

The Church Health Review

A summary of the Review

HC2 Health-checks series

This paper is designed as a short summary of the Church Health Review and was last updated in August 2024. It is copyright © John Truscott. You may download this file and/or print up to 30 copies without charge provided no part of the heading or text is altered or omitted.

The Church Health Review (CHR) is designed to help any Christian church assess and improve its spiritual well-being.

CHR seeks to explore and assess every area of a church's life. This makes it rather different from other health tools such as Robert Warren's excellent *Healthy churches' handbook* or the widely used *Natural church development* model devised by Christian Schwarz.

It was first published on my website in October 2007, was given a major makeover in September 2014 and last updated in August 2024. It is listed as papers HC4 and HC5 in the Health-checks pages of the Resources section of the site at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Health-checks-index>. This is merely a summary.

There is an equivalent exercise for Christian mission agencies which follows the same basic structure but is based on quite different themes. The ***Christian Effectiveness Model*** was first published on the website in August 2008, was given a major makeover in October 2015 and last updated in December 2022. This is listed on the website as papers HC6 and HC7 in the same set of pages.

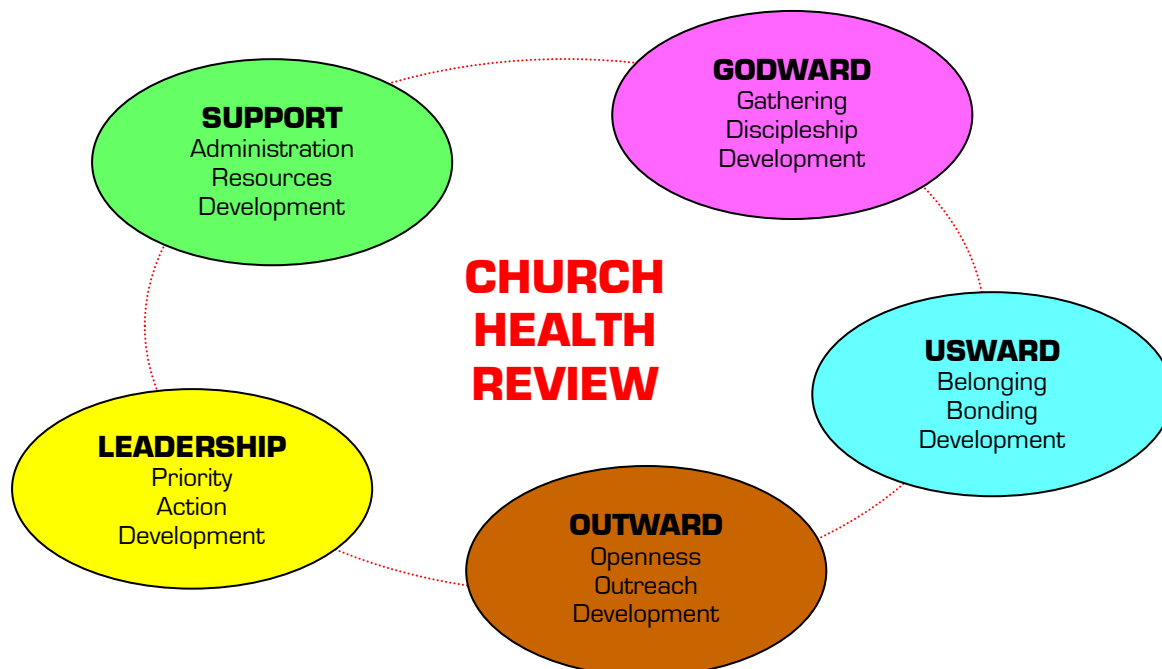
I have also included a cut-down version of the Church Health Review which I call the 'Five Themes Map' in Article A35 on the website, ***Mapping your church***. This was published in April 2015 and last updated in March 2023. See <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Articles-index>.

Working from the website, a simple form of CHR can be used by any church without charge or further permission and this is now the normal use for the Review. But it is possible to undertake a more thorough exercise which would involve my help in some form. For the full applications, a manual is available and the Review may be used under licence.

The Review consists of a set of 45 **questions** to be asked, divided into 15 **sections** which, between them, form five **themes**. Five **sample tests** are provided for each question.

Understanding CHR’s five themes and 15 sections

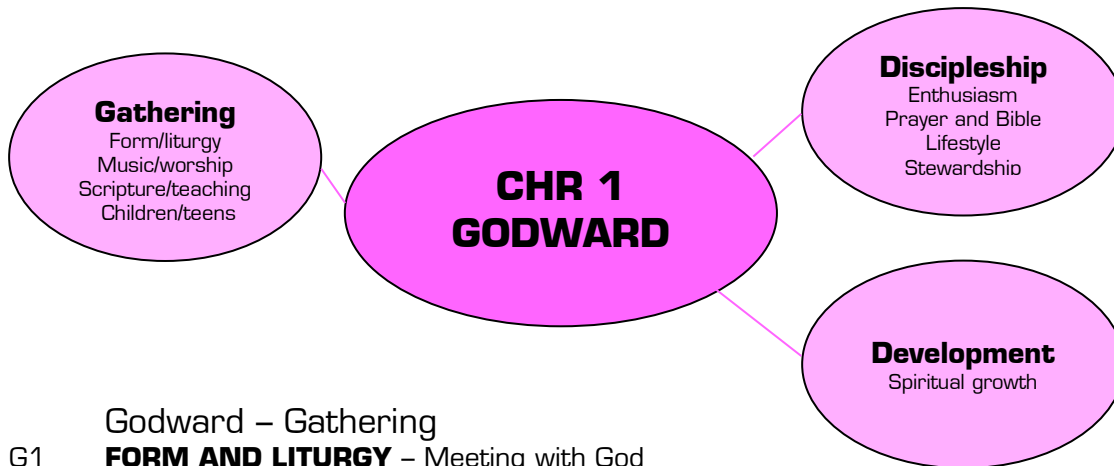
The analysis of the basic structure for the 45 questions is an essential part of the Review. Even if you do not use the Review as such, these headings can in themselves help any Christian church to think about and assess its life.



- 1** **9 questions on the GODWARD theme** *heart*
 How well is this church developing its relationships with the Trinity?
 Sections: 4 questions each on **Gathering** and **Discipleship**, 1 on **Development**
- 2** **9 questions on the USWARD theme** *blood pressure*
 How well is this church developing its relationships within its membership?
 Sections: 4 questions each on **Belonging** and **Bonding**, 1 on **Development**
- 3** **9 questions on the OUTWARD theme** *eyes and ears*
 How well is this church developing its relationships with the world?
 Sections: 4 questions each on **Openness** and **Outreach**, 1 on **Development**
- 4** **9 questions on the LEADERSHIP theme** *brain*
 How well is this church being led towards its vision?
 Sections: 4 questions each on **Priority** and **Action**, 1 on **Development**
- 5** **9 questions on the SUPPORT theme** *digestive system*
 How well is this church being organised to achieve its purpose?
 Sections: 4 questions each on **Administration** and **Resources**, 1 on **Development**

As shown above, each theme is likened to a part of the body as part of a health check-up.

Understanding CHR’s 45 questions



Godward – Gathering

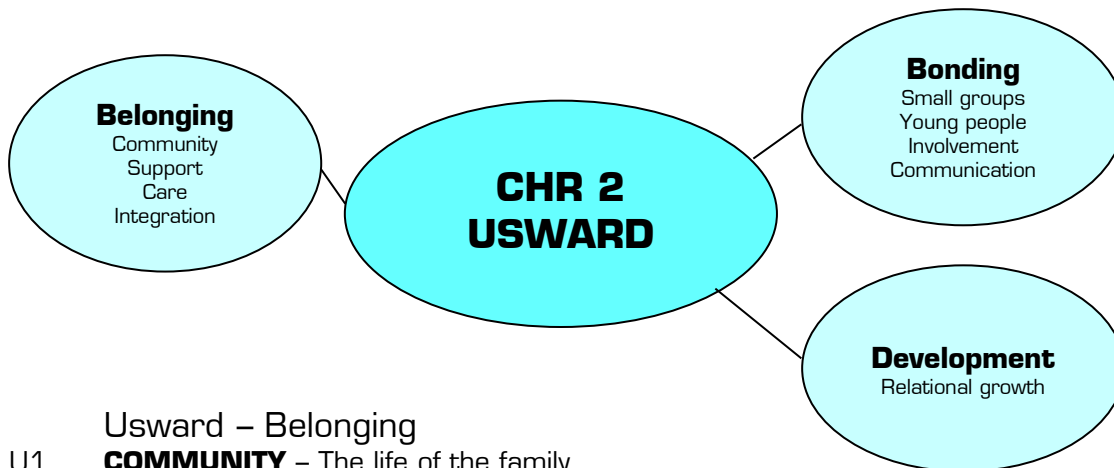
- G1 **FORM AND LITURGY** – Meeting with God
- G2 **MUSIC AND WORSHIP** – Praising God
- G3 **SCRIPTURE AND TEACHING** – Listening to God
- G4 **CHILDREN AND TEENS** – Young people with God

Godward – Discipleship

- G5 **ENTHUSIASM** – The reality of faith
- G6 **PRAYER AND BIBLE** – The source of faith
- G7 **LIFESTYLE** – The outworking of faith
- G8 **STEWARDSHIP** – The challenge of faith

Godward – Development

- G9 **SPIRITUAL GROWTH** – Evidence of movement



Uward – Belonging

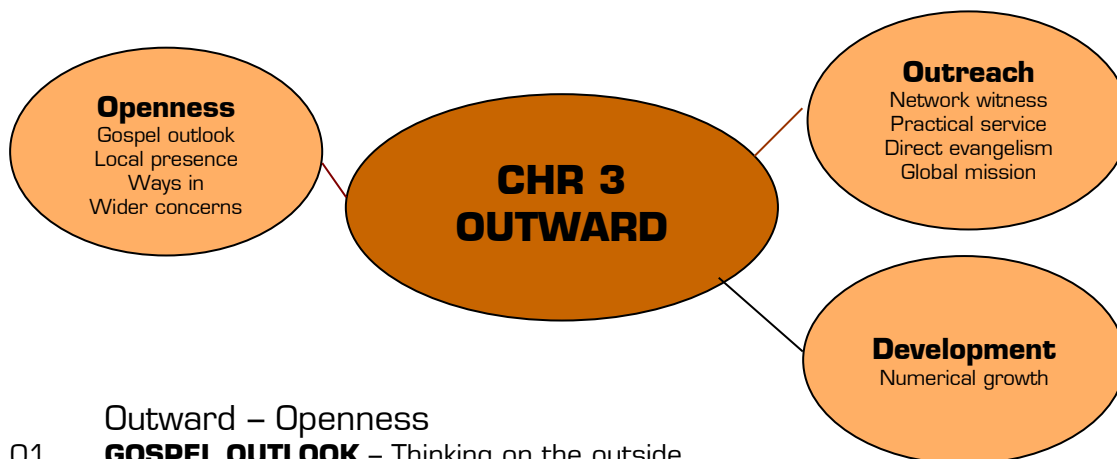
- U1 **COMMUNITY** – The life of the family
- U2 **SUPPORT** – Sharing within the family
- U3 **CARE** – Special needs within the family
- U4 **INTEGRATION** – Welcome into the family

Uward – Bonding

- U5 **SMALL GROUPS** – Growing together
- U6 **YOUNG PEOPLE** – Growing up together
- U7 **INVOLVEMENT** – Working together
- U8 **COMMUNICATION** – Staying together

Uward – Development

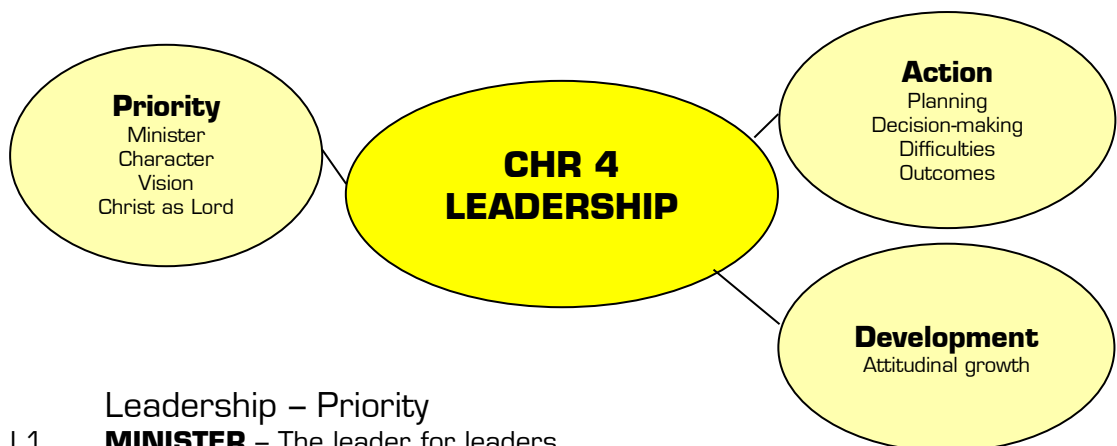
- U9 **RELATIONAL GROWTH** – Evidence of movement



- Outward – Openness
- 01 **GOSPEL OUTLOOK** – Thinking on the outside
 - 02 **LOCAL PRESENCE** – Living on the outside
 - 03 **WAYS IN** – Welcoming all from outside
 - 04 **WIDER CONCERN** – Linking to the outside

- Outward – Outreach
- 05 **NETWORK WITNESS** – Being good news
 - 06 **PRACTICAL SERVICE** – Living out good news
 - 07 **DIRECT EVANGELISM** – Sharing good news
 - 08 **GLOBAL MISSION** – Supporting others in the good news

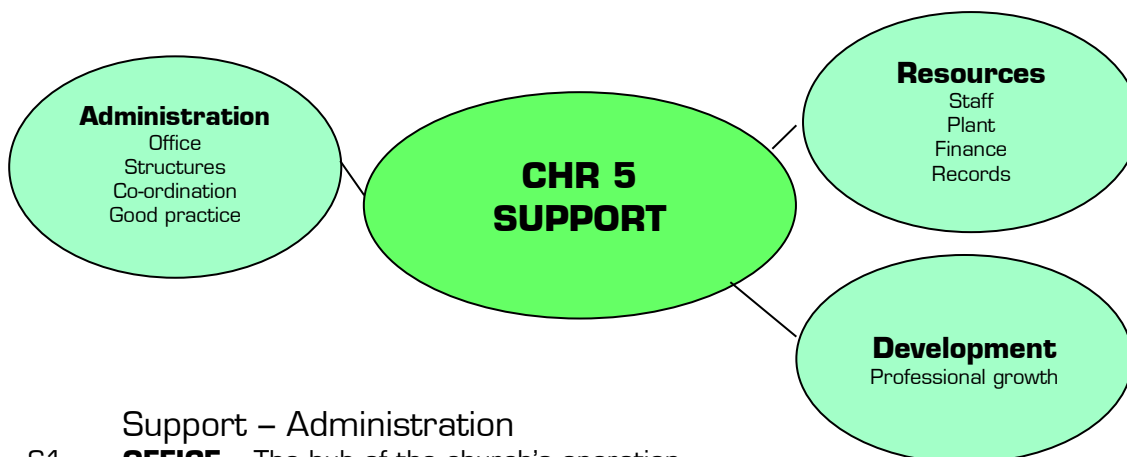
- Outward – Development
- 09 **NUMERICAL GROWTH** – Evidence of movement



- Leadership – Priority
- L1 **MINISTER** – The leader for leaders
 - L2 **CHARACTER** – Standards required for leaders
 - L3 **VISION** – The driving force for leaders
 - L4 **CHRIST AS LORD** – The spiritual foundation for leaders

- Leadership – Action
- L5 **PLANNING** – Preparing and monitoring the journey
 - L6 **DECISION-MAKING** – Choosing the route for the journey
 - L7 **DIFFICULTIES** – Managing hardships on the journey
 - L8 **OUTCOMES** – Reaching the end of the journey

- Leadership – Development
- L9 **ATTITUDINAL GROWTH** – Evidence of movement



Support – Administration

- S1 **OFFICE** – The hub of the church’s operation
- S2 **STRUCTURES** – The shape of the church’s operation
- S3 **CO-ORDINATION** – Collaboration within the church’s operation
- S4 **GOOD PRACTICE** – Professionalism within the church’s operation

Support – Resources

- S5 **STAFF** – People to enable ministry
- S6 **PLANT** – Buildings to enable ministry
- S7 **FINANCE** – Money to enable ministry
- S8 **RECORDS** – Information to enable ministry

Support – Development

- S9 **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH** – Evidence of movement

cont on next page

This paper is available at <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Health-checks-index> then HC2. The full Church Health Review is given in two parts: an introduction at HC4 on the same site, and all the questions and sample tests at HC5. For indexes of all the items available on the site, visit the [Resources page](#).

Contact John if you would like to enquire about using with the Review in its fuller form, with detailed advice on grading and assessment in general. John would also like to hear your ideas for improving the Review. Email him at john@john-truscott.co.uk.

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Understanding how sample tests support questions

Each of the questions is supported by five 'sample tests'. These are only indications of how to assess each question, and may need to be adapted to fit the church. This is explained in more detail in the papers for the Review. Here are examples of sample tests for two questions in the Review.

U5-8: THE USWARD THEME – Questions of Bonding

These test the means for such love for each other.

U5 **SMALL GROUPS** – Growing together

How effective is the small group structure within our church and how widely does it cover all the congregation, enabling people to relate closely to each other, to support each other by prayer and in practical service, and to apply the gospel to daily living?

Sample tests *(cf. U2)*

- 1 the existence of a set of small/cell groups (including specialist groups such as a seniors' group) that involves a significant majority of the congregation;
- 2 group meetings include a mix of activity such as worship and concern/prayer for each other, as well as study of the Scriptures and/or application of main service teaching;
- 3 where appropriate, the existence of a cluster or mission community system, perhaps with these as the basic unit of church grouping and small groups formed from these; *(cf. S2.2)*
- 4 all groups open and expecting to welcome newcomers, subdividing as appropriate, with new leaders trained, supported and available to take on new groups;
- 5 outside group meetings, members seeking to support and build each other up in the faith by praying for each other, visiting each other and applying teaching in practical ways.

L5-8: THE LEADERSHIP THEME – Questions of Action

These test the performance of the church's leadership.

L6 **DECISION-MAKING** – Choosing the route for the journey

How efficient is our process of leadership decision-making in its operation (by not wasting time or people while delivering wise outcomes) and how effective is it in what it achieves (by engaging with the real issues instead of trivia)?

Sample tests

- 1 business meetings in the church (Council or other) appreciated by all involved, with satisfaction at the way they are run, sensitive honesty from everyone, and lack of destructive conflict;
- 2 decision-making groups kept small, committee structures designed to fit needs, chairing carried out to a high standard, and paperwork delivered on time and with clarity; *(cf. S2.3)*
- 3 the Holy Spirit's presence sought at church business meetings so that there is an edge to proceedings and high attendance, with prayer for wisdom in decision-making seen as essential;
- 4 good communication so that the congregation are kept in touch with decisions; *(cf. UB.5)*
- 5 meetings that take clear decisions which are then actioned effectively without delay.

Assessment Group

The review is carried out by an **Assessment Group** of church leaders and members. This might be four to seven people who between them understand attitudes and views throughout the congregation and who have a wide perspective on church life.

The Review includes a pro forma sheet which can be used by the group to record their assessment for each question (see sample below). There are five categories:

- 1 Healthy
- 2 Reasonably healthy
- 3 Patient action
- 4 Needs treatment
- 5 Hospitalisation

A more detailed application

There is a more thorough way of using the Review which involves a grading system, possibly congregational research, an external observer, etc. There is a detailed manual for this and a licence system so that I can train the Assessment Group.

The simpler form of the Review described above will be sufficient for most churches.

Pro-forma sheet (extract)

Theme

agree and tick one box for each question

Q	Question name	He	ReHe	PaAc	NeTr	Hosp	N/A
1	Treatment						
	and so on for all nine questions						
2	Treatment						
	and so on for all nine questions						
3	Treatment						
	and so on for all nine questions						

Priority treatment

Full review: HC4&5 at: <https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/Health-checks-index>.

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