

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

November 19, 2019

This week's *Laptop* has to do with health of several sorts. I'll begin on a personal note and move to a congregational chord.

Readers of this column are likely aware that I was diagnosed with colon cancer about this time last year, that I had surgery to remove the cancer at the end of January followed by three months of chemotherapy, and that I had surgery at the beginning of October to repair two incisional hernias from January (try to read that aloud in one breath!).

Some of you also know that my PSA numbers tripled during chemotherapy. Though the numbers went back into the normal range when the chemotherapy got out of my system, the elevation resulted in my having an MRI of the prostate, an examination that revealed several lesions that were probably cancer. Once all the colon adventures were completed, I had a prostate biopsy several weeks ago (not nearly so awful as I expected), and I got those pathology reports yesterday.

As I had rather expected, the pathology reports revealed the presence of moderately-aggressive cancer (T2b N0 M0 for you medical types). I will have a full-body bone scan on Friday to check for metastasis, which is not expected. Once that's done, I'll probably begin some sort of radiation therapy to put the quietus on another unwelcome guest.

At this point, we expect the prognosis for both colon and prostate to be reasonably good and that, with appropriate monitoring, my life expectancy will not be drastically reduced. That's happy; and all this confirms my previously-announced decision to retire at the end of next year so as to be sure things are in order should recurrences take place in the future. And it is for these reasons that we will elect a Pastor Search Team (PST) next month.

The PST will begin work after the first of the year, parallel with our launching of our next strategic plan. We'll continue our life together, "full speed ahead," through 2020, with the hope that there might not be a long period between my retirement and the call of your next senior pastor.

Part of the preparation for a pastoral search is the creation of a "congregational profile" and a "pastoral profile." Both of these profiles will be considerably affected by where we perceive God to be taking us as a congregation. Glenn Akins, the Assistant Executive Director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), will be working with the PSC and our Church Council on our perceptions of the future, and Jody Faig, the BGAV Field Strategist for Northern Virginia, will be working with the PSC as well.

One of the things God has placed in my mind and on my heart about our future is that CBF will become the catalyst for transforming the Village of Oakland Mills into a community others wish to replicate. Under the leadership of Pastor Andrew, I see this catalysis as having at least four dimensions:

1. Building bridges of relationship and friendship through a variety of outreach activities;



CBF: transforming Oakland Mills into a community others wish to replicate.

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2. Enlarging and expanding the worldview of neighborhood youth, whose exposure to wholesome, productive role models is quite limited;
3. Sharing Jesus with those/our youth and their families and nurturing deepening faith;
4. Becoming a significant player in Oakland Mills Village life and decision-making such that over a period of ten years, our neighborhood is transformed into “the Columbia Vision for the 21st Century.”



One of the many ways in which we'll move toward these goals is through the implementation of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (and plans that follow that one). We decided earlier this year to use the analysis of *Natural Church Development* (NCD) as a primary component of our congregational planning for the next several years.

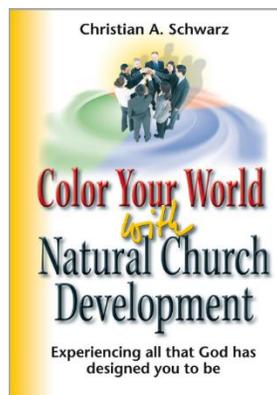
The NCD process is an evidence-based process that has been normed on more than 70,000 congregations of every size and on every continent except Antarctica. The process involves having 30 active members complete the NCD inventory, receiving the results of that inventory, and developing an action plan that addresses the needs identified through those results.

This process is repeated about every eighteen months. If you want to get an in-depth understanding of this research and the theology behind it (which I encourage), I recommend that you read the book, *Color Your World*, a link to which is provided below.¹

You'll be hearing a lot more about NCD in the weeks and months ahead. Our Church Council will begin their work on our first results in January. Just as an introduction, though, please see the charts on the following page.

Yours for Better Health!

Dave



¹ https://smile.amazon.com/Color-World-Natural-Church-Development/dp/1889638471/ref=sr_1_4?keywords=color+your+world&qid=1574199899&sr=8-4

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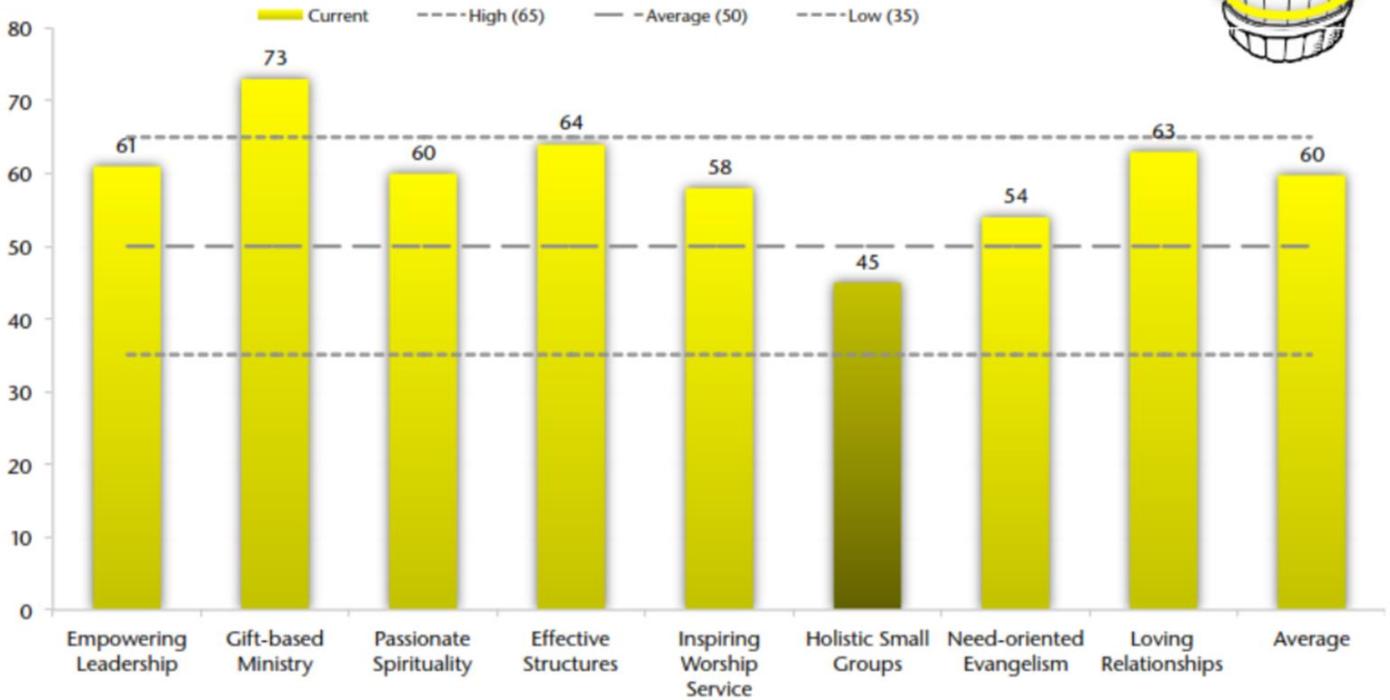


Natural Church Development *profile*

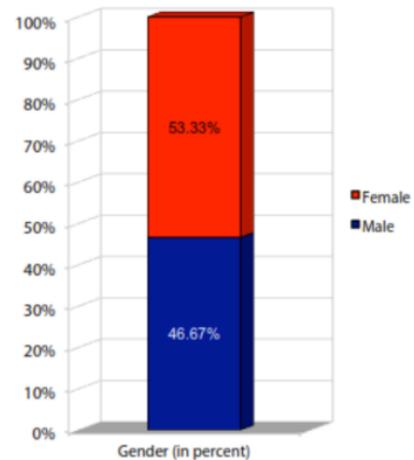
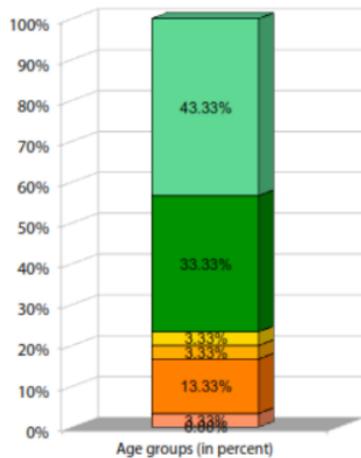
of Columbia Baptist Fellowship

November-2019

Service attendance
Our minimum factor
Quality characteristics



Survey participants by age groups and gender



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