

PRESS KIT

THE IMPACT OF CHURCH CONSULTANCY

DR IAN G DUNCUM

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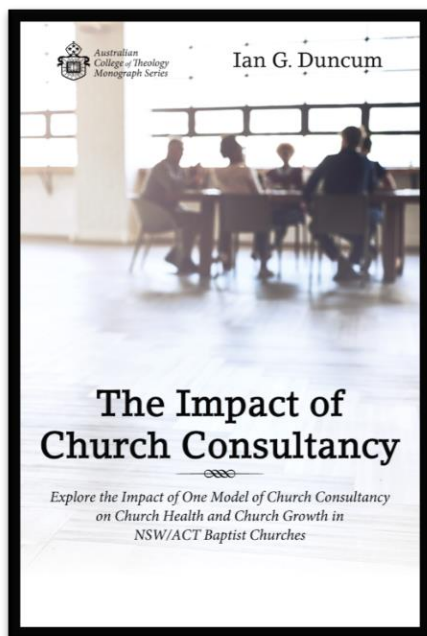
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PRESS RELEASE:

New Title from Ian G. Duncum: **The Impact of Church Consultancy**

This book follows the journey of ten churches who undertook church consultancies, and explores in depth both the consultancy and its outcomes. Pre-consultancy and post-consultancy “snapshots,” five years apart, of vitality indicators and attendance figures are compared with those of churches that have not undertaken church consultancies. Theologies of church consultancy, church health, and church growth are also developed and examined, intersecting with a wide body of literature, including contemporary ecclesiologies.

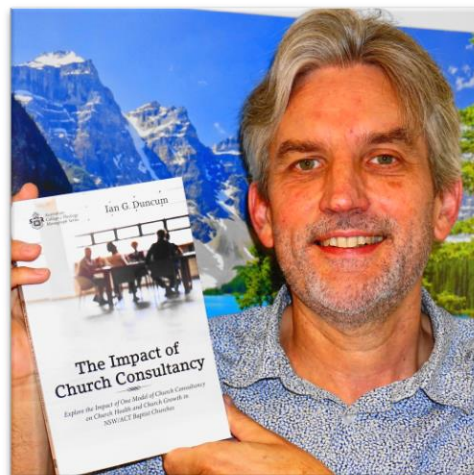


Consultancy outcomes are examined in detail. This includes interviews with pastors of some of those churches, considering whether and how the church consultancy impacted the health and growth of their church. Conclusions are drawn about the efficacy of church consultancy in influencing the health and growth of churches, as well as contexts for the best use of church consultancy.

This is a significant book for denominational leaders, theological lecturers, pastors, and church leaders as they encounter lack of health in churches and seek ways forward for greater health and impact in their local communities.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Ian G. Duncum has pastored churches and held denominational leadership (in church health) and research positions. He works across numerous denominations as a church consultant, intentional interim pastor, trainer, and mentor.



Ian's passion for church health comes from leading (as a pastor) the turnaround of a church which had been in decline for 37 years to effective local mission, vitality and growth.

Ian consults with churches and nonprofits in the areas of missional effectiveness; vision and strategic planning; leadership and governance; revitalisation; church health; conflict management; pastoral transition; navigating change; crisis recovery, and more, and sees many encouraging examples of healing and renewal over the last 20 years.

Ian has authored many articles, including (with Ruth Powell) *"Baptists Responding to Cultural Diversity" in Cultural Diversity, Worship, and Australian Baptist Church Life* (2016). Ian is married to Joanne, a speech pathologist, and they have two sons. Ian can be contacted through www.ianduncum.com.au.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Ian G. Duncum

duncum@internode.on.net

(61) 0466 620 217

<https://www.ianduncum.com.au>

Australian orders: <https://www.ianduncum.com.au/shop>

<https://www.facebook.com/ianduncumministries>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-ian-duncum-92371723/>

PRODUCT DETAILS:

TITLE: The Impact of Church Consultancy:
Explore the Impact of One Model of
Church Consultancy on Church
Health and Church Growth in
NSW/ACT Baptist Churches.

AUTHOR: Dr Ian G. Duncum

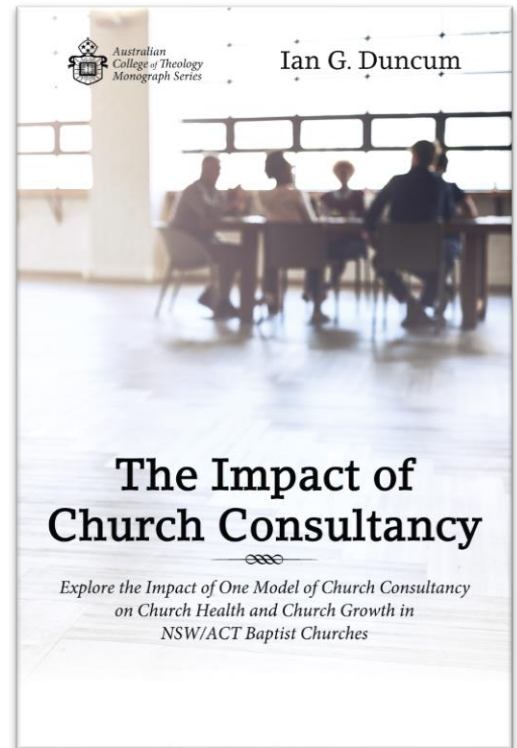
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INTERVIEW RESOURCES:

SAMPLE Q & A:

Q: What is the *Impact of Church Consultancy* about?

A: This book follows the journey of ten churches who undertook church consultancies, and explores both the consultancy process and its outcomes. “Snapshots” of vitality and attendance for these churches before and five years after the consultancy are compared with those of churches that have not undertaken a church consultancy. This includes interviews with pastors of some of those churches, who share their perspective on whether and how the church consultancy impacted the health and growth of their church.

Q: Why is this book important?

A: In the West many churches are struggling, though not all. Certainly increased secularization makes the task of impacting local communities more difficult for a church. While new models of church are emerging, these churches are not immune from difficulty or loss of impact. Church consultancy is neither church model-specific, nor centred around a particular denomination/way of organizing church. Many churches are asking one of these questions; “How can we redevelop our ministries?” or “How can we revitalize after a season of decline?” or “How can we transition into something new?” or “How can we break through this growth barrier?” Church consultancy is helping to answer these and other questions. As many of the factors which make up church vitality are within the control of each local church, they have the ability to change. This is borne out by the results of the research.

Q: Is this just management consultancy re-worked for churches?

A: Not at all. While it is a practical book, it embeds the practice of church consultancy in a developed theology, as well as cultivating thinking around church growth and church health or vitality. Church consultancy

is a ministry with similarities to other ministries, as it seeks God's agenda for the church and its local community.

Q: What results did you get?

A: I used the nine vitality indicators developed by NCLS Research and in one analysis, eight of these indicators were higher for the consultancy churches than for the churches which did not have a consultancy. Six of these were statistically significant.

Seven of the ten churches grew, one by 65%, over the five years post-consultancy. Overall growth was 9% for the consultancy churches, against 0.7% for all churches in the denomination across the state.

In summary, consultancy churches overall had higher levels of vitality and thirteen times the growth compared with churches not undertaking a consultancy. I am not aware of any similar longitudinal research around the world which has been carried out on churches that have invited a consultancy. So these results are very encouraging.

Q: Is church consultancy the 'silver bullet' that is needed today?

A: Yes, and no.

Church consultancy is helpful and wholistic, in that it usually looks at the interface between the leadership and the church, and interface between the church and its community, but it is only one health tool alongside others. It may be that a particular church will benefit more from an intentional interim ministry, or that a pastor will be enabled to bring greater vitality in a church through effective coaching.

I would like to see more churches using consultancy for growth issues, like the church in my research which grew 65% after some blockages were addressed. Because of this I believe that solid churches in the middle, neither struggling nor soaring, would benefit the most from engaging in a church consultancy. Unfortunately many churches use consultancy in a reactive way and too late, rather than as a regular proactive health tool. Nevertheless half of the churches in my research were receiving a denominational subsidy (which was phased out), so there can be good outcomes at the struggling end also.

Q: Who will benefit most from this book?

A: This model of church consultancy has been used in over 20 denominations. So this is a significant book for denominational leaders, church consultants, theological lecturers, pastors, and church leaders as they encounter lack of health in churches and seek ways forward for greater church vitality and missional impact in their local communities. It actually unpacks each consultancy in detail, so that it gives a window on each church's local area, what recommendations were made in the consultancy, and how the church responded. It is an intensely practical book.

BOOK EXCERPT:

What did the pastors interviewed identify as the means used by the consultants to foster health and growth in the church?

Firstly that, in conjunction with the leadership of the church, they identified and addressed the issues facing the church. This was further achieved through gathering information from those in the congregation through tools such as mapping exercises, listening groups, and interviews. The consultants then made this collated information (with appropriate safeguards regarding confidentiality) available to each church, along with recommendations which sought to deal with each of these issues, or consultancy objectives.

Secondly, that it provides a pathway and suggests next steps for a church to follow. That church consultancy provided part of the framework for moving a church forward.

Thirdly, that church consultancy “encouraged people in their ministries in the church and the community” so that “worth is engendered in what they were doing and could do.” This is particularly important for churches that are struggling with their viability, and/or a loss of hope, so they are enabled to move into the future with a greater sense of confidence.

Fourth, church consultancy can put a church in touch with resources, either people or programs, which can assist them in addressing their objectives. It can be difficult for church leaders and pastors to be cognizant of all the resources at their disposal, so the provision of expertise in this way is a helpful contribution to a church’s health.

Fifth, church consultancy can bring an objective, realistic assessment of a church’s health and assist a church in facing their situation and being “held accountable for what we are doing.”

Sixth, church consultancy can be used to bring hidden blockages to health, such as “systemic patterns of communicating and relating”, out into the open, where they can be addressed.

For some of the pastors interviewed, the consultancy was perceived as effective in dealing with a range of specific issues such as: dealing with conflict, prompting inclusion of the Aboriginal community in the church's ministry, or in instigating a strategic plan for growth. *pp123-124*

PRAISE FOR *THE IMPACT OF CHURCH CONSULTANCY*:

“We tend to look at church growth through the lens of numbers and vision strategy. In this book, Ian Duncum helpfully explores a more holistic understanding of church health by looking at and assessing local church health and growth through tested consultancy ministry. This is an incredible aid to understanding church growth and wellbeing. These insights come from his years of experience in church consultancy and compelling analysis of data. A wonderful addition to healthy church life.”

Ross Clifford

Principal of Morling Theological College, Sydney
Author of thirteen books, including *Taboo or To Do?* and *The Cross Is Not Enough*

“As we grapple with missional leadership and congregational transformation in the Western world, we desperately need reliable assessments, valid metrics, and practical tools for understanding and fostering church health and growth. Sometimes churches need a consultant to come alongside to ask diagnostic, curious, and subversive questions. But sometimes consultants need someone else to ask diagnostic, curious, and subversive questions of their processes. Ian Duncum has been asking insightful questions for twenty years as a pastor and church consultant and now offers a timely in-depth analysis of church consultancy in a group of Australian Baptist Churches. *The Impact of Church Consultancy* is a gift and resource for churches, pastors, denominational leaders, and consultants to learn about the necessary dance between pastor and congregational system that fosters church health and lays the groundwork for church growth.”

Darren Cronshaw

Head of Research and Professor of Missional Leadership, Australian College of Ministries (Sydney College of Divinity); Pastor of Auburn Life Baptist Church;
Author of *Credible Witness* (2006), *Sentness* (with Kim Hammond, 2014) and *Dangerous Prayer* (2017)

