Growing a Healthy Church

Using Natural Church Development

Anglican Diocese of Edmonton
Excerpts from NCD Coaches Orientation
Held December 10, 2011

What is NCD?

NCD is a *paradigm* – a way of thinking about church growth through quality, not just numbers

- Process of continuous improvement
- Viewing church as an organism that grows, not just a built structure
- Measuring all programs, activities and strategies for effectiveness
- Increasing the churches' likelihood to re-produce disciples, ministries and eventually themselves
- Getting a true sense of the church's health – not guessing

NCD's Foundation

NCD's approach to growth:

- Quality over quantity
- Universally applicable – not a model
- Multi-cultural approach
- Unique for each church
- Partnering with God
- Sound theological foundation
- Supported by research, > 65,000 surveys

NCD: Long Term Process

- A long term strategic ***process*** for progressively improving a church's health
- A process of continual improvement, not a program which guarantees "a healthy church" if implemented to the letter
- Intentional and consistently addresses the most critical issues facing the church at each stage of growth.
- Surveys are done annually, offering an accurate up-to-date "snapshot" of the church's current state of health
- Can look at progress and predict through trends (longitudinal study of the church)

NCD: Proven through Research

- Initially 1000 churches in 32 countries
- By 2009, 65,000 profiles in 70+ countries
- 177 million answers
- Over 30 languages
- Original research holds true after 15+ years
- Research statistically significant … eight characteristics consistently shown to be essential to healthy church growth

What is a healthy church?

What is a healthy church?

- A healthy church is a growing church
- Healthy growth focuses on **quality** of the growth not just the amount or quantity of growth
- A healthy church is strong in eight quality characteristics
- A healthy church demonstrates “all by itself” growth -- underlies the eight quality characteristics

What is “all by itself” growth?

Exploring “All by Itself” Growth

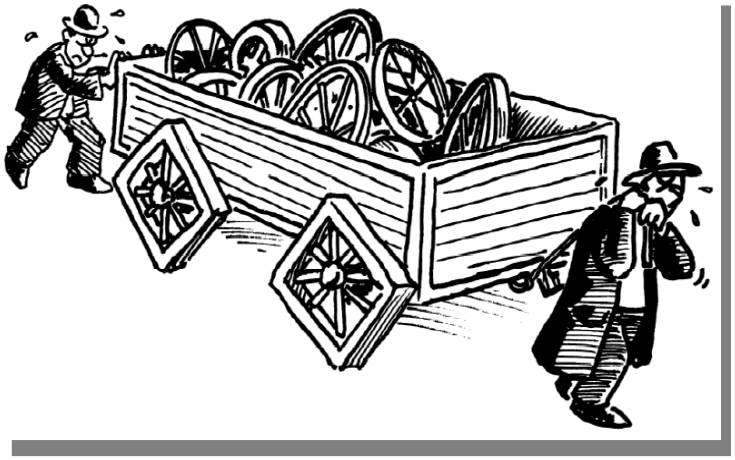
- Biblical passage found in Mark 4:26-29: Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God

“Someone scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether the grower sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though the grower does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, the grower puts the sickle into it, because the harvest has come.”

Exploring “All by Itself” Growth

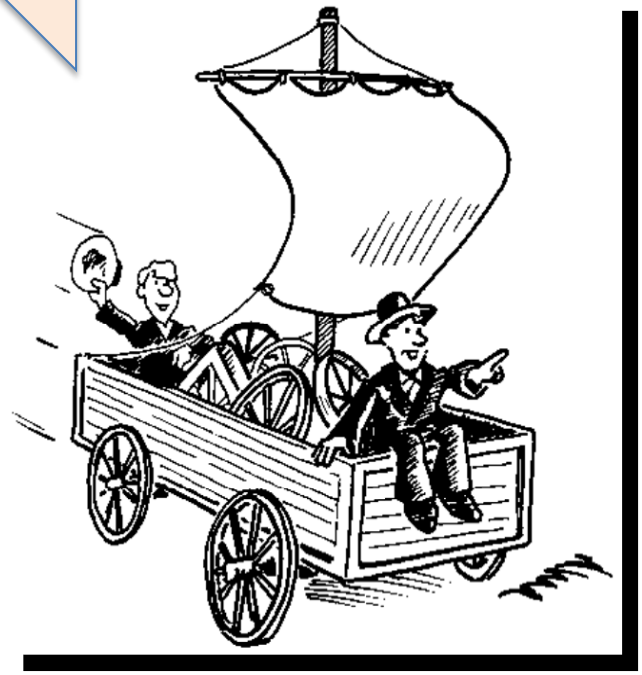
- Growing churches release and develop the potential God has laid into the church … not just pushing and pulling the church using human strength and efforts
- Our job is to stimulate the growth that God himself uses to build the church … we identify and remove the barriers to growth
- We have our part to do and then we leave the rest to God … we create the environment and God provides the growth
- We intentionally enter into a partnership with God and experience increasing fruitfulness … infinitely more than we can ask or imagine!

“All by Itself” Growth



When we attempt to MAKE the church grow

When we tend to the environmental factors and allow the **GOD DESIGNED** growth principles to grow the church



Eight Quality Characteristics

1. ***Empowering*** Leadership (EL)
2. ***Gift-oriented*** Ministry (GOM)
3. ***Passionate*** Spirituality (PS)
4. ***Effective*** Structures (ES)
5. ***Inspiring*** Worship Service (IWS)
6. ***Holistic*** Small Groups (HSG)
7. ***Need-Oriented*** Evangelism (NOE)
8. ***Loving*** Relationships (LR)

Eight Quality Characteristics

Empowering Leadership (EL)

- Leaders equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals to become all God wants them to be

Gift-oriented Ministry (GOM)

- Leaders help individuals identify their gifts and integrate them into ministries that match their gifts

Passionate Spirituality (PS)

- Individuals live out their faith with commitment, passion and enthusiasm; strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways

Effective Structures (ES)

- Church structures and forms fulfill their purpose: they are means to an end not an end in themselves

Eight Quality Characteristics

Inspiring Worship Service (IWS)

- Is the worship service an inspiring experience: personal and corporate encounter with the living God? Do people experience the presence of God: times of joyful exaltation and quiet reverence?

Holistic Small Groups (HSG)

- Small groups where individuals find intimate community, practical help and intensive spiritual interaction; biblical insights are applied to everyday issues.

Need-Oriented Evangelism (NOE)

- Gospel is shared in a way that meets the questions and needs of non-Christians without being pushy / manipulative.

Loving Relationships (LR)

- How loving are relationships between Christians? Egs: How much time do members spend with one another outside of church? How generous is the church in doling out compliments? Does priest know personal problems of lay workers?