



KINGDOM VANGUARD

The Church Health Index.

Fifty statements across ten dimensions. The scoring mathematics, the evidence base and the known limitations are published here, before you answer a single question.

ASSESSMENT & METHOD

REVITALIZE · RECALIBRATE · RESTORE

VERSION 0.1 DRAFT · AUGUST 2026

KINGDOMVANGUARD.COM

Growth without health *magnifies dysfunction.*

Most church consulting sells growth. It is what churches ask for, and it is the easiest thing to promise. But a church that grows while its leadership is exhausted and its congregation has stopped trusting its decisions does not become a healthier church. It becomes a larger version of the same problem, with more people inside it.

Kingdom Vanguard exists to help churches see their present reality clearly before anyone proposes a plan. This instrument is the first step of that. It measures ten dimensions of congregational health, names which of the three movements each belongs to, and refuses to recommend restructuring a church that is not yet well enough to be restructured.

We will not restructure a church until it is well enough to be restructured.

If Leadership Health falls below 55, or Communication and Trust below 50, the report leads with Restore, whatever else scores low. The rule lives in the scoring engine rather than in the marketing copy, and a test asserts that a flat profile can never suppress it.

Why Europe

American church-growth methodology does not transfer intact into a post-Christian European context, and applying it unchanged is how a Swedish or Dutch congregation ends up measured against a standard that was never about them. Every dimension in this instrument was chosen against European evidence, and the instrument is published in English, Swedish, Spanish, French and Italian, with the same fifty items in each.

There is no attendance question

Attendance is the variable European congregations have least power to move, and the one that says least about faithfulness. Its absence is the clearest statement this instrument makes about what it thinks health is. Every item measures something a congregation can actually change.

What this instrument does *not* do

A measurement tool used for something it cannot do causes more damage than no tool at all. So this is the plainest page in the document.

THIS SCORE DOES NOT MEASURE

- God's approval of your church.
- Your church's spiritual worth.
- The faithfulness of your leaders.
- The presence or the work of the Holy Spirit.

A low score is not a verdict on faithfulness, and decline is not automatically unfaithfulness. He builds His church; we are asked to be faithful with what is in front of us. What this instrument scores is observable organisational and ministry indicators — and nothing else.

It is not a validated psychometric test

The Church Health Index has not been subjected to independent psychometric validation, and it is presented as a version 0.1 draft. It has not yet been reviewed by Nordic denominational leaders. We state this here rather than in small print, because a church deciding whether to trust the result deserves to know what it is trusting.

The dimensions are deliberately unweighted

Each of the ten counts equally toward the overall score. There is no European dataset that would justify weighting one above another, and inventing weights would be exactly the false precision this instrument exists to avoid.

It is a conversation, not a decision

The results are a starting point. They are not professional, legal, financial, employment, medical or clinical advice, and they must not be used as the sole basis for any decision affecting a person's employment, ministry, discipline or wellbeing.

Running it well

- **Tell people what it is for** before you ask them to complete it, and what you will do with the results. An assessment introduced without explanation produces defensive answers, which produce a useless score.

- **Do not ask for names.** The instrument does not, and neither should you. The dimensions most worth measuring — leadership health, communication and trust — are exactly the ones people will not answer honestly if they can be identified.
- **Aggregate before you look.** With fewer than eight respondents, a group score can identify individuals by subtraction. With small numbers, discuss the questions together rather than scoring them separately.
- **Never use the results in an employment process.** Not for appraisal, not for discipline, not as evidence in a dispute. Beyond the ethical problem, doing so after inviting anonymous participation will end honest answering in your church permanently.

Three movements, *and an order between them*

Every dimension belongs to one of the three movements. The order is not stylistic: a church cannot be recalibrated while its leadership is unwell, which is why Restore takes precedence in the report whenever the thresholds are met.

■	Christ-Centred Vitality	Revitalize	Whether Christ, prayer and Scripture actually shape the church's life, or have become stated values it has stopped practising. Measured first because dormancy shows here before it shows anywhere else.
■	Leadership Health	Restore	Isolation, role clarity, boundaries and shared load. The Church of England's Living Ministry panel, following clergy from 2017 to 2025, found that 40% say they feel isolated in their ministry and 16% show indications of probable clinical depression with a further 13% possible or mild. Its most useful finding for this instrument is structural: depersonalisation and a sense of ineffectiveness were more prevalent than exhaustion, which suggests the nature of ordained ministry contributes more to burnout than the number of hours worked.
■	Discipleship Pathway	Recalibrate	Whether a person can move from first visit to maturity along a path someone designed, or only by accident. Measured because spiritual interest is not the constraint in Europe — formation is. In Sweden, 21.2% of 16-to-29-year-olds describe themselves as believers against 49.4% who do not, and in Switzerland belief in one God stands at 38% against 46% ten years earlier.
■	Retention & Belonging	Restore	Whether the people who arrive stay. Stefan Paas's peer-reviewed work on church planting in Western Europe describes congregations seeing genuine conversion growth while losing members at a rate that cancels it out. Arrivals are not the problem. The instrument therefore measures whether anyone is still there two years later.
■	Mission & Evangelism	Revitalize	Whether the congregation's activity is shaped by its mission or by its history, and whether faith is spoken about outside the building. Measured because European mission is now cross-cultural mission at home: in France, adult baptisms recorded by the catechumenate have risen sharply over a decade, and a substantial share of new adult converts come from no religious tradition at all.
■	Volunteer Capacity	Recalibrate	Whether the volunteer system works, measured separately from how many people attend. Volunteer numbers in the Church of Sweden roughly halved in four years, and the church's own research found many parishes have no volunteer strategy at all. A shortage of volunteers is usually a symptom of a missing system, not of a less committed congregation.

■	Communication & Trust	Restore	Whether members understand how decisions are made, whether difficult news travels openly, and whether conflict is addressed rather than avoided. This is where leadership and congregation most often disagree, which is why the instrument is designed to ask both.
■	Community Engagement	Revitalize	Whether the church is known and useful to people who will never attend it. Measured without a statistic, because the honest position is that no European dataset yet links community engagement to congregational health in a way that would survive scrutiny. The reasoning stands on its own: a church whose closure its neighbourhood would not notice has already lost something the balance sheet does not show.
■	Governance, Clarity & Stewardship	Recalibrate	Whether the structure fits the church as it is now rather than as it was, whether finances are transparent, and whether commitments are sustainable. Nominal church income across much of Europe is still rising while membership falls — a lagging indicator. The Freiburg projection commissioned with the EKD models German Protestant membership falling from 21.5 million in 2017 to 10.5 million by 2060, with financial capacity roughly halving over the same period.
■	Next Generation & Pipeline	Recalibrate	Whether young people belong rather than being catered to, and whether anyone is being prepared to lead. In the Living Ministry panel, 34% of clergy expected to have retired by 2030. Against training pathways measured in years rather than months, succession is not a future problem.

Answer for the church as it *is*, not as you hope it will be

Honest low answers produce a useful report. Generous ones produce a flattering and useless one. Where you genuinely do not know, mark **NA** — it is excluded from scoring entirely and never counts against your church.

1	2	3	4	5	NA
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral / unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not enough information

REVITALIZE Christ-Centred Vitality

1	Our gatherings consistently point people to Jesus Christ rather than to our church or its leaders.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2	Prayer is a genuine practice in the life of this church, not only a stated value.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
3	People here speak naturally about what God is doing in their lives.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
4	Scripture shapes the decisions this church makes, not only the sermons it hears.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5	There is a sense of expectancy in our gatherings that God will act.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RESTORE Leadership Health

6	Our leaders have people with whom they can be honest about their own struggles.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
7	Roles and responsibilities among our leaders are clearly defined.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
8	Our leaders are able to take genuine time off without the church suffering.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
9	Our leaders share responsibility rather than carrying it alone.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
10	A leader here who was struggling would be noticed before they reached breaking point.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RECALIBRATE Discipleship Pathway

11	Someone new to faith here would know what their next step is.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
12	We have a described pathway from first visit to mature discipleship.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13	Discipleship here involves more than attending services.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
14	People here are being formed in character, not only in knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
15	Those who disciple others here were themselves discipled here.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RESTORE Retention & Belonging

16	People who start attending here are still here two years later.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
17	Newcomers form real friendships within their first six months.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
18	We know why people leave this church.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
19	Someone arriving alone would be noticed and welcomed.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
20	Our growth comes from people new to faith rather than mainly from other churches.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

REVITALIZE Mission & Evangelism

21	Members of this church regularly speak about faith with people outside it.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
22	We have seen people come to faith in Christ here in the past year.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
23	Our activities are shaped by our mission rather than by tradition.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
24	We could explain this church's purpose to a stranger in one sentence.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
25	We are willing to stop doing things that no longer serve our mission.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RECALIBRATE

Volunteer Capacity

26	We have enough volunteers for the ministries we currently run.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
27	Volunteers here are placed according to gifting, not only availability.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
28	We have a clear process for inviting, training and supporting volunteers.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
29	Volunteers here can step back without guilt when they need to.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
30	The work here is shared widely rather than carried by the same few people.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RESTORE

Communication & Trust

31	Members understand how decisions are made in this church.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
32	Difficult news is communicated openly rather than discovered later.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
33	Members feel able to raise concerns with leadership.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
34	Conflict here is addressed rather than avoided.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
35	There is a high level of trust between leadership and congregation.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

REVITALIZE

Community Engagement

36	This church is known and valued by people in our local area.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
37	We serve people in our community who will never attend our services.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
38	We understand the actual needs of the neighbourhood we are in.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
39	We work alongside other local organisations.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
40	If this church closed, our community would notice.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

RECALIBRATE

Governance, Clarity & Stewardship

41	Our governance structure fits the church we are now, not the church we used to be.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
42	Our finances are transparent to those who ought to see them.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
43	We could sustain our current commitments for the next three years.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
44	Our budget reflects our stated priorities.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
45	We have safeguarding practices that we actually follow.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

46	Children and young people are genuinely part of this church, not adjacent to it.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
47	We are actively identifying and developing emerging leaders.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
48	Young adults who grew up here are still connected to this church.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
49	Our leaders are actively preparing people to succeed them.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
50	Someone under thirty could hold real responsibility here.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

Add the five scores, divide by the number you answered, multiply by 20.

Dimension score _____ / 100

SCORING

A dimension score is the mean of the items you answered, multiplied by twenty, expressed on 0–100. If you answered fewer than three items in a dimension, it reports insufficient data rather than a misleading number.

The overall score is the unweighted mean of the dimensions that could be scored. Dimensions reporting insufficient data are left out — they do not count as zero.

Not enough information to answer is excluded entirely, from both the dimension and the overall score. It never counts against a church.

Six bands, *published in advance*

The band boundaries are set out here so that they cannot be moved after the fact to make a result look better or worse than it is.

Flourishing	85–100	Strong across the board. The useful work here is protecting what is working and preparing for succession.
Healthy	70–84	Broadly healthy with identifiable weak points. Targeted work on the lowest dimensions is likely to pay off quickly.
Stable	55–69	Functioning, but with real strain in specific areas. Left unaddressed, these tend to compound over a two to three year horizon.
Vulnerable	40–54	Multiple dimensions under pressure at once. This is the point at which external help usually shortens the road considerably.
At Risk	25–39	Significant difficulty across most of the instrument. The priority is stabilising leadership and trust before anything is restructured.
Critical	0–24	Serious difficulty. This score does not mean the church has failed, and it is not a verdict on faithfulness. It means the situation needs experienced help soon.

The Restore-precedence rule

If **Leadership Health** scores below 55, or **Communication and Trust** below 50, the report leads with Restore regardless of what else scores low. Where a congregation has been surveyed as a group, a gap of twenty points or more between what leaders report and what members report triggers the same precedence — flagged as a perception gap, without assigning blame.

Every competitor studied sells structure and strategy. None of them says: we will not restructure you until you are well enough to be restructured.

What a low dimension actually means

It means that on the five statements measuring it, this church currently sits low — and that is information, not judgement. The most useful reports are rarely the flattering ones. A church scoring 41 on Leadership Health has learned something worth more than a church scoring 78 across the board and learning nothing.

You own the result. *There is no obligation.*

The Church Health Index is free, and it is designed to be genuinely useful on its own. Many churches will read their report, act on the lowest two dimensions, and never need us. That is a good outcome, and where free training is the right next step we will say so and point you to it.

Where we can help

Assessment tools and detailed reports	€99–250
Strategic Envisioning Weekend	€7,000
Implementation partnership	€250–1,000 / month

Prices are published rather than quoted on request. Published prices are indicative; the price for a specific engagement is confirmed in writing before any work begins.

How an engagement is structured

Discover, then Diagnose, then Discern, then Design, then Deploy, then Develop, then Multiply. Every engagement is built to end. A consultant who becomes indispensable has failed — the standard is 2 Timothy 2:2, four generations in one sentence, and the measure of our work is whether your church can run its own next cycle without us.

ON YOUR DATA

Completed online, this assessment sends us nothing. The questions and the scoring run in your own browser; your answers, your scores and your report exist only on your device. There is no submit step, because there is nowhere for it to submit to. That is a deliberate design decision — a church leader should be able to answer the questions about leadership health and congregational trust honestly, without any possibility that the answers reach us, a denomination, or an employer.

Every number carries its source *and its verification status*

Each entry in our bibliography is marked **verified at source**, **confirmed at a secondary source only**, or **contested**. A footnote may only cite a source that has already been checked, which is why there are eight long articles rather than four hundred: an article cannot be written faster than its sources can be verified.

In August 2026 we audited our own bibliography and withdrew a clergy-burnout statistic that church literature had been repeating for years. The primary document did not contain the figure attributed to it. We would rather lose a striking number than keep one we cannot stand behind — and the same audit corrected a misattributed co-author, a study cited under the title of a different book, a survey title paired with the wrong language's abbreviation, and a widely-repeated closure statistic that overstated what its source actually said.

Every figure in this document is verified at its primary source. Where a claim would have needed a number we could not verify, the reasoning is given without one, and the fact that we had no figure is stated rather than hidden.

Status and limitations

- This is **version 0.1, a draft instrument**. It has not been academically validated and has not yet been reviewed by Nordic denominational leaders.
- The **Swedish, Spanish, French and Italian translations are machine-assisted** and await native theological review. Each carries a visible notice saying so. Translation error in a measurement instrument does not announce itself — it appears as a dimension that scores oddly in one country.
- Scripture quotations are from public-domain editions, identified where they appear.
- **Two respondent modes — leadership and congregational — are specified but not yet built.** Until they are, the perception-gap trigger described on the previous page cannot fire.

Kingdom Vanguard · Church consulting across the European Union and the United States
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