the right.

Note that **the score for any given quality characteristic is not simply the average of the questions related to that area.** There are other weightings discovered through the research that collectively contribute to those final results.



The "exact meaning" behind each question

As you read any of the individual survey questions in this guide, keep in mind that **there is no one specific meaning behind each question.** As with any question ever asked, there are as many ways of looking at it as there are people responding to it. On the basis of NCD research into long-term growth trends, all that can be said of any given question from the survey is that, for whatever reason, when a group of people collectively respond to it in a positive way, it is indicative of a healthy growth dynamic in the background.

So what you must do is to **think about each question and the response to it in the specific context of your church and consider all possibilities.** Even put yourself in the shoes of specific survey participants to imagine what they may have been thinking when responding positively or hesitating strongly to a given question. The wording of survey questions within this guide is identical to the NCD questionnaire itself. This allows you to ask the question, "When faced with exactly these words and under the protection of anonymity,



why did the average person in our sample group respond positively/negatively?” Or, “What from the life of our church went through the average person’s mind when they read exactly these words?” Participants may not always be able to articulate clearly why they responded as they did, but there will be reasons.

Negatively worded questions

A few questions, you will notice, are worded negatively. This is indicated in the guides by a (neg) after the question. Some questions are worded this way because the underlying issues cannot be assessed by using positive wording. For example, when answering the question, “Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me” people tend to look at the whole service. But when answering the question, “I’m often bored in the worship service” there is a tendency to respond about a specific part of the service.

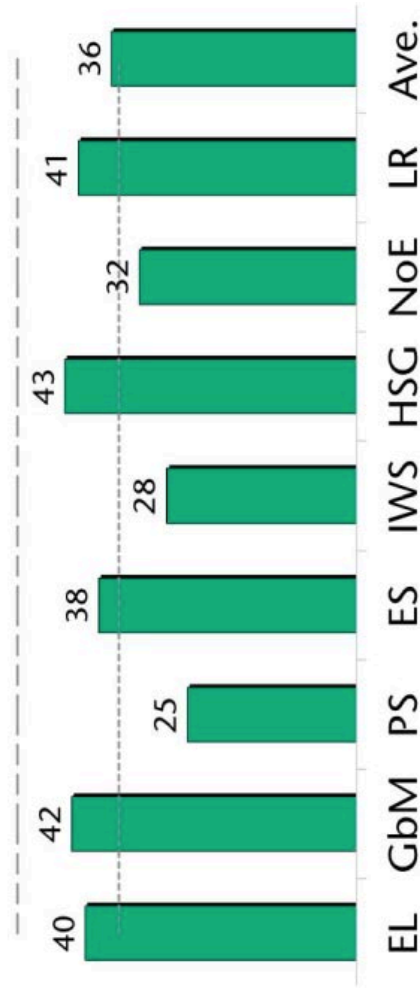
In the instance of negatively worded questions, the results have been reversed on the chart so that those questions can be compared directly with the other positively worded questions. For example, in the boredom in worship question mentioned above, a high result means that people are not bored. So, **the results for these questions should be interpreted the same as for all other questions – the higher up the graph the healthier.**

Story and Status Guides – different points of comparison

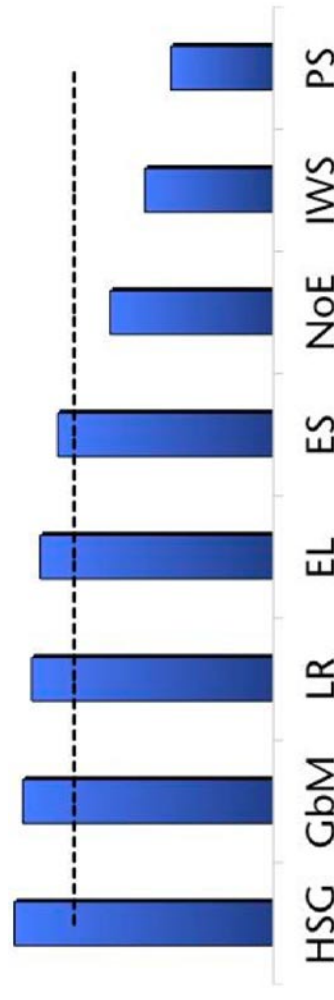
While this guide shows your results in comparison to the national average for churches, the Story Guide your church has received shows your results in comparison to your church’s own average. This is to simplify the Story Guide discussion so that it keeps focused on your maximum and minimum factor areas in comparison with each other without the added complexity of comparing them to the national average as well. Ultimately, **it is more important that a church focuses on what its minimums are and not what value they have scored. Therefore, the information you have available in this guide should be used with discretion in such a way that it does not excessively burden your church if the results are very low, or leave the church feeling like “we’re already good enough” if the results are high.**

The background to your results continued

The example below shows this difference in the plotting of a church’s quality characteristic results for the same sample church.



In the Status Guide (green), **the middle dashed line on the chart corresponds to the national average of 50 points.**



In the Story Guide (blue), **the dashed line on the chart corresponds to this church’s own average of 36 points** (the quality characteristics being reordered by rank to emphasize the story approach).

Age and gender demographics

When considering your results, keep in mind the make up of the survey participant group. If the survey instructions were followed, the survey sample will be (along with other criteria) a representative sample of the age and gender demographics in your church. The pages referred to below will show you how your sample is constituted based on those two categories.

Age distribution of survey participants (page 6)

This chart shows the distribution of the survey sample according to seven age group options listed on the questionnaire. It is not important that every age group is evenly represented or represented at all. **It is of greater interest that the percentages roughly relate to the proportion of active attenders your church has in each grouping.**

Consider which age groups are represented in the church's leadership. Your leaders do not necessarily have to represent the largest age groups. There could be good reasons why just the opposite might be beneficial. However, it is helpful to acknowledge the very different dynamics associated with a mainly older leadership group leading a predominantly younger congregation, or a young leadership team providing leadership to a mostly older congregation. While both of these scenarios can work very well, on some occasions, frustration at the leadership level can simply relate to the gap between these generations in either direction.

Knowing the age and gender demographics can be helpful in understanding why particular results have emerged. **If there are age groups comprising of significant numbers of people who are not represented on the leadership team, make sure you encourage the inclusion of some of the "missing" leadership age groups in the discussions around the NCD process.** That one simple step will enhance the discoveries that take place and therefore the next steps of your church towards greater health.

- Are you listening to and including in your result discussions the full spectrum of age groups represented in your church?
- Are there age groups you should be working extra hard at trying to understand and embrace?

Gender distribution of survey participants (page 6)

Most of what has just been said about age groups also applies to gender distribution within the church. There are several questions that should be asked in this regard. They will help in shaping who should be included in the NCD process discussions in order to ensure that a realistic picture of the church is being seen and realistic plans will ultimately emerge.

- On balance, which gender does most of the ministry work in your church?
- Does your leadership team represent the workload distribution and spiritual influence of your church in terms of gender?
- Who, in terms of gender, do your survey results most reflect? Does this line up with the most influential gender in your church? If not, what are the implications of this?

In both age distribution and gender distribution, regardless of whether you feel the survey sampling could have been slightly more precise, the results are a very accurate picture of those represented — the kind of people the leadership most wanted to hear from.

My thoughts and questions

Sustainability

Your church is a living body with the potential to move, grow, bear fruit, multiply... and get sick. While the NCD process as a whole is focused on increasing health and therefore fruitfulness, **it is important to consider the urgency of that remedial action and the natural effects of not taking it.**

The systems of your body

Like any body, your church is made up of what could be called systems. In the human body these systems are the muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular, digestive, respiratory, nervous, etc. In the church, the systems are empowering leadership, gift-based ministry, passionate spirituality etc. In both types of bodies, every system is essential, interrelated and depends upon all of the others. **If one system is sick or under-developed, it will place an additional load on all of the others and the body as a whole.**

Imagine that your muscles are better developed than 85% of people on earth. On the down side though, your heart is only healthier than that of 15% of people. What is going to happen to you? You are capable of performing some incredible feats of strength and many people may even be drawn to you as they marvel at your great power. However, without intervention, such feats will be short lived. Eventually, your unhealthy heart will simply fail to keep up with your muscles. The feats of strength will fade away and eventually your muscles will wither if you don't die of a heart attack first.

Sadly, churches, revivals and even whole movements through church history have likely died or paled into insignificance as a result of trying to defy this simple reality. They start out with a great strength in a particular area and see marvelous things happen, but after some time, collapse. Often those involved become disillusioned and wonder 'What happened in the end?' The truth is that nothing happened in the end. The effect of neglecting certain systems long before that time, simply came to fruition.

This muscle/heart example is exactly like a church very focused on Need-oriented evangelism with an NCD score of 65 (85%) but whose work in discovering, utilising and developing its people's gifts is somewhat lower at 35 (15%) (review percentage chart on page 30). Despite all the passion in the world to see people saved, God simply did not create any living thing to function fruitfully over the long-term with two of its major systems so far out of balance – least of all, his Church. This level of difference between the minimum and maximum factor is not that uncommon in churches around the world. The specific minimum and maximum quality characteristics will differ, but the principle is the same – **balance underpins sustainability.**

Using resources for growth or just maintenance?

When a church has a large minimum/maximum factor difference, the extra resources required just to maintain its health are considerably higher. In the human body example, this takes the form of compensatory medication, extra trips to the doctor and perhaps even hospital stays. In the church it could take the form of additional conflict resolution, recovery from burnout and many other resource-hungry issues.

The good news is that **reducing the number of points between your maximum and minimum factor simply involves being diligent about strengthening your minimum factor areas.** The result? A church that is not only healthier and more fruitful, but will endure in its Kingdom influence.

Sustainability reference points (front page)

Refer to the front page of this guide and consider the following...

- A Min-Max difference of 15 points or less shows strong sustainability as the systems of the church body are becoming very well integrated.
- A Min-Max difference of 15-30 points (more than one standard deviation) is cause for concern. There is a degree of urgency emerging as the minimum factor/s are putting some significant downward pressure on the other quality characteristics and therefore the health of your church.
- If your Min-Max is above 30 points, there will be considerable energy being spent in simply maintaining the church where it is and there is a high risk of the overall health of the church collapsing if remedial action is not taken. This is cause for serious engagement with your church's results as a matter of high priority.
- Consider the urgency of dealing with your church's results based upon your Min-Max difference.

For your interest, in your minimum and maximum factor areas, the percentage of churches below your church is:

Maximum Factor 94.8%

Minimum Factor 68.7%

Progress charts

There are a number of progress charts throughout this guide that indicate the changes in your church from your previous NCD Survey. These charts also show the dynamic progress of your church for up to four surveys. Such changes will either be a cause for celebration or a reason to do some soul searching about the past for the sake of the future.

Helpful whether you were focused or not

From a progress perspective, **NCD does not just measure the effects of activity surrounding your previous minimum factor area, but the effects of all church activity since your last survey.** Decisions have been made, money spent, programs and activities undertaken, and thousands of other dynamics of church life played out. All of these dynamics will have impacted your church (for good or ill) and therefore your current results. The important question is: what has all of that activity produced in terms of long-term increased fruitfulness, even if you didn't focus on your previous minimum factor as you would have liked? The progress charts will lead you to the answer.

Quality characteristic progress (page 8)

Turn to your "Quality Characteristic Dynamic Progress" page.

- What specific activity (or lack of activity) in your church has led to these changes in the overall health and culture since the last survey? (Focus on the largest two positive or negative changes first, followed by the smallest two changes.)
- Given your previous minimum factor, what does this say about activity and allocation of time, treasure and talent since the last survey?

Previous minimum factor progress (page 11)

Turn to the "Dynamic progress" page for your previous minimum factor.

- What specific activity (or lack of activity) in your church has led to these changes since the last survey? (Focus on the largest two positive or negative changes first, followed by the smallest two changes.)
- What does this say about your church's approach to your previous minimum factor? What can be learnt from this?

Highest 10 changes (page 26)

Turn to your "Highest 10 changes from previous to current" page. This page indicates the greatest gains that have come from all of the activity of church life since the last survey.

- To what can you attribute some of these gains?
- Which of these gains relate to your previous minimum factor?

Lowest 10 changes (page 28)

Turn to your "Lowest 10 changes from previous to current" page. This page indicates the areas that have progressed the least despite all the activity of church life since the last survey.

- Do any of these areas relate to your previous minimum factor? If so, what does that say?
- Are you surprised by any of these low changes? If so, why?

My thoughts and questions

Cultural 'sticking points'

Culture is a wonderful thing when it comes to the strengths of a church. When a strength is part of your culture, it takes little effort to keep it going and bearing fruit. What's more, people grow up (either physically or spiritually) in such a church knowing no other way. Though when a minimum factor area is part of your long-term culture, it can sometimes be very challenging to change. Again, people have often grown up knowing no other way.

After two, three, or ideally four NCD surveys, this guide will highlight many deeper cultural challenges or 'sticking points' as they are often called. These are aspects of church life that have proven very resistant to change, despite a lot of activity and progress in other areas of church life. By identifying them clearly, it is possible to focus your time, treasure and talent far more specifically in order to see them transformed. Below are clues as to where to find these sticking points.

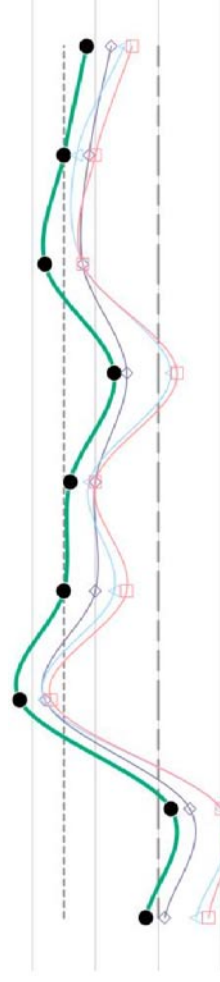
Recurring minimum factor (front page)

The easiest place to start in identifying a sticking point is if you have the same minimum factor as your last survey. If this is the case, it indicates a need for you to explore and confront the deeper issues holding back your minimum factor. These will become apparent when you look at your minimum factor dynamic progress page.

While on the front page, you may also notice a recurring maximum factor. This indicates that it won't take much conscious thought or energy to keep that area high. It is deeply rooted in your DNA.

Parallel lines (starting page 8)

The dynamic progress charts you have begun looking at, in a sense, show the individual frames of a moving picture. As more frames (surveys) are added, you can see where your church health story is moving. Turn first to the quality characteristic dynamic progress page. If the lines on this page are quite random in their relationship to each other, it may suggest that your culture is quite flexible or that you have made great strides in shifting the culture of your church. If however the lines appear to be parallel, this indicates the unique cultural 'shape' of your church. See the example in the right column.



Lines following a very similar path indicate rigid culture

Having looked for any parallel line shape on your quality characteristic progress page, turn now to your [current minimum factor] dynamic progress page to look for similar signs of cultural sticking points.

Recurring lowest 10 questions (page 27)

When particular survey questions repeatedly end up on your lowest 10 page over multiple surveys, it means they are clear cultural sticking points. If any exist, they are indicated, along with their previous level, by dots on that page.

Questions for all of the above pages

- What are the longer-term cultural reasons why the concerns behind these quality characteristics or individual questions have not been addressed effectively?
- Of the various sticking points from the pages referred to above, which appear to have been the most difficult to change?

My thoughts and questions

Minimum factor detail

The detail behind your minimum factor is particularly helpful in making sure that assumptions are not made about why that quality characteristic has scored poorly compared to the rest. Remember that if over time, the leadership had clearly understood your minimum factor area and its importance, it would probably not have become the minimum factor. Therefore, **a growing understanding of your churches unique issues within this area can prevent the leadership from sticking with the first idea that is presented, or simply following the loudest voice in the room, whose opinion may not be particularly objective.**

Themes across your minimum factor (page 19)

Look across the lowest few questions in your minimum factor to identify connected sub-themes. For example, in passionate spirituality, the questions "Our leaders are spiritual examples to me" and "I firmly believe that God will work even more powerfully in our church in the coming years" might both be low. In the unique context of such a church, it may become apparent there is a strong link between these questions and one can even picture how those dynamics play out in everyday church life.

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- Which low scoring questions seem to have a connection with each other? What does that combination look like in church life?
- How would you summarise in a few words the common theme behind the low questions within your minimum factor?

Contrasts within your minimum factor (page 19)

Aside from the low points within your minimum factor, it is also of value to look at the contrasts it may contain. These contrasts can be clues to the deeper challenges facing the future development of your church. For example, in effective structures, the question "I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together" may score highly, but the question "It is my impression that the organisational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it" might score poorly. In such a situation, it might become apparent to one that "People know how it fits together... but just don't think it works!"

When looking at some of the larger differences between the individual questions of your minimum factor, it is important to make sure that those variations are statistically significant. As a starting point, only look at combinations of questions that are at least 15 points apart. Keep in mind that the ideal is for all factors to have high results and be balanced. Therefore, large contrasts mean that there is a lack of interdependence within that characteristic. Looking at the various high/low contrasts...

- Which contrasts between questions stand out to you as showing an obvious lack of integration or interdependence?
- How would you explain these contrasts from your observations of church life?
- What missing or unfruitful processes or practices in church life have led to these contrasts?
- What connections can you see between the minimum factor detail and themes contained within it and your church's Summary Guide and Story Guide themes?

Sometimes in a given set of results, the minimum factor detail is all generally low without much contrast. In these instances, apart from taking note of what that overall picture communicates, it is often of greater value to look at the lowest 10 question page referred to in the next section.

My thoughts and questions

Lowest & highest 10 questions

Your lowest 10 scoring questions from across the whole survey form a unique virtual minimum factor. (The quality characteristic they are primarily associated with is abbreviated in brackets beneath each question.) **These questions represent the issues that are collectively limiting the long-term growth of your church to the greatest extent right now.** Substantial progress simply will not be sustainable or even take place unless they are progressively addressed.

Exploring this group of questions is especially helpful when your church has a number of low scoring quality characteristics that are within only a few points of each other (check on page 7), thereby making it difficult to point to a clear minimum factor area. However, even if your minimum factor is at least five points lower than the next lowest quality characteristic, the lowest 10 group can be very insightful.

Lowest 10 questions (page 27)

Look across the questions on your lowest 10 page and make a note of any that seem to you to have a connection with each other. For example, if the list included low scores for questions such as...

"The leaders of our church prefer to do the work themselves rather than collaborate with others."

"The leaders of our church concentrate on the tasks for which they are gifted."

"I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church."

"The small group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person."

...you might sense that this points to a general challenge with leaders working together with others. You should see evidence of this in everyday church life.

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- ☐ Which lowest 10 questions seem to have a strong connection with each other? Where have you seen that combination play out?
- ☐ How would you summarise in a few words each of the sub-groups of questions you can see within your lowest 10 page?

Lowest & highest 10 question combinations (pages 25 & 27)

The other way to gain insight from your lowest 10 questions is to contrast them with your highest 10 questions. To do this, you simply flick between the two pages asking yourself, "If this question scored high, but this question scored low, what could that be telling us?"

Based on your observations of the life of your church...

- ☐ Which contrasts stand out to you?
- ☐ How would you explain each notable contrast?
- ☐ What missing or unfruitful, processes or practices in church life have led to these contrasts?
- ☐ What connections can you see between the lowest and highest 10 question pages and your church's Summary Guide and Story Guide themes?

My thoughts and questions

Current capacity

There is no evidence in the massive NCD International database that an unhealthy church has any more difficulty improving their results than a church starting from a medium or high level of health. Churches of all levels have a minimum factor and churches of all levels display good and poor progress. So what makes the difference?

The health spiral

High quality churches are those which have deliberately (or intuitively) learnt to cycle all aspects of church life through each stage of the NCD Cycle in a thorough and consistent way (see page 29). Therefore, to make progress on their minimum factor, churches of all levels need to move through the NCD Cycle on an ongoing basis more thoroughly with each revolution.

Aside from embracing or ignoring the need for cyclical growth, **the big difference between churches who make great progress and those who don't is the willingness and ability to soberly acknowledge and act on the basis of their current level on the health spiral – their current capacity.** This level is their current minimum factor level.

Understanding the levels

To understand these capacity levels, imagine the difference in helping a person to become a good runner whose current capacity to run scored an NCD value of 35 (ie. at the 15th percentile – see page 30) compared to someone who could already run. The person at 35 is not yet even able to stand up with confidence, so their immediate level of challenge must be far lower because of their lower current capacity. In cycle terms, they would have very limited...

- *understanding* of how to run
- ability to *plan* the first steps
- capacity to therefore *do* it
- *experience* of what running feels like
- *perception* as to what they were doing right or wrong
- *testing* skills for determining whether they were achieving the goal

It is exactly the same for a church with a lower current capacity. Therefore the approach to each cycle must be different depending on your level.

Matching load with capacity

The diagram (page 29) shows the health spiral using your current minimum factor as an example. It could equally depict the process ahead for any of your low scoring Summary or Story guide themes. The immediate implication of the capacity issue in the current cycle for your church is to make sure that the leadership is not reaching “up” for *understanding, planning, doing, experiencing, perceiving* and *testing* that is too far beyond them for now.

In the context of this guide, the leadership should not believe that it can, if they just discuss them long enough, *understand* all there is to know about your minimum factor issues. More *planning, doing, experience* etc. (through further cycles) will be necessary. So at any level of the spiral, “beyond reasonable doubt understanding” is more than enough for moving on.

The Cycle Starter concept associated with these guides, aims at helping your leaders to move one level higher on their spiral, and doing so in a few weeks. This simple step in the early stages of the process will take the leadership (and therefore church!) to a new level – a vantage point from which your understanding of the minimum factor issues becomes considerably clearer.

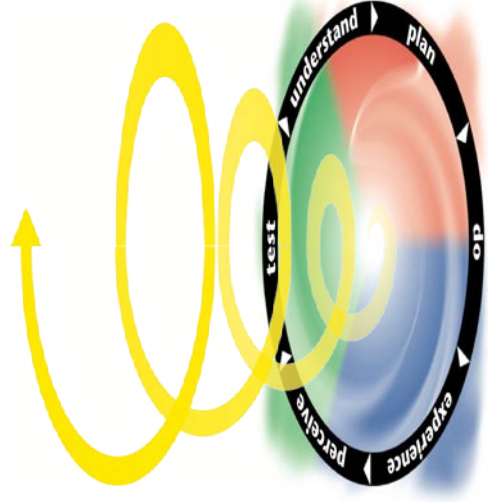
With all of the cycle stages the principle is the same. Soberly match the expectations and load that the leaders put on themselves with a realistic picture of their current capacity at this stage of the journey.

- Based on the dynamics of the growth spiral, in which cycle stages are the leaders likely to be tempted to overload (or under-challenge) themselves during the NCD process? What about yourself personally?

Warning: Presenting this concept to the church leadership should be done with great caution if your minimum factor level is particularly low, as some leaders may struggle with grasping the church's or even their own limited current capacity. Be mindful of this as you provide guidance and suggestions throughout the process. Such guidance will help your church to avoid getting bogged down with complex action plans, having made the whole *Natural Church Development* process too complicated and lofty.

Understanding the facts beyond reasonable doubt

So far (if following the suggested process) your church leadership will have discussed both the Summary and Story guides and embarked on personal Cycle Starters. Having also worked through this Status Guide, they are likely to have spiraled up to a whole new level of understanding about your current challenges. What the leadership now need to do is to express that new level of understanding as 'facts beyond reasonable doubt'.



Documenting the current facts beyond reasonable doubt

As the process of Natural Church Development is cyclical, **you must not get stuck on trying to understand everything before moving on to the next plan stage within the spiral.** It is not possible without further experimentation and experience. Instead you should ask, "What do we understand that is beyond reasonable doubt right now?" You then move onto simple revised plans that you will cycle again fairly quickly, eventually arriving back at yet another higher level of understanding.

On the following page, write down what you personally understand, beyond reasonable doubt, to be the strengths and weaknesses of your church based on your analysis so far. At the Status Guide discussion meeting, make sure that you firmly state what you believe the facts from the results to be. Others, who are perhaps not as strong in testing and understanding to establish facts, are likely to find it helpful for someone like yourself to make some clear, well thought through statements, as long as they know that you are also remaining open and teachable. Having stated your own perspective, invite others to comment or add to your statements. **If points are not generally agreed upon, leave them for a later cycle and simply focus upon those that are beyond reasonable doubt for the vast majority of those in the discussion.**

- Based on the Summary, Story and Status guides and your discussion so far, what are the basic facts beyond reasonable doubt about your church right now?
- Objectively, what do your results tell you that newcomers to your church are likely to experience?
- What facts are you willing to accept about your church that are a personal challenge to you?
- What has become a fact beyond reasonable doubt despite them being somewhat different to your pre-survey perceptions?
- How important are these findings for the future of your church? Be specific.
- What points raised by the guides or in discussion are you not yet convinced of and should therefore leave off a list of facts beyond reasonable doubt? Be sure to leave them off for now.

"Cycling together" discussion

Having completed the Status Guide discussion and documented current facts beyond reasonable doubt, **it is time to review each person's Cycle Starter exercise** that was initiated after the Story Guide discussion. Check with your pastor as to who is going to facilitate that discussion with the help of the "Cycling together" instructions (presented on page 41 of this guide or page 18 of the Story Guide). For your convenience, the "My Growth Cycle" page introduced in the Story Guide meeting is included on page 42 of this guide.

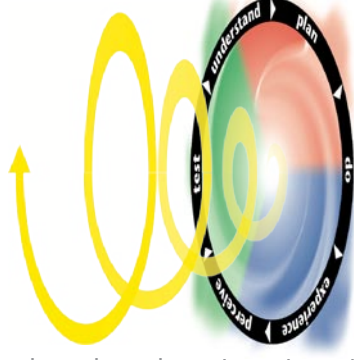
As these discussions take place, keep in mind and try to provide gentle steerage in accordance with your church's current capacity (see previous page) and the general findings presented from the Summary, Story and Status guides.

Be sure that you are ready to share about your own Cycle Starter progress and what you intend to put in place as your revised or new plan for the next short cycle.

What are the facts beyond reasonable doubt regarding our...

...strengths?

...weaknesses?



Cycling together

Cycling together to explore your church's current challenges simply involves **following the instructions on any given Cycle Starter sheet** (introduced in the Story Guide). However, if you are facilitating Cycle Starter discussions in a group (which should happen each time your group gets together to consider your church's results), here are some suggestions.

If facilitating discussion, refer the group back to their personal Cycle Starter sheets while you read or summarise the following...

A growth cycle discussion simply involves putting your Cycle Starter sheet on the table and inviting others to ask the cycle questions starting at the Do stage, with the aim of helping them to move to a higher level on the growth spiral. If a person would like to talk through deeper personal issues with the group, we should make time for that. Otherwise, each person should move through his or her cycle questions in just a few minutes. So, who'd like to go first?

If helpful, you can explain slightly on the questions for the group.

Do: *Are you following through and inviting God and others to go beyond your plan? Are you actually doing what you said you would do while recognising you can't do it all alone and need the help of others?*

Experience: *Have you freed yourself to receive from God and others? Have you given yourself the time and space to experience what has emerged from putting your plan into action?*

Perceive: *What do you see? What do you think happened (whether you like it or not) as a result of putting your plan into action?*

Test: *How do you know that you are seeing clearly? What means have you used to check you are being objective about your observations?*

Understand: *What are the facts? What can you now state about your chosen challenge topic that is beyond reasonable doubt?*

Plan: *What is most important now? If not the same plan, what refined or completely new plan is now a priority for your challenge topic?*

Creative questioning

Feel free to **invent and ask other questions** that relate to each of the cycle stages. The aim of the discussion is to help each other move through each stage of the cycle in an open, honest way and to ensure that everyone finishes with a simple, concrete revised plan for their next cycle until you meet again.

Be sure to **lock in a date for your next round of cycle discussions** (and discussing your next NCD Result Guide if appropriate).

Some will of course be more diligent than others with their personal growth cycle. It is important to **keep encouraging those faithful few**, because often, once others see the fruit that begins emerging in their lives, a very motivating Godly jealousy develops.

Anywhere... anytime... with anyone

Typically, for the sake of momentum, such discussions should take place at least monthly. However, **greater cycle discussion frequency will bring about far more rapid and consistent progress.**

Eventually, asking the cycle questions of other key influencers will be a natural part of everyday conversation. Until then, it will be important that designated cycle meetings take place. These meetings could be at the start of a leadership meeting, as part of a small group gathering, with a friend over lunch, or even as part of family dinner time discussions.

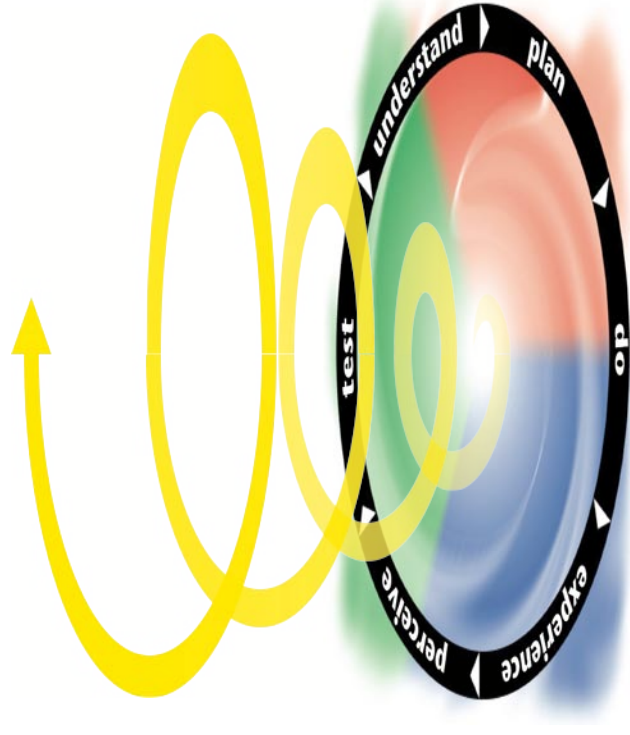
In short, **cycle discussion can take place anywhere, anytime, with anyone.** Though, your initial survey result group should at least meet a few times as a group until they are into the rhythm of consistent cyclical growth.

Connecting back into your results

In these initial cycle meetings, it will be important to **keep your NCD Result Guides on hand** in order to review your results with the benefit of fresh experiences and increased understanding.

For those interested, let them know that the Strategy Guide discussion will include broadening the process to include the wider church.

My Cycle Starter Plan



Our current challenges

Fellowship

Holistic small groups

relevance

good organisation

vision

**Beyond reasonable doubt,
which of the above do you personally
need to explore a little further?**

www.ncdchurchsurvey.org/cycle-starters

Growing Further

Having worked through your church's NCD guides and having started to take simple action steps, it may be that you would like to take yourself, your leadership team, small group, or even whole church further into God's principles for growth. Each of the following books are designed for just that purpose.

www.ncd-uk.com

Color Your World with Natural Church Development

Would you like your leadership team to better understand the principles and process behind a naturally developing church?

- The reading guide and discussion questions will take your team on a 5 week journey of discovery together.
- You will discover how Natural Church Development helps you and your church mature.
- The Trinitarian Compass will guide you to all that God has in store for you.
- You will learn more about what lies behind your church's NCD Survey results including the 8 quality characteristics



The 3 Colors of Ministry

Would you like to help release and develop the spiritual gifts of those in your church or small group?

- The Change Compass test will help you understand and balance the way people do ministry.
- The 3 Colour Gift Test will accurately identify your gifts, even those that haven't yet had a chance to be expressed.
- Practical action steps, gift explanations and frequently asked questions will get you on your way to a more fruitful life



As well as having an affinity with the Summary Guide topic of **Service** and focusing on **Gift-based ministry**, this book is especially helpful when addressing the following Story Guide themes...

- creativeness
- learning
- self-awareness
- God-consciousness
- releasing
- teamwork
- good organisation
- relevance
- vision

The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality

Would you like to feel free to express your faith according to your God-given style?

- The Spiritual Style Test will identify your personal "antenna" to God.
- Stories of different spiritual mentors will encourage you in your native style and challenge you in your opposite style.
- Practical personalised disciplines will move you toward a fuller experience of God.



As well as having an affinity with the Summary Guide topic of **Faith** and focusing on **Passionate spirituality**, this book is especially helpful when addressing the following Story Guide themes...

- faith-stretching
- everyday-faith
- hope
- prayer
- inspiration
- God-consciousness

The 3 Colors of Love

Would you like to see a biblical, practical, deeper form of love transform the relationships in your world?

- The fruit of the Spirit Test will help you and your friends discover the ways in which you reflect God's love and the ways in which He is not seen so clearly in your life.
- The study on biblical love will restore aspects of it in your heart and mind that are often forgotten in the world today.
- Practical personal and church-wide exercises will help you to grow in the most important thing... love



As well as having an affinity with the Summary Guide topic of **Fellowship** and focusing on **Loving relationships**, this book is especially helpful when addressing the following Story Guide themes...

- affirmation
- intimacy
- pastoral care
- compassion
- joy
- reconciliation
- good organisation
- nurturing
- welcoming