

Dear Pastors and Elders,

Every local church desires to be healthy, faithful, and fruitful. Yet even healthy churches encounter seasons of challenge, transition, conflict, or uncertainty. Sometimes a church simply needs another set of eyes and a trusted voice.

The Board of Church Health exists to come alongside local Bible Fellowship Churches as a resource and ministry partner (see Article 512-4). Our desire is to help churches assess their current health, identify opportunities for growth, navigate difficult seasons, and pursue greater faithfulness to Christ and His mission.

What happens when you contact the Board of Church Health? The following booklet lays out the process.

1. Consultation
2. Assessment
3. Make a Plan
4. Work the Plan
5. Ongoing Evaluation

The Board of Church Health is willing to walk with you each step of the way or you may only need our presence for one or two of the steps. Each church and situation is different.

You don't need to wait for a crisis to contact the Board of Church Health. Any church of any size at any time may contact us for a listening ear or a fresh perspective. We are here to help—but you are the ones who ultimately make the decisions and solve the challenges. The spiritual health, leadership, direction, and ministry of a local church belongs to its pastors, elders, other leaders, and, ultimately, the whole congregation.

Contact us through our website at BFC.org/Church-Health. We look forward to working with you towards greater church health.

Warmly in the Love of Christ,



Dan Williams
Interim Church Health Director



How Can the Board of Church Health Help You?

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU CONTACT
THE BOARD OF CHURCH HEALTH



**BFC Board of
Church Health**

Churches Helping Churches

Healthy churches take ownership of their health.

They are willing to ask honest questions, prayerfully assess their strengths and weaknesses, listen to wise counsel, and take appropriate action.

The Board of Church Health is ready to walk alongside you in that process.

When you contact the Board of Church Health, you will begin with a consultation. For some churches, a consultation is all that is needed to set you on the path towards greater church health. Others will want to continue through one, two, or all the remaining steps in the process.

1 Consultation

2 Assessment

3 Make a Plan

4 Work the Plan

5 Evaluation

1 Consultation

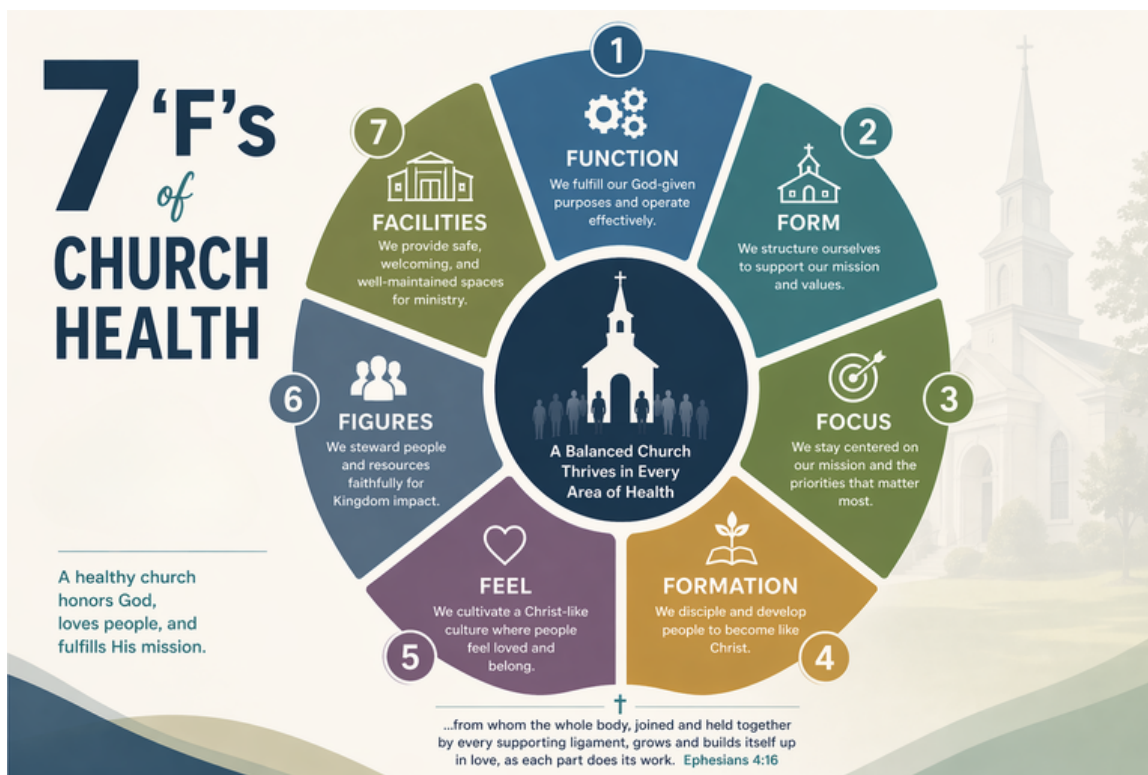
Sometimes a church simply needs someone to talk with.

The Director of Church Health and members of the Board can provide consultation by phone, video conference, or through an on-site church visit. We can listen, ask questions, offer perspective, and help church leaders think through challenging situations.

The Board of Church Health is available to consult with:

- Pastors
- Elder boards
- BFC Regions (Regional consultation can bring neighboring BFC churches together to share experiences, identify common challenges, encourage one another, and explore collaborative solutions.)

For some churches, one consultation is sufficient for gaining momentum. Others meet several times and yet others go on to a more strategic assessment.



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Assessment

A healthy church is willing to take an honest look at itself. We can assist churches with church-wide and/or leadership assessments designed to help identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and areas requiring attention.

The assessment can be tailored to any particular area of church life including:



Organizational Change - Churches experience change whether they plan for it or not. Changes in pastors, staff, ministries, demographics, facilities, finances, and congregational expectations can create significant organizational anxiety. We can help leaders understand the dynamics of change and develop healthier approaches to leading their congregation through significant transitions.



Conflict Mediation - Conflict is not unusual in the life of a church, but unresolved conflict can become deeply damaging. When appropriate, we can help churches navigate difficult relational situations by providing outside perspective, facilitating conversations, and assisting leaders in pursuing biblical reconciliation and constructive resolution. Conflict involving a credentialed pastor will also involve the Ministerial Relations Committee.



Policy Review - Good policies can provide clarity, protection, and healthy organizational boundaries. We can assist churches in reviewing bylaws, ministry policies, leadership policies, personnel practices, and other documents in light of Scripture, BFC principles, and sound organizational practice.

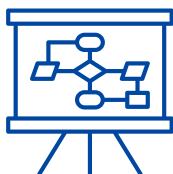
Assessment is not about assigning a grade; it is about gaining clarity so that leaders can make necessary and wise decisions.

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Make a Plan

After assessment, you will want to take action on what the assessment reveals.

Your elder board may develop a plan on your own or the Board of Church Health can walk with you along the way to help you develop a plan step by step. You can develop a variety of plans including:



Strategic Planning Support - Once the assessment reveals the areas of church life in which there needs to be change, we can help leaders clarify their mission, evaluate current realities, identify priorities, establish goals, and develop practical strategies for moving forward.



Pastoral Succession Plan - Pastoral transition is one of the most significant seasons in the life of a church. We can help churches think through succession planning, transition processes, leadership dynamics, communication policies, congregational preparation, and the opportunities and challenges that accompany pastoral change. All pastoral succession plans include working with the Ministerial Relations Committee for specific rules regarding pastoral transitions in the BFC.



Leadership Development - Healthy churches require healthy leaders. We can assist churches in developing elders, deacons, or other emerging leaders through training, coaching, resources, and customized leadership development opportunities.

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Work the Plan

Once the plan is created, your elder board may work through it on your own or you may continue to have us walk beside you. The Board of Church Health has a number of resources that may be helpful to you as you work your plan.

1. Recommended Resources

We can help pastors, elders, and ministry leaders identify books, articles, training materials, assessment tools, and other resources related to church health, leadership, discipleship, conflict, revitalization, succession, and organizational change.

2. Interim Elders

In certain circumstances, churches may temporarily need formal leadership assistance in the form of an interim elder. This individual must be a BFC pastor or elder and will formally join the elder leadership of a church in need to help give wisdom, spiritual oversight, and make important decisions.

3. Church Assistance Fund

Some churches have identified a significant ministry opportunity or strategic need but lack the financial resources to pursue it. Through the Church Assistance Fund, eligible churches may receive financial assistance for approved strategic initiatives. The goal is not simply to fund ministry expenses but to invest in initiatives that contribute to the long-term health and effectiveness of a local church.

4. Pulpit Supply

When a church experiences a pastoral vacancy or needs temporary preaching relief, we may be able to help fill the pulpit or identify appropriate BFC pastors who can provide pulpit supply during the interim period. See also the BFC Speaker Pool on the resource page of our denominational website.

5. Advising on Church Mergers

In some circumstances, two churches may determine that greater gospel effectiveness could be achieved by joining together. We can provide counsel as churches explore the multi-faceted dynamics involved in a potential merger.

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Evaluation

The Board of Church Health is here to follow up and check in with you about your plan to see what is working and what needs to be adjusted.

In most cases working the plan improves your church health.

Unfortunately, there are times when, despite the faithful efforts of pastors, elders, and congregations, a church reaches the difficult conclusion that it is no longer able to continue. When this occurs, the Board of Church Health can help leaders navigate the process of closing with wisdom, dignity, transparency, and care for the people and resources that have been entrusted to them.

Mindset Matters

In our experience, the churches that benefit the most from the assistance that we provide all have common traits.



Contact us early...

before a minor problem becomes a major problem. This is especially true in times of conflict or declining attendance. The churches who consult with us soon after the conflict or declining attendance begins have a greater chance of quick resolution and positive results.



Be teachable...

as an elder board so that you are willing to try new things and learn new things to benefit the health of your church.



Be willing to change...

even if that means letting go of things you love for the benefit of what will help the church have greater church health.

The Board of Church Health does not exist to take responsibility from local churches but to come alongside you. Our goal is not to create dependency but to encourage healthy leadership, strengthen local churches, and help congregations become increasingly equipped to fulfill the mission God has given them.

Sometimes the healthiest thing a church can do is simply ask for help. You do not have to navigate every challenge alone.

If your church is facing a significant challenge, entering a season of transition, or simply wants to become healthier and more effective, we invite you to contact the Director of Church Health.

Use the Confidential Contact Form located at BFC.org/Church-Health to schedule a time for an initial conversation. We would be honored to listen, pray, and explore how the Board of Church Health might come alongside your congregation.



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Use the QR code to access the
CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT FORM.

