CECL
Center for Excellence in
Congregational Leadership
GREEN LAKE
CONFERENCE CENTER

Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake, Wisconsin

June 10, 2005

The CECL Guide to

NATURAL

CHURCH

DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The CECL Guide to Natural Church Development is a brief manual prepared by resource persons associated with the Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership, a professional development program for pastors conducted at Green Lake Conference Center in Wisconsin with support from the Lilly Endowment. Because this publication is created especially for CECL use, it is the property of Green Lake Conference Center, is placed on its website and circulated to CECL project participants. Aspects of this document which have been drawn from other copyrighted sources are acknowledged through footnotes within the text. Much of the material in this document appears in alternative forms at www.coachnet.org.

Much developmental effort has been invested to prepare this manual by the Rev. Jane Moschenrose and the Rev. John Radcliffe, with additional material from the Rev. Sandra Wimpelberg and Dr. Charles Dunning. CECL also acknowledges the contributions of Dr. Alan Wright, Dr. Thomas Watkins, and Joe Gaunt as collaborating writers and editors.

Purpose of this guide: This manual is intended to assist pastors participating in the CECL program and their congregations with implementation of the Natural Church Development (NCD) process that fosters constructive change among churches.

CECL requires administration of the NCD survey near the start of each congregation's participation in this program. The NCD survey serves as the primary measure of congregational health. Each church will administer the survey again shortly before CECL Session 6, which is the concluding event of the program at Green Lake.

CECL does not require that participating congregations employ an NCD consultant to assist with interpretation of the process, nor does CECL require that the church change its policies and procedures based primarily upon NCD results. However, CECL does encourage congregations to invest significant time and effort for interpretation of NCD results, comparing and contrasting the survey conclusions with other information about the congregation and its leadership team. This manual will help to clarify a model process for this procedure, enabling congregations to capitalize on availability of NCD data in greater depth.

CECL recommends that participating congregations purchase a copy of *Releasing our Church's Potential,* available at www.churchsmart.com for $95; a price reduction is available to NCD-trained coaches. A one-year subscription to CoachNet is provided by CECL. Other useful materials on CoachNet include descriptions of quality characteristic items. These resources will enable churches to use their maximum factor and other strengths as catalysts to address their minimum factor(s). Keep in mind that some wording drawn from NCD survey results may require reframing to be most useful in the analytical and implementation processes.

NCD should be recognized as one approach to change management that some congregations may elect to use. In addition, pastors participating in CECL will study multiple approaches to congregational change, taught by Paul Borden, George Bullard, Al Ells and Dan Southerland, plus the philosophies described in two books provided for study – *Deep Change* and *Leading Congregational Change.*

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Overview of the Natural Church Development Process

This resource is intended to help pastors and leadership teams understand the big picture of the NCD survey as a **required** measurement tool, and the NCD process as an **optional** strategy for congregational change (among several available through CECL).

If you decide to use the NCD survey results only as an evaluation tool, follow steps 1, 2 and 3 below. If you decide to use the NCD process as a strategy to facilitate change, follow all steps below.

1. **Pre-Survey**
   Pastor and board review NCD process
   Decide whether to employ a coach to conduct survey and assist with implementation
   Decide about commitment to implementation and gathering an implementation team

2. **Survey**
   Select 30 survey participants (must be people who know what is happening in your church, *but should represent a range of perspectives – not just persons closest to you*)
   Meet to complete the surveys and answer questions; gather the surveys at the conclusion of this meeting, rather than allowing participants to take the surveys home for later collection
   Process the survey (CECL tabulates and processes the survey and mails results back to you)

3. **Feedback of Survey Results**
   Pastor and coach discuss survey results – themes and issues
   Discuss survey results with survey participants and congregation

4. **Finalize and Train Implementation Team**
   Finalize implementation team (leaders from areas addressed by Minimum Factor and persons representing a cross-section of congregation; 6 to 8 people)
   Review NCD processes
   Study materials and survey information on the Minimum Factor

5. **Develop an Action Plan**
   Understand reason why the Minimum Factor was the lowest quality
   a. *Review* the graphs and Minimum Factor
   b. Seek to *understand* what the profile indicates
   c. Look for *themes and issues*
   d. *Ask*: What do you think this means? (Recorder takes notes on all comments)
   e. *Avoid* looking for *quick-fix solutions* and looking at "Are we good or poor?"
   Prepare an action plan to address the Minimum Factor using the Implementation Guide
   Secure ownership of action plan from relevant ministry leaders and board

6. **Implement Action Plan**
   Have an official launch
   Celebrate early successes
   Monitor momentum and progress
   Realize that quality improvement is a long-term process

7. **Repeat the NCD survey annually** *(optional at congregation's expense – not covered by CECL)*

8. **Conduct NCD survey at the end of CECL** *(required and covered by CECL)*

Natural Church Development Survey Issues

1. Be sure you read *Implementation Guide: Natural Church Development* (the black book) and understand the issues before you start to address your church about the survey. (*Natural Church Development*, the white book, might be good to read first <u>in addition</u> to the *Implementation Guide.*)

2. Determine first how you plan to use the NCD survey. CECL needs *before* and *after* snapshots of your church to determine whether the CECL process has made a difference in the congregation.

   Option #1 – Do you want to use it **only as an evaluation tool** to determine your church's strengths and areas where it needs to improve?

   Option #2 – Do you want to use the **NCD process as a strategy** and approach to facilitate congregational change (as a part of, or instead of, the other approaches that are part of the CECL training)?

<u>If you choose Option #1:</u>

- You still need to be thoughtful in your selection of the 30 taking the survey, and then give your people a brief explanation about the meaning of the survey and the fact that you are taking it only to give CECL a *before* and *after* snapshot. If this is the case, it is still important that you are able to interpret the results appropriately, and know how to use the results in the context of the congregational change with which your team will be working. Be sure to read bullet point #4 below, as well as the summary of quality characteristics on subsequent pages.

- **The validity of the NCD survey results depends on having qualified people take the survey.** In order for the survey to yield valid results, the participants need to be core adults who know what is happening at your church. Do not select occasional attendees or teens.

  o If you were doing a more subjective survey, then you would want a cross-section of the congregation including your less involved people. But this survey asks very objective questions about <u>specific behaviors and attitudes</u> in the church and of the survey participants. While the rankings of participants on a scale of 1 to 5 is subjective to a degree, the survey is not primarily a subjective survey, but rather objective. That is why the typical approach of getting a cross-section of the total congregation (which is a very good approach in many cases) is not valid in this case. *The wrong people will give you skewed results and you will miss the benefit of the whole approach.*

  o If you think that individuals not asked to fill out the survey would feel left out and/or offended, then you might take a creative approach to get the right people. First determine who is qualified (core people who are significantly involved). Perhaps you have an average Sunday attendance of 125 and 45 adults would be qualified. Put the names of the 45 qualified people into a hat and draw the 30 to take the survey (and also 8 alternates in order). That way people can know that it was a random process and not favoritism that determined the selection. For most congregations, this will not be an issue.

- There are two common pitfalls when the results of the survey are shared. Two common initial reactions are denial and/or pessimism if the results are less than desirable. If you have interaction among your people at the initial presentation of the results, they will start to process the valid analysis of their church. Significant energy and optimism may result if presentation is done in the right way.

  - If you encounter denial and/or pessimism as the initial reaction, do not let it stand. You don't have to necessarily contradict the first initial comment(s), just ask for other comments. Also, the survey is not a subjective opinion of outsiders. It is a direct measure of what your church people themselves have said about their church, using scientific statistical analysis.

  - Other pitfalls might be feeling that you did so well you don't need to work further, or failing to do anything about the results. It is usually helpful on this last pitfall to get an advance commitment from the board to select an implementation team and address the lowest characteristic.

If you choose Option #2:

- If you will be using the NCD process for congregational change, selection of the implementation team is important. Team members will in large measure be determined by which "Quality Characteristic" is the low score. For example if "Inspiring Worship" is the low score, you would want some people from your worship and music ministry to be on the implementation team.

  - You also want a couple of board members on the team (2 or 3) to coordinate with the main church leadership.

  - If you have traditionally-minded people in your church as well as more forward-thinking visionary people, you want both groups to be represented on the implementation team, with emphasis on those who are likely to embrace change strategies (also consider any other major groupings of people like older/younger, or ethnic groupings, or blue collar/white collar, etc.). You want the implementation team to wrestle with the same issues the whole congregation will deal with when recommendations to improve are considered.

  - You will also want people with a variety of skills on the team. A visionary, an administrator, an influencer, a person with analytical skills, a compassionate person, etc. A variety of skills will be important as this team will be a change agent in the congregation.

  - Most of all, you want people who are team players rather then people who have an agenda.

  - 6 to 8 people is a good number for the implementation team. If you want, you can have a team that is a little larger.

- Call ChurchSmart Resources at 800-253-4276 for a list of possible coaches in your region, or talk to your denomination's area pastors. If you use a coach, you will need to pay an honorarium and expenses. Each coach has an individually-determined fee structure. A coach can present the results to the congregation, can help you determine who will be part of an implementation team, and can help to orient the implementation team. These are the most critical stages to arrive at an effective implementation.

- If you use an outside person to do the survey, let them know that CECL will be scoring the survey. Mail the survey forms to Russann Devine at Green Lake. (If another outside person scores the survey, they have to pay a $150 fee to ChurchSmart Resources and the Natural Church Development organization just to run the software.) CECL has already paid this fee, and so the processing of the survey itself does not incur an additional fee to your church if CECL does it. Then CECL sends the complete results back to you. If you are using outside help, you can copy the results for them.

Overview of the NCD Essential Quality Characteristics[1]

Quality Characteristic	Definition
Empowering Leadership	Leaders that multiply, guide, empower, and equip disciples
Functional Structures	Church organization and systems that work well and that focus on the mission of the church
Gift-oriented Ministry	Believers' ministry that is related to their gifts
Holistic Small Groups	Life-changing groups that meet members' needs
Inspiring Worship	A service where worshipers encounter the living God
Loving Relationships	Relationships that create an atmosphere of genuine joy, love, and caring
Need-oriented Evangelism	Evangelism based on relationships and needs
Passionate Spirituality	Joy, enthusiasm and conviction that God can and will work supernaturally

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Empowering Leadership*

The core, or foundation, of effective leadership is an intimate relationship with God, which matures into a Christ-like character and a clear sense of God's calling in the leader's life. As spiritual maturity grows, effective pastors and leaders pass this on to their disciples, to multiply, guide, empower and equip them to realize *their* full potential in Christ and work together to accomplish God's vision.

Being an Empowering Leader involves several factors[2]:
1) An effective match between leader and church.
   - Does the job description or expectations of the church match with the gifts/abilities and personality/character of the pastor?
   - Is the pastor working in his/her areas of strength, or non-strengths? To what extent does the vision of the church match the vision and call of the pastor?
2) An effective leader continues to grow personally, in the areas of character formation, authentic relationships, skill development, life-long learning, ministry focusing.
3) Growing leaders maintain mentoring relationships. They cultivate the mentoring relationships they need to continually grow, changing mentors as their growing edges change.
4) Removing personal blockages. These blockages include complacency with status quo ministry, lack of vision for bringing others into Christian discipleship, lack of boldness and confidence in leadership, lack of certainty regarding one's call to ministry, poor delegation and management

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[1] Adapted from material in the *Natural Church Development Implementation Manual*
[2] Adapted from Releasing Your Church's Potential, p 2-3 through 2-4.

skills, condescending, disrespectful mentality toward those he/she leads, and poor ability to encourage and adjust to change.

5) Ability to focus on disciple-making through authentic relationships. These relationships include family, pre-Christians, those you mentor personally, and with the church community.

Reflection Questions[3]:

1) In what ways has your relationship with Christ deepened in the last six months?

2) What Scriptures, books, seminars or other efforts have encouraged your personal growth in the last six months? How have you responded?

3) To whom are you accountable for your spiritual and personal growth? For your growth in ministry skills? For the strategic direction of your ministry?

4) Does your primary role in your current position take energy away from you or return additional energy to you?

5) How does your current ministry role fit with your core values, life mission and giftedness?

6) How much of your time is devoted to developing and empowering leaders?

7) What personal blockages prevent you from becoming an empowering leader?

Other Questions for Consideration[4]:

1) How do you facilitate leaders to learn from each other?

2) What processes are you using for personal and ministry skills development?

3) In what ways are you using the passion within your leaders to energize them in other areas?

4) What existing ministries could be used for developing leaders in the process of ministry?

5) How can you tie evangelism and leadership development together so more people are reached and more leaders are developed?

6) How are the leaders becoming more effective in their ministry?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Functional Structures*

Every healthy church must have internal systems that work together to fulfill their intended purpose. Each part of one's structure must be evaluated on a regular basis to make sure it is effectively accomplishing their intended purpose. The "structures" or systems this Quality Characteristic refers to include: the programs and ministries of the church, the systems and infrastructure that links them together into a unified organism, the written and unwritten forms, institutions and regulations that define church culture, and the systems for communication and decision-making.[5]

The failure of functionality in structures comes from a lack of[6]:

- intentional approach to ministry and mission

- overall ownership to a clear, concise vision

- clarity to agreed-upon model of ministry

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[3] Ibid, p 2-5.
[4] Ibid, p 2-19.
[5] Releasing Your Church's Potential, p 5-3.
[6] Points in the following section are from www.CoachNet.org.

- commitment to excellence

Creating functional structures is an on-going process of:

- evaluating -- determining course action needed

- planning -- determining how that action will be carried out

- implementing -- actually doing it

Evaluate functional structures using three criteria:

- how closely it is related to the vision

- how effective it is in its operation with regards to its intended function and outcomes

- what its contribution is to producing harvest leaders

Things to consider as you develop functional structures:

Values: "Who are you?"
Vision: "Where are you going?"
Mission: "How will you get there?"
Outcomes: "Are you there yet?"
Ministry Flow Chart: "What are you doing to get where we're going?"
Organizational Chart and Job Descriptions: "Who is going to do it, and what are they supposed to do?"

Other Questions For Consideration[7]:

How are the various ministries of your church related to each other? Do they function independently or do they take advantage of each other's strengths and supplement each other's weaknesses?

In what ways are your leadership structures designed to expand and reproduce?

How has growth in one area or ministry of the church encouraged growth in another area?

How does each ministry generate the resources needed to develop and expand that ministry?

In what ways do the strengths of the people in the leadership team complement each other?

Are the systems working in a way that promotes growth? How is evaluation a permanent part of your system and structure?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Gift-Oriented Ministry*[8]

The Holy Spirit gives every person spiritual gifts for the good of the Body of Christ and the building of God's Kingdom. (1 Cor. 12:4-7) Church leaders have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop and exercise their gifts in appropriate ministries so that the Body of Christ grows in love and matures "to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-16)

Those who understand spiritual gifts recognize that

1) Every child of God is called to be a minister, and use their God-given spiritual gifts. (ref. Isaiah 61:6a, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-10, I Peter 4:10-11, Ephesians 4:11-16)

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[7] Releasing Your Church's Potential, p 5-11.
[8] Adapted from Releasing Your Church's Potential, p 3-3 to 3-15.

2) Mature leaders seek to activate the whole Body of Christ. They realize that spiritual gifts have already been given to each Christian. Their role is simply to release those gifts to function. Priority must be given to help members discover, develop and use their spiritual gifts and empower them to discern and fulfill their God-given passion and call.

3) People are effective and fulfilled when they use their gifts. Training that includes understanding the scriptural commands that correspond to some of the spiritual gifts may be needed to enable the gifts to be fully effective. There are many spiritual gifts inventories which may also be helpful.[9] As believers are enabled to meaningfully contribute their gifts in the faith community, enthusiasm and effectiveness will grow accordingly.

Questions to ask yourself: What is your understanding of spiritual gifts? Which gifts are available for use in your church? Record these. Which gifts do you see being used in your church? Which gifts need to be recognized and released? What factors in your church inhibit or block the natural growth and release of spiritual gifts?

Discovering your own giftedness:

1) Recognize what it is that motivates you, that strong, emotional stirring that feeds your passion. An intrinsic motivation to do a certain kind of work lies deep within each of us. Identify and describe times of personal satisfaction and achievements. Look for thematic patterns, common threads, and your motivational pattern will become evident. Characteristics of God-given passion/motivation: It is in harmony with scripture, accentuated by spiritual gifts, tempered by life situation, and directed by God for God's global purposes. Recognizing this source of your motivation will help you to focus your ministry calling.

2) Confirm your spiritual gift mix. What ministry activities give you joy? In what areas are you especially insightful, more so than the average Christian? In what ministries have you been particularly effective? How have other believers affirmed and/or encouraged you in ministry?

3) Evaluate your temperament and personality. Doing so will help you to understand what kind of work environment is helpful to you, how you work with other personalities, and negotiate personality conflicts. Using personality tests such as the DISC or Myers-Briggs will be helpful in this evaluation process.

4) Assess your life situation. The ways in which you actualize your gifts and calling is affected by many factors, such as age, career, marriage and other relationships, education, and children. Discern what steps God is showing you to fulfill His call in your life.

Helping others confirm their giftedness:

1) Re-envision your ministry in terms of how to use your ministry to release giftedness in others. Seek God's vision to mobilize the right fit of those in the church's various ministries. Educate yourself by studying various gifts inventories and other education tools, such as **Network** materials by Bruce Bugbee (Zondervan, ISBN #0310412315 / 0310257956 / 0310257948), Evaluate all responsibilities in your area of ministry in light of the gifts needed for those roles.

2) Develop a system of networks that help guide people into those areas of ministry for which they are gifted. Such a system will act to connect ministry opportunities with those who can best serve in that capacity.

3) Help people discern and develop their gifts, utilizing one or more of the available gifts inventories.

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[9] Bryant, Charles. *Your Spiritual Gifts Inventory* (Upper Room), 1997 ISBN #WW580819X; Wagner, Peter C. *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire – Updated and Expanded* (Gospel Light), 2001, ISBN #0830736948; Bugbee, Bruce. *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way: Five Assessments for Gift-Identification* (Zondervan Corp), 2004 ISBN #0310257468 are a few examples of available inventories.

4) Use small groups to activate people for ministry. The small group provides a place for people to know each other well enough to help them identify their gifts, and provides a safe place in which they can practice using their gifts. Small group leaders need to be able to spot giftedness and encourage members to use their gifts, assess maturity and passion, and provide an atmosphere in which persons can safely practice, be affirmed and coached into excellence.

Other Questions for Consideration:

1) How do you encourage those with similar gifts to interact?

2) How have you encouraged people with specific strengths to pass them on to others through mentoring?

3) Do you help others to discover and use their gifts, or do you find yourself simply filling ministry slots with willing volunteers, regardless of their giftedness or lack thereof in the particular area of need?

4) How are a variety of gifts being used in each ministry?

5) Where do you see people with different gifts and temperaments working together?

6) How does your assimilation process encourage people to discover their gifts and get involved in ministry?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Holistic Small Groups*[10]

Holistic Small Groups are spiritually oriented disciple-making communities which provide safe places for their members (unchurched and churched) to come together to develop authentic relationships, grow according to their God-given gifts, meet individual needs, and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church. Like any living organism, holistic small groups are designed to grow and multiply.

Growing churches have assimilated a system of small groups where individual Christians can experience intimate community, practical help and significant spiritual interaction. The groups provide a place where not only is the Word of God discussed, but biblical insights into practical issues are applied.

Changes in our culture have increased the need for small group ministries. The reasons for this growing need are many: family fragmentation, resulting in diminished boundaries, lives that are out of control, increased stress, lack of genuine relationships, and desire for authenticity. In secular society, small groups are growing at a rapid rate, with support/recovery programs being particularly effective. The church can meet those same needs while providing a spiritual base for people through small group ministries.

Your theology and philosophy of ministry should integrate small groups into the life fabric of the church. What you do in small groups needs to be thought through carefully, be consistent with the church's values and vision, and be designed to multiply. Implementing an effective small group ministry will be leadership intensive and require moving through a change process. If Holistic Small Groups is your church's minimum factor, investing in a curriculum/teaching manual that leads you into the process of developing such groups is strongly encouraged. The **40 Days of Purpose** Church Program is a good example of such a program, and a combination of **Releasing Your Church's Potential** and guides available on www.CoachNet.org is quite comprehensive.

Reflection Questions:

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[10] Adapted from *Releasing Your Church's Potential,* p 7-1 to 7-21 and *www.CoachNet.org.*

1) What does group life look like when "God shows up"? How many of your groups are experiencing this on a regular basis? To what extent is scripture a central part of small group life? To what extent is prayer an essential part of small group life?

2) What makes your small groups a "safe place" to share personal struggles? What do you think hinders honest sharing? In what ways are members encouraged to interact between meetings? What evidence do you have that indicates the groups are actually meeting the needs of people who participate?

3) How do small groups fit into the overall scheme and ministry of the church? How will they be integral to fulfilling the vision? In what ways will small groups enable people to live out the church's core values?

Other Questions for Consideration:

1) Are your small groups linked in a system, or is each one on its own to survive? Describe.

2) In what ways does your small group system promote and encourage the multiplication of groups (not just accommodate it)?

3) How do you capitalize on the excitement of a growing group to encourage other groups/leaders?

4) In what ways does your system for small groups enable more groups to be formed?

5) How do people with various gifts and abilities work together in small groups to provide a holistic community?

6) What evidence do you have that small groups are fulfilling their function to produce more and better disciples?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results *Inspiring Worship*[11]

Inspiring worship involves a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. The presence of God in worship creates times of joyous exultation as well as times of quiet reverence. It is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group, but rather, the shared experience of God's awesome presence.

Inspiring worship is a lifestyle, a lifestyle that acknowledges that Christ is Lord of our lives. The work and person of God is the source of life-giving inspiration in worship, which can be experienced in a corporate setting as well as in individual quiet times. Corporate worship is an overflow of personal worship: as you experience the presence of God and allow him to transform your life on a personal level, when you come together for corporate worship, God touches you as a group. When God is glorified in worship, the result is a dynamic process of celebration and reflection which leads into unity, vision, maturity, blessing and empowerment for ministry.

As you build your life on the solid foundation of God, you will increasingly practice the following habits: continuously praise God, rejoice in negative circumstances, experience God even in difficult circumstances, maintain your focus on God, notice the miraculous, desire the Lord, confess your sins as they occur, and find joy in the Lord. This behavior is contagious – it spreads throughout the congregation, and results in inspiring worship!

Characteristics of vital corporate worship include the following aspects: worship that is alive to the presence of God, culturally appropriate, modeled by the leaders, biblically based sermons that have a clear theme and response goal, effective transitions and flow, maximum participation, and is meaningful to both regular attendees and newcomers.

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[11] Adapted from *Releasing Your Church's Potential* and www.CoachNet.org

Other preparation for inspiring worship that is important: adequate parking, effective signage, clean building (especially restrooms!), and attractive, well-managed children's ministries all work to enable people to be open to and focus on the Spirit in worship.

Reflection Questions:

1) In what ways are your worship services more than a "feel good" experience? When does it seem that people are connecting personally and corporately with God? What indicators tell you that God is infusing the praises of the people?

2) How do you include children in the worship service? What other programs or opportunities do children have to be involved in the life of the church? How well are those attended?

3) How easy or difficult is it for the newcomers to locate the sanctuary, nursery, children's ministry rooms, and the restrooms? Do they have to ask, are there signs, are there greeters volunteering information?

4) Are the transitions between various elements of the service smooth, or do they create boredom? How do you address and involve guests and pre-Christians in the worship experience? Who have you asked to evaluate your sermons? What characteristics of a good sermon do you need to intentionally develop?

Other Questions for Consideration:

1) In what ways does the worship service fuel other ministries and vice versa?

2) What segment of your community is not being reached through your present style of worship?

3) How does the energy from praise and worship transfer to the life of the worshipper and their specific ministry area?

4) How are you developing new celebration and worship leaders for multiple services or church planting?

5) In what ways do you reinforce the sermon through the worship and the worship through the sermon?

6) What are the intended outcomes of the worship service? How are those increasing?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Loving Relationships*[12]

Loving relationships are at the very center of a healthy, growing church. In fact, the heart of Christianity can be summed up in one word: love. (Matthew 22:37-40, John 13:35) Jesus said people will know we are his disciples by our love. Practical demonstration of love builds authentic Christian community and brings others into closer relationship with God.

Loving relationships within the church require that its members are loving persons, who relate with others in healthy ways to cultivate an authentic community in which God is worshiped and celebrated. Their love and joy overflow the bounds of their church out into the world, where they share the love of God to the lost and hurting.

Authentic, loving relationships are expressed in practical ways: through mutual affection and honor (Romans 12:10); a spirit of patience and forgiveness (Eph. 4:2, 32); carrying one another's burdens (Gal.6:2); mutual submission (Eph 5:21); correcting and accepting correction from one another (Col 3:16); encouraging and building one another up (1 Thes 5:11); provoking one another to love and good deeds

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[12] Adapted from *Releasing Your Church's Potential,* p 9-1 to 9-13 and *www.CoachNet.org.*

(Heb 10:24), confessing sins to each other and praying for one another's healing (James 5:16). Authentic, loving relationships are characterized by honesty, grace, forgiveness, transparency, intimacy, compassion, hospitality, laughter, and mutual accountability.

Reflection Questions:

1) How is joy and trust experienced and expressed in congregational life? What are the indicators to you that your church provides such an atmosphere? What have you done to foster this atmosphere? How have you seen people supporting one another in your congregation? How does your church show love to people outside the church?

2) When people do something new or for the first time, is there affirmation expressed, criticism or silence? How does your church respond to people who try and fail at a new ministry or responsibility? What systems, programs or ministries in your church promote relationship building? In what ways do they celebrate and have fun?

3) What opportunities does your church provide for people to go beyond the initial, superficial stage of relationship? How do you consistently and systematically invite newcomers to be a part of a small group? How do you train small group leaders to develop community? When and how do you celebrate community? What is the quality of relationships among people on leadership teams? How can you strengthen those relationships?

4) What unresolved conflicts, past or present, hinder you and/or your members from developing loving relationships? What else might hinder the flow of God's love through your life and that of the members? Using an example of conflict resolution in your church's recent history, how would you evaluate the ability of the congregation and you as pastor to face and deal with conflict in a healthy manner?

Other Questions:

1) How do you provide specific guidelines for your people to love others within and outside the church?

2) What specific opportunities do you provide for reconciliation in the church family?

3) In what ways are people's relationships with Christ transforming their relationships with others?

4) What benefits has your church experienced from loving relationships that would motivate you to encourage loving relationships in the church?

5) How are loving relationships encouraged in each ministry of the church?

6) In what ways do people show the love of Christ to others inside and outside of your congregation?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Need-Oriented Evangelism*[13]

Need-Oriented Evangelism intentionally develops relationships with pre-Christians so they can become mature disciples of Jesus Christ who are actively participating in the life of the church and Christian community. Employing appropriate ministries and authentic relationships, believers can lead others into the family of God.

Growing churches are not manipulative or over-bearing in the way they evangelize. Rather, their success lies in the way in which they share the gospel, so that it is relevant and comprehensive in meeting the needs and questions of pre-Christians.

Churches which have Need-Oriented Evangelism as their minimum factor may have a majority of members who shy away from even the word "evangelism" – their associations with the word are negative, and filled with fear. A focus for growing in this Quality Characteristic will be to educate the members about

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[13] Adapted from *Releasing Your Church's Potential* p 8-1 to 8-13 and *www.CoachNet.org*

the variety of ways one can share the good news of Christ, including how to share one's own spiritual life story in an effective way.

In addition to enhancing the member's ability to personally evangelize (regardless of one's primary spiritual gifts), Need-Oriented Evangelism also involves developing culturally relevant outreach oriented ministries, becoming "user friendly" in terms of preparing for and caring for guests in worship, and assimilating newcomers into the life of the church.

Reflection Questions

1) Who are the unchurched people you relate to on a regular basis? To what extent are individuals in your church (including the pastor) actively seeking to develop redemptive relationships with them? How can you help your people build relationships with pre-Christians in such a way that they will want to know more about God?

2) How have you helped people discover their personal style of evangelism? What percentage of your church programming is directed toward evangelistic ministries? To what extent is evangelism a primary goal for small groups? What aspects of your small groups would help or hinder bringing a new person to a small group meeting?

3) How are you using prayer in your evangelistic efforts? What needs are you meeting in your community? What new ministries need to be started to meet felt needs? How will you determine effectiveness in a given outreach ministry?

4) What aspects of your worship service are guest-sensitive? What parts might be confusing?

5) What avenues are available to help guests build relationships with members and get involved in ministry? How well are these strategies working? What changes in your facilities would make your church more attractive to visitors?

6) In what ways does your discipleship track simultaneously reach the unchurched, help new believers mature and encourage them to become active members of a small group?

Other Questions:

1) How will people without the gift of evangelism participate in evangelism?

2) How are you mobilizing new Christians to reach out to their network of friends, family and co-workers?

3) Do you expect people without the gift of evangelism to evangelize? Do you train them to use their gifts for evangelism? How?

4) How do you both meet specific needs and introduce Christ in a healthy way through outreach events?

5) What different types of evangelism do you practice in your church?

6) How have you researched your community to ensure that outreach events are relevant?

Interpreting and Using NCD Results for *Passionate Spirituality*[14]

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[14] Material adapted from Christian Schwarz' *Natural Church Development* (ChurchSmart Resources), 2000 p 26 ff, Releasing Your Church's Potential, p 4-1 to 4-13, and www.CoachNet.org.

Enthusiasm for the faith undergirds effective ministry. An inspiring, intimate relationship with God leads to a confidence that God will act in powerful ways. Alignment with God's will and activity can only be accomplished through a hopeful faith that discerns obstacles as opportunities and turns failure into victories. Passionate spirituality is not the same as emotionality; a variety of worship styles can be passionate. Passionate spirituality is inspiring to others because it is faith lived out with sincerity, commitment and enthusiasm. The concept of spiritual passion and the widespread notion that "living a good, Christian life is one's duty" are mutually exclusive, and to the extent that church members are there primarily to fulfill their duty to God, your church will fail to inspire others to experience and grow in relationship with God and one another. Having a passionate spirituality involves personal spiritual disciplines, corporate spiritual disciplines, and contagious faith.

Passionate spirituality refers to the vibrancy and deepening of a believer's personal walk with Christ. Spiritual maturity is not accurately measured by how long someone has "known" the Lord, extent of Christian education, faithful giving of time, talent, or treasure, compliance with church leadership, or variety of Church experience. Instead, it is more accurately measured in a manner that is consistent with Christian core values. These include a hatred for evil (not evil doers!), love for unlovable people, ability to share the gospel with others, a teachable spirit, flexibility, and a spirit of peace, contentment, simplicity, and joyfulness.

Rev. Gordon MacDonald offers helpful insight into seven elements of life and ministry which have the capacity to undermine spiritual passion and dampen enthusiasm, which he calls "The Seven Deadly Siphons": "words *without* action, busyness *without* purpose, calendars *without* a Sabbath, relationships *without* mutual nourishment, pastoral personality *without* self-examination, natural giftedness *without* spiritual power, an enormous theology *without* an adequate spirituality."[15]

Reflection Questions:

1) When have your erroneous, unconscious definitions of "spiritual maturity" affected whom you have called to leadership? Practically speaking, what attitudes and actions would indicate genuine growth in spiritual passion?

2) In what way does joy characterize your Christian walk? How has your prayer life and faith deepened in the last six months? What scriptures fuel your spiritual passion? What actions, attitudes or experiences diminish your spiritual passion?

3) How have you helped increase the faith of others in your church? How have you integrated prayer into the life of the church? What plans do you have to increase your prayer base? Do you have strategic intercessors praying for your church and community? If not, how will you develop such a team?

Other Questions for Consideration:

1) Are worship and prayer integrated into all the ministries of the church, or are they isolated to certain times and places?

2) What guidelines do you provide to help people responsibly grow in their spiritual walk?

3) In what ways do you see mature passionate spirituality empowering the ministries of the church?

4) How could you use prayer walks and prayer evangelism to reach your neighborhoods?

5) Which ministries of the church strengthen or deepen the spiritual life of the participants?

6) What are the marks of a person in love with Christ? Is your church growing in the number of people who demonstrate those marks? In what ways?

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[15] As quoted in *Releasing Your Church's Potential,* p 4-6.

Suggested Format for Presenting Survey Results to Congregation

I. Introduction and Prayer

II. Briefly explain again eight Quality Characteristics and barrel stave illustration

III. Present survey results

IV. Discuss initial reaction of whole group to survey results
(Do not let pessimism or denial dominate – ask for other opinions)

V. Conduct breakout discussion groups consisting of 5 to 8 people. Identify a facilitator for each group.
Instruct each group to take notes and then report their conclusions back to the entire congregation.
Discuss the following questions:
What does the survey mean to you?
What does the survey tell you about the health of your church?
What would your church be like at its healthiest?
What problems would you anticipate in implementing the survey?

VI. Breakout groups report their conclusions and most significant ideas back to the whole group

VII. Explain alternative approaches to using NCD survey results, the concept of an implementation team
and its role in addressing the low quality characteristic

VIII. Closing remarks and dismissal