

The Christian Effectiveness Model

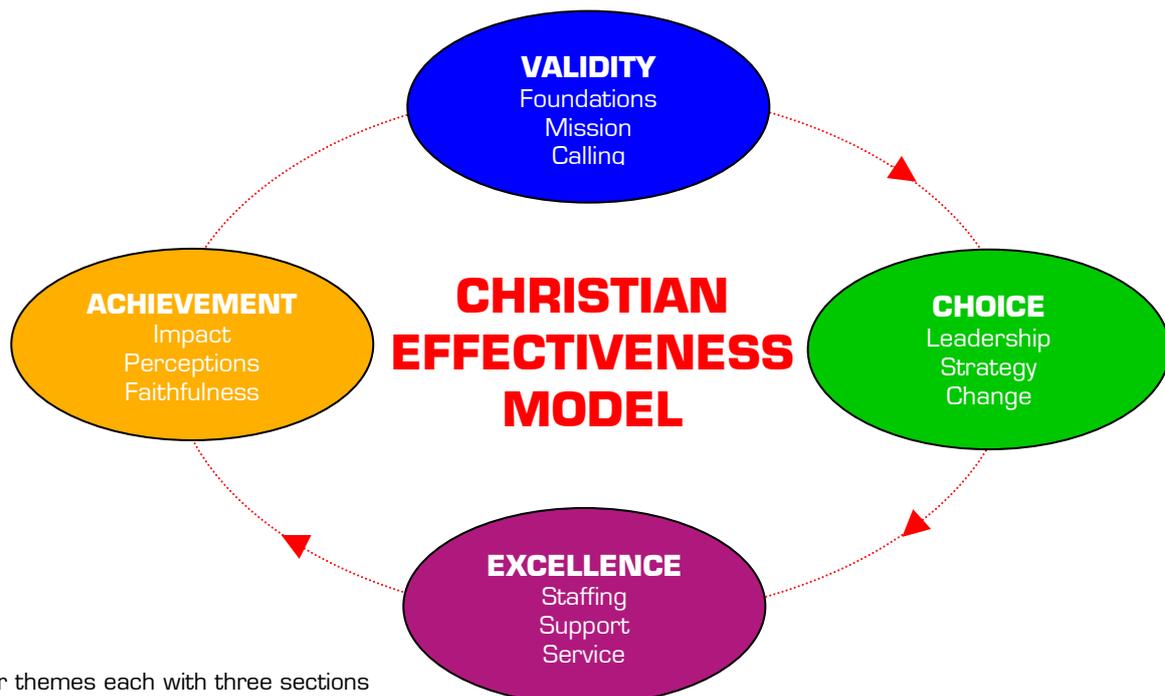
Part 1: Introduction

HC6 Health-checks series

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The Christian Effectiveness Model (CEM) is designed to test the effectiveness of any Christian mission agency or church enterprise. This first paper gives the background to the Model, provides an outline of how it is operated, and explains the structure and all the terms that are used. It is followed by a second paper in HC7 on this website which lists in full the 48 questions and the 240 sample tests and provides a *pro forma* sheet for using the Model.

This is the October 2015 (last updated in December 2024) version which includes a recasting of all the questions, revised explanation and other new material. The Model will continue to be updated as users and readers suggest improvements.



Four themes each with three sections

Effectiveness

Introduction

This Model is designed to help any Christian mission agency assess and improve its effectiveness in ministry. With minor adaptation it can also be applied to a church 'business' ministry such as the running of a café, playgroup or church school. The exercise is more than just a general audit. It is based on a set of four main **themes**.

The Christian Effectiveness Model (CEM) focuses on a set of 48 questions to be answered. In its simpler form a specially selected **Assessment Group** checks each question and selects one of six possible responses. So, in summary, the Model has:

- 1 Four **themes**, necessary elements of any understanding of effectiveness. Each theme is divided into three **sections**. See the diagram on page 1 for all themes and sections (start with 'Validity' and go round clockwise).
- 2 Each theme has twelve **questions** to ask. To help you do this there are five **sample tests** for each question to give some idea of how to assess your response.
- 3 A small **Assessment Group** chooses one of six possible responses for each question and so builds up a picture of overall effectiveness to see where action may be necessary.

The heart of the Model lies in its 48 questions (12 for each of the four themes). One of the most likely benefits from conducting the exercise is to see the way in which these have been grouped.

The Model is designed to cover a wide range of applications. Some of the questions will need to be adapted or expanded for the mission agency, or church enterprise, to which CEM is applied. But this should not prove difficult.

The measurement of effectiveness, though, is no straightforward task. One aspect of the Model's usefulness lies in the make-up of the **Assessment Group** whose members co-ordinate the process; another in the interpretation of the results.

'Christian mission agency'

For the purposes of the Model the term 'Christian mission agency' is taken to mean:

Note that technical terms relating to the Model are given in bold italic – as in **themes, questions, sections, sample tests, Assessment Group** above. Such terms will be similarly highlighted in the text whenever they are first introduced, and at other times when such emphasis may be helpful.

Any organisation whose primary aim is to serve Jesus Christ and his Church in a given field of Christian ministry.

It is assumed that such an organisation is Trinitarian in belief and offers a definite Christian service, product or function; that is, the nature of its output or work reflects its beliefs.

This definition includes neither a local church nor any grouping of churches, but it can cover a national or local office of a denomination or any 'business' run by a church. It encompasses specialist agencies working in fields such as evangelism, relief, care, literature and education; also those offering support for churches in fields such as training, information, finance, and administration. Throughout this description of the Model the generic title used is usually **organisation** to denote any kind of Christian mission agency or church enterprise.

The meaning of 'effectiveness'

The Model assumes that four key concepts define 'effectiveness'. These four then form the basis for the four **themes** on which CEM is focused.

- a The fundamental meaning of ‘effectiveness’ is the achievement of planned or desired results.
- b For a Christian, though, the idea of planned results needs to be subservient to God’s will. We cannot be said to be effective unless this is on God’s terms rather than on human ideas.
- c Effectiveness is also about doing the right things, or making the right strategic choices, to get to the results. One choice may produce ‘greater’ results than another.
- d Effectiveness is taken to include the narrower concepts of ‘efficiency’ (minimising wasted effort) and ‘quality’ (doing things well from the viewpoints of all interested parties).

When CEM is explained (see below) these four will be labelled

- a **ACHIEVEMENT**
- b **VALIDITY**
- c **CHOICE**
- d **EXCELLENCE**

and placed in a loop in the order b – c – d – a, with a possible link back to b.

‘Achievement’ is placed last rather than first because it cannot be properly considered until the other three have been addressed. Achievement may be the core meaning of effectiveness, but it depends on the other three.

This definition has introduced the ideas of:

Results

These must be seen not in terms of human expectations, but in God’s plan (which, at the time, may not be fully clear to us). See the section ‘Success on God’s terms’.

God’s will

The Model assumes that God has a plan for his people. This includes the idea of a ‘call’ to specific work (of any kind), of the need for prayer for wisdom to discern his will, of the requirement to ‘test’ prophetic revelation, and of the need of a renewed mind to think issues through and take decisions. It does not imply a fatalistic view of all activity.

The ideas of God’s plan and God’s will imply some form of revelation. Without seeking to explore this in any detail, the Model assumes that the Bible is God’s prime means of such revelation, but that he also speaks today in other ways that are never inconsistent with Scripture. The interpretation of Scripture for today is not addressed here although it may become a key issue for some of the questions.

Language

The Model uses a number of organisational and planning terms. Most organisations will find no problem with these; they will use them, or terms very similar to them, in their own work.

Others may however carefully avoid such terminology. It may feel strangely technical and even sub-Christian to use a tool that talks in terms of ‘visions’ and ‘targets’, of ‘stakeholders’ and ‘beneficiaries’, of even ‘staff’ and ‘volunteers’, and of ‘fund-raising’.

If this describes you, remember that these terms are merely labels for various concepts and should be seen as no more than this. They are used either as shortcuts to what would otherwise be a tedious process of explaining the underlying meaning each time, or as general terms to enable the Model to be used by a wide variety of Christian mission agencies or church enterprises.

The use of a term such as ‘target’ does not imply any unthinking acceptance of secular management theory. The overall structure of the Model makes it very evident that the context is the sovereignty of God and the call to his people to follow his will. But within this, it is perfectly valid to seek to achieve something very specific in the short-term, such as to publish a document by a certain date. This is the meaning of a target.

It is unlikely that organisations will use the term ‘beneficiary’ to describe the people they serve. They will talk in terms of ‘people living in South America’, or ‘Baptist churches in Yorkshire’, or ‘those suffering from Aids’, or ‘persecuted church leaders’. But this Model is designed for these four cases and many more too. So it needs a common language.

cont on page 6

Glossary

It is assumed that a Christian mission agency or church enterprise will have:

Overall vision	A 'big picture' idea of what might be achieved for God and through him – the driving force behind most Christian ventures
Purpose	The broad reason why the organisation exists which will include some concept of being obedient to a 'call' from God
Mission	The ministry that it believes God has called it to carry out and the people it is called to serve within this (the 'beneficiaries') <i>(note that this is a different use of the term from that in 'mission agency')</i>
Services	A listing of what it currently offers its beneficiaries in the carrying out of its mission <i>(for some mission agencies these may be specific 'products' but, in others, thought of in terms of 'the gospel' or a prophetic message)</i>
Values	a list of specific foundations and/or key features of how the mission agency or church enterprise seeks to work and behave <i>(this is not the same as a credal basis of faith, but may include that)</i>
Visions	The achievements the organisation is working towards as part of the 'overall vision' – these should be seen in terms of what God might do if the organisation is faithful to its mission <i>(so, for the purposes of this model, 'mission' is a human activity, 'visions' represent faith in divine activity)</i>
Aims	A list of planned achievements toward its visions over a period such as a year <i>(some organisations will not differentiate between 'visions' and 'aims')</i>
Targets	A number of dated or measurable steps to assess the progress towards each aim <i>(some people refer to 'objectives')</i>

The people involved will be:

Stakeholders	All the different groups with an interest in the agency such as referees, board, staff, supporters (volunteer workers, donors and those who pray), investors, partners, advisers, all beneficiaries <i>(see below for further details of several of these terms)</i>
Leaders	Board and executive staff, but can also apply to project and team leaders (both staff and volunteers)
Board	Trustees, Council of Management, etc. (sometimes with committees)
Executive	Often just the Chief Executive Officer of the organisation: larger agencies may have a small executive staff team to work with the CEO
Staff	Those employed, full-time or part-time, usually under contract
Volunteers	Those who serve without pay and contract <i>(but in some organisations the 'staff' may be self-employed and/or technically volunteers)</i>
Partners	Other individuals or organisations whose work is linked with that of the mission agency in some way, whether formalised or not
Advisers	Any independent, external individuals or groups whose advice is sought, such as consultants or legal experts
Beneficiaries	All people-groups, members, clients, customers, or others who should benefit in some way from the services of the mission agency or church enterprise
Church	The worldwide body of all Christ's people
church	A local representation of the Church, of any denomination or none <i>(may be termed 'local church')</i>

Case studies

to show how terms in the glossary on page 4 might apply to two very different mission agencies.

Far Corners (FC) is a Christian mission agency set up as follows

Purpose	To preach the Christian gospel
Mission	To place Christian workers in specified far corners of the world
Beneficiaries	Those who live in the lands identified
Overall vision	Continuous and significant church growth in these lands
Values	FC has four main values summarised as: 'biblical integrity', 'cultural sensitivity', 'long-term investment', 'compassion for all in need'
Aims	One of several aims for next year is to move new workers into the land of Farther Corneria and to establish a church there
Targets	One of several targets for this particular aim is to recruit a doctor who will set up a medical centre in Farther Corneria by July next year
Stakeholders	These include a mailing list of 5,000 prayer supporters, and the volunteers who help run the UK office
Board	15 Trustees
Executive	A Mission Director (CEO), and a Team Leader in each country in which FC is working
Partners	These include a range of other mission agencies working in the same countries as FC and with which FC seeks to co-operate

Safeware is a UK company producing computer software for church use

Overall vision	Church growth through leaders freed for front-line mission
Purpose	To support the work of the Church throughout the UK
Mission	To produce quality software covering all aspects of church administration and development
Services	Software products, consultancy service, training events
Values	These include prayer, innovation, enthusiasm, web-safety
Visions	One of several is to see every church of over 100 membership resourced with appropriate organisational software within three years
Aims	One of several aims for next year is to launch a new program to determine/monitor people's gifts and experience of practical service
Targets	One of several targets for this aim is to find 12 churches willing to take part in a pilot study this year
Stakeholders	These include 20 shareholders
Executive	The Managing Director and four departmental managers
Board	MD plus four other Directors
Partners	These include other software companies, web-designers, computer consultants; they are producing the new program in partnership with a national Christian home-mission agency

cont from page 3

'Beneficiary' is not a particularly elegant term, but it is commonly used in the world of voluntary organisations and so is used here.

The idea of the 'staff' of an organisation, those under contract in paid employment, will be commonplace for most. But some Christian mission agencies act not as technical employers, but as umbrella organisations for people who are expected to find their own financial support.

In such cases, all the 'staff' will in fact be 'volunteers' from a technical point of view!

Here some interpretation is necessary. When the Model talks in terms of 'staff' it should be clear what is meant. Some organisations will take it to apply to a group of people who are not technically under contract of employment.

Some Christians dislike the term 'fund-raising' as it seems to denote a human appeal rather than trusting God to supply. As far as CEM is concerned, it is a neutral term that can cover a wide range of approaches to seeking finance.

So throughout the Model it is not the language that matters, but the ideas behind the language.

Measuring effectiveness

It is immediately apparent that any assessment of 'effectiveness' is no straightforward task. This next part addresses four problems that might block the way.

Difficulties faced

First, the Model seeks to encompass a wide range of agencies, as already indicated. These include evangelistic missions, Bible and theological colleges, commercial enterprises (such as publishers), and those who provide a professional service for a fee. It is also designed for church enterprises such as a café or playgroup. Can one model apply to such a broad band? See the section headed 'The breadth of application' below.

Secondly, the Model deals with not just a physical product provided through a tightly controlled work environment (as in much of commerce or industry and in *Safeware's* case above). More often it has to cope with a service provided through an organisation where gift income, rather than the discipline of sales, provides viability and where volunteers play a significant role (as with *Far Corners*). Can one measure with any accuracy when accountability structures are so weak? See 'Accountability without market forces' below.

Thirdly, the purpose of the Model is not simply to assess 'efficiency' (whether things

are being done in the best possible way), but the prior concept of whether the right things are being done. It also goes beyond current and widespread interest in the idea of 'excellence' even though this is a part of it. How can one measure or assess such an open-ended concept? See 'Effectiveness not just excellence' below.

Fourthly, the Model assumes that, for a Christian mission agency, those 'right things' (within the definition of effectiveness) are determined by God himself, and that success must therefore be on his terms, not ours. This introduces the concept of divine plan and guidance. How can one assess whether an agency is within God's will? It is not even as straightforward as for a local church where there are clearer scriptural principles to follow. And what do we mean by success? Even a seemingly 'successful' enterprise may not in fact be an 'effective' one in God's eyes and vice versa. See 'Success on God's terms' below.

The breadth of application

The Model has been designed for a wide range of Christian organisations. At its heart is the concept of a mission agency

servicing people outside the UK Church through direct evangelism, caring services, development work or training. But it is also intended for home missions, Bible and theological colleges, denominational offices, a range of agencies that service the Church and local church enterprises.

To enable the Model to fit all these different cases, two areas of user-control are assumed. First, the questions need to be read into the specific situation of the organisation under investigation and adapted as necessary. Secondly, the findings need to be interpreted with care.

The first point was helpfully demonstrated when the Model was being tested. One organisation, a resource and umbrella agency for a range of mission agencies, noted that its beneficiaries, its financial supporters and the source of its governance were one and the same group: the mission agencies themselves. This was an extreme scenario, and yet the Model proved itself easily adaptable to fit this case. A few of the questions had to be viewed with this in mind, and one or two others were combined.

A more common occurrence will be when the beneficiary is the UK Church. One of the questions that relates to the Church (A7*) and its neighbour that relates to the (normally non-church) society in which the agency works (A8) need to be combined. Another (V4), that considers the world, needs to be applied instead to the Church. The Model allows for this.

Other differences may be between a faith-mission and a Christian agency offering consultancy advice to churches. These may use very different types of language to describe how they go about their work, but as already explained, the Model's language is only an expression of deeper meaning. Provided this is noted there should be no problem.

Secondly, the Model's findings need to be interpreted with care. For this reason the Assessment Group that works through the questions should contain at least one person outside the organisation, possibly a specialist adviser. He or she will need to help the group see what particular answers to certain questions may mean.

For example, one of the questions on validity asks if an organisation is highly regarded by other Christian leaders. A negative answer here does not in itself mean that there is no valid ministry. On the contrary, some great works of God have only been carried out in the teeth of strong opposition from other Christians. So, with this test, it may be necessary to look at which leaders are critical and why – and consider the meaning.

There is a slight risk of lack of discipline in interpretation so that poor findings are dismissed. But again, the make-up of the Assessment Group which undertakes the analysis should be chosen to cover a range of stakeholders: board, CEO, staff, users, supporters. This is designed to minimise this danger.

The Model is flexible enough to cope with a wide range of applications because:

- 1 Its question format is less prescriptive than a statement format.
- 2 It is quite possible for **questions** to be combined or ignored.
- 3 The **sample tests** given to help answer each question are clearly shown as samples which can be ignored or amended to fit different organisations.
- 4 The **Assessment Group** includes both an external adviser and a wide range of stakeholders so that interpretation of questions and replies can be as objective as possible.

* Each question has a reference letter and number as listed and explained on page 13.

Accountability without market forces

A manufacturing or retail industry will be effective if it manages resources and sells products at such prices that investors and workers are paid and the company makes sufficient profits to develop the business. It is possible to be ineffective and survive if a gullible public are prepared to pay a higher price than they need to. But a competitive and changing market-place will often force such an organisation to work towards both greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Many Christian mission agencies, however, depend upon the motivation of supporters (through giving money and time) to enable the work to go ahead. Providing enough people believe in the cause and offer support, a highly ineffective and/or inefficient work can continue unchecked, especially for a long-established work in a rapidly changing culture. The organisation’s continued existence may not depend so much on customer response as on supporter enthusiasm. In fact some Christians argue that when beneficiaries vote with their feet and ignore or even oppose the service being offered, this may be a sign that the agency has got it right!

Again, there is often little accountability outside the agency other than what is required by agencies such as the Charity Commission and HM Revenue and Customs. Any Christian can start an organisation to do almost anything without any form of external regulation apart from ensuring that it is keeping within charity and other legislation. The board will usually be self-selecting. There can be little enforceable accountability to the Church in any meaningful way. It is this lack of accountability that makes any rigorous assessment of effectiveness, for them, so easy to avoid and, for us outside, so difficult to apply.

To give one example, a Christian organisation may exploit its staff, paying too little, expecting too much and/or placing them in positions of unacceptable danger. This may be justified on a selective reading of biblical texts on servanthood, or through a misuse of power.

This is a genuine difficulty which has to be taken seriously. The Model therefore has the following features.

- 1 A number of the **questions** focus on the views of people outside the organisation itself: eg. those to whom it is accountable (V11), respected Christian leaders (V12); the beneficiaries (A5, A6), the Church (A7), and the society in which the organisation operates (A8).
- 2 **Sample tests** for several other questions assume external input too.
- 3 The **Assessment Group** would be well advised to carry out research to discover

the views of stakeholders rather than making assumptions.

- 4 The questions on **Achievement** mean that it would be difficult for any organisation to hide behind a smoke-screen of purposeless activity as the questions test results against plans.

Effectiveness not just excellence

We live today in a management culture that seeks to define and identify standards of excellence. Quality systems such as ‘Investors in People’ and social auditing provide benchmarks for companies to demonstrate a superior level of quality.

In the past few years the (secular) voluntary sector in the UK has looked closely at such standards to assess whether they apply to their work as well. Some of these have been taken on board by voluntary organisations (and a growing number of Christian mission agencies too). These are:

- Investors in People
- ISO 9000
- PQASSO (the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations)
- The Business Excellence Model
- People in Aid (for overseas aid agencies).

The Excellence Model (from the European Foundation for Quality Management - EFQM) has been reworked for the voluntary sector. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) published a form of this in May 2000 and some of its ideas have influenced thinking on the Christian Effectiveness Model.

However, these models do not go far enough in addressing issues of validity within our thinking on effectiveness and, naturally, take no account of issues of the Kingdom of God. The concept of excellence is not as wide as the concept of effectiveness. It is quite possible to run an organisation in an excellent way, but not to be doing the right thing in God’s plan in the first place.

The CEM therefore incorporates ideas from the secular use of quality measurement, but has to build on a new foundation. It cannot

be simply a variation on a system already in existence as its underlying purpose is wider and assumptions in the Christian context are radically different from all secular thinking. It is quite valid for a Christian mission agency to seek accreditation with 'Investors in People', or similar organisations, but the CEM is seeking to measure more than quality.

The following features of the Model take it beyond a normal quality assessment tool.

- 1 The four underlying **themes** (Validity, Choice, Excellence and Achievement) are given equal weight in the Model. This means that the area of investigation is considerably wider than the scope of quality assessment tools.
- 2 The **Validity** theme assumes the will of God, and everything else follows from this. This is not an adaptation of any other tool. The whole Model is placed in a Christian context which strongly influences every part of it.
- 3 The Model is expressed in terms of **questions** rather than formulae. This open approach is not only more theologically appropriate, but better able to cope with the open-ended nature of effectiveness.
- 4 One of the most valuable outputs is proving to be the issues raised from the process of answering the questions. The process of applying the Model fits the nature of effectiveness.

Success on God's terms

A proper understanding of 'success' in Christian ministry deserves more space than is possible here. See, for example, 'Success – a biblical exploration' by Simon Coupland (Grove Books S81). Without clear thinking on biblical principles there is a great danger of adopting the kind of arguments used by those who promote the 'prosperity gospel'.

In the field under consideration note that:

- 1 A 'successful' ministry (in terms of humanly perceived results) does not necessarily imply that this is a valid ministry in God's sight.
- 2 A 'financially viable' ministry does not imply such validity either.

- 3 Nor does one that has run for many years, clearly with God's blessing, imply that this is necessarily his will for the future.

The Christian Church is founded on seeming failure, on the shame of the cross. So we also have to be careful with measurements based on currently acceptable values of success. Take pioneer missionaries working for years with a people-group who had not heard the gospel before. They see little result for their labours. Later, their successors go in and within a year have reaped an impressive harvest. Were our pioneer missionaries ineffective? Perhaps – but they may have been God's workers faithfully preparing the ground for the work that was to follow. They achieved God's planned results. We need to beware too simplistic an analysis.

Time-scale is crucial in this. Some works of God cannot be accurately assessed too close to the event. Many years may need to elapse before a fuller understanding can be reached. Sometimes the time-scale is shorter: consider the period just before and just after the Resurrection – or before and after Pentecost.

Success in Christ's service is not necessarily about numbers but about faithfulness to God's call. In Jesus' early ministry he deliberately called a halt to a seemingly successful healing ministry, since he knew that his Father's purpose was for him to move elsewhere to focus on teaching. Popularity was not to come before purpose. (See, for example, Mark 1:35-39 and notice the place that prayer plays in this episode.) Hence the need to understand that 'results' cannot be seen solely in human terms.

However, the opposite does not necessarily apply! It is all too easy to slip into an attitude that assumes that God blesses failure, and that provided we keep on being faithful God will bless our endeavours. It is quite possible to think we are being faithful to a calling when we may be completely mistaken about the strategy we are adopting. Christians must firmly resist such sloppy thinking while seeking not to equate worldly success with a sign of God's favour.

We need renewed minds as well as renewed hearts as we pursue the ministry we believe we are called to.

- 1 The 12 **Achievement** questions are equally divided between **Impact** (the organisation's own view of its success or otherwise), **Perceptions** (the views of those outside the organisation), and **Faithfulness**. These provide three very different standpoints on the issue.
- 2 Christian commitment is tested in no less than four questions (in the **Validity** theme), three on the Trinity and one on the organisation's understanding of and involvement in the prevailing culture.
- 3 Particular questions challenge the organisation to consider tough issues such as closure or amalgamation (V10), regular review of its work (C12), and lessons learned from past failure (A9).
- 4 In its more detailed form the **Assessment Group** lists not just a **score**, but **strengths**, **areas to improve** and **issues raised** out of each question. Provided the whole operation is undertaken as a spiritual exercise (which the Model assumes) seeking God's guidance, the danger of a too simplistic reading of results is minimised.

The Model assumes that this is an area where we need to hesitate before making any pronouncements. It is however designed to seek God's will for the organisation and to offer a spiritually wise measurement of success.

The Model is now described in outline and then, in HC7, the 48 questions and 240 sample tests are listed.

This material provides any organisation with enough for them to use a basic form of the Model without payment. But to gain the full benefits, it is necessary to obtain a licence (no charge) and then have access to the manual and a full description of how to undertake the testing. In this case I will either run the exercise for you or train your Assessment Group. This is explained further on pages 15 and 16.

A short note on Capacity Self-Assessment

At about the same time as I was developing the Christian Effectiveness Model, Bill Crooks of Tearfund was devising the CASA tool, **Capacity Self-Assessment**.

This is a quality assessment tool, similar in many ways to those listed above on page 8, but designed specifically for Christian development organisations.

There are clearly similarities between CEM and CASA. Both are written in a Christian framework, both use lists of tests (simple statements in CASA's case, sets of questions for CEM).

CASA has three modules:

- Internal organisation (who we are)
- External linkages (who we work with)
- Projects (what we do).

Each is broken down into key areas with a number of statements to score in one of four ways.

But there are obvious differences too. CASA is designed for Christian development agencies (and so is strong on ideas such as compassion, non-discrimination, projects), and seeks an overall assessment without CEM's specific requirement to assess effectiveness.

So the basic units, though having considerable overlap with those in CEM, are structured rather differently.

It is interesting to put the two side-by-side to compare them.

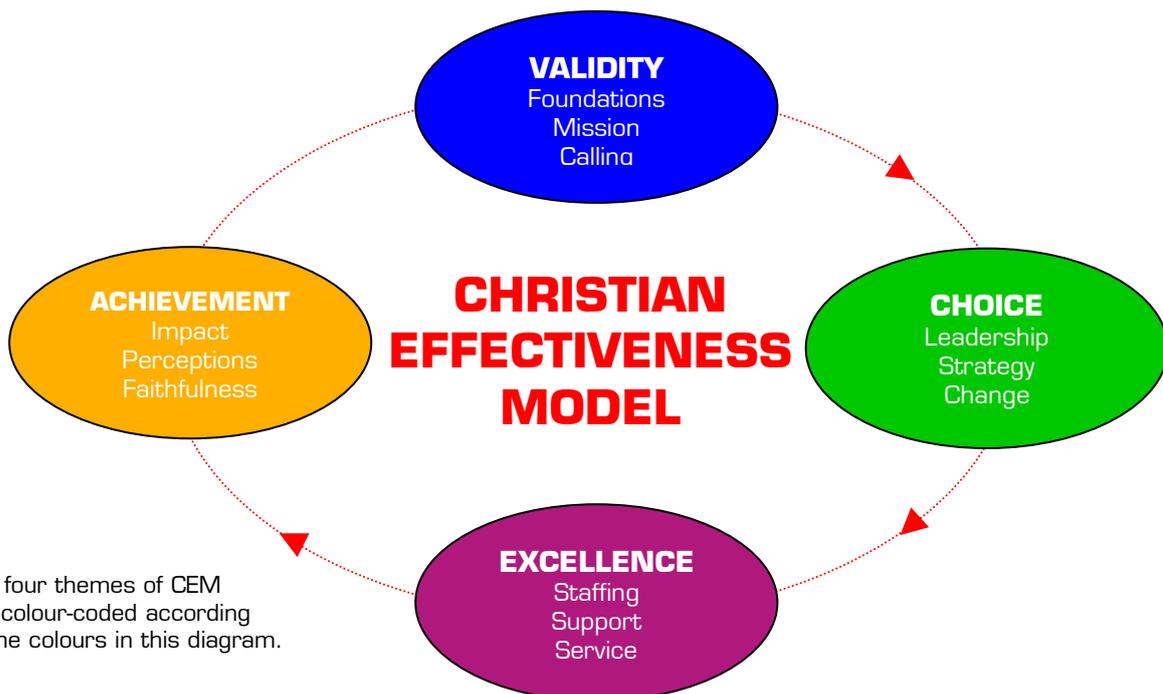
CASA is published by Tearfund, Web: <http://inspiredindividuals.org/resources/organizational-development/>. (Note: not currently available)

CEM in outline

The structure of CEM

The meaning of ‘effectiveness’ in a Christian mission agency or church enterprise is, first, focused into four **themes** listed below. Each theme is then assigned 12 **questions**, broken into three **sections** of four questions each. Effectiveness is then measured by how positively the organisation can answer the 48 questions, although the real value of the Model will be found in the specific issues that these questions raise. Note that the four themes follow in logical order (shown by solid arrows below) and the analysis can then loop back to the first of these (shown without an arrow).

- 1 12 questions on the theme of VALIDITY**
 Does the organisation have a valid Christian ministry?
 4 questions each in sections on **Foundations, Mission** and **Calling**
- 2 12 questions on the theme of CHOICE**
 Does the organisation make the right strategic choices?
 4 questions each in sections on **Leadership, Strategy** and **Change**
- 3 12 questions on the theme of EXCELLENCE**
 Does the organisation work in an excellent way?
 4 questions each in sections on **Staffing, Support** and **Service**
- 4 12 questions on the theme of ACHIEVEMENT**
 Does the organisation achieve what God requires of it?
 4 questions each in sections on **Impact, Perceptions** and **Faithfulness**



The four themes of CEM are colour-coded according to the colours in this diagram.

The 48 questions

Questions, rather than statements, have been chosen to underline the open approach required when testing so fragile a concept as effectiveness in God’s work. We need to come to this task as God’s servants, knowing that the final answers are his and we are merely seeking to discover his purposes. People love formulae, but God has patterns.

You may prefer to check out page 13 now before reading on.

Each **question** is given a **reference** (letter and number, so V1) and a **title**. On the next page is a listing of all 48 references and titles within the 4 **themes** and 12 **sections**.

The references take the theme letter (V, C, E, A) followed by a number from 1 to 12. So, in the table, it can be seen that C12 is the reference for the question titled **Review** within the **Change** section of the **Choice** theme.

Each question is also given a **sub-title** to show how it relates to the others in its **section**. So the **titles** and **sub-titles** for E9-12 are as follows:

Ref	Title	Sub-title
E9	Administration	Systems that serve the ministry
E10	Fund-raising	Systems that finance the ministry
E11	Promotion	Systems that tell of the ministry
E12	Delivery	Systems that provide the ministry

Multi-part questions

Most questions are made up of more than one part. For example, question C2 on **Executive** asks,

‘To what extent are the Chief Executive and any other executive staff well informed, respected for their styles and qualities of leadership, and successful in developing the organisation towards its overall vision?’

You could argue that there are six questions here: three for the Chief Executive and the same three for other executive staff.

Such grouping is deliberate for three reasons. First the Model needs to fit many different types and sizes of organisation and if questions are too specialised many will not apply to any one organisation. Secondly, the sub-questions are closely related and the single question format helps to bring this out. Thirdly, 48 questions are quite enough if the structure and the flow of the Model are to remain visible!

If the answers are different for different parts of the question, that is no problem. In the simpler form of the Model this can be noted beside the answer given.

Open questions

The instructions have always been to answer the 48 questions in an ‘open’ way; you assess how well the organisation is doing rather than give a YES/NO answer.

The 2015 version has now clarified this by rewording all the questions into ‘open’ format even though this leads to some repetition of phrase. Feedback has indicated this to be the better option.

The fact that the Model asks for one of six possible answers for each question (see below) demonstrates the real intention clearly. Note also that some questions do not tightly define each word (such as ‘recent’). This is so that different organisations can interpret it in a way that is appropriate for them.

The sample tests

Each of the 48 questions is given five **sample tests** to help assess how well the organisation meets the requirement of the question. On the next page is an example of one such set of sample tests.

The tests are merely **samples** (this is a vital point to grasp). Any organisation applying the Model should use these carefully.

- 1 They show the *kind* of evidence that would point to effectiveness.

cont on page 14

Listing of the 48 questions titles in their themes and sections

VALIDITY theme	CHOICE theme	EXCELLENCE theme	ACHIEVEMENT theme
Foundations *	Leadership	Staffing	Impact
V1 The Kingdom...	C1 Principles	E1 Employer	A1 Perspective
V2 The Lordship...	C2 Executive	E2 Workplace	A2 Outcomes
V3 The power...	C3 Board	E3 Management	A3 Results
V4 The reality...	C4 Teamwork	E4 Development	A4 Viability
Mission	Strategy	Support	Perceptions
V5 Purpose	C5 Definition	E5 Supporters	A5 Image
V6 Services	C6 Research	E6 Partnerships	A6 Assessment
V7 Values	C7 Policies	E7 Finances	A7 Church
V8 Visions	C8 Planning	E8 Resources	A8 Society
Calling	Change	Service	Faithfulness
V9 Past	C9 Structure	E9 Administration	A9 Failure
V10 Future	C10 Decisions	E10 Fund-raising	A10 Changes
V11 Certification	C11 Communication	E11 Promotion	A11 Difficulties
V12 Endorsement	C12 Review	E12 Delivery	A12 Foundations

* full titles: The Kingdom of God, The Lordship of Christ, The power of the Spirit, the reality of the world.

A typical set of five sample tests that are listed with each of the 48 questions

E2: WORKPLACE – Caring through resources

How adequate and safe are the staff and volunteers of the organisation and how appropriate are the resources they are given to carry out their responsibilities and duties?

Sample tests	
1	staff and volunteers satisfied that they have an adequate quality of work environment, whether office, home or field workers;
2	strict adherence to all legislation affecting health and safety, with special care given to those who are working in isolated, difficult or dangerous situations;
3	staff and volunteers satisfied that they are supplied with adequate equipment and software (with appropriate training) and, where appropriate, vehicles; (cf.E8)
4	appropriate checks in place to protect staff and volunteers against financial, sexual and other forms of temptation;
5	proper arrangements for healthcare and child education/travel for those abroad.

cont from page 12

- 2 The wording used may not be appropriate for your organisation.
- 3 It is not the aim that your organisation should be involved in all the activity listed! These are *sample* ideas.

If an organisation does not do what one test suggests, this does not necessarily mean that this is wrong in any way. The church may do something different in its place or may simply not have the resources to attempt what is listed. So treat them as starting points for assessment.

It is important to note that the Model is defined by its 48 questions, not by the 240 sample tests.

The tests are only given to show how the questions might be answered. They also challenge the organisation to take the question seriously. They are seeking to provide evidence to see how positively the question can be answered and so how it can be scored.

If the organisation can produce good evidence as listed in a sample test, that will be a sign that the question to which the test applies can be scored high. But if the organisation has not carried out what the test asks for, that is not necessarily an indication that the question to which the test applies needs a low score.

In the simpler application of the Model (which will be sufficient for most organisations) a carefully selected Assessment Group will now be able to assess each question. There is a fuller form of the Model where many of the tests call for research or for wide knowledge of people's views both inside and outside the organisation.

Throughout the sample tests there are a number of cross-references to other questions (marked as, for example, *cf.A3*). If one is listed after the heading 'Sample tests' this means that the whole question links to another of the 48 questions. Most are listed after one particular test (see test 3 in the example on page 13) which means that this one test links to one of the other questions. The cross-referencing is far from

exhaustive as there is no desire to complicate the Model.

Running the Model

The questions and sample tests are listed in full in paper HC7 on this website. There are three different ways in which these can be used.

1: As a structure to aid analysis

This is not really a use of the Model, but the way the questions have been structured may well prove to be a helpful way of 'thinking' about effectiveness. The list of questions in their sections and themes on the previous page could be used as a checklist for any kind of organisational review.

2: As a simple review of the organisation

The Model can be run by assessing each of the 48 questions, or by taking just one theme and assessing the 12 questions there.

In this simple application of the Model an **Assessment Group** assesses each question in the light of the sample tests (adjusted as necessary). They assess each question on a scale of:

- Doing well
- Reasonably well
- Need some improvement
- Weak
- Serious problems

and then make notes on the action required. There is a sixth *Not applicable* option although this should only apply in very special cases.

The Assessment Group should consist of about four to seven people, leaders and others, who between them have a wide understanding of people's views. The idea would be to carry out the exercise at a reasonable speed within about three meetings if covering the whole Review.

From this the more negative assessments need to be seen across the structure of all themes, sections and questions. Are there

themes that need more action than others, or sections within a theme that show signs of weakness? From this, an appropriate action plan can be put together. Part 2 in HC7 includes a *pro forma* sheet for noting results.

The group can decide the details of how to carry this out themselves and, by using copies of the two papers on the website, need no authorisation to do so. I would however be very keen to hear that the exercise has been carried out, with any details of findings and planned actions. I would also welcome ideas for improving the Model for other users.

3: As a detailed exercise

However, the CEM has been written with a more thorough approach in mind. For those wanting to take part in a more detailed assessment, advice is given in a manual. The following is a brief summary of that so that the questions can be read with some idea of how they are put to use.

The Model is run by an **Assessment Group**, up to about nine people chosen to represent different stakeholders both within and outside the organisation. Ideally, one member should be an external facilitator with experience of the Model. They follow six **phases** covering **training, set-up, research, analysis, report** and **action**.

After initial training and set-up, they carry out whatever research they consider to be necessary to enable them to answer the questions. For example, if they use sample tests 1 and 3 for E2 in the example cited above, they may need to survey the staff to find out what their views really are. This particular exercise probably needs to be carried out confidentially by an external member of the group to provide accurate answers.

For analysis, they investigate each of the questions and list four outputs (see top of next column).

These results then need to be interpreted carefully. Effectiveness is no exact science. Some low scores may matter much less than others. The Group then report to the board or other authorising body and an **Action Plan** is produced.

- 1 **Strengths** – any specific aspects where the organisation is strong
- 2 **Areas to improve** – particular points that the question has shown up as requiring action in some way
- 3 **Issues raised** – any point (whether tackled directly in the question or not) they believe the organisation needs to consider
- 4 A **score** – the question is scored on a scale from 0 to 10. The manual gives advice on how to do this.

The Model works round the themes from

1: Validity to

2: Choice to

3: Excellence to

4: Achievement

as shown by the three arrows with solid heads on the representation.

But this whole pattern of analysis can be seen to enable a more systematic assessment of Validity – and hence the diagram of the Model is shown as a cycle, with the fourth movement from Achievement back to Validity having a slightly different meaning from the others.

If this description has given the impression of a secular exercise, its nature has been misunderstood. The use of the Model is merely a tool to help us discover how effective we are being as labourers in his Kingdom. The whole process needs to be viewed as such, and the process should be undertaken in an attitude of prayer. There may then be a far richer outcome than what some may at first expect.

This full exercise (whether complete, or of only one theme) needs to be carried out under licence. There is no charge for this, or for the manual, but I ask that I either conduct the exercise or (more likely) train the Assessment Group, both at my normal consultancy rates. Please get in touch if you would like to follow this up. Such initial contact assumes no commitment to go through with a licensed use of the Model.

Having explained that, the simpler application will suit most organisations and this may be used from papers HC6 and HC7 without any charge.

Summing up

The Christian Effectiveness Model is designed for any Christian mission agency or a church enterprise such as a cafe, playgroup or church school. To assess a church itself, use the **Church Health Review** also on this website.

Even in its simpler form this is a detailed process. It is intended to be. It is designed as a thorough analysis of a Christian mission's effectiveness in a complex world, seeking to give a measure for this concept. To keep it all straightforward:

- 1 Access only one of the four themes – at least as a first exercise. This gives you 12 questions to address.
- 2 Give the exercise to a small Assessment Group rather than expecting the whole board or senior staff to undertake it.

Part 2 follows with a full listing of all the questions and sample tests. Access it by clicking on [HC7](#).

Summary of terminology used

The **Christian Effectiveness Model (CEM)** is a tool to enable any **Christian mission agency or church enterprise** (or **organisation**) to assess and improve its own effectiveness in ministry. The heart of the Model is a series of 48 **questions** and the way they are grouped.

The Model is based on four **themes** (Validity, Choice, Excellence, Achievement).

Each theme has 12 **questions** to answer broken down into four questions in each three **sections**.

Each question is identified by a **reference**, a **title** and a **sub-title**.

Each question is assigned five **sample tests** to enable it to be answered. These are only samples. The Model is defined by the questions, not by the tests.

The Model is applied by a specially selected **Assessment Group** consisting of various stakeholders and including an external facilitator.

There is a more detailed form of the Model available for those who with a more thorough approach.

This paper is available at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Health-checks-index> then HC6. It forms the first part of two papers outlining the Christian Effectiveness Model with the second part available at the same web address but with HC7 instead of HC6. For details of the Church Health Review (for churches), see papers HC4 & HC5 on the same site. For indexes of all items available on the site, visit the [Resources page](#).

Contact John if you would like to enquire about using the Model in its fuller form, with detailed advice on scoring and assessment in general. John would also like to hear your ideas for improving the Model.

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