

# The Five Steps of Natural Church Development

By Jack Stephenson and David Wetzler

It is highly recommended by ChurchSmart, NCD International, and the authors that your church be supported in this process. This video series and workbook hopefully will be a supplemental tool to a trained Coach who can walk beside your Church Leadership. Use the Coaching Log at the end of each section to prepare for a coaching session at the start of each step. Contact your local denominational office or ChurchSmart Resources ( [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com)) for a coaching support system near you, or for the possibility of beginning one in your area.

## Step 1: Prepare

- ✓ Acquaint pastor with NCD
- ✓ Evaluate readiness to engage in the process
- ✓ Help pastor gain ownership with leaders
- ✓ Establish coaching relationship
- ✓ Mobilize intercessors for focused prayer
- ✓ Help mobilize church health team

**Key Point:** The pastor, leaders and groups of the Church are all on the same page and ready to begin a process of lay empowerment and visioning addressing the Church's area most in need of attention - the "Minimum Factor".

## John 5 Reflection: Do we want to get well?

### How will we accomplish the following?

Acquaint the pastor with NCD.

Gather a Church Health Team (CHT).

Make sure official and unofficial leaders are brought on board.

Take the orientation to all groups within the church.

Make the decision that we are ready to begin step 2 (order the survey and begin).

### **Readiness check list:**

- Is the time right?
- Any major problems within the last year?
- Is the Leadership committed?
- Is the pastor leaving soon (within weeks or months)?
- Size and age of the church (larger or older, slow down).
- Church experience with change (if none in recent years, slow down).
- List of groups taking the introduction and member of the CHT assigned to each:

### **What introduction method will we use?**

This DVD introduction segment

*ABCs of Natural Church Development* booklet

NCD in one hour PowerPoint

### **Responsibilities of the Coach or Church Health Team**

1. Make sure the Pastor is well informed.
2. Evaluate the readiness of the congregation.
3. Create a time line for the five-step process
4. Make sure the CHT is organized and given the introduction (on this DVD).

Makeup of the Church Health Team:

- Team Leader
- Strategic Thinker
- Researcher
- Intercessor
- Communicator
- Members of some ministry teams (Add in step two, after the survey results, a few more members who are most affected by the minimum factor).

## Gant Chart Example

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Feb	April	June	September	Nov.

Remember that ***coaching is highly recommended*** and contact your local denominational office or ChurchSmart Resources at [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com) .

When your Church Health Team feels the church is ready:

- Order the Survey (again from either your local denominational office or [www.churchsmart.com](http://www.churchsmart.com)).
- Gather 30 people to take the survey (29 plus the senior pastor).
- Set a date to take the Survey.

# Coaching Log

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Progress

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## Challenges

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## **Step 2: Diagnose**

- ✓ Assist in completing the survey as needed
- ✓ Process the results with the pastor/church health team
- ✓ Help expand church health team as needed
- ✓ Facilitate church health team training
- ✓ Provide coaching to identify key issues contributing to the Minimum Factor
- ✓ Ensure church narrows focus to 3-5 key issues
- ✓ Resource pastor/leaders in light of 3-5 key issues.

## **Diagnosis and Confession**

Point: The congregation takes a very accurate survey of 8 quality characteristics and gathers together to say ***“Why are we this way?”*** They then reduce those many opinions to 3-5 causal issues surrounding their minimum factor.

**John 9 Reflection:** The disciples were wrong in their diagnosis of why the man was blind. How important is our honesty about why we are in need of attention in this area of the church?

## **Review:**

- Is the pastor informed and on board, introduced to the process and ready to begin?
- Are the Key Leaders on board and given the introduction to the five steps?
- Have we gone to the major groups in the church and given them an introduction?
- Are we organized as a CHT and meeting together to discuss the process?
- Has the Church decided to move ahead in this process?
- Are the Survey Results back?
- If any of the above are not complete, strongly consider finishing step one before continuing.

**There are two parts of Step Two:**

1. Taking the Survey (2a)
2. Unpacking the Survey results (2b)

## **Taking the Survey:**

Gather 30 people who are:

Active or “core” members of the church

Involved in a group other than worship ( a group of 3- 20 people who meet together regularly)

Involved in the life of the church (They have some ministry task)

Remember, there is a separate pastor’s survey wanting different information. The pastor fills this out and also participates on the night when 30 people fill out the regular survey... filling out one of those as well.

## **When the survey results come back:**

It is highly suggested that the pastor and coach meet first about the survey results. A concept called the “Emotional Toll Booth” means that it would be best for the pastor to be able to work through his or her feelings - seeing the results before others see them.

Remember to add to the CHT leaders affected by the minimum factor, (as an example, Inspiring Worship being a minimum factor, Choir Director or Worship Leader or Chair would be good additions.)

Gather the CHT, go over the results of the Survey and plan the ***Affinity Exercise*** night.

Who will lead that night?

Coach?

Pastor?

Member of the CHT?

(For that night you will need blank wall space in a room big enough to gather all who come, enough post-it notes for each attendee to receive five, and enough sticky dots for each to have five. If you are breaking into small groups allow adequate space for groups of 12 around the room and a space for their sticky note exercise.)

## ***Review Step 2 video on the night just before the Affinity Exercise with the CHT***

Share with the congregation the 3-5 issues they have ascertained to be the reasons surrounding the minimum factor.

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### **Step 3: Plan**

- ✓ Plan and facilitate Action Planning Workshop
- ✓ Determine evaluation and celebration times
- ✓ Coach through change management process
- ✓ Ensure communication strategy happens

**Matthew 16 Reflection:** “I will build My Church.” The Church has been entrusted to the people. Those people will now brainstorm. This is a laity empowerment method of listening to the congregation... how do we feel about that?

### **Review: Have you...**

1. Reported to the congregation the 3-5 reasons we feel we are the way we are?
  
2. Invited the congregation to a brainstorming night relating to those?

Step 3 can be done in two ways. The first is Brainstorming and Filtering. We either do it in this simple way or use the 7 action steps. We will take them in order. First, the Brainstorming and two filters.

### **Brainstorming Night**

A column is set up on a marker paper, white board or chalk board where each of the 3-5 issues surrounding our minimum factor that we gathered in step two is placed at the top of the column. We then simply collect ideas under each heading until we have exhausted the imagination of the group.

**Brainstorm Initiatives**

<b>Issue #1</b>	<b>Issue #2</b>	<b>Issue #3</b>
Idea Idea Idea Idea		

The CHT then takes that list through the two filters of SMART goals and the Growth Forces (six words), asking of each idea first if it is:

**S**pecific

**M**easurable

**A**chievable

**R**elevant to the minimum factor

**T**imeline - Able to be put in a timeline

Remember, the point is to winnow down the list, so be honest and reduce the list.

**The second filter is the six biotic principles called the Growth Forces.** We ask the remaining list of ideas if they promote:

1. Interdependence
2. Multiplication
3. Energy Transformation
4. Sustainability
5. Symbiosis
6. Fruitfulness

Why do we reduce so many good ideas to a few? At the end of step three we will have to find a champion (consider the maker of that idea), build a team, consider a budget, a timeline, and resources for each idea we end up leaving on the table. We don't want very many. Better to do a few, or even one, well rather than doing many poorly because we are overworked.

The longer, but more comprehensive, method of step three is the 7 Action Steps.

### Seven steps to action planning

1. Picture the future (Tool below)
2. Brainstorm initiatives (Tool above)
3. Set qualitative goals (SMART)
4. Prioritize initiatives (an additional filter)
5. Develop biotic strategies (The six growth force words)
6. Finish action plans (Set up teams and resources for each plan)
7. Take the first steps

### Picture the future

**Key question: What is the vision and values of the church?**

Use the APA analysis to help leadership envision what they would like to see happen within the quality characteristic on which they are focusing.

<b>Achieve</b>	<b>Preserve</b>	<b>Avoid</b>

**How can you help the church *celebrate the past and embrace the future*?**

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## **Step 4: Implement**

- ✓ Encourage celebration of early wins
- ✓ Monitor momentum of implementation
- ✓ Hold leadership and church health team accountable to their plans
- ✓ Help team make mid-course corrections
- ✓ Share resources to facilitate church health and growth
- ✓ Keep the six growth force words in play

### **Implement (getting past the paralysis of analysis)**

Point: Step 4 is about mobilizing the teams for each remaining idea. Paying attention to them, celebrating their wins, keeping the congregation aware of their work, and supporting them in remembering the 6 Growth Forces are constantly needed.

**Reflection on the Great Commission:** Jesus said “GO”. Are we ready?

Remember the observation principle: People do better when we pay attention to them.

**Review:** Have you done enough reduction? Remember you have to resource each idea you keep. Don't put out more tomato plants than you can water. For each idea, have you:

- A leader/champion for this cause
- A team
- A budget
- A time line
- A communication process (How do we tell the congregation about what we are doing?)
- Marketing (How do we present this in a positive way?)

Assign a CHT member to each team to encourage and find celebration opportunities to market and communicate about them to the congregation. That same CHT member needs to keep the 6 Words in focus and ask them often in the process of the implementation of these task forces.

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### **Step 5: Evaluate**

- ✓ Meet with the team for review of the NCD process
- ✓ Assist leadership/team in bringing closure to the implementation process
- ✓ Help church deal with growth factors as the church increases in health

Point: Step 5 is about taking the survey again and looking at our metrics to see improvement. Then review our 5 steps to see if we really did each one to the best of our ability. Thus informed, we begin the next cycle, ready to do it even better.

**Reflection on the writings of Paul:** Are we becoming self examined?

**Have we come to the place where our church health team work can be evaluated?**

If so, order the survey.

Get 30 people together and take it again (no, we don't need exactly or even any of the same people).

Receive the results and measure the progress.

Look at progress in areas such as:

- Worship Attendance
- Giving
- Involvement beyond the Worship Service
- General Morale of the congregation

**Did we do our best to follow the process as defined by the video and this workbook in:**

Step 1 – Prepare:

Step 2 – Diagnose:

Step 3 – Plan:

Step 4 - Implement

Step 5 –Evaluate:

Rebuild the CHT and begin the next cycle of NCD.

Celebrate and communicate the areas of progress found in your evaluation.

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