



UNHEALTHY SIGNS

1. Most people are “stuck” (not growing) and spiritually immature.
2. People are not transparent or truly known, and many struggle long with secret sins.
3. There are few actual members *or* many unregenerate members (nominal Christians).
4. The leaders are controlling, manipulative, unaccountable, or otherwise toxic.
5. Members have little role in the church’s ministry.
6. Some sins are coddled or tolerated.
7. Many members are lonely and starving for meaningful friendship.
8. Numbers increase primarily by drawing people away from other churches.
9. The church’s “worship” is shallow or lifeless, or is dominated by a few personalities.
10. The church is irrelevant in the community (few would notice if it closed).
11. Outsiders are made to feel unwelcome *or* given a false impression that they belong.
12. The congregation is less diverse than the surrounding community.
13. People don’t ask questions or share doubts.
14. People bear their burdens alone.



HEALTHY SIGNS

1. The members are growing, and there are people at each stage of spiritual maturity
2. People are authentic and vulnerable, and reach out for spiritual help
3. The number of tested and catechized members is steadily growing
4. Leaders are good shepherds who teach and exhort with patience and model integrity
5. Members are actively using and developing their spiritual gifts.
6. All sin is taken seriously and actively confronted with grace.
7. Spiritual friendships abound.
8. Numbers increase by evangelizing the lost and raising children who stay in the church.
9. The church truly worships, exalting God in Christ by the Spirit from the heart.
10. The church has an influential and redemptive presence in the community.
11. Outsiders are loved and shown hospitality while being called to repentance and baptism.
12. Diversity of age, ethnicity, social status, etc. matches or exceeds surrounding community.
13. Questions and open dialogue are welcomed.
14. The church is a spiritual hospital in which broken and wounded people can find healing.

VERY UNHEALTHY

Health is on a spectrum.

VERY HEALTHY



A toxic environment
for you and your family;
get out!

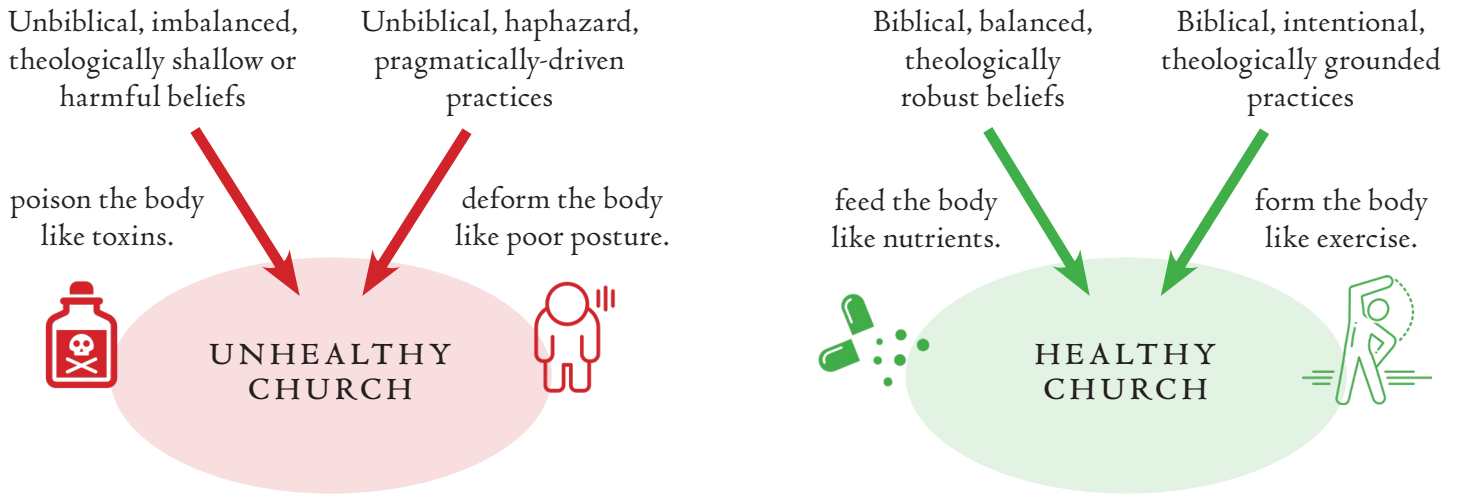


Remember that no church is perfectly healthy (reject utopian ideals). Be patient. Try to be part of the change. Stick around as long as your church is moving in the right direction (however slowly).



Be extremely grateful to God for his grace. Stay humble. Don’t become complacent. Keep growing.

A church's health is largely the result of its beliefs and practices over time.



BELIEFS OF HEALTHY CHURCHES



1. **The pure gospel** of Jesus Christ, avoiding both legalism and antinomianism.
2. **The historic Christian faith**, deeply held and treasured.
3. **Theological triage**, distinguishing matters of first importance (especially the Trinity, incarnation, and atonement) from confessional distinctives or personal convictions.
4. **A robust systematic theology** (e.g., Wesleyan-Arminianism) held charitably but firmly.
5. **A strong ecclesiology** (doctrine of the church).

PRACTICES OF HEALTHY CHURCHES



1. **Reading Scripture** in community.
2. **Expositional preaching** of God's Word.
3. **Biblical government** by qualified elders who are assisted by qualified deacons.
4. **Catechesis** or systematic passing on of the whole counsel of God.
5. **Theological education** (e.g., Sunday School classes taught by qualified teachers).
6. **Confession of the ecumenical Creeds.**
7. **Small groups** focused on spiritual transformation (e.g., the Wesleyan Class Meeting).
8. **Accountability, confession of sin, and restoration** (e.g., the Wesleyan Band Meeting).
9. **Hospitality** (e.g., sharing meals together while having important life conversations).
10. **Prayer** that is worship-based and kingdom-focused (not merely concerned with temporal needs).
11. **Baptism** administered as a loving corporate act of welcoming members into God's family with all the duties and responsibilities that come with it.
12. **Church membership** for all baptized believers.
13. **The Lord's Supper** constantly administered to church members with a focus on the work of Christ as the bond of the church's unity.
14. **Biblical church discipline** carried out gently and with a restorative focus.
15. **Evangelism** to reach the lost with the gospel.
16. **Church planting and world missions** aspirations, initiatives, and engagement.

Healthy churches
reproduce themselves
in time.