

Characteristics of North American Cell Churches

Definition: Cell church has been identified in NCD database as church with more than 75% of members involved in holistic small groups.

In the NCD database there are presently 7972 church profiles from North America. Out of that number 3.6% qualify as cell-churches.

Based on the updated research database and new research we can summarize cell churches like the following: "Comparing the NCD scores of cell churches and non-cell churches showed that cell churches overall scored significantly higher in all areas than non-cell churches. Combined cell church scores averaged 58 while combined non-cell church scores averaged 50. Not surprisingly, Inspiring Worship showed the smallest difference (2 points higher for cell churches) and Holistic Small Groups showed the most difference (17 points higher for cell churches). Significantly, even churches that say they would focus on small groups over large group worship still had somewhat better scores for large group worship. This finding indicates that cells don't detract from corporate worship-they add to it. Additionally, the rate of church planting-in spite of the fact that the cell church movement has seemed to focus on getting larger rather than on planting more churches-would seem to indicate that multiplication is in fact in the genetic code. Cell churches in US averaged 2.0 churches planted compared to 2.1 churches planted for non-cell churches. Finally, the study showed that cell churches demonstrated an average growth rate more than double that of non-cell churches."

The following report goes more in depth to show how exactly are the North American cell-churches doing in comparison to non-cell churches. Eight qualities are compared along the occurrence of maximum and minimum factors. This study also shows what are the most distinct differences between cell and non-cell churches in matters of church planting, church growth, and other important characteristics that are part of church health.

Part of the study is also a Profile Custom which shows the differences between cell and non-cell churches with each of the eight qualities, both by individual lay questions and also by areas (subcategories) that are part of each quality.

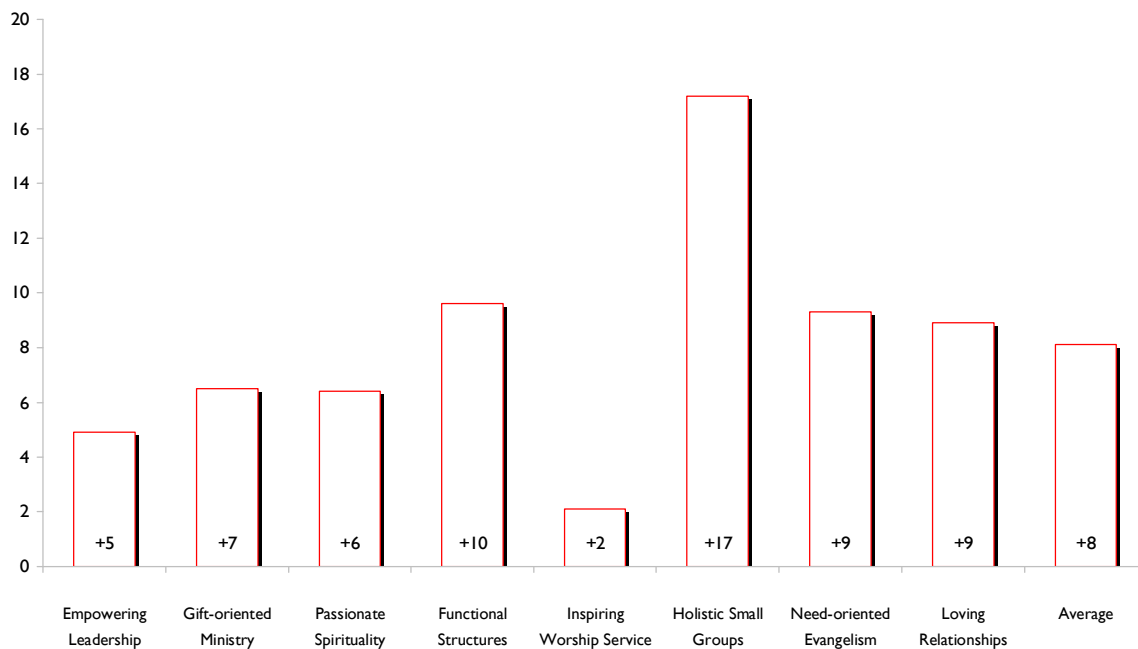
The differences of the quality characteristics of non-cell churches and cell churches are as follows:

	EL	GoM	PS	FS	IWS	HSG	NoE	LR	Avg
Non-cell Churches (96.4%)	50.0	49.8	49.8	49.7	50.0	49.4	49.7	49.7	49.8
Cell Churches (3.6%)	54.9	56.3	56.2	59.3	52.1	66.6	59.0	58.6	57.9

The trends of cell churches compare to non-cell churches are shown in the following graph.



Trend of Cell Churches



The overall difference of the combined score is 8.1 points in favor of cell churches. The biggest difference is obviously in Holistic small groups area (+17 points), the lowest difference is with Inspiring worship service (+2).

The following two tables show occurrence of minimum and maximum factors for both non-cell and cell churches.

Minimum Factor Occurrence	Non-cell Churches	Cell Churches
EL	16.30%	18.81%
GM	13.69%	15.84%
PS	12.21%	12.87%
FS	6.99%	4.62%
IWS	11.92%	26.40%
HSG	14.27%	1.65%
NoE	11.59%	7.59%
LR	13.04%	12.21%

Maximum Factor Occurrence	Non-cell Churches	Cell Churches
EL	16.73%	6.11%
GM	13.85%	9.65%
PS	11.93%	6.11%
FS	6.64%	7.40%
IWS	12.56%	4.50%
HSG	13.58%	38.59%
NoE	12.51%	14.79%
LR	12.20%	12.86%

Cell churches are healthier and more growing as the following table of rates comparison shows. There is a percentage of both the non-cell and cell churches shown for each category described in the first column. For example among non-cell churches there are 11.4% churches with combined score of all eight qualities higher than 65. However, there are 32.5% (that is 21.1% more) churches with combined score of all eight qualities higher than 65 among the cell churches, etc.

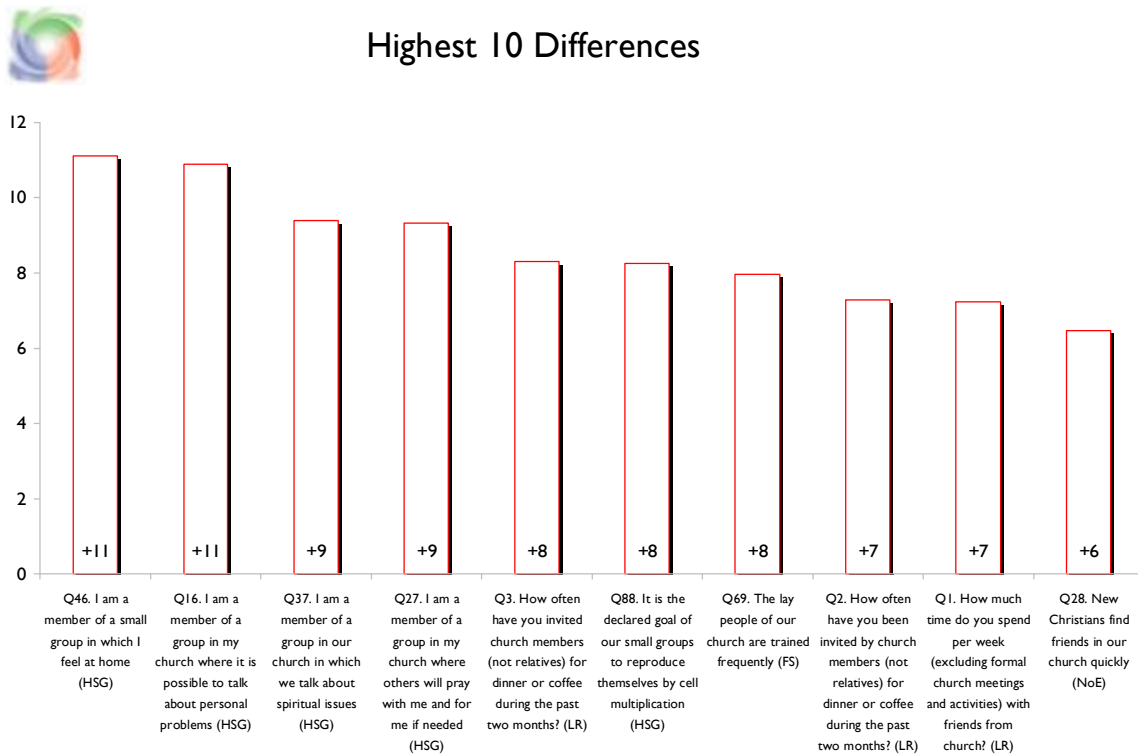
RATES Comparison	Non-cell Churches (%)	Cell Churches (%)	Trend of Cell Churches (%)
Rate of "healthy" churches (combined score higher than 65)	11.4	32.5	+21.1
Rate of "unhealthy" churches (combined	12.1	3.2	-8.9

score lower than 35)			
Rate of Church planting Churches	19.1	25.1	+6.0
Rate of New Churches	8.8	15.3	+6.5
Annual Growth Rate	4.9	10.1	+5.2
Average Annual Growth Rate (5 years)	4.0	8.0	+4.0

The following table shows some other characteristics of churches that are brought in through the pastor questionnaire. We can say that these elements are characteristics of health. The table simply gives a percentage of the churches whose pastors complied with the features described in the first column. Based on the table we can say that there are 28.9% more cell than non-cell churches that train their leaders for ministry, etc.

Other Characteristics Comparison	Non-cell Churches (%)	Cell Churches (%)	Trend of Cell Churches (%)
Multiplication of small groups promoted and implemented	16.4	46.2	+29.8
Training of leaders for their ministry	21.2	43.4	+22.2
Specialized ministries for new believers	19.1	37.2	+18.1
More than 25% of believers utilize their spiritual gifts for ministry	50.0	76.3	+26.3
Church optimistic about change	41.0	59.2	+18.2
Small groups more important than church service	13.3	36.9	+23.6
Importance of involvement in other cultures	27.4	51.4	+24.0
Evangelism supported by church leaders	50.5	70.7	+20.2
Opportunities for fellowship provided along church services	66.5	79.8	+13.3
Worship services attractive to visitors	39.8	43.7	+3.9

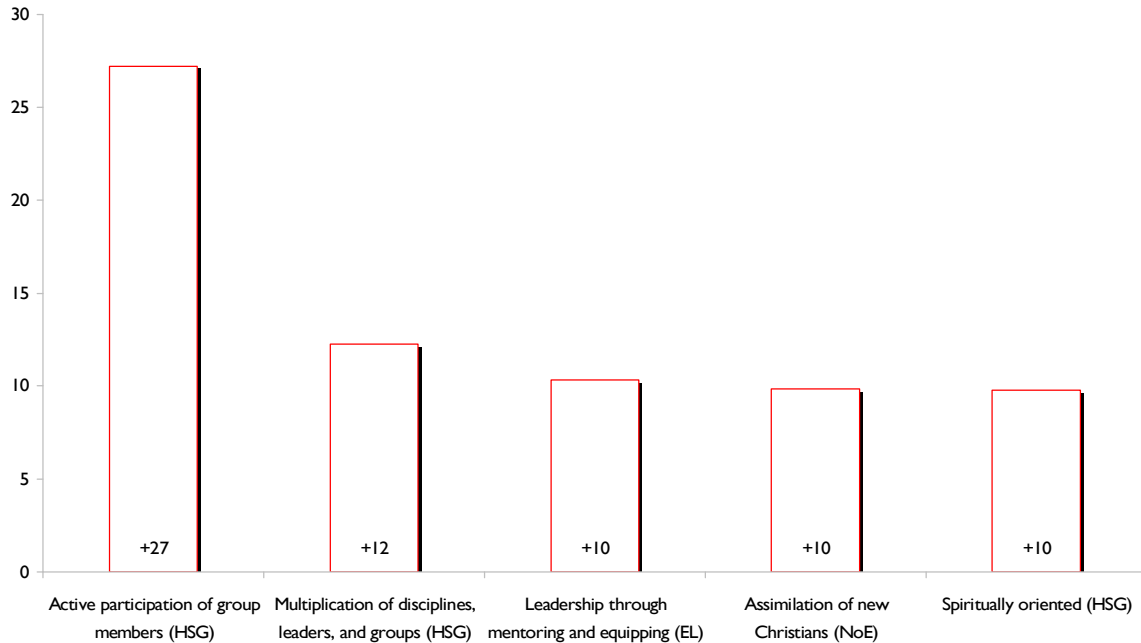
The last comparison shows the ten most distinct items from the lay questionnaire in comparison of non-cell and cell churches. Most of these questions and areas are related to holistic small group ministry (such as I am a member of a group in my church where others will pray with me and for me if needed) but there are also some other items significantly different among cell churches as compared to non-cell churches as the following charts show. The first chart displays 10 lay questions with the highest score difference. The second chart shows five areas (composed by both lay and pastor questions) across the eight qualities of cell churches that differ the most from the non-cell churches.



Compare to the world-wide research the difference in NA research is in area of loving and interdependent relationships. People in cell churches are more upto invite each other and be invited. They spend more time together.



Highest 5 Changes from Previous to Current



From this comparison we can conclude that members of cell churches are more active (in and through small groups). They are more likely to reproduce their ministries, leaders and groups. Their groups are spiritually oriented. The area of equipping believers for ministry is also strength of cell churches. The last item to be mentioned is also very important for healthy growth – cell churches are more effective in assimilating new Christians into their church body.

This report has been drafted to help the leaders to see the opportunities in growing healthy through holistic small group based churches.

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