

## 104 Does NCD work?

Founded on an extensive research project involving 1,000 churches, 6 continents, 32 countries, and 18 languages, NCD is the only scientifically valid study to be done in the area of measuring church health. Since then, 70 countries have launched national NCD partnerships.

But does it work? Follow up studies have been done in churches that have completed three or more surveys to assess what change happened during that timeframe. Between the first month (when the initial survey was completed) and the 31<sup>st</sup> month (by which time at least three surveys had been completed), the following measurable changes were demonstrated:

1. Quality increased by an average of 6 points.
2. Percent of transfer growth decreased, while conversion growth increased.\*
3. Workload of leaders decreased.
4. Overall growth rate increased by 51% (on average). If a church as growing by 10 people per year, after the 31 months it was growing by 15 people per year. If 200 had been joining per year, after 31 months 302 were joining.

\*Most churches do not keep these records, so to assess transfer growth vs. conversion growth, a question was added to the survey asking whether or not a participant has been a member of another church after becoming a Christian. Based on those responses, as churches continued to take surveys and go thru the NCD process, conversion growth gained over time, while transfer growth decreased significantly over time.

Sometimes it's helpful to hear about changes in specific churches or groups of churches as well. You could hear amazing stories from many quarters, but below is a newsletter from the Orlando District of the Florida United Methodist Church that describes some of their experience with the effectiveness of NCD.

**"Does NCD Really Make a Difference?"** (June, 2004 Orlando District Newsletter -- Jeff Stiggins)

NCD is a long-term process for assisting congregations to be more healthy and effective in fulfilling Christ's great commission. The greatest

transformation usually begins to happen in the third year that congregations use the NCD process. Twelve congregations in the Orlando District are now beginning their second year in NCD. How have they, as a group, fared compared to other churches in our district? Recently Linda Mobley asked a professional statistician to look at the end of the year 2003 statistics and answer that question. Here are some of the staggering statistical differences she found in comparing these 12 NCD churches to the rest of the churches in our district that have not participated in NCD:

- Members received by profession of faith in NCD churches increased 89.5%; the rest of the churches in the district had a decline of 13.5%.
- Attendance in principle worship services in NCD churches increased 3.9%; the rest of the churches in the district had a decline of 5.5%.
- Attendance in short-term small groups in NCD churches increased 75.1%; the rest of the churches in the district had a decline of 16%.
- The number of persons removed by transfer to UM churches in NCD churches decreased 20.5%; the rest of the churches in the district had an increase of 53.8%.
- The number of persons removed by transfer to other denominations in NCD churches decreased 38.7%; the rest of the churches in the district had an increase of 25.8%.
- African American membership in NCD churches increased 21.2%; the rest of the churches in the district had an increase of 7.9%.