

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT Headlines

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the fourth (quarterly) edition of *Natural Church Development Headlines* to keep you updated on what is happening with NCD in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In this issue you will find

- Two great stories about the NCD experience
- Maximizing use of the NCD Survey results
- New resources available on the SDA Network
- CoachNet group tours
- 2003 training events
- Info re. the new NCD delivery system for the SDA church

Dates to Remember:

- February 11
- February 18
- May 19 & 20
- July 14-17

You will find more details for each date as you read the following pages.

To the contributors for this issue, we say “thank you” for being willing to share your story, your experience, your knowledge.

NCD is what’s happening in your church. If you are willing to share your story, please contact me using the contact information at the end of this issue.

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT DOESN’T WORK! (If you make the following mistakes.)

I am a Natural Church Development coach for just over three years and have coached more than thirty churches. However, I am not an expert in NCD, except perhaps in “what not to do.” When asked to write this article, I remembered as many mistakes as

“success stories.” Perhaps the sharing of my mistakes will save you from making the same.

Mistake number one: *I assumed that if a pastor, or a church, requested a NCD Survey, this church was ready to change and/or grow.*

I’ve learned pastors and churches have many motives for requesting a NCD survey. I am learning to ask better questions, listen more, and talk less. For example, I’ve asked, “Why do you want to do the survey?” or “How do you think this survey will help you?” or “Is there anything I should know about your church or ministry that could help me in serving you?” The sooner I discover their motives, expectations, and perceptions of the survey, the better I help.

Mistake number two: *I assumed that if a church understood its minimum factor and were given specific resources for that factor, they would DO something about it.*

I’ve learned it takes more than knowledge to create change within a church. Both the pastor and the leaders of a church must develop (and repeatedly communicate) a sense of urgency for needed change, or little progress is made. Also, an Implementation Team, consisting of the church’s “movers and shakers”, as well as those involved with the ministry effected by the minimum factor, must be held accountable for implementing change/growth. This Team often begins by asking the following questions; “Are these survey results accurate?” “What factor(s) contribute to these results?” “What can be done to improve our minimum factor?” and “What might hinder progress in this area, and what can be done to minimize these hindrances?” For excellent information on implementing change within a church

see Alan Nelson and Gene Appel's book, *How to Change Your Church (without killing it)**.

Mistake number three: *I assumed that if a church was convicted it needed to change to become healthier, that it would.*

In the past, after explaining the Survey results, I gave a simple assignment. I requested them to daily pray about the results and to ask for God's guidance. Next, I requested them to call after three weeks and tell me what area they wanted to improve, and then we would begin training in that area.

Since they rarely called back in a timely manner, I've changed my modus operandi. Today, after I explain the survey results, the church selects an Implementation Team (see above paragraph). Also, I now bring resources to assist the Implementation Team (such as *Health for the Harvest*, by Robert Folkenberg, Jr.). Finally, they are given a deadline to report on their progress (usually at the next church Board meeting and often each Board meeting thereafter). I still request them to spend much time in prayer. However, I've learned that I must educate and empower an Implementation Team at the time I explain the survey results.

In addition to an Implementation Team (and usually in conjunction with it), I encourage their church to develop a master plan committee. This committee must look to their past to describe what they have done well and how God has blessed them. They must also assess their local talents and resources as well as their opportunities for ministry. Then they can develop a vision and strategy, based on God's leading, as to where God wants them to be in five years. This committee also has the responsibility to communicate their vision to the church until it becomes an intricate part of that church.

Mistake number four: *I assumed that if a church was not following my guidance, that I had failed.*

At times, some churches seem only to want an objective assessment. The resident pastor usually understands the personality, resources, and/or history of a church better than a church growth consultant. She, or he, may prefer an alternate method (or timing) than suggested by the consultant. I've learned to affirm every positive step toward church

health, regardless of its source.

Mistake number five: *I assumed that if a church didn't do something now (to become healthier), they wouldn't do something in the near future.*

Some churches are not ready for change. If a church is overwhelmed by problems, or is without a pastor, they rarely make significant changes. Often, by the time of a second Survey, more churches are ready to overcome hindrances to growth.

In spite of all my mistakes, God richly blesses even my feeble efforts. For example, one of the churches I began working with almost three years ago had an average attendance of four members on Sabbath. They began implementing the concepts of Natural Church Development and today average forty-five in attendance every Sabbath. God blesses beyond our abilities to help a church grow. I am thankful God's blessings are vastly more important than my limited resources!

Submitted by Del Dunavant, D.Min., Director of Church Growth, Northern California Conference

***NOTE:** Gene Appel and Alan Nelson, authors of *How to Change Your Church (without killing it)*, will be the main speakers at SEEDS 2003, May 7-10, at Andrews University. For further information, call 800-255-7568 or check www.NADEI.org, or email SEEDS@cs.com

THE NCD EXPERIENCE AT THE MANCHESTER (KY) SDA CHURCH

In early 2001 I became excited about Natural Church Development! The Conference strategic planning committee had endorsed it, as had the conference executive committee. The Ministerial department sent each pastor Christian Schwarz's book *Natural Church Development*. I read it quickly. Here was a tool to analyze the state of my congregation; it even offered guidance for correcting our weaknesses. In May 2001 we took our initial Survey. Results: Minimum Factor – Functional Structures, with Gift-Oriented Ministry a close second.

I did not use optimal procedure in selecting and forming the Implementation Team; the church board selected the

members. I started giving them material to read, and soon we were meeting every couple of weeks. The problem was one of understanding and perspective. Even though I distributed Schwarz's book and lots of implementation data on confronting structural issues, some of the Team members never bought into the concepts or perspective. I now recognize the need to intentionally educate both the Implementation Team and the general church regarding vocabulary and concepts.

We fumbled for a while, but one Team member signed up with CoachNet (www.CoachNet.org) and helped me learn to direct and focus the Implementation Team. We pushed the board and then business meeting to establish a mission Statement. We developed a chart of the church hierarchy. From that chart we could see our need to sharpen the organizational structure. It was even apparent where we could make some simple changes to improve both focus and flow of information.

The Implementation Team recommended who should serve on the nominating committee (based on the results of a spiritual gifts inventory). The church voted them in and then accepted the new structure that developed for church organization. The shrinking of the church board went through quite a process from Implementation Team to church business meeting, and finally nominating committee. Our church has about 60 active members. Our board had been 22 members with a quorum of 8. Our new board has 12 members with a quorum of 9. Each board member leads a team of church ministers, reporting for them to the church board. Eight of the board members have each been assigned one of the Quality Characteristics to monitor and develop.

Another change is that the nominating committee does not try to be so comprehensive in its assignments. Much more freedom is left with the various team leaders to recruit their own teams. We cut in half the list of names the nominating committee submits annually to the church for vote.

Having done some sweeping changes and lived with them for a few months, it is time to check up on how things are going. I await answers to

questions that will come from the second NCD Survey: Are our structural changes functional? Has the intentionality of seeking to place people in the area of their giftedness really improved the gift-oriented ministry of the congregation? Have we maintained passionate spirituality while we worked on more mundane issues?

The parallel of church growth to that of a garden continues to impact me. In gardening I know my role and trust God to do His part. How much more in church growth do I need to differentiate between what He has assigned me and what He promises to do in and for us. As we submit to God in prayer, He is empowered to do in and for us those things that would be to His glory.

Submitted by J. Fred Calkins, Pastor, Manchester SDA Church

NOTE: If you are interested in a copy of the most recent Manchester SDA Church Nominating Committee Report showing their new organization, contact the Editor using contact information at the end of this issue.

MAXIMIZING THE OUTCOMES OF THE NCD SURVEY – Part 3

In the previous article we made a first step in discovering the secret of how to have healthier churches (or in other words how to have higher scores for all eight qualities at the same time). We saw how significantly the utilization of spiritual gifts contributed to the overall health of the local churches. The analysis of Gift-Oriented Ministry brought our attention also to the fact that spiritual gifts are discussed in the Scripture always in the context of church community as Christ's body.

Let's assume that the Holistic Small Groups quality is one of the most important ingredients of a true community. How are SDA churches doing as communities? In the overall profile of the 200 tested churches, the Holistic Small Groups quality had the lowest score of all (31). Such a low score might be surprising for some. One would expect that the Sabbath school commitment for small group ministry should be reflected in a higher score. But it is not. Why? In what way do small groups create a true community? What makes small groups holistic?

Before dealing with these questions, let's take a look at the statistics. In order to determine how actual involvement in small groups affects the scores, the tested congregations were divided accordingly. 166 congregations were reported to have less than 25 percent of members involved in small groups. (Out of that number, 91 congregations had less than 10 percent of members involved in small groups!). Seventeen congregations were reported as having 25-50 percent of members in small groups, and only 12 churches had more than 50 percent of members involved in small groups.

An interesting development appeared in my research. While the first group with less than 25 percent of its members in small groups had lower average scores in all eight qualities (mean=37) than the second group with 25-50 percent in small groups (mean=47), the third group with 50+ percent in small groups, however, did not exceed the scores of the second group as expected. All the average scores of the third group but the score for Holistic Small Groups were more or less lower (mean=45).

Our data analysis indicates that with the increasing participation in small groups the scores grew only if the involvement in small groups did not exceed half of the congregation. Then the process started to reverse. With increasing participation in small groups with more than half of the congregations, all the scores started slowly to drop. Surprisingly, churches with more than 76 percent members participating in small group had actually lower average scores than churches with the amount of participants between 51 and 75 percent. Based on this observation we can say that a higher percentage of people involved in small groups does not always lead to greater health of the congregations.

A closer look at given data provided two possible reasons for this development:

The first lays in numbers of church attendants. The churches with higher attendance had average higher scores than churches with lower attendance. Along that line, the congregations with 51+ percent of members participating in small groups were not large enough (the average size of these 12 congregations was 61 attendants).

The second reason comes with utilization of

spiritual gifts. The congregations with 51+ percent of members participating in small groups did not have sufficient scores for Gift-Oriented Ministry. In particular, there were two congregations with less than 25 percent of members using their spiritual gifts and five congregations with less than 40 percent. In such cases, all the other qualities scored low as well.

To sum it up, the utilization of spiritual gifts leads quite consistently to a greater health, but involvement in small groups does not lead to greater scores as consistently. Such a conclusion indicates that small groups by themselves do not lead to an authentic community. On the other hand, small group ministry creates an excellent opportunity for utilizing members' spiritual gifts that brings new vitality to Christ's body. As Randy Frazee points out, "you can have a small group and not experience community but you cannot have community apart from a small group experience" (p.22*).

Perhaps the holistic component of a small group is what makes the difference. Such a small group is organized around and relevant to daily life, meeting both intellectual and emotional needs. In holistic small groups people reach out to others in an atmosphere of transparency and trust where one learns to walk with God, where people experience healing of their spiritual emptiness, emotional wounds, or physical sickness through prayer and sharing. That reminds us of early church life described in Acts 2:42-47. People read the Bible, hung out, ate and prayed *together*, and enjoyed each other. They had something in common. Through this powerful ministry God multiplied disciplines, leaders and groups. Could it be that this simple and biblically rooted principle of holistic small groups could bring new energy and greater health (i.e. higher NCD scores) to our churches?

Submitted by Petr Cincala, M.Div., M.S.W., Ph.D.

*Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church*, MI: Grand Rapids, ZondervanPublishingHouse, 2001.

NEW RESOURCES ON THE SDA NETWORK!

For those of you who have already checked out the Seventh-Day Adventist NCD Network on CoachNet, you'll be glad to know it's been updated

with new files. For those of you who have not yet visited this area of CoachNet – try it out!

To find the SDA Network:

1. Log in with your first name, last name, and password
2. Click on MyNetworks at the top of your screen
3. Choose & click on either the NADEI logo or the link that says “Seventh-Day Adventists” (on the main part of the page)
4. You will see the following choices: Network Library, Forums, and Coaches

Within the Network Library is an area called Files. This area has recently been updated with new files that you can download. It now includes:

_ NCD Resources from NADEI – A *great* list of resources that are available from NADEI for each of the 8 Quality Characteristics.

_ SDA Introduction to NCD – This is Russell Burrill’s presentation that he gives at the beginning of the NCD coach trainings. Included here are Student and Teacher Manuals in both Word and WordPerfect, as well as his PowerPoint slide presentation.

_ The Biotics Simplified – Bill Peterson’s strategy and directions for making the biotic principles layman-friendly. (Under the category “General Files”.)

To find these files once you are in the SDA Network:

1. Click on Network Library
2. Click on Files
3. Be sure that you are looking at the SDA logo—it should be in the middle or at the top of your screen
4. Under the logo you will see 3 categories:

NCD Resources from NADEI
SDA Introduction to NCD
General Files

Click on the plus sign (+) next to the file you are interested in. (“The Biotics Simplified” is under the “General Files” category.) When you click on the plus sign you will see individual files to choose from.

5. Choose the file you are interested in and click on the underlined, blue words.
6. You can download these files onto your computer or print them out from the Internet. They are free and for you to use as needed.

We hope that these files will be of help to you. If you know of any other SDA specific NCD resources that we could make available or that you would like to see, please let me know. And if you have any trouble finding what you need, let me know! You can contact me at:

Sherilyn Carlton

CoachCarlton@DestinationCoaching.com or at 425-881-2953.

YOU HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY!!

The coaches who took advantage of the CoachNet group tours in October were glad they did. If you missed those tours you will want to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in one of the two tours scheduled for February.

To join a live tour guided by our own CoachNet expert Sherilyn Carlton, call 360/816-1400 on one of the following dates:

Tues., February 11, 9:30am Pacific Time, or

Tues., February 18, 12 noon Pacific Time.

You will find this tour most helpful in expediting your learning how to navigate in www.CoachNet.org.

EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL?

In the last issue of *Headlines*, I told you that beginning with this issue you would be receiving *Headlines* via email. Obviously, that didn’t happen this time, but you can still look forward to it happening in the near future, hopefully with the 1st Quarter 2003 issue.

If I do not have an email address for you, you will continue receiving the *Headlines* by snailmail.

2003 TRAINING EVENTS SCHEDULED AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

Phase 2 – May 19 and 20 (Monday and Tuesday)

Pre-requisites:

Previously attended a Basic or Phase 1 training

Coached at least two churches through the NCD process

Hold a current CoachNet membership

Phase 1 – July 14-17 (Monday through Thursday)

We are in the process of having brochures prepared and printed. Everyone who has attended our 2001 and 2002 training events will receive a Phase 2 brochure for yourself, as well as a Phase 1 brochure

to pass along to a friend.

NEW NCD DELIVERY PLAN FOR THE SDA CHURCH

Progress continues to be made in preparing the new NCD delivery plan for the SDA church. The last week of January Bob Logan will be meeting with seven hand-picked coach trainers in preparation for introducing the new delivery system during the fall of 2003.

The conferences hosting the Pilot Program have been chosen and we continue to work with them to make necessary arrangements.

Much groundwork has been laid, but there is still much left to do. Please remember in your prayers those who are specifically working on this new plan; and please remember Natural Church Development in general and those working with it in their churches. The Lord is using NCD to make many good things happen in SDA churches. It is our prayer here at NADEI that this is only the beginning, and that we are yet to see the greatest things that the Lord has planned for our churches as they relate to NCD.

Please direct any questions, comments, or information that could be used in a future issue of *Natural Church Development Headlines* to:

Lyle Litzenberger, NCD Coordinator
269/471-8304
112223.2556@compuserve.com

OR

Runette Litzenberger, Associate NCD Coordinator
and
Editor, *NCD Headlines*
269/471-8314
112223.2561@compuserve.com