

The Process

Step 1: Prepare “See it”



Christian Schwarz through his extensive research worldwide has discovered that healthy, growing churches share eight quality characteristics. These characteristics are listed below in Step 4. Schwarz uses the illustration of a barrel with eight staves to symbolize the eight quality characteristics. The barrel can only hold water to the height of the lowest stave. So too, Schwarz argues, a church can only grow as far as their “minimum factor”, which is the lowest of the eight quality characteristics in their church.

Step 2: Diagnose “Own it”



Conduct an NCD survey in your church to identify which of the eight characteristics is your church’s minimum factor. Thirty men and women of various ages and tenure who are in key leadership roles will take the survey.

Step 3: Plan “Solve it”



The church will select a Church Health Team of 5-14 persons who will work with the NCD consultant to improve the minimum factor. Develop a strategy to raise the quality of your minimum factor by asking your church health team to use the *Big Idea Handbook: Our Church Health Plan*.

Step 4: Implement “Do it”

Releasing your church’s potential

Healthy churches are growing churches. God places within the genetic code of every congregation the potential for authentic church development. Translating this potential into reality requires careful implementation of appropriate change dynamics. Anchored to the eight essential qualities confirmed through the international research of Christian Schwarz, leaders learn how to design and implement effective change strategies to develop healthy, thriving churches.

- Empowering leadership
- Gift-oriented ministry
- Passionate spirituality
- Effective structures
- Inspiring worship service
- Holistic small groups
- Need-oriented evangelism
- Loving relationships



Step 5: Evaluate

Monitor your progress with an annual church health check-up by completing another NCD survey.



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Natural Church Development

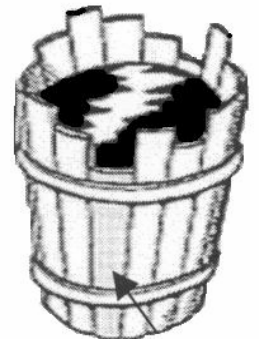
is all about releasing the potential that God has already implanted in the church. Based on research in more than 40,000 churches on all six continents, NCD describes eight healthy characteristics of the church that are applicable regardless of culture or spiritual style.

Who leads this process?

The church health team designs and recommends strategy for enhancing the health of the church. The team is composed of men and women who walk with God, are strategic thinkers, detail persons, communicators and persons who have a passion for the church.

Why address the minimum factor?

Imagine a barrel with staves, each representing the eight Quality Characteristics (on back). With this analogy, you can only fill the barrel to the level of the lowest stave. To increase the capacity of the barrel, we must increase the height of the lowest stave.



Quality Characteristic # 1

Empowering Leadership

Leaders of growing churches do not try to build their own power to become all-powerful. Leaders in growing churches encourage members to develop greater degrees of empowerment, which already belongs to them according to God's plan. They equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals to become all that God want them to be.

Quality Characteristic #2

Gift-Oriented Ministry

The role of the church leadership is to help its members identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that match their gifts.

This principle sounds quite simple, but its practical application will have enormous implications for all areas of church life.

Quality characteristic # 3

Passionate Spirituality

It is vital that faith is lived with commitment, fire, and enthusiasm. The most expensive car is not going to get you anywhere if the tank is empty.

Quality Characteristic # 4

Effective Structures

Church structures are never an end in themselves, but always a means to an end. Change and breaking away from the usual way of doing ministry is difficult. Through this process of renewal, conventional ruts can be avoided to a large extent.

Quality Characteristic # 5

Inspiring Worship

Is the worship service an inspiring experience for those who attend? People who attend inspiring worship services unanimously declare that the church service is meaningful, regardless of style.

Quality Characteristic # 6

Holistic Small Groups

Growing churches develop a system of small groups in which individual Christians can find intimate community, practical help, and intensive spiritual interaction. These are the elements of the biblical concept of holism. In these groups, people discuss Bible texts and apply Biblical insights to everyday issues confronting the participants.

Quality Characteristic # 7

Need-Oriented Evangelism

How else will the church grow if not through the process of sharing the gospel to bring more and more people into the church? The most effective methodology of evangelism is the sharing of the good news of Jesus with the non-believer in a manner that meets his/her needs and addresses his/her questions.

Quality Characteristic # 8

Loving Relationships

Growing churches manifest a measurably higher "love quotient" than plateaued or declining churches. The NCD survey contains a group of questions that measures the quality of loving relationships between members.