



NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

An Introduction for Churches



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1. Welcome

Welcome to this introductory booklet on 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 increase 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.

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) 753-2420 or toll-free at 1-866-945-8741.

NCD continues to grow after twelve years of involvement by churches all over the world. Over 3,400 Survey have been conducted in Canada, and over 80,000 internationally. Many church leaders now find it an indispensable combination of growth principles, process, tools and resources for ensuring their churches remain on the path to healthy 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.

Ian Campbell

&

Bill Bickle

NCD Canada

October 2012



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.

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 ”

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 continual improvement, not a program which guarantees 'a healthy church' if implemented well. 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 through experience in over 65,000 churches. 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 church leadership to see three images 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. As one Canadian leader so eloquently put it, "It gives every church leader the clear view of their church from 20,000 feet that they need when so much time is spent in the day-to-day."

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 essential growth values and bring focus to the use of limited time, energy and resources to maximize effectiveness. Churches tell us the most important aspects of conducting NCD Surveys has 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.

Each church still has to have a strong sense of its unique vision that God has for it. Every church leader needs to discern God's leading for that vision, but it is true that NCD can help clarify, stimulate and enable that vision.

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.

“ But by far the most important thing that has happened is the depth of conversation has increased substantially. ”

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 happen as if "all by itself" to the farmer)

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. This is not growth brought about by continually initiating new programming. Rather, it comes about by progressively growing into and understanding 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) organisation 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 the beginning of October 2012, over 85,000 Surveys have now 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 were critical components of the life of healthy, growing churches. All were present and none could be missing. They were:

- **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.

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 of what they do on other parts and ensure that such impact is always positive for the sake of long term growth.
- **Multiplication** – every part of the church is looking to reproduce itself, including the church as a whole.
- **Energy Transformation** – all 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 superintends 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. In some instances the teaching is direct, such as in John 15 where Jesus speaks about “fruitfulness.” In others we see the principles undergirding 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 churches in Canada to provide objectivity.

In essence the Survey profile gives a rating for each quality characteristic, but 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 so-called "Minimum Factor", the principal focus for discussion, analysis, strategic planning and action (see next page).



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 quality characteristic 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 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 engaging 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?

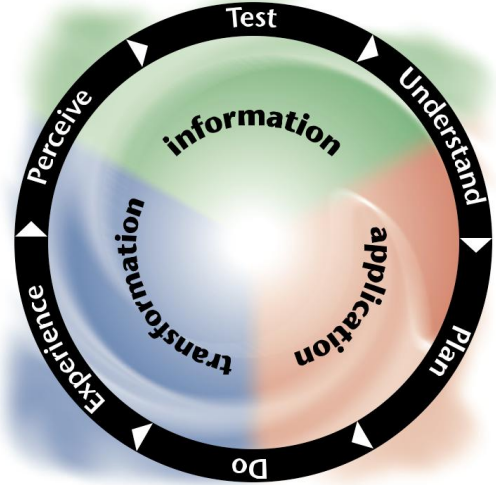
The world that God created naturally operates in cycles. It is the natural order of all growing things. We acknowledge this without even thinking twice about it. The cycle of life is something we take for granted.

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 other resources, however the following can be said by way of introduction:

- It grounds the process of growing a church in the essential nature of God who reveals Himself to us in Trinity (represented by the three colours).
- It encourages the pursuit of depth in the 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.



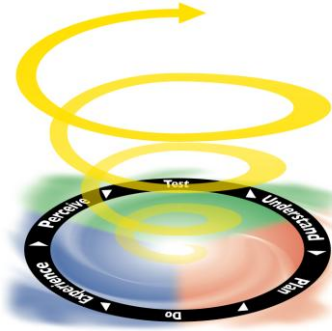
The most natural starting point for using the Cycle is to see the annual NCD Survey as the major part of the “Test” phase. This helps match the cycle to the annual church calendar, with its normal processes of review, visioning, programs, holidays, etc.

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 more healthy (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 "performance" not to "partnership." 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 believe being frantically busy is the same as effective outcomes
- They prefer to see their own spiritual growth as separate 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 rather than a long-term process.

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.

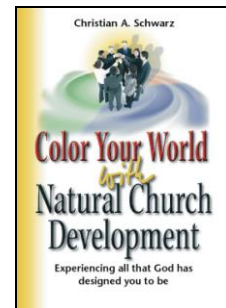
NCD offers the principles and processes which encourage increasing fruitfulness in practical ways.

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 NCD Cycle featured in the book is the 1st generation Cycle, since upgraded to the Cycle featured in this booklet and in the 2006 edition of the book *Natural Church Development*, see below).



The ABCs of Natural Church Development – this small booklet of 28 pages is ideal for introducing some of the main concepts to your congregation. It asks why church growth can seem so hard, then looks at the eight quality characteristics, the minimum factor approach, and “all by itself” growth. It’s a fun read.

You can read more about these resources and other books and tests created around each of the eight quality characteristics at our website: www.ncdcanada.com then order them through the web-site, or by email to us at ncd@fordelm.com or by calling toll-free at 1-866-945-8741.

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 until the new leadership team 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 continuously addressing key health issues?
- More importantly, is there some heart 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 ABCs of Natural Church Development* 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 the practicalities of working through the NCD Cycle over a year, 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 *ABCs* booklet.
- 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 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.
- Affirm that NCD has been tried and tested internationally for over 12 years. Refer people to the NCD International website if they want to go exploring for themselves.
- Direct any questions that you can't answer to us at ncd@fordelm.com and we will either answer it ourselves or direct you to someone who does know the answer.

10.3 How are people chosen to complete the Survey?

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

The *NCD Survey Form* is given to thirty 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: member from a 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 thirty people in the congregation, select thirty people who fit all three criteria. Consider a broad range of people in the life of the church who fit the criteria.

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* as long as they meet 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 inputting the results of the Survey, creating the reports, and administering the account. This person may be on staff or volunteer, and needs to be trustworthy with confidential Survey results.

Download the Instructions in PDF format from the 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 report variation called NCD Results Guides (NRGs). These guides, or reports, are explained below. The issuance of the two Tokens by NCD Canada will trigger the issuance of an invoice for the Survey. Currently the costs are as follows:

- First Survey - \$400.00 + G/HST
- Subsequent Surveys - \$375.00 + G/HST

1. Select and invite Survey participants

- i. Use the instructions to select the Survey participants.
- ii. Write to those selected inviting them to meet after a church service to complete the Survey. You may wish to include a short explanation.

2. Prepare for the meeting.

- i. Prepare a short presentation to explain the purpose of the meeting (ten minutes maximum). Base it on some of main points of the *ABCs of Natural Church Development*.
- ii. Print off copies of the *NCD Survey Form* (with a few spares) and have pens or pencils.
- 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 forms. 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 doing the Survey and why they were chosen. Hand out the questionnaires with a pen or pencil, go over the questionnaire instructions and let them begin. To ensure an accurate result, make sure all questions receive an answer on the Survey Forms. Do *not* mail out questionnaires or allow people to take them home. Your workload will increase exponentially trying to get them back. It is also better that people offer their “gut” responses to the questions rather than spend a lot of time mulling over answers. To ensure an accurate representation of the church’s situation, ensure every participant has indicated responses for all questions.

Once all the questionnaires are complete, the Survey Administrator enters the raw data into the online Church Survey account. At this point, they are ready to create the report-guides.

10.6 What reporting is received?

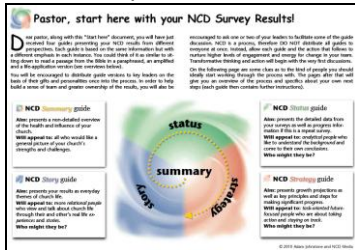
NCD International rates the health of the church against the eight quality characteristics. The rating is calculated by taking the raw scores from the questionnaires and measuring them against a standardization calculated from over 3,400 Surveys conducted across Canada between 1998 and the end of 2011, 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, but the first two Guides in the Understanding Phase show only a visual comparison of the church’s results as an internal comparison.

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.

The ProfilePlus report was introduced in 2004 increasing the capacity of church leaders to identify themes and barriers to health and quality. In 2012, NCD Canada and NCD Australia were the first two National Partnerships to introduce the third generation of reporting: the NCD Results Guides, or NRGs. These new guides were tested in over 100 churches in Canada alone, and once again enhanced churches’ ability to name the barriers impeding their health and quality. All Canadian churches involved with the NCD process now receive the NRGs. They form an indispensable tool for those who wish to see their church as an organic whole. (A sample set of NRGs from an actual church is 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 almost 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.

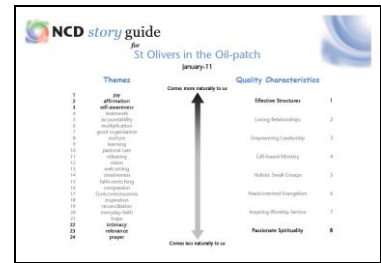
Pastor Start Here is a guide to the flow. This is a standard document and has no link to the specific results



1. **Summary Guide:** three pages of graphics produced from your results, the first two linked to the Trinitarian Compass. You will see there are no dotted lines or num-bers, just relative place-ments. It is recommended these two go out to the Leadership Team first.



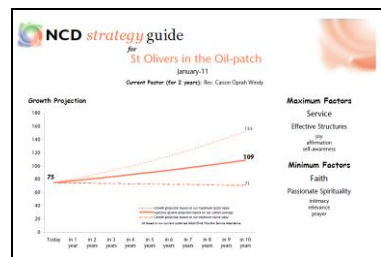
2. **Story Guide:** This “blue” Guide is produced from the Survey data according to 24 groupings of Survey questions around themes. These themes are ones seen regularly and the questions are statistically correlated. This Guide launches the congregation into the ‘story’ of the parish rather than an analytical exercise to find the themes. In other words, the reporting has done some of the analytics for you. This Guide will appeal to those who talk most naturally about the congregation relationally and experientially, not in graphs and numbers!



3. **Status Guide:** You will recognize this as virtually the same as the earlier ProfilePlus report. This Guide is designed for analytics, and is therefore ‘green’ in colour, and will appeal to those who are more analytical in their approach. The imbedded process suggests holding a meeting about this Guide, but many churches, especially fairly new churches involved with NCD may find its analysis by the NCD Leadership Team is sufficient to augment what will have been heard during the review of the Story Guide. For some churches with relatively low capacity, the Story Guide will be sufficient to name the most important barrier to growth.

Profile	Date	Minimum Factor	Maximum Factor	Min - Max Difference	Average
2	Jan-11	31 Pastorate Spirituality	58 Effective Structures	28	48.00
					Change 1 - 2: -1.00%
1	Jan-10	24 Pastorate Spirituality	60 Living Relationships	36	43.00

4. **Strategy Guide:** This is the ‘red’ Guide, because it is more about action than experience (blue) or reflection (green). More tools will be added to this Guide for planning and developing a way forward for the congregation to remove barriers to all-by-itself growth. Currently, the best part of this Guide is the new insight into Key Influencers and the impact they have on the results. Significantly more emphasis on individual key influencers has been imbedded into the process and how they can begin implementing change right away, even before the team has developed 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.

NCD Canada recommends you 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 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 can 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.

On the website you will find *The NCD Cycle Manual*. This is a 99 page manual available as a free download. It outlines in detail the entire NCD Cycle process.

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 takes about an hour.

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. Even seasoned NCD churches find the debrief useful as they begin the Understanding Phase and interpret the results.

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 of the denominations implementing NCD provide such coaching support. Please contact us for further details. Any costs associated with engaging a coach are a matter between you and the coach.

Quite often it will help just as much to dialogue with other church leaders on the NCD journey.

11.4 What about other resources?

The resources you have at this point are sufficient to engage with the critical health issues in the context of the NCD Cycle. There are, of course, other resources – NCD-specific and others – that may be helpful in understanding your Minimum Factor or taking steps to address it.

The NCD resources we recommend are found at the NCD Canada website (www.ncdcanada.com). This note about other resources comes with a couple of warnings:

- Over the past 12 years many different resources have been written that have either been NCD-specific or contained elements of NCD within the context of other church growth concepts and systems. A lot of that material is still available on the internet. Much of it is out-of-date or based on a limited knowledge of the NCD paradigm. Be careful.
- Do not fall for the “program trap,” the decision to go and find a ready-made solution to raising your Minimum Factor. **The most critical element of the NCD Cycle process** is that you and your leadership work hard at using the Survey results to diagnose the specific (unique) health issues your church needs to be addressing over the next twelve months. If this is done with care and effort, quite often the desire and need to go and find a program some other church has developed disappears. If you do go in that direction, remember that it needs to be adapted to address the specific issues identified in your results.

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

12. NCD Canada - history

FORDelm Inc. is the NCD National Partner in Canada, representing the Institute for Natural Church Development International, based in Germany. FORDelm Inc. is a strategic growth consultancy based in Port Hope, Ontario, about an hour east of Toronto. FORDelm became the National Partner in 2008 taking over from The Leadership Centre Willow Creek Canada. FORDelm is responsible for:

- training and supporting pastors, coaches and denominational leaders to work with NCD
- supplying international NCD resources and developing additional local resources
- providing statistical information on NCD findings
- contributing to the Institute in its ongoing research & development.

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 as well as *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. Ian has worked closely with Christian Schwarz and the other members of NCD International to develop NCD resources and training which are now used internationally. He now works from Australia on a consultative basis with NCD International, NCD national partners and denominational leaders globally.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at ncd@fordelm.com, through the web-site at www.ncdcanada.com or by phone toll free at 1866-945-8741.