



NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

An Introduction



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1. Welcome

Welcome to this introduction to Natural Church Development (NCD). We pray that NCD will stimulate an experience of growth and health for you personally, for your groups, and for your church in new ways. We also hope it sharpens your focus on the real issues impeding growth in your church, and increases the effectiveness of your ministry.

This introduction provides you with basic information about NCD and how it assists you to identify and address the specific issues you and your church are facing now and into the future. On the following pages you will find information about:

- the basic concepts of NCD;
- the process of implementing NCD;
- the commitment required to gain the most value from NCD;
- the benefits of engaging;
- the steps to commencing the process by conducting your first NCD Survey
- the resources available to help you apply the growth principles in your life, and in the lives of the people around you.

You are permitted to make multiple copies of this document to share with your leadership. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at NCD Canada at ncd@fordelm.com or by phone at (905) 885-6571.

NCD continues to grow after 20 years of involvement by churches all over the world. More than 4,000 Surveys have been conducted in Canada, and 100,000 internationally. Many church leaders find it an indispensable combination of growth principles, change-processes, tools and resources for ensuring their churches remain on the path to healthy and sustainable growth. We look forward to partnering with you as you join them.

May God give you energy, insight and blessing as you partner with Him in the exciting journey ahead.

Bill Bickle
NCD Canada
January 2018



I particularly wish to acknowledge my friend **Ian Campbell** who authored the first two versions of this guide. He generously allowed me to add my name as co-author for the third version in 2009.

The Canadian Church, indeed the global Church, owes a great debt to Ian for his work in NCD, and the many hundreds of leaders he has mentored over the years. Often quietly, humorously, and I expect like Jesus would. I thank God for Ian's tireless mentorship.

2. What is Natural Church Development?

2.1 A different way of thinking about growth

Natural Church Development (NCD) is a **set of principles** – a way of thinking about church growth. Growth should be about quality (health) and not just quantity (numbers). In fact, NCD suggests that quality should take priority over quantity in church growth. Quantity *follows* quality.

At the heart of the principles is the Scriptural concept of the church as a living organism, not just an organization (albeit a spiritual one). Looking at the church "organically" gives us a different perspective on what "growth" means. The growth of organisms focuses on their health, their capacity to reproduce, and how the individual 'body' parts interact. They are grown, not built. They are nurtured, not assembled.

If a church becomes increasingly healthy over time, it is more likely and better able to reproduce disciples, ministries and eventually itself. The NCD principles, tools, processes and resources help you think about growing your church as a healthy living organism.

“ Healthy churches
are grown, not
built ”

NCD's objective is for each church to become the best church it can be. First Baptist should become the best First Baptist it can be, Knox Presbyterian should become the best Knox Presbyterian it can be, and St Luke's Lutheran should become the best St Luke's Lutheran!

2.2 A long term strategic process

Natural Church Development is also a long term strategic **process** for progressively improving a church's health. It is a process of continuous improvement, not a program that guarantees 'a healthy church'. Growing a church, like growing a plant, requires a long term commitment which is intentional and consistently addresses the most important issues facing the church at each stage of growth.

At the heart of the NCD process is a globally recognized diagnostic tool, the NCD Survey. The Survey was developed in Germany and is based on research into what causes churches to grow or decline. Originally carried out in one thousand churches across the globe, it is now corroborated by more than 100,000 Surveys. The NCD Survey complies with the highest international statistical standards for validity and reliability.

Surveys are done annually, offering an accurate up-to-date "snapshot" of the church's health. NCD churches find that integrating the Survey into their annual planning cycle is advantageous. Each Survey enables the leadership team to see three views of their church: i) the current state of health, ii) how the church's health has changed over the previous year, and iii) what areas need greatest attention over the coming year.

Several profiles or "snapshots" result in a longitudinal study of the story or narrative of a church. This reveals longer term trends, by identifying and addressing the most significant issues impacting long term health and growth.

3. Why church leaders find NCD helpful

Natural Church Development liberates leaders wrestling with growth issues by reminding them that God, and only God, does the growing, and that their role is to partner with Him, not try to generate the growth themselves. It offers universal growth principles that apply in all churches at all times. It provides regular accurate "snapshots" of a church's health, keeping the leadership focused on the most important issues to achieve long term sustainable growth and outlines a process of continuous improvement through the NCD Cycle. It helps leaders focus on organic growth values and brings focus to the use of limited time, energy and resources to maximize effectiveness. Feedback consistently identifies that the most important aspects of conducting NCD Surveys have been: gaining an objective view of themselves; and fostering the important conversation(s) in their church.

4. What NCD is not

NCD is not a prescriptive "silver bullet" program guaranteeing church growth. It is not a short term solution. Deciding to "try NCD this year" will miss the richness and benefits that accrue from using the tools. Neither is it a replacement for exploring the paradigm, applying the principles and spiritual leadership that is motivated to achieve healthy growth.

*The most important thing
“ that has happened is the
depth of conversation has
increased substantially.”*

Each church still has to have a strong sense of its unique vision and mission that God has for it. Every church leader needs to discern God's leading, but it is true that NCD can help clarify, stimulate and enable vision and mission. NCD is not a "complete package": the NCD paradigm is dynamic, and understanding continues to grow as the international NCD community makes new discoveries in applying the principles. NCD does not make all churches the same, it's about becoming the best, unique church possible.

5. Thinking growth.... naturally

5.1 God's principles for growing living organisms

Scripture invites us to consider the principles by which God sustains and grows living things in the created universe.

Scripture teaches that the local church is also a living organism which God wants to grow – the Body of Christ. The local church shares similarities with other organisms God has created and sustains. Its potential for growth lies in its health, not its size.

NCD has proven through its international research that healthy growing churches are more successful in releasing the potential for healthy growth because they apply these natural principles and treat the church more like a living organism to be grown than an organization to be built.

A foundation of NCD is learning to see the church as a living organism whose growth can be stimulated by understanding and applying these principles in community.

5.2 Partnering with God to stimulate healthy growth

Jesus gives a picture of the partnership God expects to have with His people in growing the Kingdom. In the Parable of the Growing Seed, Jesus said:

*"This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A farmer scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know why. **All by itself** the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-29)*

Jesus clearly points to growth as the work of two partners:

- the farmer gets the environmental factors right to maximize the potential for new life and growth by consistently removing the obstacles to healthy growth,
- but God alone brings that life and growth (which appears to the farmer as if it happens "all by itself")

The role of God's people, and their leaders in particular, is similar to that of the farmer. They cannot give life or produce growth. Only God can do that. **All they can do is maximize the potential for growth.** This is done by a continual process of identifying the barriers which impede growth within the life of the church and removing them. In this way the potential for 'all by itself' growth is constantly maximized.

5.3 Quality as the foundation for quantity

To think of the local church as a living organism is to acknowledge that **quality** (health) is just as important to church growth as **quantity** (attendance). In fact, quality **is** the essential foundation for quantity.

The health of any living organism directly impacts its capacity to grow and reproduce. NCD's international study of over 65,000 churches has shown a clear correlation between quality and quantity: churches that continue to maintain focus on improving their health are more likely to grow numerically and reproduce ministries. Likewise, churches failing to heed the "health warning" are much more likely to be in decline or to make decisions that will lead to future decline. It just doesn't make sense for church leaders to measure ministry success solely by quantity.



Natural Church Development helps leaders identify and address the unique health (quality) issues facing their church

5.4 Not just any growth but 'all by itself' growth

It is important to recognise that Jesus speaks of 'all by itself' growth, a term we see in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 4. This is not growth brought about by continually initiating new programming. Rather, it comes about by progressively understanding and growing into the dynamic of the church as a living, growing organism and continually working to identify and remove the barriers to its life and growth. This is the farmer's role in raising a successful crop.

For many leaders who are used to setting the course of the church – taking the congregation with them and asking God to bless the plans that have been developed – this may not be an easy transition. Many leaders see their church predominantly as a (spiritual) organization to be built rather than an organism to be grown. In effect they see their role more like a mechanic than a gardener. They may find it nearly impossible to consider leading a church where 'all by itself' growth is the norm – where God's Spirit is constantly at work among His people and not controlled by the leadership.

Yet this is the essence of the Natural Church Development paradigm. It is a process of coming to terms with how God grows healthy organisms – of which the church is one – and then collaborating with God by doing what is necessary to remove the barriers to 'all by itself' growth.



Growth requires
gardeners, not
mechanics



6. The origins of Natural Church Development

6.1 Comprehensive worldwide research

The Institute for Natural Church Development International, based in Germany under the leadership of Christian A. Schwarz, undertook worldwide research in the early 1990s. **One thousand churches in 32 countries** were surveyed to determine if there were principles producing healthy church growth independent of denomination or theology, country or culture, leadership style, size, or ministry model.

The key question was: ***"What church growth principles are true, regardless of culture and theological persuasion?"***

As of June 2017, more than 100,000 Surveys have been completed worldwide, confirming the reliability and validity of the original research and that there are indeed universal God-given principles that can be applied to the unique issues in every local church.

6.2 The Quality Characteristics: a framework for healthy growth

The research revealed a framework of *eight Quality Characteristics* that are critical components of the life of healthy, growing churches. All are present and none can be missing. They are:

- **Empowering** Leadership
- **Gift-based** Ministry
- **Passionate** Spirituality
- **Effective** Structures
- **Inspiring** Worship Service
- **Holistic** Small Groups
- **Need-oriented** Evangelism
- **Loving** Relationships

The most significant finding was that the vital ingredient of each characteristic of quality was the adjective. For instance, take leadership: it was not visionary leadership, or pastoral leadership, or decisive leadership which was the chief contributor to long term healthy growth but *empowering* leadership. That is, the principal contributor to healthy growth by leadership was the degree to which leaders empowered their people to keep growing toward greater spiritual maturity and contributing to Kingdom growth. The same emphasis applies for the other seven quality characteristics.

NCD is writing books about each of the 8 Quality Characteristics. See section 11 for descriptions of these books and accompanying resources.

6.3 The six growth forces: putting the “natural” into church development

NCD has shown that what differentiates healthy, growing churches from those in decline or stagnant is not just high quality in the eight areas, but their application of six *natural growth principles* to church life so that the church functions more like an organism than a spiritual organization. Six growth forces were identified in the research:

- **Interdependence** – all parts of the church know the impact on other parts of what they do and ensure that such impact is always positive for the sake of long term growth.
- **Multiplication** – every part of the church is looking to pass on God’s blessings and reproduce itself, including the church as a whole.
- **Energy Transformation** –the church’s energy and resources are continually assessed, harnessed and directed towards achieving its long term potential, eliminating wastage.
- **Sustainability** – the church invests its resources in such a way that its various parts become self-sustaining, freeing up resources to be used elsewhere.
- **Symbiosis** – diverse parts of the church are encouraged to work together in synergistic "win-win" relationships.
- **Fruitfulness** – all areas of church life are regularly assessed to ensure they are continuing to contribute to the overall healthy growth of the church as an organism.

The leaders of churches that are healthy, or becoming increasingly healthy, may or may not be aware that these principles are at work in the life of the church, they may simply be employing these principles intuitively. They may use other names for these principles, or not name them at all, but they are nonetheless employing them.

The higher the health of the church, the greater the degree to which these principles are at work. This is encouraging for two reasons: first, it shows that God is entirely consistent in the way He stewards His creation, enabling churches to grow as organisms in the same way as He brings about the growth of other organisms; secondly, to identify these principles makes it possible to understand and apply them as part of partnering with God to grow the church.

It should come as no surprise that these principles are thoroughly biblical. The teaching is direct in John 15 where Jesus speaks about "fruitfulness." We see the principles foundational to the message, such as "multiplication" in the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

For church leadership, therefore, understanding and applying these principles consistently until they become a natural part of the "way of life" of the church is essential. They are a key to releasing 'all by itself' growth.

7. The NCD Survey

7.1 A regular accurate "snapshot" of your church's health

The international research was used as a foundation for developing the NCD Survey which gives local churches an accurate annual profile of their health. The Survey is based on:

- an internationally-validated, user-friendly questionnaire completed by thirty (30) congregational members chosen according to specific criteria;
- an algorithm arising from the original research program; and
- a statistical standardization which measures the church against other Canadian churches to provide objectivity.

The Survey profile gives a rating for each Quality Characteristic, and it holds a wealth of information about:

- relative strengths and weaknesses of the Quality Characteristics;
- the potential interrelationships between various Quality Characteristics ("Why is Holistic Small Groups high but Loving Relationships low?");
- the trends of different Quality Characteristics from Survey to Survey; and
- most importantly, the "Minimum Factor", the principal starting point for discussion, analysis, planning and action.



7.2 The Minimum Factor

The strategy to improve the health of the church is simplicity itself – work at improving the health of the Quality Characteristic that is least developed. Christian Schwarz calls this the Minimum Factor. Since all eight Quality Characteristics are essential to healthy growth, it makes sense to address the lowest characteristic, the part of the body making the least contribution to its overall health and growth. It is the most strategic use of energy and resources to maximize growth potential.

Taking action to address the Minimum Factor brings changes to the church's health. The succeeding Survey reveals the extent of such change on all eight Quality Characteristics, that is, the overall health of the church. The new Minimum Factor reflects the area most needing attention at the new level of health. And so it goes with each successive Survey. This ensures leaders stay focused on what is currently *most* important for long term healthy growth.

More specifically, this strategy is about identifying the barriers hindering "all by itself" growth for that Minimum Factor and then taking steps to remove them, just as the farmer does in the Parable of the Growing Seed. This approach acknowledges that each church is a unique organism with a unique growth path and a unique set of emerging barriers as it grows, each requiring a unique and timely response.

To focus continuously on successive Minimum Factors as they emerge with each new Survey does not mean an abandonment of the church's strengths. On the contrary, NCD recognizes the vital importance of leveraging the church's strengths to help address areas of weakness.

8. Of Cycles and Spirals

8.1 Linear versus cyclical thinking

So much of what we do in the Western world, and therefore the Western Church, is to think in linear ways. Everyone knows the standard approach to planning: know where you are, decide where you want to be, then put a plan in place to get there. It's always about getting from A to B. But is it?

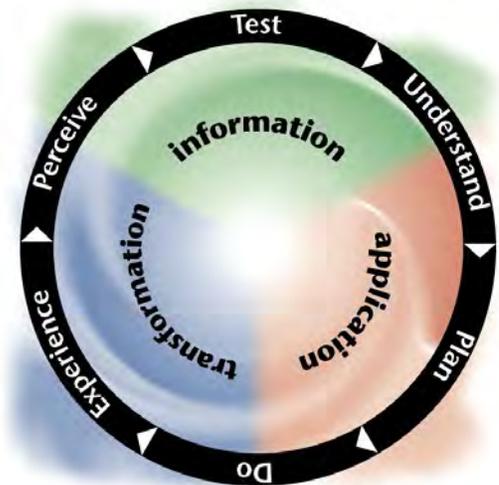
The world that God created naturally operates in cycles. It is the natural order of all growing things. We acknowledge this without even thinking twice about it. The cycle of life is something we take for granted.

Cycles are part of the everyday life of churches. The "church year" is but one example. The issue is that very few church leaders pursue the growth of their church in a systematic cyclical way. Yet adopting a cyclical approach is the most effective way to address issues of life, health and growth. Experience has shown that farmers and others whose lives are largely influenced by the forces of nature intuitively understand the power of the cyclical approach to life whereas those from more urban settings find it harder to grasp.

8.2 The NCD Cycle

The NCD Cycle is the foundational tool for undertaking the NCD process of addressing each Minimum Factor as it arises. It is more fully explained in **The NCD Cycle Manual** available online as a free download at the NCD Canada web-site. The following can be said by way of introduction:

- It grounds the process of growing a church in the essential nature of God revealed to us in Trinity (represented by the three colours).
- It encourages the pursuit of deeper partnership with God in growing His Kingdom.
- It challenges leaders to pursue “increasing fruitfulness” in their ministry.
- It binds the processes to Scripture by laying a biblical foundation for each cycle phase.
- It raises the bar for church activity by settling for nothing less than ongoing transformation.
- It offers the possibility of practical application to every part of, and person in, church life.



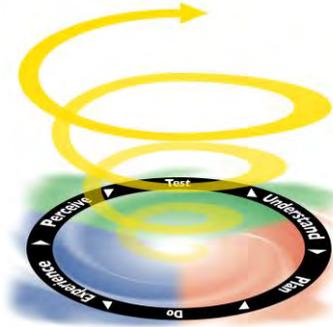
The most natural starting point for using the Cycle is to see the annual NCD Survey as the major part of the “Test” phase. This helps match the cycle to the annual church calendar, with its normal processes of review, visioning, programs, holidays, etc.

It is not hard to introduce The Cycle. Every church leader is *already* using the Cycle phases to some degree: perceiving how church life is going, testing those perceptions, developing greater understanding, planning, taking action, and seeing the resultant impact on the experiences in the church. Consistently working through the Cycle brings greater balance to the process which contributes to healthier outcomes.

8.3 Turning the cycle into a spiral

No church, whether it works consistently on addressing current health issues or not, ends up in the same place at the beginning of each year. All activity in church life is contributing in some way to the long term healthy growth of the church, or not. It may come as a surprise to church leaders but there is no such thing as a “plateau” – right now seeds are being planted in your church which will deliver future fruitfulness or fruitlessness, growth or decline, health or sickness. It is unwise to assume that decisions, actions and activity taken to address issues in the past will produce the same results in future, even if applied to what appear to be the same issues. In fact an entirely different response might be required.

This reality is represented by the NCD Spiral, which is in effect a three dimensional view of the Cycle. In one sense, the NCD Spiral represents the changing health of every church. While a church may “begin again” each year, it will always begin from a new place on the spiral, either healthier (up the spiral) or less healthy (down the spiral).



More specifically, the spiral represents the fact that every time a church undertakes the Cycle, each of the six phases will differ from their counterpart in the previous Cycle because the church's health has changed, bringing new issues and dynamics. If the church is increasing in health, perceptions of where God is at work are sharper, the testing process more focused, understanding greater, planning tighter, actions more effective – all contributing to new experiences of God at work. At its heart, the spiral is about a practical ongoing process that progressively increases the Kingdom fruitfulness of everyone in church life, especially leaders.

8.4 A challenge to become increasingly fruitful

Engagement with NCD principles and processes highlights the fact that continuously growing the local church to greater health is serious business, particularly for its leaders. Fortunately God's call is first to "partnership" not to "performance". And it is the depth of that partnership which determines a leader's fruitfulness. That is why NCD is so strongly focused on growing that partnership in the practical processes of everyday church life.

Experience has taught us over the years that many leaders face one or more of the following hurdles when approaching NCD for the first time:

- They worry about knowing the state of their church's health, or believe they already do
- They mistake being frantically busy for effectiveness
- They see their own spiritual growth as distinct from that of their church
- They are satisfied measuring "success" in terms of quantity (numbers of people, financial giving, amount of activity) not quality (spiritual health and growth)
- They tend to focus on short-term programs and quick-fixes rather than a long-term process calling for discipline and wisdom.

All of these issues have a bearing on fruitfulness. In John 15, Jesus calls on us to contemplate seriously what it means to be fruitful. He poses the following challenges:

- We are all called to lead fruitful lives (v15:16a)
- We are to bear lasting fruit, i.e., fruit bearing long term results for the Kingdom (v15:16b)
- We should aim for more fruit rather than less because it brings glory to God (v15:8)
- We need to know in very concrete terms if we are bearing fruit because fruitlessness is not an acceptable option (v15:2a, 6)
- We must understand that in partnering with God, He desires to help us, expecting us to become *increasingly* fruitful as time passes (v15:2b). This is not achieved without effort on our part.

There is a strong growth dynamic evident in this passage, using the organic metaphor of the Gardener, the Vine and the branches. Ongoing healthy growth resulting in increasing fruitfulness is expected. It challenges all who are called to partner with God in leading their church to grow.

NCD offers the principles and processes which encourage increasing fruitfulness in practical ways.

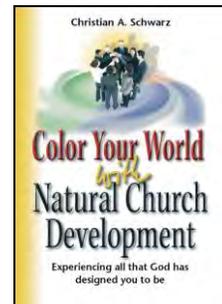
9. Commencing the NCD process

9.1 Read the foundational resources

You have already commenced the NCD process by beginning to deal with the issues raised in this introduction. The next step is to read the foundational NCD resources. There are many, but we would recommend that as a church leader, you begin with just two, both written by Christian A. Schwarz, the founder and leader of NCD International.

Color Your World with Natural Church Development – published in 2005, this book explains the Quality Characteristics, growth forces, Trinitarian Compass, some of the NCD tools including the NCD Survey, and the impact of NCD on churches internationally over the past ten years.

The All By Itself Pathway – this small book of 96 pages is ideal for introducing the main concepts to your congregation. It covers two decades of research and insight into the Church, then looks at the eight Quality Characteristics, the Minimum Factor approach, and “all by itself” growth. It’s written in the style of a conversation with Christian Schwarz.



You can read more about these resources and other books and tests created around most of the eight Quality Characteristics at our website: www.ncdcanada.com then order them through the web-site, by email at ncd@fordelm.com or by calling 905-885-6571.

9.2 When to conduct the first NCD Survey

Christian Schwarz says that there are no pre-conditions to conducting a Survey. Every church can get a "health check" and begin to work on the most important issues affecting its health whenever it chooses.

Having said that, experience suggests it is helpful to consider the following issues. They do not disqualify a church from conducting a Survey. It is solely about timing and whether the leadership is able to devote sufficient attention to working consistently through the cycle process and address the issues in the Survey. You may wish to discuss them with your leadership before deciding finally when to conduct your first Survey.

- Is the church currently launching significant new programs or building new facilities, activities which are consuming all available energy in the church?
- Is the leadership at the point of seeking new vision or direction, or questioning the fruitfulness of current approaches?
- Is there a time of the year when doing a Survey naturally fits in? If, for example, you do your visioning and planning over the summer vacation, you may want to do the Survey in the March to May period, giving time to obtain the results and get congregational feedback before everyone heads away. Alternatively, you may do the Survey in the Fall when people are fresh and enthusiastic and wanting to engage with the issues.

- Are you going through leadership change, whether it be the senior leader or others in the church? You may wish to delay the Survey two or three months until the new leader is in place. (Many churches find that once they have started the Cycle process, it helps to keep doing the Survey through times when there is no senior leader because it provides continuity and keeps them focused on the key issues.)
- Are there any significant crises currently occupying the church's leadership? It may be wise to address these first as they often take a lot of time and energy.
- Does the leadership of the church understand that conducting the NCD Survey is not a "one off" program but the start of a long term process of continuous improvement and addressing key health issues?
- More importantly, is there energy and enthusiasm for doing what it takes to grow the church, because NCD will not "do the growing" for those who have no real interest or commitment?

10. The Survey mechanics: step-by-step

10.1 What do you need to conduct the Survey?

- The two questionnaires: the *NCD Survey – Pastor's Form* which collects basic information about the church, and the *NCD Survey Form*, containing the main questionnaire.
- Enough copies of *The All By Itself Pathway* to ensure the people in the congregation know something about NCD before the Survey process begins.

10.2 How do you take it to your leadership?

NCD is best learned by actually working through the NCD Cycle over a year, and by identifying and addressing the issues specific to your church raised in the Survey results. It is inadvisable to try to begin with any more theory than just the basic concepts. So keep it simple. Here are some tips:

- Don't try to summarize everything you have read on NCD. Often it is enough to ensure that every leader involved in the decision-making process has read *The All By Itself Pathway*.
- The most important message to convey is that NCD is a process not a program and one that requires ongoing commitment to address the issues that arise with each annual Survey.
- Revisit with them the reasons why you personally believe it is important to get an annual assessment of the church's health.
- Stress that the NCD process takes the church from where it is and adds the qualitative information that sharpens focus like a laser on the most important things. It is not a burden for leadership, but a release provided they are willing to address the issues it raises. It is not just another ministry or program, it's the effectiveness of all of the ministries and programs.
- Affirm that NCD has been tried and tested internationally for over 20 years. Refer people to the NCD International website if they want to explore for themselves.
- Direct any questions that you can't answer to your denominational support-staff or us at ncd@fordelm.com, or call toll free at 905-885-6571.

10.3 How are people chosen to complete the Survey?

The *NCD Survey – Pastor’s Form* is completed by the senior leader or delegate.

The *NCD Survey Form* is given to 30 people who meet all three criteria:

- committed to the life of the church
- actively involved in ministry, preferably performing a regular task
- member of a group which can be groups like youth group, cell group, choir, home group, or worship team



The senior leader of the church is an automatic selection. There may be other members of pastoral staff whom you wish to include in the thirty. It is not essential to do this, however.

If there are more than 30 people in the congregation, select 30 people who fit all three criteria. Consider a broad range of people in the life of the church who fit the criteria and strive toward a representative sample across gender, age and tenure.

Leaders of larger congregations sometimes ask if they can survey more than 30 people. It is possible, but no more are required to produce a statistically accurate result. We recommend leaders take the time to reduce their list to the 30 people fitting the criteria whose opinion they value most or those they consider to have the greatest influence on church life.

If you have a congregation with less than 30 people who qualify, include *everyone* who meets all three criteria.

10.4 Preparing for the Survey

Once the decision has been reached by the church leadership to begin the Survey process, go to the NCD Canada web-site (www.ncdcanada.com) to request an NCD Church Survey account be opened. Appoint a Survey Administrator who will be responsible for inviting the Survey participants, following up to ensure they have completed the Survey (online or on paper), creating the Profiles and reports, and administering the account. This person may be staff or volunteer.

Download the Instructions in PDF format from the NCD Canada web-site, along with the NCD Survey Form and the Pastor’s Form. Near to the time when the Survey is being conducted and the results are ready to be input, request NCD Tokens from NCD Canada through the NCD Church Survey account. One Token is required to create the Basic Profile and a second (and distinct) Token, is required to produce the Advanced Profile called the NCD Results Guides (NRGs). This Profile includes a suite of four guides, or reports, explained below.

Issuing the Tokens triggers an electronic invoice from Fordelm operating as NCD Canada. The current cost of the Survey is \$475.00 plus applicable taxes. This fee includes a one hour debrief of the results with the pastor and/or leadership team and NCD Canada over the phone or by teleconferencing.

1. Select and invite Survey participants

- i. Use the instructions to select the Survey participants.
- ii. Write to those selected inviting them to participate in the NCD Survey, and to attend a short meeting for an explanation of NCD.

- iii. Ask Survey participants to advise if they prefer to input their responses by paper, or through an online interface. Those opting for online participation will be invited electronically by the Survey Administrator. Those choosing the paper option will need to attend a meeting for that purpose.

2. Prepare for the meeting.

- i. Prepare the 10-15 minute presentation explaining NCD and base it on some main points from *The All By Itself Pathway*.
- ii. Download from the NCD website, and print copies of the *NCD Survey Form* (with a few spares) and have pens or pencils for those staying behind to complete the paper version.
- iii. Review the instructions on the front of the *NCD Survey Form* so that you can take participants through it before they begin.

10.5 Conducting the Survey: completing the Forms

Call a meeting of the people selected to complete the Survey, whether online or by paper. At the meeting give a short, 15 to 20 minute introduction and explain how long it will take to fill out the Survey Form (about 40 minutes). Holding the meeting after a church service is a best practice.

At the meeting, offer people a short explanation of the purpose of conducting the Survey and why they were selected. For those remaining to complete the Survey by paper, hand out the questionnaires, go over the instructions and let them begin. Some online participants may choose to stay and complete the Survey online. To ensure an accurate result, ask participants to ensure that all questions are answered. It is also better that people offer their “gut” responses to the questions rather than spend a lot of time mulling over answers.

Once all the questionnaires are complete, the Survey Administrator enters the raw data from the paper responses into the NCD Church Survey account and combines this with those received from online participants. At this point, they are ready to create the Basic Profile.

10.6 What reporting is received?

NCD International rates the health of the church against the eight Quality Characteristics. The rating is calculated by taking the raw scores from the questionnaires and measuring them against a standardization calculated from over 4,000 Surveys conducted across Canada between 1998 and the end of 2016, as the standardization is recalibrated annually. This provides a very accurate assessment of the church’s health with respect to the rest of the Canadian Church. All NCD reporting reflects this Canadian standardization in the scoring, however the Story Guide presents the church’s results purely as a comparison against its own average.

Changes in health from year to year can be tracked and matched against actions taken to address specific health issues. Over time it also exposes long term trends, greatly enhancing the capacity to identify the deeper issues impeding healthy growth, and to build confidence. In time the reports will become predictive, especially if ‘sticky’ questions remain in the Bottom 10, revealing issues that are not being addressed. This capacity for revealing the most important and current issues to deal with, the past trends around what impact the church’s changes have made on health, and the quasi-predictive nature of the Survey may be considered one of its greatest strengths.

The Status Guide, previously known as the ProfilePlus report from 2004 through 2012, facilitates the leadership’s capacity to identify themes and barriers to health and quality. In 2012, the Status Guide became one of a suite of reports called the NCD Results Guides, or NRGs. All Canadian churches involved with the NCD process now receive the NRGs and best practices have been developed to work with them. They form an indispensable tool for those who wish to see their church as an organic whole. Sample sets of NRGs from actual churches are available by contacting us at ncd@fordelm.com.

The Survey Administrator creates the NRGs by using the Church Survey Tokens. The four Guides are provided online immediately after the Survey results are entered. Viewing privileges can be shared with Coaches, colleagues and denominational leaders who also have NCD Church Survey accounts with NCD Canada. The forms can be downloaded in PDF format.

1. **Summary Guide:** three pages of graphics produced from the church’s results, the first two linked to the Trinitarian Compass. This report contains no dotted lines or numbers, just relative placements. It is recommended this report go out to the Leadership Team first.



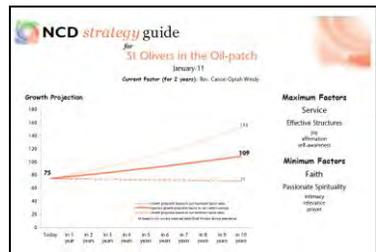
2. **Story Guide:** This Guide is produced from the Survey data according to 24 statistically relevant groupings of Survey questions around regularly identified themes. It launches the congregation into the ‘story’ of the congregation rather than an analytical exercise to find the themes because the reporting has done some of the analytics up front. This Guide will appeal to those who talk most naturally about the congregation relationally and experientially, not in graphs and numbers.



3. **Status Guide:** previously known as the ProfilePlus report, this Guide is designed for analytics, and for more analytical people. Many churches, especially fairly new churches to NCD find its analysis by the NCD Leadership Team is sufficient to augment what will have been heard during the review of the Story Guide.



4. **Strategy Guide:** This Guide is geared more to action than experience or reflection. More tools will be added to this Guide for planning a way forward for the congregation to remove barriers to all-by-itself growth. Currently, the best function of this Guide is the insight into Key Influencers and the impact they have on the results. More emphasis on individual key influencers has been integrated into the process: they can begin implementing and modelling change even before the team develops an Action Plan.



11. What happens after you get the results?

11.1 Work through the resources provided

The NRGs contain a suggested process for using the Guides, facilitating a conversation about the outcomes of the Survey, understanding the results, naming the barriers to all-by-itself growth, and taking action individually and corporately.

Involve as many key influencers in the early discussion about the results as possible. Key Influencers are the people who can open and close discussions, or open and close gates to progress, even to the understanding of the results and issues raised by them. It is important to build ownership of the results early on in the review process, and there are steps recommended for gaining this commitment, not only to the results and issues, but to the actions required to deal with the issues. The NRGs anticipate that this requires individual actions by Key Influencers, and an ensuing corporate action-plan.



The Story Guide discussion held with Key Influencers should be expanded beyond the 30 people who completed the Survey questionnaire, to as many as are interested. The Story Guide is specifically designed to facilitate the review of the story or narrative revealed in the Survey results, and relate it to experience, not merely actions and/or knowledge.

11.2 Get an initial debriefing of the results

It can be helpful to request a debriefing of the results using the NRGs. Such debriefs are usually conducted one-on-one by telephone with the Coach, or with the National Partner. The purpose of the debrief is not to prescribe actions, but to help use the NRGs effectively in the process of assessing strengths and weaknesses, diagnosing the issues which most need attention. The de-brief typically lasts about an hour. Even seasoned NCD churches find the de-brief useful as they enter into the Understanding Phase and interpret the results.

Some denominations hold NCD seminars for church leaders which address various aspects of NCD, including the use of the NRGs and the NCD Cycle Manual.

11.3 Ongoing coaching support

Some church leaders benefit from the assistance of an NCD Coach in working through the results, developing and executing an action plan, and staying focused on implementing the NCD process over the long term. Some denominations provide such coaching support.

Often it will help just as much to dialogue with other church leaders on the NCD journey, or another church's NCD Leadership Team.

11.4 What about other resources?

The resources discussed in this guide are adequate to engage with the critical health issues in the context of the NCD Cycle. There are other resources – NCD-specific and others – that may be helpful in understanding the Minimum Factor or taking steps to address it.

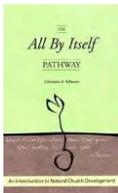
The NCD resources we recommend are found at the NCD Canada website (www.ncdcanada.com).

Churches and NCD Coaches sometimes fall for the “program trap,” the decision to find a ready-made solution to raising the Minimum Factor. **The most critical element of the NCD Cycle process** is that the leadership strive to use the Survey results to diagnose the specific (unique) health issues the church needs to address over the next twelve months. If this is done with care and diligence, usually the desire dissipates to go in search of a program. If a program or programmatic, rather than paradigmatic, solution is chosen, it is important to remember that it needs to be adapted to address the specific issues identified in the Survey results.

The NCD International website also has some very helpful introductory material: www.ncd-international.org or follow the links from www.ncdcanada.com.

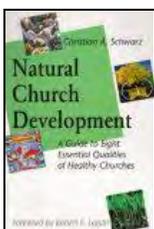
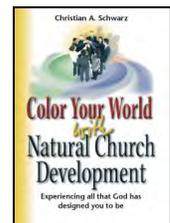
11.5 The 3 Color Discipleship Series

Christian Schwarz and other members of the international leadership team have written more than a dozen books about NCD, some of which have been translated into 40 languages. Books about each of the 8 Quality Characteristics continue to be produced and are introduced below. For additional information about the books and supporting resources and tests aligned with them, check the NCD Canada web-site.



The All By Itself Pathway is a small book describing the background of NCD and enough information about the Survey and the 8 Quality Characteristics for Survey participants to understand why their church is engaging with the NCD principles and the NCD Church Survey.

Color Your World with Natural Church Development was published after nearly 10 years of NCD experience and is an essential introduction to NCD covering the “basics”; includes the Trinitarian Compass, the 8 Quality Characteristics, the 6 Growth Principles, the NCD Cycle process for ongoing personal, group and church growth. It is ideal for newcomers to NCD, members of the NCD Leadership Team, and those who want a solid overview of NCD, where it comes from, how it works, and what it accomplishes.



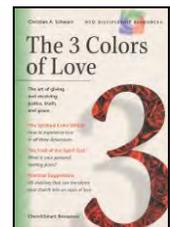
Natural Church Development – A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches, now in its seventh edition, was originally considered the “NCD textbook” covering the original research and the early basics. It remains an important book for people who have read *Color Your World* and want to know more about the original research and findings, and how the organic & organizational components of church life work together.

The 3 Colors of Your Gifts replaced *The 3 Colors of Ministry* in 2017 and covers the Quality Characteristic **Gift-based Ministry** and explains the spiritual gifts in a Trinitarian context, and is paired with an online Gift Test to discover one’s spiritual gift-mix that provides practical helps in growing in the use of one’s gifts. It includes ideas for programming and adaptations for ministries. It is ideal for those desiring a fresh look at how to use their spiritual gifts for churches where Gift-

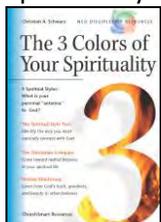


based Ministry is the least healthy area, or for those wishing to run a spiritual gifts workshop. The 3 Color Gift Test is available online and includes 360 feedback from as few as two people. Group profiles are also available for the 3 Color Gift Test providing an excellent starting point for congregations wishing to strategically review their programmes in line with their current gifting. This book has three accompanying implementation books, one for individuals, one for groups, and one for churches.

The 3 Colors of Love covers the Quality Characteristic **Loving Relationships** and a Trinitarian take on love. It includes a Fruit of the Spirit Test to identify one’s strengths & weaknesses in the spiritual fruit, and practical help with “radical balance” in spiritual fruitfulness. It is ideal for those who want to mature by growing the fruit of the spirit in their life, and those who really want to know what real love is about – not just the Hollywood variety. There is a companion implementation book titled *How to Implement The 3 Colors of Love in Your World*. The Fruit of the Spirit Test is available only as part of the book.



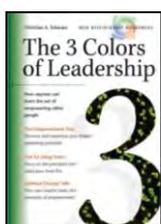
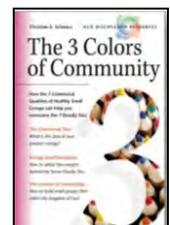
The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality covers the Quality Characteristic **Passionate Spirituality**. The Spiritual Style Test determines one’s most natural way of connecting with God, from nine style-



types globally. It provides practical ways to connect more with God, and is ideal for individuals and groups who want to understand their spiritual formation, and how to move to spiritual transformation. This book is ideal for those who want to connect more with God for purpose. The Spiritual Style Test is available in the book, and there is a companion implementation book called, *How to Implement The 3 Colors of Your Spirituality in Your World*.

The 3 Colors of Community covers the Quality Characteristic **Holistic Small Groups**.

This book reveals how working out the seven God-given energies through the path of isolation leads to the 7 Deadly Sins – and how working them out in community leads to the 7 Communal Qualities and building up the Body of Christ. An online Test (or paper version in the book) determines the maximum energy, and the corresponding potential vulnerability. It is ideal for those who want to set a personal vision, understand spiritual energies, how community is formed, and how the best way to growing community is to grow more leaders. In a church setting, the Test results can help a leadership team find the people with the highest energy for their Minimum Factor – by matching the energy for the Communal Quality and the congregation’s Quality Characteristic.



The 3 Colors of Leadership covers the Quality Characteristic: **Empowering Leadership**. The Empowerment Test, which is available only in an online format, provides (360) feedback from at least two other people to identify which of six pairs of Empowerment & Leadership principles is the person’s minimum area, and questions for becoming a more empowering leader. It is ideal for those responsible for helping people become more empowering leaders, or those who want to become more empowering leaders themselves. Group Empowerment Profiles are available as well.

12. NCD Canada

FORDELM Inc. is the NCD National Partner in Canada, representing the Institute for Natural Church Development, based in Germany. FORDELM Inc. is a strategic growth consultancy based in Port Hope, Ontario, about an hour east of Toronto. In the role of National Partner, FORDELM:

- trains and supports pastors, coaches and denominational leaders to work with NCD
- supplies international NCD resources and develops additional local resources
- provides statistical information on NCD findings
- contributes to the Institute in its ongoing research & development and leadership.

The president of FORDELM Inc. is Bill Bickle. Bill has significant experience in management, marketing, and consulting with non-profits and faith-based organizations. The previous Director of NCD Canada, and the primary author of this document and *The NCD Cycle Manual* as well as a major contributor to the original development of the ProfilePlus report, is Ian Campbell. Ian managed the Australian National Partnership from 1999 to 2005 and worked closely with Christian Schwarz and the other members of NCD International to develop NCD resources and training which are now used internationally.

Please feel free to contact us at ncd@fordelm.com , through the web-site at www.ncdcanada.com or by phone toll free at 905-885-6571.