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## Signs of 'Healthy' Churches

The aspects that make for a 'healthy church' are various and cannot be simply reduced to a set formula. However there are recognised reasons why certain churches can and do grow and here are some features that seem to be common to most of these churches:

1. Empowering Leadership
  - *Striving to bring out the best in others*
2. Gift-oriented lay ministry
  - *Members are helped to discern and develop their gifts*
3. Inspiring worship
  - *Worship that enables people to meet with God*
4. Significant small groups
  - *Groups that foster fellowship and intimacy*
5. Enabling structures
  - *The church is organised to fulfil its task in mission*
6. Culturally relevant
  - *The church is in a community and it knows that community*
7. Outward looking and participative
  - *The church knows it exists for those beyond the church walls*
8. An energising faith
  - *The church is a place where people's faith can be nourished.*
9. A clear sense of direction
  - *The church knows the purpose for which it exists*
10. Welcoming all
  - *Members seek opportunities to invite others in*
11. Need oriented evangelism
  - *The needs of the community are primarily addressed*
12. Loving relationships
  - *Love is not just spoken about but demonstrated*

I intend in future articles to develop each of the above aspects. My hope is that they will provide a basis of discussion in Elders' and/or Church Meetings and that local churches might explore how well they are incorporating some of these features.

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