



NCD Headlines

Growing Healthy Adventist Churches Through Natural Church Development

The Clinton Seventh-day Adventist Church – Six Years of History

In 1998, Clinton, Missouri, was a conservative, mostly Caucasian, Midwest town with a population of 9,000. It was experiencing a 2-3% annual growth rate, with a healthy business and industry environment and some tourist traffic. It experienced a slightly below average state income.

The Clinton Adventist Church congregation met in a small building in “average” condition. Their finances were good, but their church esteem was fairly low. They had no vision. They were tired and dying. Weekly attendance was 30-40, out of a membership of 85. They had only one baptism in the previous 12 months. The core group realized “We need to do something or our church is going to die out.”

It was at this point of desperation that Gary Brady, the Clinton church pastor, introduced the church to Natural Church Development. Within the next six years, dramatic changes took place:

1. Membership almost doubled, from 85 to 165
2. Average attendance increased more than 300%, from 40 to 132
3. There were 103 baptisms, including 67 adult baptisms or profession-of-faith, 17 children baptisms, and 15 member re-baptisms
4. The number of young people in the church grew from 3 to 50
5. Tithe increased almost 300%, from \$71,466 to \$188,846
6. Local giving increased more than 1300% (no, that is *not* a typo!), from \$9,215 to \$118,280
7. A new church building was erected
8. The joyful atmosphere of the congregation was re-created

The Clinton church took the NCD Survey three times during those six years. Each time, they increased in all eight areas, except in two instances: once, they stayed the same in one of the characteristics, and once, they dropped three points in one of the characteristics. Their last Survey average was 66, with four characteristics scoring between 69 and 85, and four characteristics scoring between 53 and 63.

The Clinton Seventh-day Adventist Church is a healthy, growing church, thanks to the desire of the members to improve their church, as well as their commitment to make change happen; and most of all, thanks to the Lord’s leading them to make the necessary changes. The gain has been worth the pain of change. Now, they are a vibrant, healthy, growing church, better able to fulfill God’s purpose for them in their community.

Facts provided by Gary Brady. Written by Runette Litzenberger.

Editor’s Note

One recent Phase 1 NCD Coaches Training participant was thrilled with the new coaching skills and saw how they could benefit other relationships in their life. “Coaching skills could really help with parenting teenagers!”

And it’s true. Coaching is a great skill for parenting teens. And so much more. Up until recently, coaching was a little known resource—usually thought of in the context of athletics. Over time, the word became associated with helping musicians, public speakers, and actors as they attempted to grow their skills and abilities. A few years ago, coaching became the hot thing in the corporate world. Businesses hired executive coaches to guide their leaders. Today, people are turning to wellness coaches, fitness coaches, financial coaches, and life coaches.

Churches have slowly begun to recognize the benefit of coaching. NADEI has trained Natural Church Development coaches to work with churches through the NCD process. It’s been found that a church will be more successful and more likely to follow through if they have the assistance of a coach. But this is only the beginning of how coaching can impact the church. One conference has begun assigning coaches to their church plants. A conference ministerial director is using coaching as he meets with the pastors of his conference on a regular basis.

Imagine the impact and support it would give to churches, church plants, pastors, and administrators on all levels of church life to have a coach walking beside them on their journey, pointing them to God, and helping them to stay focused on God’s plan, their goals and what is really important in their ministries and lives.

As people experience coaching, they realize the benefits, and many times, want their own personal coach to be a part of their journey on a regular, not temporary basis. Dr Gary Collins suggests that someday coaching “will be common parlance and a valuable ministry in the church, even as coaching has become widely accepted in the larger secular community.”

As a denomination, we’re beginning to recognize the benefits of coaching. We were the first denomination to use coaching as part of our NCD delivery system. Will we also be the first to use coaching as a resource for other areas of church life? How could it impact the health and growth of our churches? Are we willing to commit the resources and time to building this kind of support system? As we seek to strengthen churches, we will need to give them the resources that will maximize their potential for growth.

Coaching Tips: Don’t Forget the Skill of Supporting

by Sher Carlton,
Destination Coaching



Usually when you think of coaching “skills” you think of things like listening, asking powerful questions, setting SMART goals, etc. But there are some important relational skills that are not so concrete. These are in the category of support.

According to Bob Logan and Gary Reinecke, support includes:

- encouraging
- challenging the coachee
- offering accountability
- appropriately providing for ministry needs
- keeping the focus in a clear direction

I would challenge you to take a look at your coaching relationships and assess how you are doing in these areas. Choose one of these skills listed that you will focus on improving in the next month.

Are There Elephants in the Room?

Before taking the NCD survey, churches need to ask themselves, “Are we ready to take the survey?” A coach assigned at the beginning of the NCD process can help churches answer that question— looking for potential scheduling conflicts (ie, an upcoming evangelistic series or building project) and for internal conflicts and issues that will sabotage the NCD process. Sometimes when a church jumps into NCD without assessing their readiness, a conflict or issue will arise and stall the NCD process. Checking beforehand to make sure there are no “elephants in the room” will help make the process stronger and work better.

As the Implementation Team begins to work on the minimum factor, coaches need to help them identify the “real” 3-5 key issues that need to be addressed. Many times an I-Team want to rush the Affinity process and just “fix” the problem. It’s human nature. In this instance, the coach needs to assist the I-Team in discovering the real issues behind their minimum factor versus plowing into their own agendas or thinking. What are the real elephants?

A New Spanish Translation Is Available

Creating Healthy Adventist Churches Through Natural Church Development, by Russell Burrill, is now available in Spanish – *Inglesias Adventistas Saludables*. This little book can be very helpful for introducing Spanish churches and congregations to the principles of Natural Church Development and the correlation between NCD and the Adventist church.

These books sell for \$2.00 each. When ordered in quantities of 20 or more, there is a 10% discount. To order, please contact the NADEI Resource Center:

Phone: 269/471-8303
Email: Resources@nadei.org
Fax: 269/471-8324

Christian Coaching

In his book, *Christian Coaching*, Dr Gary Collins defines coaching as, “the art and practice of guiding a person or group from where they are toward the greater competence and fulfillment that they desire. Coaching helps people expand their vision, build their confidence, unlock their potential, increase their skills, and take practical steps toward their goals.” Christian coaching adds to this basic definition by coming at coaching from a biblical worldview. Instead of emphasizing looking inside for answers, a Christian coach encourages looking to God. The Christian coach prays regularly for the person(s) they are coaching and like in every other area of their life, approaches coaching from their own personal relationship with Christ. Collins writes, “Christian values aren’t attached to coaching like a caboose hooked to the end of a train. Christian values permeate the life of the Christian coach and flow into coaching. A Christian coach takes on the same leadership style of Jesus: servant leadership. They desire to make a difference in the life of the person or church they are coaching; helping that person or church to become all that God has designed them to be.

NADEI has helped to train coaches who specialize in Natural Church Development. These NCD Coaches have a desire to help churches grow to the full potential that God has designed for them. By coming along side a church as they take the NCD survey and then walking them through the NCD journey, they help to provide accountability, resources, and a listening ear, as a church and their implementation team plot out the process by which a church will work on their minimum factor. NCD coaching is the process of coming alongside a church and empowering the leadership team to discover God’s plan for their health and growth, to guide them through the implementation process and to help them establish a periodic cycle of evaluation, action planning, and re-evaluation. As Christian coaches, they do all of this in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Your NCD Stories Are Needed

How many times have you listened to stories being told by others and benefitted from hearing them? You may not feel that your stories and experiences are worth sharing, but others do need the opportunity to hear and benefit from them.

If your church is involved in the NCD process, you have a story to tell. The *NCD Headlines* was created not only to report news, tell about new resources, and give you coaching tips, but to be a forum for sharing NCD experiences.

Whether you feel that your church’s NCD experience has been positive or negative, someone else can benefit from hearing (or reading) about it. Your mistake(s) may save someone else from making the same one; your positive action may be just the stimulus to help someone decide what they need to do.

Scripture admonishes us to “encourage one another.” Be an encouragement to each other by sharing your NCD experience so it can be published in *NCD Headlines* for others to read. To share an experience, please contact Tami Horst (daughterinawe@yahoo.com) or Runette Litzenberger (RunetteNCD@cs.com.)

Books and Resources

Can You Hear Me Now?

Listening is a huge component to good coaching. Hearing past the words and truly understanding the heart and meaning of the person speaking. Yet we live in a word filled with many words, little comprehension, with people longing to be truly understood.

In *Can You Hear Me Now?* (available through the NADEI Resource Center), authors, Dr Dallas Demmitt and Nancy Demmitt, teach the reader “discovery listening” and “discovery talking”. The book is an easy read, filled with real-life stories that demonstrate the five keys to “discovery listening”: anchoring in Christ, focusing on the person you’re listening to, summarizing what’s being said, inviting them to say more, and asking good questions. The book also leads the reader through “discovery talking”—a way for the person talking to truly identify what they want to say by looking at what they see and hear, what they think, identifying what they’re feeling and what they want.

Each chapter ends with questions for personal reflection or small group discussion.

To order, please contact the NADEI Resource Center:

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Fax: 269/471-8324

Correction: The price of the DiSC Classic Personal Profile System is \$15.95 each for orders of 1-4 booklets or \$12.00 each for orders of 5+ when ordered through the NADEI Resource Center. (The actual retail cost is \$17.95.)

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