



Natural Church Development *profile* of Church of the Epiphany

NCD America

January-2025

Church

Pastor's name: Peter Frank

Church address: Church of the Epiphany
3863 Centerview Drive
Ste 100
Chantilly
VA
20151

Alternate address: Church of the Epiphany
3863 Centerview Drive
Ste 100
Chantilly
VA
20151

Phone: 7034818601

Cell phone: 7032299122

Fax:

Email: pfrank@epiphanyanglican.net

Quality Characteristics

Average: 58

Empowering leadership: 55
Gift-based ministry: 67
Passionate spirituality: 60
Effective structures: 54
Inspiring worship service: 61
Holistic small groups: 64
Need-oriented evangelism: 45
Loving relationships: 59

Attendance

Five years ago: 150
Four years ago: 160
Three years ago: 100
Two years ago: 120
One year ago: 144
Today: 168



What do the numbers mean?

The numbers on the graph can be a barrier to understanding what the profile is really saying about the health of the church. You must understand what the numbers mean before you explore the issues behind the Minimum Factor.”

Here are some clues to interpreting them:

The numbers are not percentages but standardized scores – scoring less than 50 is not a failure for that Quality Characteristic.

The NCD Institute’s software converts the raw scores from the questionnaires to the numbers shown on the profile using a standardization formula. This standardization formula sets the “average” for any Quality Characteristic at 50. In other words, the average church would score 50 for each of the Quality Characteristics.

The standardization itself is built on a national database of churches to give the profile greater contextual accuracy. In other words, the health of your church is measured against other churches in this country. This database covers a wide spectrum of churches – different denominations and movements, traditions, liturgical styles, theological positions, locations, leadership, etc.

The software has three main categories for scoring each of the Quality Characteristics:

- 70% of churches will score between 35 and 65
- 15% of churches will score less than 35
- 15% of churches will score more than 65”

It is possible to get less than zero (0) and more than one hundred (100).

If you need further information about what the numbers mean, turn to the Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development. Appendix 2 of the Guide contains an outline of the scientific basis of the profile.

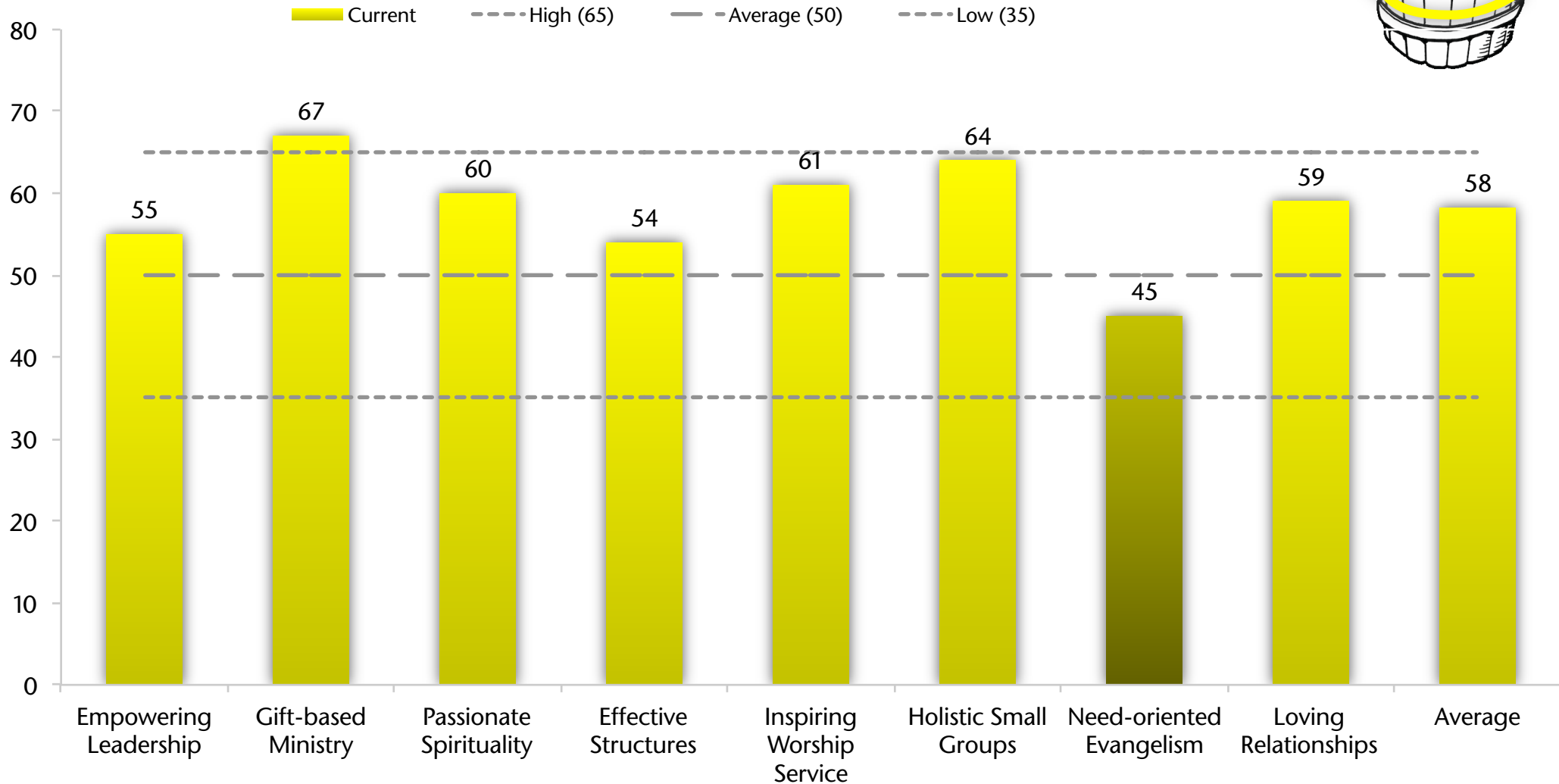


Natural Church Development *profile*

of
Church of the Epiphany

January-2025

Service attendance
Our minimum factor
Quality characteristics





A better understanding of need-oriented evangelism

Compassionate church

Another way to word this section would be:

How do you make newcomers feel as if they belong?

Questions to ponder:

- How have the needs of the community been assessed?
- How do we work with church members to approach new people with openness and acceptance?
- To what extent do family groups and established cliques prevent newcomers from feeling they belong even if people have been friendly to them?
- What compassion ministries does our church offer? (i.e. food, clothing, education, ESL, counsel, etc.)

Corporate evangelistic efforts

Another way to word this section would be:

How intentional is the leadership at encouraging evangelism?

Questions to ponder:

- How has the leadership of your church organized its “prayer warriors” to pray for the evangelistic outreach of your church?
- What regular ministries do you have that are tailored specifically for seekers? What has been the outcome of these ministries in the last year? Have they reached their evangelistic goals?
- In the last year, what unique events have been held where you have specifically encouraged members to bring their pre-Christian friends? What were the results of these events?
- To what extent do your worship services facilitate evangelism, or do you have special services that are more seeker oriented?

Personal evangelism

Another way to word this section would be:

How well do the people in your congregation do in sharing their faith?

Questions to ponder:

- To what extent are individuals in your church (including the pastor) actively seeking to develop redemptive relationships with pre-Christians? Give examples.
- How have you helped people discover their personal style of evangelism? (Gift-based Ministry is a helpful section to review as you consider these issues.)
- We are called to share the Gospel Truth in Love. Some people are good at sharing the truth, but are not loving in the way they do it. Others are very caring and try to meet needs, but don’t do it in the name of Christ. How can we avoid these mis-directed attempts at evangelism?

Seeker-sensitive church

Another way to word this section would be:

How do we as a church work together to welcome seekers?

Questions to ponder:

- What aspects of your worship service might be bewildering to an unchurched person (insider lingo, worship styles, readings or music that “everyone just knows”, etc.)
- How are newcomers cared for before and after the service? Do you have information about your church that you can hand to them to take home?
- How well have you marked directions to specific locations (such as children’s facilities)?

Additional reading? — *Spiritual Conversations* by Gary Rohrmayer and *X Factor Evangelism* by Michael Wiles are excellent books for addressing Need-oriented evangelism. www.churchsmart.com



Minimum Factor Manual - Introduction

If you are like most people, you read Natural Church Development and became very excited about what this could mean for your church. Most people immediately identify the eight quality characteristics as something they have intuitively felt should be a part of their church, they were just never quite sure how to implement them.

The Natural Church Development survey helps guide churches through the implementation of these characteristics and provides the roadmap that so many have been looking for.

However, this brings us to a crossroads of sorts. Many churches devour the book and quickly decide to take the survey, but then get the results and ask: Now What? For many churches, the process ends after taking the survey. The reasons are many: fear of change, overwhelmed by the work, not sure what steps to take, lost in the busyness of daily church life, etc.

Clearly, the real value of NCD begins after the survey, but only if steps are taken to act on the results. If nothing is done with the survey results, then NCD just becomes another failed program.

So where do we begin? This manual is designed to help guide your church through the process and help you hold yourself accountable as you seek the unique prescription for your church.

Some steps you may wish to consider:

Re-read the book Natural Church Development. It would be good to refresh your memory on Christian's teaching about the eight characteristics and the six biotic principles. Many of them may make more sense to you now that you have your church's survey results in front of you as you read.

Guard against emotion. It is natural for people who associate their ministry/service in the church with the minimum factor to feel like they are being blamed or attacked. Assure them that this is not the case. Every church, no matter how healthy, has a minimum factor. All this means is that their ministry (minimum factor) is the area of maximum leverage for improving the overall health of your church.

Don't do it alone! Many pastors feel that as the leader of the church, they must carry the burden of implementation. Don't fall into this trap! In the first chapter, we will look into the importance of forming a Church Health Team. Surround yourself with people who want to see your church succeed. You may also wish to consider working with a coach from outside your church. The insights from an outsider are often invaluable. (See page xy for additional coaching resources.)

As you begin this process, you will be amazed at how God can use your church in a fresh and exciting new way!

Notes



NCD Review

Natural Church Development is a “principle-oriented” approach. “Models” are concepts that one or sometimes many churches in some part of the world have experienced positively. But imitating these experiences may not be the right answer for churches in other situations. On the other hand, “principles” are those elements that have been proven to apply to growing churches around the globe.

Who was studied?

- 1000 different churches on five continents
- 32 countries
- 18 languages
- 4.2 million pieces of data
- large and small
- growing and declining
- churches persecuted by the state and churches financially supported by the state
- well-known churches and totally unknown churches
- churches from areas currently experiencing great spiritual revivals, as well as from regions which appear to be more spiritually developing

The result

These eight quality characteristics are used by God to build his church!

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

The key in each of these quality characteristics is the adjective, which can be considered a summary of the six biotic principles (see page 5) as they apply to that characteristic: empowering, gift-oriented, passionate, functional, etc. Every church has some sort of leadership or worship or structure. Not all emphasize the adjectives at the front of each of these quality characteristics. Here are some brief definitions:

Empowering Leadership

Effective leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christ-like character and a clear sense of God’s calling for leader’s lives. As this base of spiritual maturity increases, effective pastors and leaders multiply, guide, empower and equip disciples to realize their full potential in Christ and work together to accomplish God’s vision.

Leaders consider it as one of their most important tasks to help Christians develop greater degrees of empowerment. They equip, support, motivate, mentor and coach individuals to become all that God wants them to be.

Gift-based Ministry

The Holy Spirit sovereignly gives to every Christian spiritual gift(s) for the building of God’s kingdom. Church leaders have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the Body of Christ “grows and builds itself up in love.”

The role of church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that match their gifts. When a person lives according to their spiritual giftedness, they are not longer working in their own strength, but the Holy Spirit works in them. Studies show that most Christians are either not involved in ministry or they function in a ministry that does not match their gifts.



Passionate Spirituality

Effective ministry flows out of a passionate spirituality. Spiritual intimacy leads to a strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways. A godly vision can only be accomplished through an optimistic faith that views obstacles as opportunities and turns defeats into victories.

The important issue here is not the way spirituality is expressed, but the fact that faith is actually lived out with commitment, fire and enthusiasm. The methods a church uses are really a secondary concern. A church that lives its faith with passionate fervor will experience success with many methods.

Effective Structures

The Church is the living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems that work together to fulfill its intended purpose. Each must be evaluated regularly to determine if it is still the best way to accomplish the intended purpose.

The most important criterion for forms and structures in the church is if they fulfill their purpose or not. Church structures are never an end in themselves but always only a means to an end.

Inspiring Worship

Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group - but rather the shared experience of God's awesome presence.

Is the worship service an inspiring experience for those who attend? It is not whether our services target Christians or non-Christians, whether they celebrate "in the language of Canaan" or in a more secular language, or whether we worship using a liturgical or a more free-flowing approach. Inspiring worship services are often described as "fun."

Holistic Small Groups

Holistic small groups are disciple-making communities which endeavor to reach the unchurched, meet individual needs, develop each person according to their God-given gifts and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church. Like healthy body cells, holistic small groups are designed to grow and multiply.

Growing churches have developed a system of small groups where individual Christians can find intimate community, practical help and intensive spiritual interaction. In the groups, not only is the biblical text discussed, but they apply biblical insights to everyday issues.

Need-oriented Evangelism

Need-oriented evangelism intentionally cultivates relationships with pre-Christian people so they can become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are actively participating within

the life of the church and community. Using appropriate ministries and authentic relationships, believers can guide others into the family of God.

Growing churches are not "pushy" or "manipulative" in the way they share the gospel, rather, their secret is to share the gospel in a way that meets the questions and needs of pre-Christians.

Loving Relationships

Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said people will know we are his disciples by our love. Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian community and brings others into God's kingdom.

Unfeigned, practical love endows a church with a much greater magnetic power than all the marketing efforts of this world. Growing churches manifest a measurably higher "love quotient" than stagnant or declining ones.



No Quality Characteristic Can Be Missing

Three things can be said with a high degree of certainty:

1. These are universally valid qualities
2. They can be transferred to our own situation
3. Each of these has a positive relationship with both the quality and the quantitative growth of the church

No one single factor leads to growth in churches; it is the interplay of the eight elements as they relate to the biotic principles.

The “All-by-Itself-Principle”

The secret of growing churches does not consist in pushing or pulling the church in human strength and efforts-but in releasing and developing the potential God himself uses to build his church. Then growth occurs all by itself!

“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts, and grows; though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, and then 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

The church is designed by God to grow so growth happens automatically if we remove the obstacles that prevent growth. Growing churches use this growth principle.

The Minimum Factor

Imagine a barrel with eight staves, each representing the eight quality characteristics. The staves in the barrel only reach as high as the score

of the characteristic. With this analogy, you can only fill the barrel to the level of the lowest staff. So to increase the capacity of the barrel, we must increase the height of the lowest staff.

Now focusing on the minimum factor does not mean that we don't pay attention to the other seven areas. As stated before, all eight characteristics

are vitally important to healthy growing churches. Focusing on the minimum factor helps us to set timely priorities. Since all eight areas can't be worked on with the same amount of energy and concentration, we

need to find areas, which will yield the greatest long-range return on our investments. Remember, minimum factors can change quickly—especially when there is a conscious attempt to improve on this one area.

Growth Forces

The principles behind all the quality characteristics are the six Biotic Principles. The survey assesses each of the eight Quality Characteristics by measuring the degree to which each is lived out in a 'life-giving' way. Any plans to improve your minimum factor must take into account these six Biotic Principles.

Interdependence – Individual units are connected to each other in a larger system. Changes in one ministry will affect other ministries in the church and community.

Synonym: *Connecting*

Multiplication – Healthy organisms do not grow endlessly, but reproduce themselves.

Synonym: *Reproducing*

Energy transformation – Momentum or energy already flowing, whether positive or negative, can be redirected to accomplish God's purposes.

Synonym: *Harnessing*

Sustainability – Resources used should increase the capacity for on-going growth and development, as well as serve multiple purposes.

Synonym: *Recycling*

Symbiosis – Different ministries can cultivate cooperative relationships so the mutual benefit is greater than operating separately.

Synonym: *Cooperating*

Fruitfulness – Each ministry needs to produce discernible results in line with its intended purpose.

Synonym: *Evaluating*



Biblical Promises for Change

Notes

"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

— Jeremiah 32:27

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

— Proverbs 3:5-6

Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

— Proverbs 16:3

"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."

— Isaiah 41:13

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

— Psalm 32:8

Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

— Psalm 37:3-5

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen

— Ephesians 3:20-21

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

— Zechariah 4:6

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

— Mark 9:23



Church health team

The purpose of the Church Health Team is to help the church move through the NCD process. Once your church has completed the NCD survey, this team will be responsible for suggesting a course of action regarding the church's minimum factor. **The team will be responsible for setting a plan with a timeline and will then guide the church through the process.** Continuous and intentional prayer for God to release the church's full potential is critical!

Who should serve on this team?

People who are spiritually mature. Nothing is more important for a team member than that they have a heart for God and his kingdom. People who exercise personal spiritual disciplines on a regular basis, such as prayer and reading of scripture, are good candidates.

People who can see the big picture. Many people can get lost in the details. This often leads to meetings for the sake of meetings. You never want to lose sight of the purpose of this team. Your "big-picture" people can serve as constant reminders to the team of why you are meeting.

People who are strategic thinkers. While it is important to keep an eye on the big picture, it should never be done at the expense of planning. Your strategic thinkers will excel at putting processes in place to help the big picture become a reality.

People who are committed to see the church become healthier. Anyone who has a heart to see God's church grow is a good candidate to serve. Their enthusiasm for the church can be contagious and serves as a good reminder for all team members about the importance of this team.

Roles on the team

Team Leader. Be sure to give plenty of thought to leadership roles. Everything truly does rise and fall on leadership, so a good leader is important. Ideally, the leader should be someone who works well with people, but can be decisive and keep the team moving forward. NCD believes it is the laity that drives the church, therefore the leader should be someone other than the pastor, though he should work closely with the pastor. Also be careful not

to put too many leader types on the team. More than one team has failed because there were too many leaders and no followers.

Strategic Thinker. As mentioned above, this is a person who enjoys creating processes to ensure success. This person can serve as an excellent form of accountability for the team, putting names, dates, and goals in writing to track progress and keep the team moving forward.

Researcher. This person can do a lot of the leg work for the team, including compiling a list of people and their spiritual gifts, bringing ideas from the congregation to the team, phone calls, etc.

Intercessor. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of prayer. If this seems like a recurring theme, it is because it is so vital to the success of your team. Find your prayer warriors and ask them to pray.

Communicator. We want NCD to be something the whole church embraces. And while it is not possible to have the whole church serve on the Church Health Team, it is important to keep them informed of the team's progress. This person will also serve as a key link between the team and the leadership/staff of the church.

Members of ministry teams. Since many of the changes that the Church Health Team will recommend directly affect the ministries of the church, it would be good to have some of those people from the front-lines on the team. They can frequently explain why things are done the way they are and provide a valuable perspective on any suggested changes.

The core of the team can be chosen even before the results of the survey are received. After you receive the results, you will want to expand your team to include people who have a passion to see your particular minimum factor improved.

Though the church health team will lead the church through the NCD process, they will continue to involve other people in the assessment, planning and implementation of the plan.



Church health team

Suggestion: If your church has not already done a gifts discovery process, you may wish to consider doing that at this time (even if “gift-oriented ministry” is not your minimum factor). This information will prove to be very helpful as you assemble your team and will also be useful as you begin to address your minimum factor. Some suggested gift materials are listed in the back of this manual in the “Resources” section.

What the team needs to do

- 1. Prepare:** Read and have a working understanding of the book Natural Church Development. Have a significant comprehension of the basic NCD principle of health as the basis for growth of the church and the “all by itself principle.” Have an understanding of the 8 Quality Characteristics and the Biotic Principles and the fact that the emphasis is on the adjectives related to the characteristic (i.e. empowering leadership).
- 2. Diagnose:** Help the church consider contributing issues that come to bear on their minimum factor through focus groups and other listening strategies.
- 3. Plan:** For each key issue identified, develop biotic strategies to move toward health.
- 4. Implement:** Keep the church on track to accomplish goals.
- 5. Evaluate:** Take time to evaluate whether goals and outcomes have been reached. Review the way the process was handled and what could have been done differently. Identify the unplanned benefits that the church has received through the process.

Each of these five steps will be reviewed in more detail on the following pages.

Notes



Step 1 — Prepare

Taking the NCD survey does not ensure an increase in your church's health. In order to become healthier, your church must change. These next pages will look at a change process to help your church do just that! Each phase of the process lays a foundation for the next phase and therefore each is essential. By carefully helping a church work through each phase, keeping the biotic principles in view, a church can increase its health.

The key question for the PREPARE phase is: **"What can we expect?"** In this phase NCD is defined and possible coaching relationships are explored. If your church chooses to use a coach, be aware that the work of each NCD phase will be placed squarely on the Church Health Team and the church leadership. The coach walks beside to help facilitate, not to do the work.

What should be done in the Prepare phase?

Understand and share NCD principles. Don't do the NCD survey just because someone from another church recommends it. You will get so much more out of the process if you actually read the book yourself and share the principles with key leaders in the church. As people in the congregation read the book or the ABC's of Natural Church Development, they inevitably catch a vision for what this could mean for their church. This creates a sense of ownership that can't be achieved any other way. This critical first step also helps key leaders understand what their survey results really mean. Imagine getting a score sheet with eight numbers and no explanation. The information is useless without the learning you first receive from the book.

Evaluate the readiness of the church. While it is important to wait until there is a sense of excitement and ownership in the process before beginning, leaders should not wait too long before engaging in the process. No one knows your church better than you. Do your best to evaluate when the best time to do the survey would be.

Mobilize intercessors. NCD is more than just a scientific process. It is part of a church's spiritual journey. The importance of prayer cannot be overemphasized. Make sure you have a team of people prepared to pray for your church and its leaders through the entire process. Pray for wisdom. Pray for a spirit of cooperation. Pray for your church and the impact it can have in your

community. Pray that your church will honor God throughout the process. Pray for your leaders and pray for the Church Health Team.

Establish a relationship with a coach. While this is not a necessary step, it is highly recommended! Research has shown that the churches that avail themselves of a coach are more successful in implementing NCD. The advantages of working with a coach include:

- An unbiased outside observer.
- Sometimes it is easier for an outsider to present tough decisions to the congregation.
- Accountability. The coach can give the church leadership assignments that need to be done before their next appointment.
- Encouragement.
- Experience. The coach has been through this process before and can help you avoid some common pitfalls.

Coaching arrangements can take many forms. Some churches simply have a monthly coaching phone call. Other churches choose to bring a coach in for a weekend planning retreat. Some communities have multiple churches go through the process together, with the leaders from each church helping the others in their community. Feel free to customize your coaching relationship for your church's unique situation. But do consider using a coach. A list of trained NCD coaches is available from ChurchSmart Resources. Rates vary by coach and region. Contact the coach for their pricing information.

Recruit members of the Church Health Team. Using the criteria on page 4 of this manual, select your team. To ensure a good team dynamic, you may wish to avail yourself of a book like Paul Ford's *Discovering Your Ministry Identity*. This book looks at spiritual gifts, team style, vital values and primary functions of leadership. All these issues should be considered when forming your team. Different types of people can work well together, they just have to have an understanding and appreciation for how their teammates work.

Order the NCD survey. If your church is working with a certified NCD coach, you may wish to secure the survey through your coach. Your church can also order the survey from ChurchSmart Resources by calling 1.800.253.4276.



Step 2 — Diagnose

The key question for the Diagnose phase is: **“Where are we?”** From this point of reference significant issues can be identified and addressed. This phase is crucial to the rest of the process, and good coaching is essential. Help the Church Health Team keep the focus on the minimum factor and search for causal issues (root issues causing the minimum factor to be what it is).

It is at this point that your church will want to select survey participants and complete a survey. Once the survey is completed and the results are returned to the church, the following issues should be addressed:

Process initial reactions. Generally churches respond one of two ways when they first receive their survey results. Either they say “Yes, that’s us!” or they are shocked by the score and caught completely by surprise. Either way, your church needs to take time to pass through this “emotional tollbooth.” Remember, every church has a minimum factor and this should not be viewed as a failure, just the area that needs a little extra attention.

Discuss the next steps with a coach. This is where having a coach can be very helpful. If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got. A coach can bring a fresh perspective and an objective set of eyes to help you evaluate your next steps.

Expand the Church Health Team. Now that you know what your minimum factor is, you can add another member or two to your Church Health Team. They should be people who are gifted in that particular area. For example, if “need-oriented evangelism” is your minimum factor, you may wish to identify someone with the gift of evangelism in your church and ask them how your church could do a better job at evangelism.

Develop a general process with timeline. You should map out the complete schedule for implementation including: Diagnose, Plan, Implement and Evaluate. Use exact dates that you wish to have each phase completed by and the name of the person(s) responsible for getting it done. Specifics help keep you accountable. Remember, the biggest reason for failure in the NCD process is no follow through. By holding yourself accountable, you increase your chances for success.

Conduct focus groups. Try to discern key issues that are contributing to the minimum factor. For instance, if “need-oriented evangelism” is your minimum factor, you may wish to interview new Christians in your church and ask how it was they came to Christ through your ministry. Was it directly related to a ministry in your church or through an individual member? If it was through an individual member, you may wish to interview them and find out what makes them effective in sharing their faith.

Remember, ministries can affect each other. Don’t treat your minimum factor by itself, but always ask how any changes could affect other ministries and interview those people as well.

Do additional reading and study. There is a wealth of information already written on each of the eight areas. Your church does not have to limit itself to something written by Christian Schwarz. The more you read about your minimum factor, the more ideas you will have to share with your Church Health Team and the church leadership. We have listed some suggested resources at the back of this paper, but dig even deeper. Go to your bookstore and explore what others have said. There is no such thing as gathering too much information.

Present the survey results to the congregation. Some churches choose not to do this and that is OK. But if you do share the survey results with the congregation, you have many more people that you can tap for prayer and idea resources.

Communicate progress and prayer needs. Taking the time to communicate progress can be an excellent opportunity to share the vision of your church with the congregation. Share often. Remember that as new people join the church, they need to hear the vision too. By sharing and communicating often, you ensure that your congregation has a good idea of the direction of your church.

Frequent communication also allows for more effective prayer. The congregation can celebrate answered prayers together and be updated about the most crucial prayer needs. As you enable your congregation to be more effective in their prayers for you, you will greatly improve the effectiveness of your team.



Step 3 — Plan

The key question for the Plan phase is: **“Where do we want to go?”** Working from the diagnosis, an action plan is constructed. The action plan must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Related to the minimum factor and be accompanied by a Timeline. Biotic thinking is an important part of the planning process.

As you work through the planning stage, consider the following:

Conduct an Action Planning Workshop. Get your key leaders and Church Health Team together for a day or a weekend to map out your plan. Don’t spend a lot of time rehashing the survey results. The purpose of this meeting is to set goals. We use the acronym SMART for goals. Goals should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Related to the minimum factor
- Timeline should be established

Helpful hint: You may wish to divide into small groups for some goal setting. You might be interested to see how similar the goals are among the groups. This is also a good way to keep one or two individuals from dominating the direction of the day.

Introduce individuals to Growth Forces. Many people are intimidated by the Growth Forces as being too much like a biology class and want to just ignore them. Please don’t do that. The secret to understanding the Growth Forces is really quite simple — it is the adjective in the characteristic. For instance, every church has leadership, but is it empowering leadership? What is empowering leadership? It is a natural Growth Force! Empowering Leadership is: Interdependent, Multiplication, Energy Transformation, Sustaining, Symbiotic, and Fruitful. The following synonyms are helpful for understanding the growth forces:

- Interdependence = Connecting (Does the leadership connect?)
- Multiplication = Reproducing (Does the leadership reproduce?)
- Energy Transformation = Harnessing (Does it harness other ministries?)
- Sustaining = Recycling (Does the leadership sustain itself?)
- Symbiosis = Cooperating (Does the leadership cooperate?)
- Fruitfulness = Evaluating (Are there regular periods of evaluation?)

As you explore goal setting, always ask yourself, “how will these proposed changes impact other ministries in the church as well as your minimum factor?”

Clarify the 3-5 key issues to address. With your survey report, we have returned some sheets that break down what is being measured in the area of your minimum factor. There are some discussion questions for each of those points. After reviewing these sheets, you will probably identify some key issues within your minimum factor that need to be addressed. Once these areas are determined, look for SMART goals and biotic solutions.

Determine timeline and budget. Part of the SMART goal is developing a realistic timeline to complete your goals. Be sure this is done.

Make sure it is possible with the appropriate budget support. You can always tell what a church’s priorities are by how they spend their money. If you state “need-oriented evangelism” is a priority but have no money for any of the programs, you are essentially saying one thing and doing another — which sends a very mixed signal to the congregation. Make sure your stated priorities are backed up with the appropriate budget allocations.

Form workgroups to spearhead each initiative. Part of being specific in your plans is to appoint specific individuals or groups to be in charge of getting one aspect of the goal accomplished. Make sure you have people in place for each of the needed tasks.



Step 3 — Plan

Ensure ownership by church leaders. Much of this simply involves communicating with the leaders as to what the plans/goals are. Assuming they were involved in the prepare and diagnose stages, their ownership should be high.

However, sometimes people who were very supportive in the early stages may now become a roadblock. If this happens, try to determine why. Do they have a legitimate concern that should be addressed? Are they trying to protect some aspect of the church they find personally fulfilling and are fearful of losing? Perhaps they are just now realizing the amount of work that will be necessary and find it intimidating.

Remember, most of these people have invested a lot in their church and genuinely want the best for it. Don't take the concerns lightly. Try to understand and resolve any concerns here. Once you have complete ownership by your leaders, the process will go much smoother.

Schedule time for evaluation. Be flexible. As you begin working through some of your plans, you may find the need to change some aspects of it. That is OK. A regular time for evaluation can allow for celebration of victories and mid-course corrections.

Communicate progress and prayer needs.

Notes



Step 4 — Implement

The key question for this phase is: **“What do we need to get there?”** By this phase of the NCD process, the Church Health Team may just need some regular checkups to make sure they are still focused on the minimum factor and their energy is still invested in the action plan. Some keys to remember during this stage:

Plan an official launch. Treat the launch as a celebration of a new direction. This is yet another opportunity to share your church’s vision with the congregation. An official launch date also helps you monitor your progress and keep you moving forward.

Monitor progress towards stated goals. Make sure you recognize, monitor and address change dynamics and momentum. Just because you have launched the change, doesn’t mean there still aren’t forces working against it. If you notice some negative momentum, try to identify the source and their concerns. Because you have gained ownership with your leadership and Church Health Team, you should have their support as you seek to create positive momentum in the church.

Resource as needed for healthy change. Make sure the people in charge of new ministries or changes have been appropriately trained for the tasks and will have coaching along the way.

Also, allow for the fact that there may be some unexpected needs as you make mid-course corrections. Have a resource pool you can draw from to address these needs. They may be needs that require additional people or they may be financial.

Celebrate wins along the way. This serves as an encouragement to your congregation and your team. It also encourages your prayer team. Celebrating wins helps to keep the positive momentum going.

Notes



Step 5 — Evaluate

The key question in the Evaluate phase is: **“How did we do?”** There are many benefits from the experience of reflecting on the entire process. Try to glean wisdom and information that can be used in future NCD processes. Some things you need to consider during this phase are:

Conduct a final evaluation of the entire process. Be honest with yourself. The whole purpose of the NCD survey is to improve your church’s health. Don’t evaluate based on what you wish had happened. Ask yourself if your church is better off today than it was a year ago. Is so, why? What can you learn from this process that you can incorporate the next time your church does a survey. What didn’t work? Why? It is OK to make mistakes, but we don’t want to make the same mistakes twice.

Identify key learnings and insights. You’ve now been through a complete cycle of the process. What worked? What didn’t? Try to learn from the things that didn’t go as planned and build upon the success of those that did work. Make needed adjustments for the next time you do the survey.

Determine a date for your next NCD survey. Continuing the process is key. Doing a second survey allows you to track your progress. As you work on your minimum factor, eventually you will reach a point where it is no longer your minimum factor. This is something to celebrate, but it also means you have a new minimum factor. By taking the survey again, you can identify your new minimum factor and continue improving your church’s health.

Begin to consider the concept of church multiplication. Because the church is a living organism, birth is a natural part of that life. As your church grows in health, consider giving birth to a new church. What a great example of the biotic principle of multiplication!

Notes