

The 20 Question ‘How whole-life is your church?’ Survey

‘Where are we?’ The Imagine church survey seeks to help you answer this question. The survey provides a snapshot of where the church currently is by allowing church members the opportunity to honestly feedback their impressions and perceptions about the church community. Often this kind of reflection is not done as a whole community.

The survey highlights the difference between the messages a leadership may be trying to impart to their congregation and what is being ‘heard’. It therefore provides an opportunity to identify areas that are perceived to require greater attention. What the survey maps is not simply a response to the Sunday content of church attendance, but an attempt to allow people to reflect on whether they feel empowered for their discipleship in the lives as a whole.

Most significantly the survey allows for discussion between the congregation and the church leadership. The results of the survey should not be kept for the consumption of the leadership alone, but presented at a church meeting. The ‘yes/no’ format may at first seem limiting or ‘business-like’, however, it is the opportunity for discussion which accompanies the process that is crucial.

Filling in the Survey:

We suggest that surveys are distributed at a meeting and then people are given the space to complete them at a time convenient for them. Although this may mean that not all surveys are returned, nonetheless it is important that people feel that they are able to complete the survey after giving it space & prayerful consideration.

Processing responses:

The survey responses are placed in the Excel spreadsheet, a blank copy can be found at www.licc.org.uk/imagine/resources. The responses to each survey are placed in a separate column (from B onwards) new columns can be inserted. Use yes = ‘y’, no = ‘n’ & maybe = ‘m’.

This will automatically subdivide the responses down into charts covering four subject areas (to be found on sheet ‘Charts 1’).

- Ecclesiology (2, 4, 8, 17)
- Theology (5, 11, 12, 16, 19)
- Personal Development (1, 13, 14, 18, 20)
- Mission (3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15)

Interpreting the results:

Wisdom is required in interpreting the surveys; responses that come back 100% negative are not any more accurate than those that are 100% positive and as a leader you will often know when a response is realistic or not. It is important not to just look at the negative results, but equally acknowledge the positive responses. This survey seeks to help you understand where you are, not where you are not or where you should be. Importantly, this survey is not really a catalogue of empirical data; rather it is a reflection of the congregation's perceptions of where they are.

Do look out for responses which are strikingly low or high. However, the correlation across the four areas is perhaps more revealing than individual responses. For example, is the ecclesiology breeding a happy, but insecure, group of people who are not confident in mission? Alternatively, is the theology preparing people to respond maturely to the situations they are facing?

A Caution:

The idea of doing the survey is not to create a huge 'to-do' list for leaders so that were the survey to be repeated all areas would be covered. Indeed, this may be a harmful response which infantilises the congregation. Rather it seeks to allow leaders and their churches to communicate well and honestly with one another as you walk forward together in the challenge of building a community which has whole-life discipleship.

Outcomes:

The outcome is both an awareness of strengths and weaknesses and also a context for constructive and stimulating discussions of how to build a more robust whole-life discipling culture. Used in conjunction with the concept of 'One degree shifts' it's possible to generate a series of small steps that will eventually change the culture of a church. At the same time it can identify where some longer term work needs to be done.

If possible, please forward a copy of the survey responses to ben.care@licc.org.uk, at LICC we are interested to keep a record of the overall picture emerging from churches. We can also provide a perspective on your responses in the light of others we've received.