

# Color Your World

*calling out the artists of life*



*preparing to paint...*

## *Welcome to Color Your World!*

Over this next five weeks, you are setting out along with thousands of Christians from different countries and denominations to Color Your World.

### *My World?*

Your world stretches from your innermost thoughts, to your family and friends, your workplace and beyond. The journey of the next five weeks is focused primarily on your church, the place that both impacts your life and has the potential to transform the world around you. This journey will help you better understand the life of your church so far and discover how you can take God's principles - His own paint - and color your church to more fully reflect the fullness of God's love to your world.

### *Me... an artist of life?*

You may not view yourself as an artist of life. Regardless of how you view yourself now though, remember that you are made in the image of the creative genius of the universe. This being true, the family trait of creativity has been passed down to you from your Heavenly Father, even if for a whole host of reasons it has been held back from showing itself in your life. It is a creativity that releases life in your church, in your family, your workplace, your city, your world —a creativity inspired by the God of abundant life. Color Your World is about discovering the principles that can be seen throughout God's creation—the paint of his masterpiece. Your challenge is to then pick up a brush and fill in those colors of life that are less vibrant in your part of the world.

## *Preparing to paint*

Over the next 5 weeks, your first tasks in further coloring your world are to...

1. read through the daily Color Your World book readings outlined on your 5 weekly worksheets.
2. note down any thoughts or questions that come to mind from the readings
3. bring your book and worksheets to your weekly small group ready to share with and support others on the journey

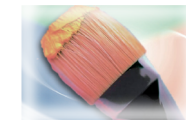
You might be a person who really enjoys reading and will choose to work through each daily reading in full. If so, great! If not, don't worry. The book is designed in such a way to allow you to gain an overview of the topics of each day with less than 5 minute's reading. From there, you can choose to read further into the points that particularly grab your attention (see next page for details).

## *Color Your World*

You are being called out as an artist of life - the life in all its fullness that Jesus offers to all in your world. In as much as you reflect all the colors of God's light to the world around you, you will become the 'light of the world' to them (Matthew 5:14).

[www.coloryourworld.org](http://www.coloryourworld.org)

Along the way, we invite you to come and join the web-based Color Your World community. It's free and you can ask



questions, read other people's experiences and also support others as they set out to color their world.

## Read it your way

People read in very different ways. Some take hold of a book and read it from cover to cover. Some like to read some sections and leave others alone. Some just like to look at headlines and pictures. During Color Your World, the choice is yours.

Using pages 10-11 of the book as an example, the following option allows you to get an overview of each Color Your World topic and then choose to go deeper with the points that interest you most.

- Read the heading and the first short passage of text (1)
- Look at the main picture and read the caption beside it (2)
- Read the 'My experiences' story (3)
- Then, decide which if any of the sub-headings (eg. Just imagine, etc.) caught your attention, and read through the accompanying text. (4)
- Reflect on the question in the box (5) ...then note down on your worksheet any thoughts or questions that come to mind.

calling out the artists of life

10 Explore the Second Chapter of NCD

Chapter 1 **Your dream church** 1

If I were sitting next to you now, it wouldn't take long for me to figure out how you feel about the concepts of "church growth" or "church development." Even without putting your feelings into words, I would probably be able to detect them from watching your eyes, observing your gestures, and listening to the sound of your voice. This sort of information would be extremely helpful to me given the topic I want to share with you in this book.

**Mixed feelings**

If you were to share your feelings with me, what would they be? If you are like most Christians I have met, the term "church development" probably does not bring strong enthusiastic emotions to the surface. It's not unlikely that you share the same skepticism that I frequently encounter with other people when discussing this topic. Many of us have the vague suspicion that when we talk about church development, we are referring to some sort of marketing gimmick or manipulative, pushy method... that our emphasis is on quantity... that we are trying to copy a successful model church... that we are about to import an approach that doesn't really fit our own culture... that we are hoping to implement some successful pastor's pet ideas that have nothing to do with the reality in our own churches.

If these are your feelings, I assure you that I agree with you 100 percent. Those approaches do indeed exist, and my own feelings toward them are not different from yours.

**Just imagine...**

However, I would like to invite you to perform a brief mental exercise. Imagine that there was an approach to church growth that didn't sport the latest marketing trick, but that was built on a sound **theological foundation** that you could identify with, and that this theological compass permeated even the most practical aspects of church life. Imagine that this approach was not focused on quantity (more people, higher numbers), but that it held **quality** at the center of all considerations.

Imagine an approach to church growth that doesn't copy a model church, but is focused on developing a church's **individuality** and releasing its God-given creativity. Imagine that this approach doesn't export features from one specific culture, but strives to create an **inter-cultural** learning experience, in which all cultures give and take.

Imagine an approach to church growth that doesn't simply promote the favorite ideas of some successful leader, but is

Your dream church 11

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Any church, no matter how unfavorable its present situation, can expect considerable increase in quality and quantity. To start such a process, there is only one precondition: a longing for God to manifest himself more strongly in the life of a church.

based on the comprehensive **research** of thousands of churches around the globe. That communicates truly universal **principles**. That helps you fulfill your own dreams for your church. That is fun to be involved in. Wouldn't you be curious to learn more about it?

**The core of NCD**

The features I have just mentioned are, in fact, the very center of what I have chosen to call Natural Church Development. It is a privilege for me to invite you to join millions of other believers from 70 countries who have already begun this journey and are experiencing highly promising results.

Working with so many churches in so many different settings, I have learned that there is no precondition either you or your church has to fulfill in order to commence this journey. Whether you are a mature believer or still inexperienced in your Christian faith; whether you have adopted an orthodox theology or find yourself on the other end of the theological spectrum; whether you are a member of a quickly growing church or a congregation that has been in decline for decades; whether you are an advocate of one of the famous model churches or you are hesitant to jump on their bandwagon—the principles outlined in this book will help you experience greater effectiveness both in your personal life and in the life of your church.

Are there truly no preconditions to getting started? Actually, there is one. There must be a longing in your heart to experience more of what God has in store for you and your church. If you don't have this longing, this book will not speak to you. However, if you do, you have all you need to begin a journey that could well become one of the most adventurous undertakings of your life. Let's link arms and travel together.

4. You decide

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What would your ideal of a healthy church look like? Which details would be important for you?