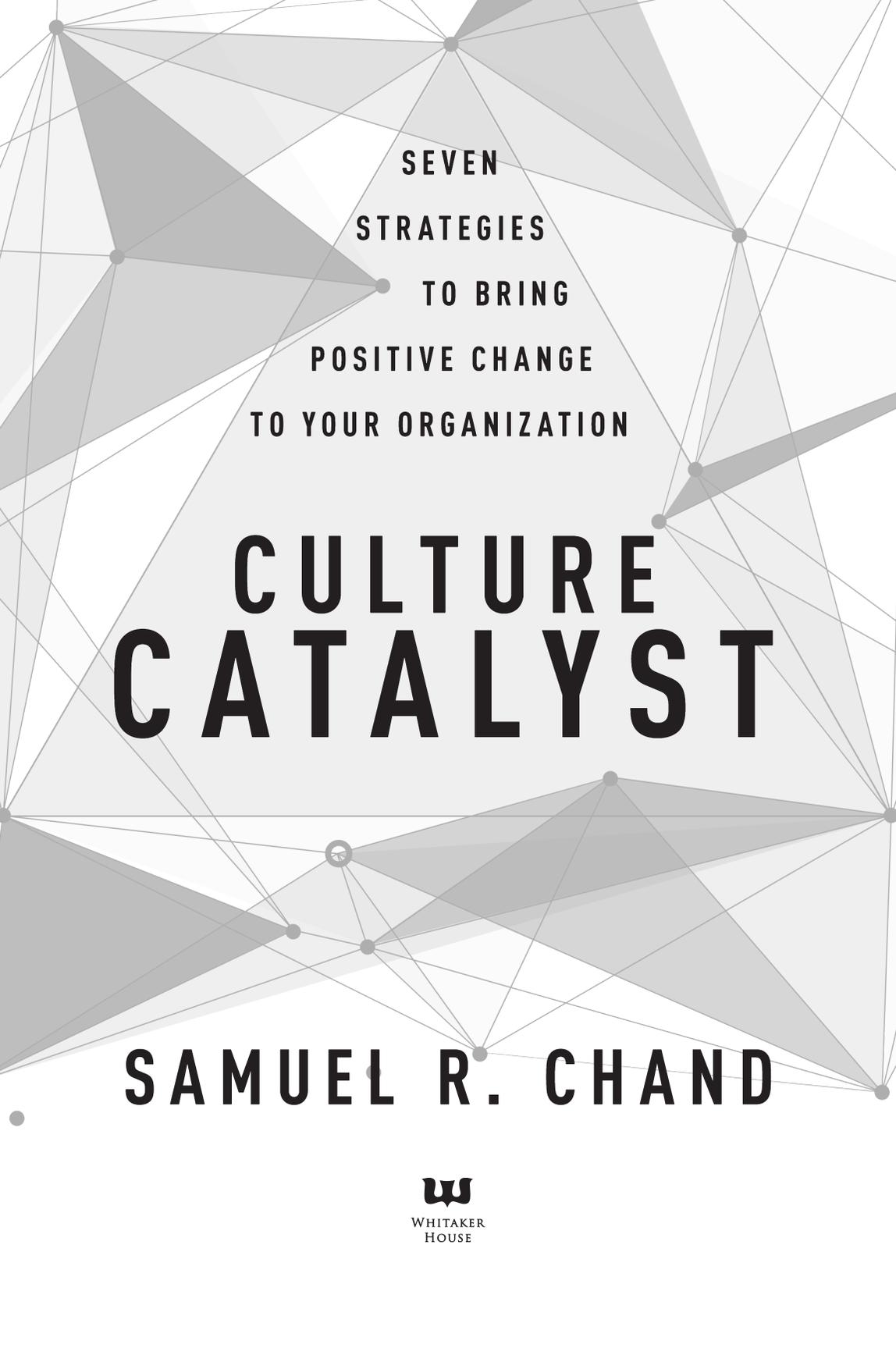


**CULTURE
CATALYST**



**SEVEN
STRATEGIES
TO BRING
POSITIVE CHANGE
TO YOUR ORGANIZATION**

CULTURE CATALYST

SAMUEL R. CHAND



**WHITAKER
HOUSE**

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CULTURE CATALYST:
SEVEN STRATEGIES TO BRING POSITIVE CHANGE TO YOUR ORGANIZATION
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*To my wife, Brenda; my daughters, Rachel and Deborah;
and my granddaughter, Adeline Joy — they all give up so much to
make my dreams a reality. Because of them, I never lack for con-
stant and consistent encouragement.*

CULTURE TRUMPS VISION

Unless commitment is made,
there are only promises and hopes...but no plans.

—Peter Drucker

A church in the Midwest grew rapidly, but the growth curve gradually flattened. In recent years, they saw almost no growth at all. In the early days of explosive growth, the senior pastor taught seminars and spoke at national conferences to instruct other pastors in how to grow their churches, but in the past few years, he received very few invitations to speak. When the curve began to flatten, he took his senior staff to hear noted speakers. Surely, he thought, they could learn something new and overcome stagnation. When that didn't fix things, they hired consultants to analyze the situation and prescribe a solution. When this strategy didn't effect the change they wanted, the senior pastor began "cleaning house." He hired and fired so many people that the offices needed revolving doors. Still, the church didn't grow.

Out of frustration, the pastor left the church. He moved his family a few miles away and started another church with about two hundred people who followed him there. Some would call this a church plant; I think it was a glorified church split.

At the original church, a new pastor came into the office full of fresh ideas and a clear vision of where the church could go; that's exactly why he was selected. After a long, grueling first eighteen months with the new pastor on the job, however, the church's growth curve had barely budged. When he called me, he was frustrated and tired. In our first meeting, he told me sadly, "I don't understand. We spent time and money to reenergize the congregation. We took our top staff on a retreat to instill the new vision into them. We hired more staff, and we reformed our worship experience. We started plenty of new programs. We redesigned our stage set. We created a killer Web site, reconfigured our offices, redecorated to create a fresh ambiance, and designed a new logo for the church. We even wrote a song about how great we are! But none of this has made a bit of difference. We haven't gone backward, and I'm glad of that, but I thought we'd be way ahead of where we are today." He paused for a second and then asked, "What am I missing?"

This senior pastor had done a lot of good things, but he failed to understand the impact of the existing organizational culture on his new, exciting vision for the church. It was like changing the engine on a sports car to make it faster, but it was spinning its wheels in the mud. Or to use a different metaphor, he tried to transplant a heart into a patient whose body rejected the foreign organ. No matter how perfect the new heart was, the patient had no chance at all unless the body accepted it.

Culture—not vision or strategy—is the most powerful factor in any organization. It determines the receptivity of staff and volunteers

Culture—not vision or strategy—is the most powerful factor in any organization.

to new ideas, unleashes or dampens creativity, builds or erodes enthusiasm, and creates a sense of pride or deep discouragement about

working or being involved there. Ultimately, the culture of an organization—particularly in churches and nonprofit organizations, but also in any organization—shapes individual morale, teamwork, effectiveness, and outcomes. In an article in the magazine *Executive Leadership*, Dick Clark explains how he took the pharmaceutical firm Merck to a higher level: “The fact is, culture eats strategy for lunch. You can have a good strategy in place, but if you don’t have the culture and the enabling systems, the [negative] culture of the organization will defeat the strategy.”¹

To help you uncover the nature of your existing culture and identify the steps of change, this book examines the full range of cultural health, from inspiring to toxic, and describes the seven keys of CULTURE:

1. Control
2. Understanding
3. Leadership
4. Trust
5. Unafraid
6. Responsive
7. Execution

Insight is the first—and crucial—step toward change.

Looking at the Landscape

In the past decade or so, dozens of books and countless articles have been written about the importance of corporate culture, but relatively few churches and nonprofit organizations have taken the arduous (but necessary) steps to assess, correct, and change their culture. First, we need to understand what we mean by the term *organizational culture*. It is the personality of the church or nonprofit. Like all personalities, it’s not simple to define and describe. Organization development consultant, speaker, writer, and filmmaker Ellen Wallach observes,

“Organizational culture is like pornography; it is hard to define, but you know it when you see it.”

Organizational culture includes tangibles and intangibles. The things we can see are the way people dress and behave, the look of the corporate offices, and the messages of posters on the walls. The intangibles may be harder to grasp, but they give a better read on the organization’s true personality. The organization’s values (stated and unstated), beliefs, and assumptions; what and how success is celebrated; how problems are addressed; the manifestations of trust and respect at all levels of the organization—these are the intangible elements of culture. Every group in society—family, town, state, nation, company, church, civic group, team, and any other gathering of people—has a culture, sometimes clearly identified but often camouflaged.

Many leaders confuse culture with vision and strategy, but they are very different. Vision and strategy usually focus on products, services, and outcomes, but culture is about the people—the most valuable asset in the organization. The way people are treated, the way they treat their peers, and their response to their leaders is the air people breathe. If that air is clean and healthy, people thrive and the organization succeeds, but to the extent that it is toxic, energy subsides, creativity lags, conflicts multiply, and production declines. I’m not suggesting that churches and nonprofits drop their goals and spend their time holding hands and

Vision and strategy usually focus on products, services, and outcomes, but culture is about the people—the most valuable asset in the organization.

saying sweet things to each other. That would be a different kind of toxic environment! A strong, vibrant culture stimulates people to be and do their very best and reach the

highest goals. Spiritual leaders point the way forward, but they invite meaningful participation from every person at all levels of the organization. Together, they work hard toward their common purpose, and they

celebrate each other's accomplishments every step along the way. Trust is the glue that holds the organization together and gives it the strength it needs to excel.

The inputs into the "cultural system" include the stories that surround the staff's experiences; shared goals and responsibilities; respect and care for people; balance between bold leadership and listening; and clear, regular communication. The outcomes include the reputation of the leader, the reputation of the organization, the attractiveness of the church or nonprofit to prospective new staff members, a measure of pride in being a part of the organization, and a positive impact on the entire community.

To see a few snapshots of a church's culture, we might ask these questions:

- + Who are the heroes? What makes them heroes? Who determines who the heroes are?
- + When someone inquires, "Tell me about your church or nonprofit," what stories are told?
- + How much does the average staff member feel he or she has input into the direction and strategy of the church or nonprofit?
- + Who has the ear of the top leaders? How did these people win a hearing with the leaders?
- + What are the meaningful rituals? What message do they convey to those in the organization and those outside it?
- + Who is rewarded, and for what accomplishments?
- + What is the level of loyalty up and down the organizational chart? What factors build loyalty?
- + What is the level of creativity and enthusiasm throughout the organization?
- + When an objective observer spends an hour watching people interact in the offices, what mood does he or she pick up?

- ✦ How are decisions made, deferred, or delayed?
- ✦ Who are the nonpositional power brokers, the people who have authority based on the respect they've earned but who don't have authoritative titles?
- ✦ Where are control problems and power struggles most evident?
- ✦ How is "turf" defined and protected?

The shape of an organization's culture begins at the top level. The leader's integrity, competence, and care for staff members create the environment where people excel...or not. In his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni observes that trust is the most powerful trait in shaping a positive culture, and trust thrives on honesty. He writes, "When there is an absence of trust, it stems from a leader's unwillingness to be vulnerable with the group," and "leaders who are not genuinely open with one another about their mistakes and weaknesses make it impossible to build a foundation of trust."²

I believe that the role of senior pastor is the most glorious and at the same time most difficult in the world. These leaders have the incredible privilege of representing the King of kings, imparting grace and life to people, and creating environments in which God's Spirit changes the eternal destiny—and the present relationships and direction—of men and women, boys and girls in the community. There is no higher calling. Yet senior pastors shoulder enormous burdens. They have to be "on" every time they speak, whether it's to the entire congregation or to an individual. They feel the pressure of finances, deadlines, new visions and missed opportunities, the mistakes and sins of their staff, and their own flaws. But even as they face those troubles, they are expected to be the source of hope, peace, and wisdom for every person in their world. Like the Apostle Paul, senior pastors report either metaphorically or actually, "*I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?*" (2 Corinthians 11:27–29). Senior pastors

are in a unique position to shape the culture of their teams and their churches, but they can't do it alone. They need the support, wisdom, and commitment of every person on the team.

Let me give a couple of examples of the impact of organizational culture. A senior pastor who understands the importance of creating an inspirational culture has a church with five sites and about a dozen daughter churches. Throughout the organization—from the first interview of a prospective employee to large staff meetings and every team's interaction—staff members remind each other that they come to work each day to make a difference in people's lives. It's not just a job, and they aren't just killing time each day. The pastoral staff has an open-door policy, and they welcome creative suggestions from every staff member. Treating each person in the community and each other with the utmost respect is a high value. The senior pastor regularly carves out time to roll up his sleeves and work alongside the most humble employee at the church.

In an atmosphere of mutual encouragement, top leaders at the mother church, the sites, and the daughter churches are devoted to each other's success, so power struggles are minimized. The senior pastor goes to great lengths to celebrate accomplishments, rewarding not only the vigorous effort to pull off all the work of ministry at the church but also the selfless service to the community. As you can imagine, staff loyalty is through the roof! Staff members express tremendous pride in being a part of such a caring, supportive organization that values them even more than their production.

The senior pastor explained his philosophy of leadership: "I make it a priority to say or do something each day to speak to people's hearts and affirm their commitment to serve God. They work hard, and I want to bring them joy and relieve some stress in their lives. With this as a priority, I find innumerable opportunities to accomplish this every single day. I think about the lives of our staff members and volunteers beyond the walls of our church. They have interests, homes, and families. How they are treated here has an impact on every relationship and every activity in their lives. They need to know I care—and that my expressions of

love aren't just words; they're real." The staff at this church come to work each day excited about working as a team to solve problems and make a difference in people's lives. It all starts with the senior pastor's commitment to people and excellence.

The powerful, positive culture of this church is exactly what this book is about—but there are other examples, ones that aren't as inspiring. A friend of mine told me about his experience working at a large church. The senior pastor wore two faces. In public, he appeared to be the paragon of Christian virtue, referring often to Christ, brotherly love, and the Spirit's work in people's lives. In the halls of the church offices, however, he was a tyrant. Those around him observed that power and pride motivated him and shaped his relationships. Once when the pastor faced stiff opposition to a building campaign, my friend heard him snarl, "I don't care if people respect me. I just want them to fear me!" Machiavelli would be proud. Around the office, any semblance of Christian love was blown away by his ridicule of those who made a mistake, and rage at those who offered a suggestion that was different from his intentions. But nobody knew which suggestions would be accepted and which would be blasted. Everyone stayed on edge, fearful of offering an opinion about even the most trivial issue, and waiting for the ax to fall if the pastor disapproved.

The staff enjoyed working with their own teams in their areas of ministry, but they grew to despise the pastor and the circle of yes-men around him. The church lavishly celebrated when the denomination and other organizations gave the pastor accolades, but the staff rarely received even a pat on the back. "Your bonus," the fiercely loyal executive pastor told a competent but beleaguered staff member, "is continued employment. Don't ask for more." The executive pastor smiled as if he were joking, but the staff member knew he was serious.

In this culture, loyalty wasn't earned; it was demanded. When staff members or lay leaders left the church for any reason, they were severely criticized with vicious name-calling. Gradually, most of the competent and emotionally healthy people left the church, leaving behind only those who were afraid to suffer abuse for leaving, or even for considering leaving

the church. One of the most alarming facets of this story is that the pastor was commended for several years by his denomination for his “integrity and exemplary leadership.” I guess he wrote his own press releases, and enough people believed him. During those years, though, few people bothered to notice the pained expressions on the faces of his staff. Eventually, the diminishing quality of the staff took its toll. The church’s numbers stagnated and then declined. Even today, the pastor blames others for every problem he and the church faced. He still doesn’t get it.

A healthy culture inspires and stimulates all staff members—whether they’re in the boardroom or the mailroom—to give their best because they are convinced their ideas will be valued. In a creative, supportive environment, people are less threatened by their own mistakes and by others’ failures. Problems are viewed through a different lens: they become opportunities for growth, not causes for condemnation. Certainly, there has to be a balance between meeting immediate organizational goals and patient listening, but the vast majority of staff members are thrilled when anyone, especially the top exec, cares enough to listen at all. Employees who feel valued work harder, are more productive, and add value to the organization’s purpose. A healthy culture works for everybody.

In a creative, supportive environment, people are less threatened by their own mistakes and by others’ failures.

Key Principles

As we begin our examination of organizational culture, I want to communicate some important principles.

Culture Is the Most Powerful Factor in Any Organization

I travel quite a bit, and I’ve become a student of hotels around the world. In some cases, I’ve noticed a significant difference between hotels,

even when the rooms actually cost about the same. The difference is in the quality of service. I've stayed in some very nice hotels where it seemed that my coming was a nuisance to the staff. No one opened the door for me or offered to lug my suitcase and boxes into the lobby. From the expression of the person behind the counter, I'm quite sure he would rather have been getting a root canal than checking me in. Sometimes, when I needed some assistance, no one came for a long time, and when they came, they weren't authorized to do what I needed them to do. So I waited even longer. Now don't get me wrong. I had a nice room with clean sheets and fluffy pillows, and I slept very well.

But I've also enjoyed very different experiences at some hotels. Not long ago, I stayed at a Ritz Carlton. When the car dropped me off, a man opened my door and greeted me by saying, "Welcome to the Ritz Carlton, Dr. Chand." I wondered, *Did I leave a nametag on?* No, but somehow he knew I was coming and went out of his way to greet me. The woman at the desk also knew my name (How did they do that?), and she gave me a key without hesitation. Instantly, another man came to help me with my luggage and escort me to my room. He was as kind and attentive as a favorite uncle. My stay was exceptionally pleasant, but a couple of days into it, I lost the key card to my room. As I stood in front of the door, I noticed a cleaning lady down the hall. I asked if she could help me. She instantly let me in and then called for the desk to send up a replacement key. In other hotels, the cleaning people may not be authorized to help in this way, so they have to call for someone else to take care of it. At the Ritz Carlton, though, every staff member has authority to do whatever it takes to care for a guest.

The slogan for the Ritz Carlton Hotels is "Ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen." Can you see how this simple but profound statement reflects their inherent corporate culture? By treating each employee with dignity, the company fills his or her need for significance, and warmhearted service flows out of each one like a flood.

I can imagine that the other hotel chains had some kind of written statement to inform employees that they need to serve their guests, but its statement didn't create a culture of service like the one at the Ritz. In

fact, it didn't seem to make even a dent. Vision statements, strategies, and goals are very good tools, but they can't compare in importance to the culture. The culture of an organization is the platform for building a strong church or nonprofit. It is the fertile soil for growing creativity and passion for excellence, and the rocket fuel for reaching new heights in excellence and accomplishments.

Culture Is Usually Unnoticed, Unspoken, and Unexamined

How often do we think about the air we breathe? It's so pervasive that we don't even give it a thought. It's absolutely essential for life, but only a few climatologists spend time analyzing it. Organizational culture is like the air; it's all around us, shaping every moment of every day, but we seldom notice it at all.

Sometimes, stepping into a very different culture gives us new insight about our own. When I came to America from India, I came face-to-face with a foreign, distinctly different culture. I had lived my whole life with the spoken and unspoken expectations of Indian life, and the moment I got off the plane in the United States, I knew I was a foreigner in a strange land. For years (and even still today), I've had to be a student of the American culture to know how to relate to people most positively. Sometimes a misunderstanding has led to some good laughs, but it has occasionally created heartache. My experiences in learning to live in a new country have made me aware of the importance of grasping the transforming power of culture.

Most leaders of churches and nonprofit organizations focus almost all their energies on the tangibles of growth and donations.

Toxic culture is like carbon monoxide: you don't see or smell it, but you wake up dead!

Their means to fulfill their goals are a clear, compelling vision and a workable strategy. Those are important components, but they only succeed if the underlying culture stimulates creativity, passion, and productivity throughout the organization. Top leaders need to spend at least as

much time analyzing their culture as they do crafting their new vision, strategy, and marketing plans.

Toxic culture is like carbon monoxide: you don't see or smell it, but you wake up dead!

Culture Determines How People Respond to Vision and Leadership

For one reason or another, some top leaders have an innate distrust of their staff. Their mode of leadership, then, is to tightly control everything their people do. They may smile while they're squeezing employees, but their people don't feel valued when they experience close scrutiny and micromanagement. On the other end of the continuum, a few leaders take a hands-off approach. They think their role is to push the ball and just let it roll wherever it goes. They don't give their staff members direction or feedback, so their people wander around confused and frustrated. Lack of clarity and pervasive ambiguity cannot become the long-term modus operandi. People are left to determine their own goals for their departments and their lives. And some leaders rule by ambivalence and ambiguity. They use the unknown to provoke anxiety and keep people off balance, and then they wonder why people are tentative, indecisive, and nonproductive. In these toxic cultures, people resent leaders instead of respecting them, their level of motivation wanes, they complain a lot to anyone who will listen (and some who don't want to), and they aren't very productive.

The intangibles of respect and trust transform a church culture into a beehive of thinking, creating, and working together to accomplish grand goals.

The intangibles of respect and trust transform a church culture into a beehive of thinking, creating, and working together to accomplish grand

goals. When staff members feel valued, they far more readily embrace a leader's vision. Even if they disagree or don't understand, they are more willing to give the benefit of the doubt and pitch in.

The two examples earlier in the chapter typify the impact of culture on employees' response to vision and leadership. The staff at one church dreaded coming to work each day. They knew that if they were lucky, they'd avoid getting hammered. That's not much of a sense of purpose! In the other church, however, staff members felt tremendously valued—as people, not just as production units—and they were free to offer their opinions about every vision and strategy that came down from the leadership team. In this church, virtually every person loved coming to work each day. Many of them said something like “This environment is the best I could imagine. It's like a family to me. I love working here.” And these people worked like crazy because they were convinced that what they did each day really mattered in the lives of people in the community and their fellow staff members, and in their own lives as well.

Whenever I uncover the culture of an organization, I instinctively ask two questions: Would I want someone in my family to work here? and Would I want to work here?

Culture Most Often Surfaces and Is Addressed in Negative Experiences

All of us would like to believe that we are incredibly perceptive and responsive, but the truth is that most of us stay stuck in the same ruts in our lives until something shakes us out of them. These pervasive patterns of behavior are too big for quick fixes. They force us to take a long, hard look at our organizations and ourselves. Only with deep reflection, accurate information, and courage can we take the necessary steps of change.

Make no mistake: most competent leaders rose to their positions because they are supremely confident in their abilities. They're convinced they know how to run the organization, and they've fixed enough problems to fill volumes of books. That's who they are and what they do. But sooner or later, they may run into difficulties that defy their attempts to fix them. Power struggles consume their top levels of leadership, complaints from staff members and church members sour the air each day, and their new vision for growth isn't getting any traction

at all among volunteers and the people in the pews. The leaders try this or that, read this book and call that consultant, but nothing seems to work. When the difficulty revolves around people, it's probably a culture problem that won't be solved by any vision or strategy. The only solution is to change the culture.

Culture problems, by their nature, are never solved quickly.

One of the most important lessons in life is to embrace difficulties and learn from them instead of just

trying to get them fixed as soon as possible. Culture problems, by their nature, are never solved quickly. They require a clear understanding of the problem, a commitment to systemic change, and patience and persistence to see change take root.

Almost always, the need to change the culture takes us by surprise. When I came to America in August of 1973 to attend a Bible college, I went to church the first Sunday after I arrived. I listened to the pastor's sermon, and after the service, I passed by him in the lobby of the church. He shook my hand, we talked for a few minutes, and then he graciously said, "If there's anything I can do for you, please let me know."

I responded, "Oh, hell, I'm fine, but thank you very much."

His face turned red, and I quickly realized that I had made my first serious intercultural faux pas. The people behind me moved me along, and one of them whispered to me, "Don't say that word . . . especially in church!"

"What word?" I answered.

He looked pained at my gross ignorance. He winced, " 'Hell.' We don't say 'hell' here."

In India, we said "Oh, hell" the way Americans say, "My goodness." It's not offensive in the least. But in America, I had committed an almost unpardonable crime—in the lobby of a church while talking to

a minister! The reactions of the pastor and the man in line behind me told me that I needed to learn something about the culture—and fast!

Far too often, we try to minimize difficulties and act as if they didn't matter, we excuse ourselves and say it's not our fault, or we point the accusatory finger at others. None of these responses leads to wisdom and change. A far more healthy and productive reaction is to stop, notice what happened, and ask, "Is there something more than meets the eye going on here?" That's how we uncover a flawed culture so that we can address it.

Culture Is Hard to Change, but Change Results in Multiplied Benefits

I don't want to minimize the mountain I'm asking leaders to climb. It's a steep and difficult journey, but those who have successfully negotiated it have never regretted a moment on the path. When they see staff members with a compelling sense of purpose, when they hear exciting stories that become part of the organization's history, when they see tears in people's eyes because they believe so much in what they're doing, and when they see them respond with joy and enthusiasm to make a good strategy even better, they know it's been worth it.

How do you know an organization's culture has changed? In his book *The Crazy-Making Workplace*, Christian psychologist Dr. Archibald Hart recounts a conversation with the CEO of a large company. He quotes him: "If you want to know what is really going on in most companies, you talk to the guy who sweeps the floors. Nine times out of

Talk to people far removed from the seat of power; ask them honest questions about what they see, think, and feel about the organization.

ten, he knows more than the president. So I make a point of knowing what my floor sweepers know—even if it means sweeping the floors with them."³ If you're a senior pastor, value the input of men and women who love you enough to tell you the truth. Talk to people far removed

from the seat of power; ask them honest questions about what they see, think, and feel about the organization. Ask them how people are valued, what motivates them, and what is celebrated. And listen. You'll find out everything you want to know—and maybe more.

So, have you been investing your time and energies into crafting and articulating your organization's vision, only to find that people aren't as receptive as you hoped? When there's a disconnect between a leader's vision and the receptivity of the staff, the problem isn't with the vision; it's the culture. Most leaders don't invest much in their church's culture simply because they assume it's "just fine." I believe, though, that great leaders devote as many resources to building and shaping their organization's culture as they invest in vision and strategy. In fact, vision and strategy simply can't succeed without a positive, healthy culture.

This Book Is for You If...

I've written this book primarily for the top leadership teams in churches and nonprofits, but the principles also apply in the corporate world. The concepts apply to megachurches and small congregations, in every denomination and in independent churches. They work for large, multinational nonprofit organizations as well as mom-and-pop agencies in every sector of service. They apply to parachurch organizations, universities, charter schools, and hospitals.

The commitment to value people all along the organizational hierarchy must be implemented from the top down. The senior pastor and the executive team must lead this effort. When the top leadership team makes a commitment to change the culture, they can use this book to communicate the values and processes to their ministry leaders and other staff members so they are all on board.

As I've talked about these principles to leaders around the world, some have asked if ministry or department heads can implement the changes in this book even if their supervisors don't ever change. Yes, they can courageously take steps to change the culture in their worlds, but they'll always be fighting against the negative pressures from the

executive suite. I've known many church ministry leaders and department heads who "protected" their people from the abuses of their bosses, but they often paid a high price. In most cases, they were glad to do that because they really cared for their people, but eventually, many of these dear, brave men and women were forced out, or they left simply because they couldn't take it anymore.

My Promise to You

If you'll read and reflect honestly on the principles in this book, I believe that you'll have a new appreciation for the impact of your organizational culture on every aspect of life. These insights will enable you to make a strong connection between culture and vision so that you always communicate vision *in light of* your culture. A positive culture will act as an accelerant for your vision. With a new appreciation for your culture, you'll empower your staff members to do their very best—and love doing it. You will create the context for vision to grow. When your people feel valued, their enthusiasm will electrify your church! To make all this happen, this book outlines a process to implement the changes necessary for you, your top leadership team, and all the rest of your leaders.

A positive culture will act as an accelerant for your vision.

The principles and practices in this book are designed to equip you to be the leader you've always wanted to be. There's no magic formula—quite the contrary. Changing your organization's culture will be one of the most challenging processes you've ever implemented, but I guarantee you, you'll be glad you did.

In *Why America Doesn't Work*, Chuck Colson and Jack Eckerd observe, "It would be unrealistic to suggest that managers become personally involved in the lives of each worker. But a sense of intimacy and mutual trust can be instilled in the workplace when managers show genuine concern for individual employees."⁴ A healthy culture begins at the

top, but it eventually releases the creativity and energy of everyone in the organization.

The nature of the topic doesn't lend itself to a quick read and then never being looked at again. Changing the culture of an organization is hard, rewarding work. I've added some reflection questions at the end of each chapter for you and your team to consider, but I'm sure you'll go far beyond these discussions if you're really serious about implementing lasting change. One of the most helpful elements in this book (available on the Web site www.samchandculturesurvey.com; see Appendix 1) is a free diagnostic tool to help you conduct a detailed assessment of your organization's culture. I'm sure you'll find it enlightening.

Think About It . . .

1. Do you agree or disagree with the premise of this chapter that culture trumps vision? Explain your answer.
2. Describe the most inspiring organizational culture you have experienced as a staff member or ministry leader. How did the senior leaders treat people? How did they impart vision and strategy? How did people respond?
3. Why did you pick up this book? What do you hope to get out of reading this book and implementing the steps of change?