

Natural Growth - Biotic Principles

Every living thing that God created, He created to grow and to reproduce. None of God's living creations will grow indefinitely. All are designed to reproduce themselves. These are natural growth tendencies. The church is a living organism therefore it should be considered a living, growing, reproducing creation of God Almighty. In his book, Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz refers to natural growth principles as Biotic principles and relates these growth principles to churches. Below are the six biotic principles identified by Christian Schwarz in Natural Church Development¹.

1. Interdependence: Individual ministries of a church are connected to each other in a larger system. Changes in one ministry will affect other ministries in the church and community.

Key question: What are the short and long-term effects of this action or change for the ministry?

2. Multiplication: Healthy organisms do not grow endlessly, but reproduce themselves; classes reproduce classes, churches reproduce more churches, a Christian reproduces more Christians.

Key question: How does this (ministry, decision) contribute to multiplication, not just addition?

3. Energy Transformation: Momentum or energy already flowing, whether positive or negative, can be redirected to accomplish God's purposes.

Key question: How can we utilize positive and negative resources to fulfill God's purpose?

4. Multi-usage: Resources used should increase the capacity for on-going growth and development, as well as serve multiple purposes.

Key question: How do these actions contribute to future ministry cycles?

5. Symbiosis: Different ministries can cultivate cooperative relationships so the mutual benefit is greater than operating separately.

Key question: How can we work together to enhance ministry effectiveness?

6. Functionality: Each ministry needs to produce discernible results in line with its intended purpose.

Key question: How can we maximize the fruitfulness of this ministry?

For more information on biotic principles and Natural Church Development visit Church Smart Resources at <http://www.churchsmart.com/> and be sure to add Natural Church Development to your reading list and your library of resources.

¹ Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz, ChurchSmart Resources