

SOME EXAMPLES OF CONGREGATIONAL CULTURE

HEALTHY

- gospel confidence – people trust God to accomplish what he wants through his Word
- selflessness – people prioritize the needs and wants of others above their own personal preferences
- willing to sacrifice – people are willing to give of their resources to a degree that it affects their life-style
- assessment/evaluation – there is a willingness to appraise ministry efforts to determine if they are meeting goals
- courageousness – people are willing to engage in activities that might be scary/uncomfortable for them, because they know it is vital to the mission
- compassion – members genuinely care for one another
- enthusiasm – people approach service with passion
- curiosity – new ideas are welcomed; people look for the kernel of good in new ideas
- ownership – members realize they have a role to play
- focus – members know the church's mission and do not let minor things sidetrack that mission
- urgency – there is an awareness that man's time of grace is limited; death or judgment day can be any moment
- hospitality – both at church and in members' personal lives, there is a desire to welcome guests and build relationships
- joyfulness – people demonstrate the bliss of knowing their eternity is secure; others are uplifted by that attitude
- mobilized laity – members are viewed as doers of ministry, not just consumers of ministry

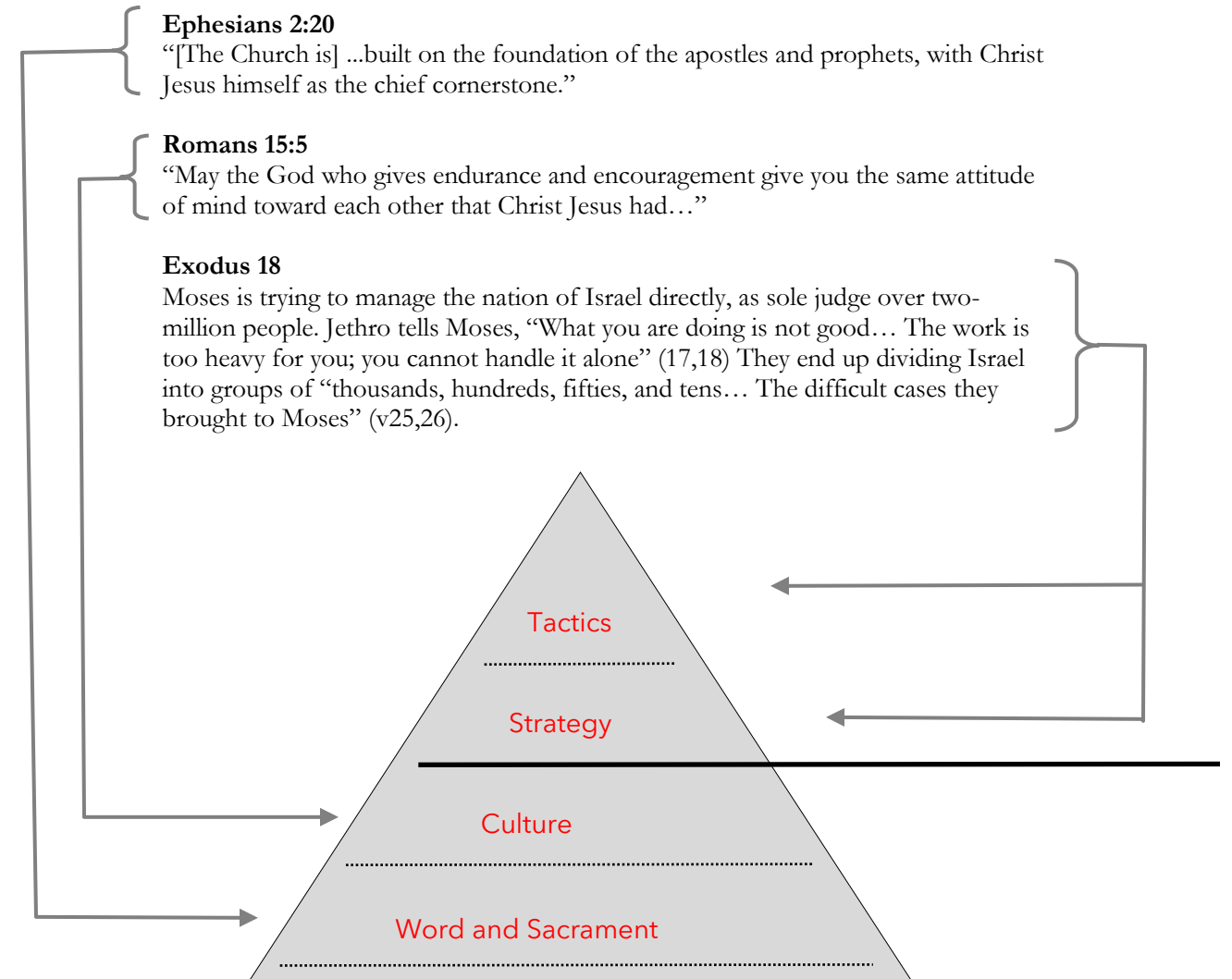
UNHEALTHY

- consumerism – people want the church to cater to their personal preferences
- inward focus – there is care for members, but little concern about the lost
- apathy – there is no honest assessment; people just accept things as they are, rather than trying to improve ministry efforts
- resignation – no one cares about ministry or whether the congregation is in decline; "whatever happens, happens"
- pastor as doer, not equipper – there is no understanding of Ephesians 4:11-16
- captive to member – decisions are made to appease a specific member(s) for some reason; that member enjoys that special influence
- institutionalism – the preservation of an institution (e.g., church, school, ministry tactic) is viewed as the end, rather than the means to the end (which is Christ's mission and glory)
- prideful – people talk about how their church is better than other churches
- self-righteous – not wanting "those type of people" in the church
- love of status quo – members do not distinguish between what must not change, what can change, and what must change
- traditionalism – customs are retained simply because they are customs; there is no consideration of whether or not that custom still serves the gospel well
- politicization – there is an implication that "true Christians" must take certain stances on civil policies
- low-expectations for discipleship – one can be a member in good standing despite being persistently absent

CULTURE EATS STRATEGY FOR BREAKFAST

The Need for Leaders to Shape Congregational Culture

A. The Pyramid of Congregational Health



B. Culture is the shared thought habits that frame the way a group of people behave and work.

C. Different results require different behavior. But different behavior requires different thoughts.

D. Unhealthy congregational culture guarantees stagnation. If left untreated, it will eventually result in the congregation's death.

Revelation 3:14-19

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:
These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.

E. Healthy congregational culture enables the best planning and ministry efforts.

Examples:

- A culture of curiosity
- A culture of focus
- A culture of ownership

F. Healthy congregational culture is shaped by the shadow of the leader. The only perfect leader is Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:3-8

“In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!”

G. Congregational leaders cast a shadow as well, whether they intend to or not. (This type of leadership is not necessarily tied to a position or title.)

Things that cast a shadow:

- What leaders talk about
- What leaders do (leading by example)
- What gets allocated resources (money, called worker time, volunteerism hours)
- What gets measured/counted
- What gets praised

H. Five Principles of Cultural Change

1. Know the Journey

- Have clear KEEPS and clear FROM / TOs
- Define the why

2. Leader Led

- Know the journey
- Be the journey

3. Watch the B's, Change the T's

4. Ensure Critical Mass

- Culture change is like a weakly contagious virus
- It happens collectively, one person at a time

5. Evaluate artifacts

- Cues for “the right way” to do things
- Eliminate anchors