

Natural Church Development Survey

Indiana Conference

What is Natural Church Development (NCD)?

Natural Church Development assumes a church, as all living organisms, needs to be healthy in order to effectively fulfill its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The healthier the church, the more likely it is that the church is making disciples (reproducing). Visit the website: <http://www.ncd-international.org/public/seminars.html> to view free mini-seminars that explain NCD.

The founder of Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz, conducted a study of thousands of congregations world-wide in order to identify the characteristics of a healthy church. Through his research, he discovered that there are eight primary quality characteristics. They are as follows:

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-oriented ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Functional structures
- Inspiring worship services
- Holistic small groups
- Need-oriented evangelism, and
- Loving relationships.

Every congregation will to some degree have each of these. However, the actual degree will vary from congregation to congregation. Through his research, Schwarz was able to develop a survey to measure a church's health in each of these eight areas. A high score in each area indicates that the church is healthy.

What's the Value of an NCD Survey?

A church can benefit from taking an NCD survey in several ways. First, it will give the church a picture of how strong it is in each of the eight areas. As a result, it can help the church quickly determine where it needs to focus extra effort and provide guidance for the church in developing a plan to address that area.

Second, it can give the church an idea of how it compares to other churches that have taken it throughout the country. And finally, by taking the survey a second time a year or two later, the church can measure its progress by comparing the two scores in each of the eight areas.

How Does a Church Conduct an NCD Survey?

A church that wishes to take the survey sends a \$165 check payable to ChurchSmart Resources to Ed Fenstermacher (mail to him at 2435 S. Webster St., Fort Wayne, IN 46807). He will place the order and then mail the surveys to the church. This takes approximately two weeks.

Note: The \$165 report will include a Profile Plus analysis of the survey, providing much more additional information with no additional work required by the church. The church, however, can order the NCD survey without the Profile Plus report if it prefers. If desired, the church should simply send a check for \$125. In either case, ordering through Ed Fenstermacher is saving the church \$50 off the retail price.

The church will then need to distribute the four-page surveys to thirty lay people to complete, which takes approximately 15 minutes. There is also a special four-page survey for the church's pastor to complete.

The thirty lay people completing the survey should meet the following criteria:

- The pastor considers them to be in the center of church life.
- They are actively involved in a ministry in the church.
- They are a member of a small group (e.g. Bible study, Sunday school class, youth group, choir, UMW circle, home group, etc.).
- They are not staff members of the church.

For accurate results, a church must return at least 22 of the surveys. On the other hand, it is not necessary to return more than 30 because studies show that the results won't change if more than 30 are included in the study. For this reason, a maximum of 30 surveys are used to determine the results. If a church wishes to have more than 30 surveys used, it will need to purchase a second NCD survey.

Once completed, the church should collect the surveys and send them to Ed Fenstermacher to be tabulated. He will send the results usually within a couple weeks. If needed, the conference Church Development staff for your district may be available to present and analyze the results to the church's leadership in person.