LEVERAGING CHURCH CULTURE: HOW UNDERSTANDING A CHURCH’S CULTURE ENHANCES MINISTRY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

by

MICHAEL E. MAWHORTER

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Doctor of Ministry

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

Dr. Lyle Schrag, DMN; Thesis Supervisor

Dr. Archie Spencer, Ph.D.; Second Reader

Dr. Randy Wollf, Ph.D.; Third Reader

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY
March 2015
© Michael E. Mawhorter
ABSTRACT

This study looked at organizational culture in a church context, to explore whether understanding and leveraging a church’s culture can help focus its ministry and maximize its effectiveness. The research used *What Is Your Church’s Personality*, by Philip D. Douglass, in the ministry context of Ladner Baptist Church, Ladner B.C.

There were three components to the research:
1. Thirty-five opinion leaders in the congregation took a personality survey with the results plotted on a wheel of eight church personalities.
2. A meeting to report the results, with opportunity for feedback and discussion.
3. A follow up interview to assess whether the leadership found this process helpful in understanding their culture and leveraging it for greater effectiveness in ministry and outreach.

The result of this project demonstrated that the survey accurately identified the church’s personality and the supplemental material on each personality in the book gave valuable insights into how to leverage that culture for greater effectiveness.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The problem with acknowledgements is knowing where to stop. A lot of people supported and encouraged me through the most rigorous academic pursuit I have yet experienced.

First of all I want to give glory to God. It has been a privilege to serve Him in ministry for more than thirty years, gathering a lot of life experience to go with my gray hair. The opportunity to reflect on all of that through new filters in the DMN program has been a gift of grace.

Secondly, I want to thank Kathy, the love of my life and partner in life and ministry. For the second time in our forty years of marriage, she has made great sacrifice for my education. At least this time she did not have to type for me – on a typewriter, with babies on her lap. I could not begin to measure the help and support she has been for me throughout this program, encouraging, giving and giving up time, doing extra, cheering me up and on, and most of all believing in me, even when I had trouble believing in myself.

I also want to thank the board and congregation of Ladner Baptist Church, where I have been privileged to pastor for the last eleven years. They have supported me through my studies, put up with being studied and analyzed, and gave me extra time to take classes and write this thesis.

I also am thankful for the staff I am privileged to work with at the church. They have stepped up, filled in, and in many other ways supported and encouraged me.

Sabrina Fast took time out of her busy schedule to proofread this thesis, giving the great advantage of a second set of eyes, and finding an embarrassing number of changes. And even said she enjoyed it!

Finally, I want to thank my Research Supervisor, Dr. Lyle Schrag, for the gentle, positive encouragement, advice, support, and prodding through the writing of this dissertation, as well as my readers Dr. Archie Spencer and Dr. Randy Wollf.
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.........................................................................................................................................................i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.........................................................................................................................................ii

CONTENTS...........................................................................................................................................................iii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM...................................................... 1
Assumptions ....................................................................................................................................................... 6
Research Question .......................................................................................................................................... 9
Research Project ............................................................................................................................................. 10
Research Considerations ............................................................................................................................... 11
Church ............................................................................................................................................................. 11
Research Tool ............................................................................................................................................... 13
Summary of the Chapters of the Thesis ....................................................................................................... 16

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS............................. 19
Books on Church Culture .............................................................................................................................. 20
Key Books on Organizational Culture ........................................................................................................ 41
The book used as the primary focus of the research ................................................................................ 66
Summary ....................................................................................................................................................... 77

CHAPTER THREE: A THEOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ........................................... 79
Is it theologically valid to use a secular survey of personality types to examine a church?........ 79
A Systematic Theology Perspective on Organizational Culture ............................................................... 84
Theology ....................................................................................................................................................... 85
Anthropology ............................................................................................................................................... 88
Christology .................................................................................................................................................. 97
Ecclesiology ...............................................................................................................................................100
The Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3.........................................................................................................104
SWOT Analysis on the Seven Churches .....................................................................................................107
Cultural Analysis .......................................................................................................................................114
Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................................119

CHAPTER FOUR: PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH ................................................................. 121
Stage One .......................................................................................................................................................121
Patterns .........................................................................................................................................................130
Further Conclusions .................................................................................................................................132
Stage Two ....................................................................................................................................................136
Stage Three ................................................................................................................................................138
Conclusions ...............................................................................................................................................150

CHAPTER FIVE: WHAT NOW? CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS .................................... 153
OF THE FINDINGS.........................................................................................................................................153
Does this project confirm the hypothesis and assumptions?.................................................................153
Hypothesis ..................................................................................................................................................153
Summary of Assumptions ..........................................................................................................................154
Assessment .................................................................................................................................................154
Reviewing the Research Question ..............................................................................................................157
The Benefit of Knowing ............................................................................................................................158
Options for Cultural Identity ......................................................................................................................158
Douglass – What Is Your Church’s Personality?.......................................................................................159
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Why is it that churches tend to repeat similar behavior patterns over decades, or even generations, though often all the individuals involved are different? Whether it is how they treat their pastors (or each other), how they react to conflict or change, or their attitudes toward theological controversy or their community, some congregations’ behavior can be predicted with surprising (and sometimes disappointing) accuracy.

Why do some churches emphasize doctrine and teaching, or art, or community involvement, or evangelism, or children’s and youth ministries? Why is it that some churches have a relaxed, upbeat, informal atmosphere while others seem more sober, subdued and formal? Why do some churches embrace their surrounding community while others see it as a threat and are more inclined to isolate and insulate themselves from it? One highly significant but often overlooked factor is church culture.

Churches, like other organizations, have a unique personality or culture. It begins to form right from the beginning through the influence of those with the original vision. Ralph Waldo Emerson noted, “An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man.”¹ It evolves as it is shaped and modified through initial successes and failures and as new people become part of the group. Sometimes organizational culture is intentionally shaped over time. Often it is deep enough under the surface that it is neither clearly understood nor consciously engaged.

Over time it gradually solidifies and continues to impact the church, largely subconsciously. Kevin Gerald writes, “Church culture is most often created by default. It may come into existence through the life patterns and inherited habits of its founders, and

continue without much thought or consideration of whether or not some changes ought to be made.”

Organizational Culture is increasingly recognized as an important area of study in the business arena today. Since the 1980s, many books have been written, looking at culture as a factor in corporate character and success. Interestingly, Starbucks even had a Senior Vice President of Culture and Immersion, and Krispy Kreme had a Minister of Culture. Now, business and church are not the same, and what is true about some aspects of organizational culture in a business context may not have direct correlation to the church. However, there are enough similarities to be able to learn and benefit from a cross-disciplinary analysis. Even though the church is the Body and Bride of Christ, populated with people who self-identify as followers of Jesus indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it will be argued that particular theological emphases, core values, past experiences, community distinctives, common vision, and a number of other factors, all contribute to a corporate culture as unique as each member’s fingerprints. Any organization’s culture, sacred or secular, has an impact on and is in turn impacted by the attitudes, personalities, values, strategic decisions and effectiveness of those in the organization.

Although culture is generally recognized as an important influence in an organization, there are differences of opinion on the definition and characteristics of

---

2 Kevin Gerald, *Every Church has a Culture, By Design or Default* (Tacoma: KGC Publishing, 2006 and 2010), Chapter Introduction, Loc. 94, Kindle.
culture. Lewis, Cordeiro and Bird stress the importance of culture to the point that they claim, “...culture is to the church what a soul is to the human body.” They go on to say, “It influences everything you do. It colors the way you choose and introduce programs. It shapes how you select and train leaders.” They also recognize that it is easier to see its influence than to define and explain it. “Culture is also an enigma. It defies simple definition and is difficult to explain.”

Gaining a more precise understanding of the definition and character of organizational culture will be part of the literature review. There are a number of questions that will be explored, such as:

1. What is organizational culture?
2. What is organizational culture composed of?
3. How is it formed?
4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?
5. Can it be changed, and if so, how?
6. What impact does it have on an organization?
7. What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?
8. How would church culture be similar to and different from culture in other organizations?

As a working definition, this thesis defines Organizational Culture as the essence, underlying values, attitudes, character, and basic personality of an organization that both influence and are in turn influenced by stated mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and

---

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 3.
behaviors. Although the terms “culture” and “personality” may not be technically synonymous, they will be used interchangeably. This is in part because most of the literature typically uses the term “culture,” while Douglass, the primary source for the research behind this thesis, uses the term “personality.”

Philip D. Douglass, whose book *What Is Your Church’s Personality?* forms the core of this project, describes a church’s personality (the term he primarily uses for culture) as the operating system of a computer, which is essential to and influences every aspect of the computer’s workings. He writes, “In a similar manner, your church’s personality is always working quietly behind the scenes, guiding how your church thinks, feels, and acts, and directing ‘how we do things around here’.” He goes on to warn that if a new pastor or staff member tries to change this operating system, the church will malfunction in the form of conflict. In fact, he posits that it is easier (though tedious) to change the operating system of a computer than the basic personality a church.

Although culture seems to be a key factor in a church’s effectiveness, it is too often ignored, misunderstood, or underestimated. Many churches and church leaders may not recognize the importance and value of church culture in making ministry and leadership decisions. They may also prematurely interpret short-term progress or a change in vision as a change in culture.

There are a number of ways that understanding a congregation’s culture can benefit the church. One way is that a church’s culture can give invaluable clues for the kind of pastoral leadership it needs. During a transition between pastors, church boards and

---

10 Ibid.
search committees often identify areas they would like to see changed, then look for a pastor who is compatible with that vision. The pastoral candidate sees a group of leaders who want to see their church go in a direction that he would love to lead them toward, so is attracted to that church. However, if neither the leaders nor the pastoral candidate understand the cultural forces that have shaped the church’s personality, there may be an incompatibility resulting in frustration and conflict. This is a key reason why Douglass developed his model and wrote his book. As a seminary professor, he wanted to make sure his students found ministry settings that were a match for them. He writes, “What I found especially distressing was that too many of our graduates were repeating my experience of the 1970s and serving in churches that were opposite to their ministry styles. Many of them were not making it past the five-year mark before being forced to resign or experiencing emotional and spiritual burnout.”

A second way that understanding a church’s culture benefits the congregation and leadership is in the area of conflict. A church’s culture will impact its theological priorities, view of leadership, worship style, attitude toward change, and many other areas that each form potential pinch points for conflict. If a congregation does not recognize its underlying culture, it will not know why it is pulled in certain directions and reacts in certain ways. The better they understand, the better able they are to evaluate their attitudes and reactions. Similarly, if a congregation’s leadership understands the cultural influences that shape and drive the church, they can better discern what change would be most beneficial and how to bring about that change in a sensitive, respectful way.

A third key benefit is in strategic ministry and outreach. Understanding its culture

11 Ibid.
will help a congregation know what kinds of ministries to initiate and what kinds of outreach will be most effective. It can help them identify segments of their surrounding community they are uniquely positioned to reach and guide them in strategic planning. It could be argued from a missional perspective that this is perhaps the strongest reason for a congregation to gain an understanding of its culture.

Hypothesis: The hypothesis of this project is that understanding and leveraging a church’s culture can help focus its ministry and maximize its effectiveness.

Assumptions

The following assumptions have formed a starting point for the research:

1. Every church has a unique culture that is deeply imbedded in its identity and consciousness. It is formed early and largely unconsciously. This not only resonates experientially, it is supported by much of the literature examined for this project. Connors and Smith write: “Every company has a culture. That culture either came about as the result of a methodical effort to build it, or it has developed willy-nilly, for better or worse.”¹²

2. However, in the same way that human personality is more complex and nuanced than personality surveys indicate, it is important to not oversimplify a church’s culture. As churches grow older or larger, or during times of change and/or conflict, subcultures may form and there tends to be more ambiguity in looking at the total church culture. Joanne Martin has looked at the subject of organizational culture from three different perspectives: Integration (a single cohesive culture in an organization), Differentiation (an overlap of discernible subcultures where ambiguity signals an area in flux), and

Fragmentation (complex organizations where ambiguity is the norm). In fact she challenges the concept of a single integrated culture, claiming that it ignores the diversity that is in any organization.

3. A church’s culture impacts its effectiveness in mission, either positively or negatively (probably usually both). This hypothesis about organizational culture is assumed by most writers on the subject and is directly addressed by several. Denison writes, “The issues raised by the topic of organizational culture all point to the idea that an organization’s normative system – its system of values and management practices – can be one of an organization’s most important assets or most destructive liabilities.” Connors and Smith write, “Every organization has a culture, which either works for you or against you - and it can make the difference between success and failure.” In fact, Chand goes so far as to say, “Culture – not vision or strategy – is the most powerful factor in any organization. Chip and Dan Heath quote former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner as saying, “I came to see in my time at IBM, that culture isn’t just one aspect of the game - it is the game.”

4. Church culture can be changed, but not easily. Going back to the analogy of culture and a computer’s operating system, Douglas writes “If a new pastor or staff member tries to change the operating system (i.e., the church personality) to fit his ministry style

---

14 The following authors are listed in the bibliography: Denison, Gerald, Kotter & Heskett, Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, Chand, and Connors & Smith.
15 Denison, *Corporate Culture and Organizational Effectiveness*, 16.)
16 Connors and Smith, *Change the Culture Change the Game*, 7.
preferences, the church will malfunction in the form of conflict.”¹⁹ Kotter and Heskett use a great analogy to stress the importance of having the ability to change as a core value, “Cultures that lack adaptive values at their core tend to behave like mattresses or sofas with inner springs; it is possible to change the shape of a part of these structures with the application of sufficient force, but as soon as the force is removed or lessened the original shape often returns.”²⁰

5. A church’s basic culture or personality is formed very early in life. People can, and do change throughout their lives, but they rarely change their basic personality. It will be argued that the same is true of organizations. However, a fundamental biblical premise is that God works in our lives and community to transform us into his image. So as difficult as it might be, since it is possible for individuals to change, cultural change among groups of individuals must also be possible.

6. In light of the previous assumption, it is perhaps more valuable for congregations to understand their culture and see its potential rather than attempting to make wholesale change to their basic personality. In assessing a church’s culture, it is important to be able to identify in what ways that culture enhances mission and in what ways it hinders it. How compatible is it with the cultural aspects of the community the church is trying to reach? How do the attitudes, values, priorities, and behavior patterns that flow out of the current culture align with Scripture? Culture itself may be neutral, but it, like everything else in creation, is tarnished by sin.

Therefore churches must hold their culture up to the grid of Scripture and commit to

¹⁹ Douglas, 8.
living out their God-given uniqueness in spiritual and theological integrity. This could be seen as sanctifying the culture.

7. A church’s unique culture, properly understood, sanctified and leveraged, can be a powerful force for ministry effectiveness. This process can inform their strategic planning, guide them in programming, and enhance their outreach and ministry. As the Body of Christ on earth, the church is a living organism. Though many other factors influence the culture and effectiveness of a church, God is active in shaping them through their years. Therefore, in some respects, a church’s culture can be seen as a gift from God designed to help them accomplish what he wants to do through them in their community.

8. Aside from obvious dysfunction, what exactly the culture is may be less important than that the congregation understands it. If there is informed agreement in the congregation and leadership, they can more easily assess what needs to be brought under the Spirit’s direction and changed, analyze who they are best positioned to reach and discern how to best function within their personality. But if there is a disconnect between what the pastors, other leaders, and the congregation in general understand as their culture, it will make change even more difficult, and will more likely end up in conflict and loss of momentum.

Research Question

The question that this project will seek to answer is, “How effective is the “Opinion Leader Inventory” and supplemental materials in What Is Your Church’s Personality?, by Philip D. Douglas in helping the leadership in an older, established congregation better understand the cultural factors that are impacting its ministry effectiveness?”
Research Project

This research project will seek to walk the church I pastor, Ladner Baptist Church, through identifying cultural aspects in our congregation using the Opinion Leader Inventory and supplemental materials found in Philip D. Douglas’ *What Is Your Church’s Personality?*

There are three parts to this research. The first is for at least thirty opinion leaders in the congregation to take the Opinion Leader Inventory (Quantitative). This is intended to help identify the dominant personality/culture of the church. A copy of this survey is in Appendix 1.

The second part involves a meeting with the leadership of the church to review the results of the survey and to examine the specific information and recommendations Douglas gives on their dominant personality, as well as any other personality styles that may be prominent. This material includes suggestions on how the culture could be leveraged for greater outreach and ministry effectiveness. A copy of the report is in Appendix 2.

The final piece of the research is a follow-up interview with the staff and representatives of the board to gauge whether they feel this tool has helped them better understand some of the cultural aspects of our church and whether/how they think this information will help them strategically (Qualitative).

The following questions were used in the follow-up interview:

1. In what ways did you find the process helpful?
2. In what ways did you feel the process could have been improved?
3. In what ways did you find the inventory helpful/less helpful?
4. In what ways do you feel that the results accurately portray your church culture?

5. Were there conclusions that you didn’t feel fit your church culture? If so, what?

6. How comprehensively do you think these conclusions reflect the views of those outside the primary opinion leaders?

7. What did you learn about your church culture from the inventory?

8. How do you expect to use (or have used) this information to leverage your ministry planning and implementation?

Research Considerations

Church

The first significant consideration for this research involves the ministry setting where the study takes place. Ladner Baptist Church is located in Ladner, one of three cities along with North Delta and Tsawwassen, which compose the municipality of Delta, British Columbia, Canada. Ladner is a small town of about 20,000 people and is an historic farming and fishing village located in the fertile river delta where the Fraser River flows into the Georgia Strait. It is separated from the surrounding communities by farmland, the Fraser River, and Burns Bog, which covers 10,000 acres between Ladner and North Delta. The municipality of Delta is also part of Metro Vancouver, one of the three largest urban centers in Canada. Much of the population works outside of Ladner, and travels into other communities for shopping and entertainment. This dichotomy of being a small town on the edge of a large city plays a big role in the broader culture of the community, and contributes to a distinctive feel for the town.

Ladner Baptist Church has a long history in the community. It was formed in 1899 and bought property from one of the original Ladner brothers to build its first building in 1903. It moved to its current location on the main street coming into town in the early
1970’s. In the late 1990’s, they added another wing that includes a gym, large fellowship area, an enlarged kitchen, and classrooms. The church is part of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada nationally, and Fellowship Pacific regionally.

The congregation in some ways reflects the dynamic of the larger community: small town conservatism clashing with a fast changing urban mentality. One of the ways this tension has shown itself is in worship style, going from more traditional and formal to informal and contemporary. It has also gone from a single Sunday morning service, a completely different Sunday evening service, and Wednesday evening prayer meeting to two identical Sunday morning services and small groups through the week. As the church has grown, it has added staff, and now has four full time ministry staff: Lead and Associate Pastors, Children’s Director, and Administrative Director.

Another change the church has undergone over the last few years has been in the philosophy toward building use. The church sees its building as one way that it can bless and serve the broader community, and it is used throughout the week by many community groups. A few, such as Weight Watchers, Kumon and men’s hockey, pay a modest rental fee, either because they operate for profit or cause greater than normal wear and tear on the building. Other groups that have used the facilities on a regular basis are BC Guide Dogs, a home learner’s group, a home learner’s Scout group, a large multi-church Migrant Ministry and ESL classes, a Special Olympics group, an organization that provides help and support for older special needs youth, kid’s soccer practice, and community baseball umpire training. Of those, only the Migrant Ministry is faith based. For these, and for occasional use by members of the community for parties, meetings, weddings and funerals, or other gatherings, there is no charge. In addition, the kitchen has
just been completely refurnished to enable the congregation to expand its ministry and outreach and connect with the larger community in a practical way.

Youth and children’s ministries have always been a high priority for the church, and those ministries are thriving. As a result of both its long history and its commitment to the young, there is a significant cross section of people from birth into their nineties. Historically, the tenure of its pastors has been shorter. Before our associate pastor and myself, the only time a pastor has served for ten years was during the 1920’s. The current associate pastor, at more than fifteen years, has served the longest.

Research Tool

The other major research consideration is in the model and materials used: *What Is Your Church’s Personality: Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church*, by Philip D. Douglass. This study was developed through Douglass’ experience as a pastor, church planter, and seminary professor of practical theology. He approaches this subject from his own church planting and pastoral experience, observation, and involvement with students going into ministry, as well as a theological understanding of the church. An attractive characteristic of this study is that Douglass’ survey and follow-up material views the different personalities as neutral. Therefore this is not a critical study trying to determine health or dysfunction in church culture. It views each of the eight personality types as positive and legitimate, each with strengths and vulnerabilities.

Douglass uses a modified Myers-Briggs diagnostic survey to help a church identify its basic “personality.” The questions and how they are plotted are found in Appendix One. He classifies congregations into eight basic personalities:

---

21 Douglas uses the terms culture and personality interchangeably.
• Fellowship
• Inspirational
• Relational
• Entrepreneurial
• Strategizer
• Organizer
• Adventurous
• Expressive

The following are some attractive elements of his approach:

1. This approach does not judge a church’s personality. The purpose is not to try to change the current culture for a preferred one but to understand and value what it is. Each personality type has strengths and each has areas of vulnerability and temptation. In his chapters on each of the personality types, he describes these strengths and weaknesses. This approach recognizes that different kinds of churches are needed to reach different kinds of people, and that God uses all of them. This is very positive in that it affirms the church and shows how their personality can benefit their service to the Lord. It also alerts the congregations to those areas where they need to exercise greater caution and vigilance.

2. The background information on each personality type goes into a lot of detail about their strong points, challenges, in what areas of ministry they typically excel, their ministry tempo, what inspires them, what demotivates them, how they react to stress, how they make decisions, what their priorities are, their church ethos and outward appearance, what gives them confidence or causes fear, and what kinds of people and
occupations are attracted to their personality.

There are also some aspects of this model and materials that are potential concerns.

1. The survey process is to have thirty primary opinion leaders take the diagnostic. Each question contains two opposite ideas that relate to behaviors or traits, such as, “Do I depend on my personal observations in order to gather information about what’s occurring around the church?” or “Do I rely more on my intuition and hunches in order to form impressions about what’s going on around the church?” Each question allows a range of opinion from 1-5. The instructions indicate that the opinion leaders are to answer what they normally prefer rather than how they think they should behave. The underlying assumption is that this will reveal the personality of the church.

   Although this sample size seems to have statistical respectability, and the impact of leadership in shaping culture is almost universally recognized, one concern is that this may miss historical or even subversive cultural dynamics that are not obvious but compose a significant part of the church’s personality. That is why there are questions in the follow-up interview that allow for further reflection on the accuracy of the results, and that will hopefully surface anomalies.

2. A second concern is a personal suspicion with this type of personality survey in general. Whether they categorize personality by various bodily fluids (melancholic, choleric, sanguine or phlegmatic), animals (lion, beaver, otter, golden retriever), Bible characters, birth order, acronyms (DiSC, TJTA), or temperament traits, there seems a danger of oversimplification that does not factor in the complexity of human personality. Having said that, these kinds of diagnostics do seem to be helpful in self-understanding. Although they do not begin to sum one up, they tend to be fairly accurate in what they
measure. It could also be argued that any tool that helps us understand ourselves better can be beneficial, especially if it leads to more intentional behavior. The intention is that the follow-up interview will help fill in some of the blanks.

3. A third concern is to what extent mixed results play into the picture. Do churches have an integrated culture that is unique to them or do they tend to be more of an amalgamation of personalities; and if that is the case, how would that inform their understanding and strategic planning?

This thesis will argue the value of this model and the accompanying materials in helping a church better understand the cultural realities at work within it. However, in the final chapter there will also be suggestions for further research that will look at some of the relative merits of other resources examined.

Summary of the Chapters of the Thesis

Literature Review

Chapter Two will look at a number of books on organizational culture to explore some foundational questions, as well as a deeper analysis of Douglass’ book, *What Is Your Church’s Personality?*

In general, the business sector has been quicker than the Church to recognize the importance and potential of organizational culture and explore its nature and effect. The subject has also caught the attention of academia, and its contribution has been very helpful in challenging some of the assumptions and conclusions in the business literature and exploring some of the more complex elements of organizational culture.

There are resources written from a church perspective, but they tend to focus more on how to create or change a church’s culture without sufficiently addressing the topic of
culture itself – what it is, how it is formed, what its elements are, and how it affects performance. Nor is there much theological reflection in these resources on organizational culture itself.

This paper will attempt to utilize what has been written about church culture specifically while seeing how the broader topic of organizational culture from a business and academic perspective applies to church. Some of the specific questions to be asked have already been listed in pp. 2-3 of this chapter.

A significant part of the literature review will be a more in-depth analysis of the primary book used in the research: *What Is Your Church’s Personality?* by Philip D. Douglass, looking at his underlying assumptions, motivations, and conclusions, as well as the theological validity of his research.

**Theological Reflection**

Chapter Three will have a two-pronged focus. The first is to look at the theology of organizational culture in the church, addressing specific questions related to a theological understanding of church culture, such as:

1. Is there theological validity in using a survey of personality types to examine a church?
2. How is the broader concept of organizational culture informed by theology?
3. What evidences of the presence, distinctiveness, and impact of organizational culture can we find in the Bible, and how does Systematic Theology, specifically the areas of Theology, Anthropology, Christology, and Ecclesiology inform our understanding?

The second focus is whether there are evidences of what today would be identified
as organizational culture in the churches of the New Testament. Specific attention will be paid to the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3. Part of this theological reflection will be a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis on each church from what is written in the letters.

One of the intriguing factors about an analysis of these letters from an organizational culture perspective is that they are not typically addressed from that focus. This gives an opportunity to take, if not a fresh look, at least a different angle of view than normal.

Research Project

Chapter four will describe the three stages of research, outline the process used, and explore the results. There will also be an attempt to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each of the stages in order to facilitate future research in this area.

Summary

Chapter 5 will give a summary of what has been learned through looking at this topic from the various perspectives of the literature review, theological reflection, and the research project itself. It will address some of the implications of the project and make suggestions for further research and for improving the process of understanding and leveraging a church’s culture.

Effectiveness in ministry and outreach matters. We have a mission that is bigger than our forms, traditions, and doctrinal and cultural shibboleths. The hope is that this study helps us better understand the role that organizational culture has in the life and mission of the church so that we can become and make disciples more effectively.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

There is a growing body of literature on the subject of organizational culture that ranges from popular to academic, and from practical to theoretical. These resources seek to understand how cultural factors influence an organization, and whether or how they can be changed for more intentional effectiveness and profitability. One goal of this chapter will be to summarize how the books used for this thesis address the following questions:

1. What is organizational culture?
2. What is organizational culture composed of?
3. How is it formed?
4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?
5. Can it be changed, and if so, how?
6. What impact does it have on an organization?
7. What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?

The purpose of this is to gain a more precise understanding of the definition and character of organizational culture, and to see the degree of variance or alignment there might be generally in the literature. The literature studied for this thesis explores organizational culture from a church perspective, others targeted specifically to businesses, generally in a more pragmatic focus, as well as books that address the subject with a more academic approach. Generally speaking, with the exception of the books written specifically for churches, the topic seems more aimed at the business sector, even if written from an academic perspective. One interesting sideline of this research has been to see some interesting metaphors and analogies used to describe organizational culture. Some of
these will be mentioned in this section.

There will be three parts to this chapter. The first will be an overview of books dealing with organizational culture specifically from the perspective of the church. As was mentioned in chapter one, the church has been slower than both the business and academic arenas to embrace the concepts of organizational culture as they relate to congregations. However, six books were found dealing with organizational culture within the church, five of which will be reviewed in this section. This is done first because it is assumed that since this thesis relates to organizational culture within a church context, most who read it will be more interested in this focus.

Following that will be a deeper look at four books that have been especially useful for understanding organizational culture and the use of tools to discover it. Two of them are “must reads” for those interested in the broader subject of organizational culture and the other two have specific areas of focus that were particularly helpful for this study.

The final section will be a more detailed review of the book that serves as the primary resource for this project – *What Is Your Church’s Personality? Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church*, by Philip D. Douglass.

Books on Church Culture

*Culture Shift*, by Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, with Warren Bird

This book is written by two veteran pastors who lead churches they describe as “vastly different above ground.” Wayne Cordeiro is founder and senior pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Hawaii, a Four Square church. Robert Lewis is “pastor at large” of Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, a non-denominational church.

---

The preface gives both the underlying motivation for the book as well as the general purpose: “Culture Shift, born out of a passion we both hold deeply, is written to help you develop an irresistible culture in your congregation.” They go on to reveal their purpose: “We both make it our first priority to protect, cultivate, and enrich the cultures of our churches. Indeed, every vibrant church has learned to partner with the Holy Spirit in developing a thriving, contagious, irresistible culture...”

They do not attempt in any way to give an academic analysis of culture. They give a general overview of church culture in part one, but their primary goal is to show how to develop a good culture in a new church or how to shift an unhealthy culture in an existing church. As a result, everything is focused on how the leaders of a church can develop, shape, and change (shift) a church’s culture.

• Part 1 gives a very elementary analysis of culture.
• Part 2 deals with identifying and shifting a church’s culture, focusing on leadership and values; the vision statement of the church; symbols, ceremonies and celebrations; and finally, the senior leader. One of the strengths of this book is the chapter in this section emphasizing the need to work in partnership with the Holy Spirit.
• Parts 3 and 4 are the specific examples of New Hope and Fellowship Bible Church respectively.
• Lastly, Part 5 deals with creating an irresistible culture using the following progression:

1) Identify and believe God’s promises about your church’s potential.

---

23 Ibid., xxi.
24 Ibid., xxiii
2) Model kingdom culture personally.

3) Enlist allies to champion the culture shift.

4) Focus on “what we’re becoming.”

5) Compare the vision of the future to present reality.

6) Outline a specific, doable pathway.

7) Help it filter through the church, and learn from feedback you receive.

8) Stay focused on transformed people and on those receptive to change.25

They use an interesting metaphor to describe culture: totems. Totems describe the values of a community. Each of the animals carved on a totem pole speaks to a particular quality or value of their culture. They suggest that “Churches too can use a metaphorical totem to picture their core spiritual values and practices, signifying their culture and the atmosphere they want to build. These totems are the guiding values that birth the unique culture of a church.”26

The Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

   “Yet we believe culture is to the church what a soul is to the human body. It is an overall life force that the Holy Spirit uses to give energy, personality, and uniqueness to everything a body of believers says and does.27

   “Your culture is the lens through which you view your life. If you change the lens, you change your outlook. Change the culture, and everything else changes, including the

---

25 Ibid., 183.
26 Ibid., 43.
27 Ibid., xxi (italics theirs).
future."28

“Culture is also an enigma. It defies simple definition and is difficult to explain.”29

2. What is organizational culture composed of?

A church’s culture represents the intersection of three values you're to steward: God’s kingdom agenda, who you are, and your unique setting. These are the foundational elements of a church’s culture. When church leaders get in touch with God’s kingdom culture, begin to live it, and figure out how it can be expressed in their locality, then a new, rich culture inevitably emerges.30

3. How is it formed?

“Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art.”31

4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?

This seems to be assumed in the model but both authors are experienced pastors of large churches, so recognize that not everyone is going to be in the same place at the same time.

5. Can it be changed, and if so, how?

This is the whole premise and purpose of the book.

6. What impact does it have on an organization?

They have a great appreciation for the power of culture, for good or bad.

“Church culture is foundational to the life and witness of every church.”32

“It influences everything you do. It colors the way you choose and introduce programs. It shapes how you select and train leaders.”33

_________________________
28 Ibid., 12.
29 Ibid., 3.
30 Ibid., 20.
31 Ibid., 12.
32 Ibid., 2.
33 Ibid., xxi.
“Culture is the most important social reality in your church. Though invisible to the untrained eye, its power is undeniable. Culture gives color and flavor to everything your church is and does.”

7. **What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?**

“Like a powerful current running through your church, it can move you inland or take you farther out to sea. It can prevent your church’s potential from ever being realized, or – if used by the Holy Spirit – it can draw others in and reproduce healthy spiritual life all along the way.”

“Your church can indeed make certain changes and *become the way church was always meant to be.* Such changes focus not so much on the latest new idea or program but on a culture shift that honors your church’s unique values.”

Conclusion

*Strengths*

This book is more motivational than instructive. It is an action-oriented book that stresses the importance of leadership and working with the Spirit. The imagery of totems gives a helpful handle on communicating culture. It is optimistic of being able to shift the culture of a church. It is also helpful to read the personal stories of two veteran practitioners who have been very effective in very different ministry settings. In some respects, this made the book worth reading.

*Weaknesses*

Although the book acknowledges the importance of culture, it does little to advance

---

34 Ibid., 3.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 7 (italics theirs).
our knowledge of some of the more basic questions of church culture. It tends to view
culture as healthy vs. unhealthy, although the fact that the two principle authors pastor
such different churches shows that they do not have a particular, narrow perspective on
what style that culture should be. They give a general framework for change, but other
than some guidelines, they do not offer tools for gaining any kind of a precise
understanding of a church’s culture. Also, there is very little theological reflection on the
subject of church culture.

_Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create
Movement_, by Will Mancini

The theme of this book is that every church is unique and the key to effective
ministry is to identify that uniqueness and work with it missionally. The stated purpose is
“to challenge you to find your Church Unique – that is, to live a vision that creates a
stunningly unique, movement-oriented church.”[^37] The book begins by explaining what it is
not: it is intentionally not academic. It states right up front that it “does not offer
conclusions and extrapolations based on surveys or other empirical analysis;”[^38] does not
focus on a “particular tactic of church leadership;”[^39] and is not the story of any one church.

Instead of a strategic planning model, he proposes what he calls the Vision
Pathway. The steps to this are:

1. Discover your Kingdom Concept (Part 2)
2. Develop your Vision Frame (Part 3)
3. Deliver your Vision Daily (Part 4)[^40]

[^37]: Will Mancini, _Church Unique_. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), xxi, Kindle.
[^38]: Ibid., xxii.
[^39]: Ibid., xxiv.
[^40]: Ibid., xxvi.
Mancini stresses that each church is unique and equates that uniqueness with its culture. He writes: “Wouldn’t each church, however small, carry a unique collective soul, because each church is a different subset of one-of-a-kind saints?”

The Questions

1. *What is organizational culture?*

He defines culture as “the combined effect of the interacting values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions that define the life of your church.”

He also uses the equation: Uniqueness = Culture

2. *What is organizational culture composed of? and ...*

3. *How is it formed?*

He attempts to “remove some of the enigma of culture” by identifying the sources of uniqueness for a church. For each of these he asks questions and gives an illustration from his consulting experience.

- Leaders
- Gifts
- Heritage
- Experiences
- Tradition
- Values
- Personality
- Evangelism

---

41 Ibid., 6.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 7.
• Recovery
• Motivation

He would look at these not only as elements that compose culture, but also how culture is formed. (Question 3)

4. Can it be changed, and if so, how?

The emphasis of the book is less on changing the culture (uniqueness) of a church as much as finding God’s unique vision within it. “At some point, a defining moment occurs; a particular call from God collides with a concrete need in our little corner of the world.”

He includes some great quotes from others about vision:

• Frederick Buechner described vision as the place “where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

• Oswald Chambers describes vision as “the big compelling of God.”

The change he proposes is for a church to find its Kingdom Concept, that “big idea” that defines how it will glorify God and make disciples, and then take advantage of their uniqueness for Kingdom benefit. The model he proposes takes a church through that process.

5. What impact does it have on an organization? and ...

6. What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?

Questions 5 and 6 will be dealt with together. Mancini writes: “Until leaders not only embrace uniqueness but celebrate and leverage it, they will miss out on God’s best for

---

44 Ibid., 73.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 74.
47 Ibid., 84.
their ministry.” 48 He continues, “When leaders start thinking clearly, engaging locally, focusing redemptively, and risking boldly, their church becomes an unstoppable force and an irresistible influence.” 49

The Vision Pathway model is designed to walk a church through the process of discovering their Kingdom Concept, developing a Vision Frame to graphically illustrate that, and then to communicate it constantly. From a strategic standpoint, he writes that “your Kingdom Concept is what differentiates you from every other church in how you develop followers of Christ for God’s ultimate honor.” 50

Conclusion

Strengths

This was one of the more interesting and helpful books written from a church perspective, and is well worth reading. It avoided some of the “just do these ten things,” or “focus on these four areas” of some of the other books. It also recognized validity in uniqueness and built its whole model around finding and leveraging it. The book did not get hung up in a “this or that” context for organizational culture but assumes that properly understood and submitted to God, any culture can be healthy and dynamic. In fact, it is this uniqueness that is a church’s strongest strategic asset. Although the Vision Path process is quite involved and not particularly simple, it appears to be a powerful tool for understanding not only what sets your church apart, but how that uniqueness can be used for kingdom benefit.

Another strength is a clear process for working through the system with practical

---

48 Ibid., xxvi
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 84.
guidance at each step. Unlike Douglass’ system, there is no attempt to categorize a church; in fact, there is some reaction to that approach. The whole point is to identify what makes them unique, not to try to group them with others. Although this research project chose to go with Douglass’ methodology, the emphasis of this book on uniqueness is a helpful balance, and would be a reasonable option for a further project.

A big strength of the book is that there was more emphasis on theological reflection than any of the other books on church culture referenced for this project. One interesting example of this was a section entitled “Red-Letter Vision Frame: How Jesus Articulated His Vision in the Book of Mark.”\[^{51}\] This section took various teachings of Jesus in Mark and showed how they could fit into a Vision Frame. There were several other examples in the book like this.

**Weaknesses**

The main idea was sometimes hard to keep in sight. At times it felt like there was an outline within an outline. At the beginning of the book he diagrammed where he was going (as mentioned earlier on the discussion of the Vision Pathway). The titles of the various sections support this: Part One – Recasting Vision, Part Two – Clarifying Vision, Part Three – Articulating Vision, and Part Four – Advancing Vision (more on the parallelisms later). However the actual chapters sometimes seemed to draw the eye away from the main points. Chapter Titles under part one, Recasting Vision, are: Unoriginal Sin, The Fall of Strategic Planning, The Iniquity of Church Growth, and Lost Congregations. Although there was helpful information in all of them, the effect was sometimes to diffuse the overall focus.

\[^{51}\] Ibid., 117ff.
One of the most distracting elements of this book was an almost 1980’s and 90’s obsession with alliteration and parallelism that sometimes took away from the clarity of the message. For instance, when describing how to find one’s Kingdom Concept, he pictured it as three intersecting circles. The circles stood for “Local predicament,” “Collective potential” and “Apostolic espirit.” A church’s Kingdom Concept was where those three circles overlap. That is a brilliant concept and is very helpful in trying to ascertain uniqueness, but the phrase “Local predicament,” though understandable, needs some clarification and the phrase “Apostolic espirit” is so awkward and obscure it demands explanation. Another example is when communicating how to work through the Vision Frame he writes that the development moves from Missional Mandate to Missional Motives, to Missional Map, to Missional Marked Lives.52 And one more: in communicating the vision you need to be clear, concise, compelling, catalytic, and contextual – which when all put together is contagious.53 At one time this was a common communication technique to aid memory, but today is a bit annoying, sounds clichéd and affected, distracts from the conciseness of the message, and more likely dates the communicator.

The focus on and appreciation of each church’s uniqueness is helpful, but to boil organizational culture all down to uniqueness (Uniqueness = Culture) oversimplifies the concept and reframes the whole discussion.

Every Church Has A Culture, By Design or Default, by Kevin Gerald

Kevin Gerald is the founder and lead pastor of Champions Centre, a multi-site church in Tacoma and Bellevue, Washington. The question to church leaders and lay people that fuels his writing is “whether or not the culture is helping or hurting their

---

52 Ibid., 115.
53 Ibid., 116.
effectiveness.”\textsuperscript{54} He states his approach in writing as, “Because lay people influence the church culture as do its leaders, this book is intended to help both pastors and members engage in the never ending process of creating a purposeful church culture, which flows with the synergy of their vision for reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{55} His basic argument is that every church has a culture, whether it has been formed intentionally or not, and since it affects the church so dramatically, it is important to understand the dynamics of culture and design your culture purposefully. He writes:

- It is possible to design a culture that supports and champions the message you want to communicate to your city.
- It is possible to create a culture that doesn’t contradict your everyday lifestyle but complements all that you do.
- It is possible to create a life-generating church culture that exists on purpose with a culture by design.\textsuperscript{56}

He proposes seven practices of Culture by Design\textsuperscript{57} and organizes the book around them (one chapter each):

1. Create a model for culture-creating leadership.
2. Define the attitudes and design the atmosphere that will attract people to God.
3. Define your church “Mission and Values” to form a constant compass that church members can refer to.
4. Create the culture of a life-giving platform. (Referring to the platform ministries.)
5. Create the culture of corporate competence.
6. Create a culture that embraces the contribution of both men and women. (A

\textsuperscript{54} Gerald, Every Church has a Culture, By Design or Default, Introduction, Loc. 79, Kindle.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., Introduction, Loc. 112.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., Introduction, Loc. 133.
7. Create a team church culture.

The Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

Although he does not give a succinct definition of church culture, in the first chapter, entitled “Know the Facts about Church Culture,” he gives five facts:

- Every church has a culture either by design or default.
- The culture is revealed in the church’s packaging and presentation of the gospel.
- The culture of your church determines who comes and who stays at your church.
- Whatever the current culture is, it will grow.
- A culture by default is old and fixed, but a created culture is always evolving.

2. What is organizational culture composed of?

“Whatever habits and practices are accepted as normal for your church will become the culture that continues to grow there.”

3. How is it formed?

“Church culture is most often created by default. It may come into existence through the life patterns and inherited habits of its founders, and continue without much thought or consideration of whether or not some changes ought to be made. Typically a church’s culture is rooted in dated traditions and methodologies that appear too sacred to question or require too much effort to update with more relevant practices.”

4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?

The premise of the book is that a culture can be designed and implemented in a church,

---

58 Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 461.
59 Ibid., Introduction, Loc. 94.
so the assumption is that this would be a unified culture. However, he does address the question of subcultures.

“The clear and consistent communication of values helps to eliminate or minimize the existence of subcultures in the church by getting people on the same page. Subcultures that are inconsistent with the values of the leader will always weaken the effectiveness of the organization. These subcultures don’t typically originate in rebellion; rather they originate by default in organizations that lack design.”

5. *Can it be changed, and if so, how?*

The book is written as a manual for developing or changing the culture of a church. The way it is done is by following the seven practices listed above.

6. *What impact does it have on an organization?*

The consistent message throughout the book is that culture has a tremendous impact on the church. That is why it is so important to intentionally determine what that culture will be, so that the church will not be held back by an undefined, undesigned culture. “Culture by design, instead of by happenstance, will always lead to a more productive and successful ministry.”

7. *What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?*

Avoiding the consequences of an unspoken but active culture and aligning the culture with the mission and values is the primary strategic advantage. However much of this is assumed because the emphasis of the book is on designing and controlling the culture rather than trying to understand what it currently is.

Conclusion

This book turned out to be considerably more helpful than originally assumed from the fact that it was written by someone who named his church “Champions Centre.”

---

60 Ibid., Chapter 4, Loc. 1032.
61 Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 381.
was an expectation of “power of positive thinking,” prosperity teaching, that may have peeked through on occasion, but certainly did not set the tone of the book. Although it does not do a lot to advance our understanding of church culture, it does emphasize the importance of intentional leadership and gives some valuable insights into how to shape culture.

Strengths

The book is written with an earnest desire for churches to be as effective as possible in evangelism and ministry. One great quote in the section on Attractive Attitudes and Atmospheres was, “We can, and should, make it hard for someone to choose to go to hell.”\(^62\) The book champions (pun intended) an atmosphere that attracts people to the gospel then helps them transition to being an active, serving part of the community. He makes a statement that is obvious, but well-phrased, “Visitors represent 100 percent of a church’s growth potential.”\(^63\)

Another strength of the book that did not appear as much in the other books written from a church perspective was the emphasis on the Sunday services, giving a whole chapter to “Establish a Life-Giving Platform.” He references a theme that he and his wife adopted early on, “Success Begins on Sunday.”\(^64\) He writes, “Without a doubt, nothing is as important to the growth and health of the church as its church services.”\(^65\) This was written within the broader context of the whole atmosphere and ministry of the church, but it is a helpful reminder that what happens in our services sets the tone for the general attitude toward the church. It is a vital opportunity to help shape the culture of the

---

\(^{62}\) Ibid., Chapter 3, Loc. 683.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 1710.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., Chapter 5, Loc. 1091.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., Chapter 5, Loc. 1098.
congregation.

A third strength is in the seven-step process that formed the outline of the book. Although it is questionable how effective these steps would be in bringing fundamental change to a church’s culture, it could be a valuable process to work through.

Weaknesses

The book is written about culture, but little effort is made to define what is meant by the word. Also, there seems to be a narrow band of what is acceptable in a healthy church culture. There are a number of Scripture references in the book, but very little theological reflection, certainly nothing related to the broader subject of church culture.

**Cracking Your Church’s Culture Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision & Inspiration**, by Samuel R. Chand

Samuel Chand, raised in a pastor’s home in India, has served as senior pastor, college president, chancellor, and president emeritus of Beulah Heights University. According to his webpage, www.samchand.com, his vocational focus is Leadership, and he personally consults, mentors, and coaches “some of the country’s largest Church pastors.”

The title of the first chapter “Culture Trumps Vision” shows how strongly he feels about the subject. He writes, “Culture – not vision or strategy – is the most powerful factor in any organization.” He goes on to say, “Ultimately, the culture of an organization – particularly in churches and nonprofit organizations, but also in any organization – shapes individual morale, teamwork, effectiveness, and outcomes.” The purpose of the book is to help churches assess their culture in one of five categories: Inspiring, Accepting,

---

66 Chand, *Cracking Your Church’s Culture Code*, “The Author”, Loc. 3004, Kindle.
67 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 195.
68 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 199.
Stagnant, Discouraging, and Toxic. He gives a section to each of these categories in Chapter 2 – Culture Killers.

There is access to an online tool that seeks to identify a church’s culture in seven key areas forming an acrostic of “culture.” He writes, “To help you uncover the nature of your existing culture and identify the steps of change, this book examines the full range of culture 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**

The Questions

1. **What is organizational 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.”

   “Organizational culture includes tangibles and intangibles... The intangibles may be harder to grasp, but they give a better read on the organization’s true personality.”

   “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.”

2. **What is organizational culture composed of?**

---

69 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 203.
70 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 213.
71 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 217.
72 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 223.
“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.”

He differentiates between vision/strategy and culture using a driving metaphor:

“We’ll use the metaphor of a race car to illustrate the differences. Think of a high-performance Indy car, finely tuned and built for speed. The car represents the organization’s vision and strategy. The car, though, can go only as fast as the road allows and the culture is the road.”

3. How is it formed?

See quote above regarding the following: inputs; stories from staff experiences; shared goals and responsibilities; respect and care for people; balance between bold leadership and listening; and clear, regular communication.

4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?

The assumption is that the ideal is a unified culture and the goal is to work toward that. Disunity is an indication of lack of health, or at the least transition.

“Every team leader knows that some people on the team are more eager to jump on the train of a new idea than others, and there’s always someone who drags his feet yelling, ‘No, it won’t work!’ up to the day the team celebrates the success of the venture. Leaders need to recognize that people have different degrees of capability to embrace

---

73 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 233.
74 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 235.
75 Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 482.
the chaos of change.”\textsuperscript{76}

5. *Can it be changed, and if so, how?*

The book is written to help a church see what needs to change and to implement it.

However, changing a culture is not easy.

“Culture is hard to change, but change results in multiplied benefits.”\textsuperscript{77}

“Of course, cultures can change, but only when top leaders have the courage to take an objective appraisal of reality... The first step, then, is to uncover and face the truth.”\textsuperscript{78}

“Pastors and business leaders report that it’s relatively easy to institute a new program or introduce a new product, but changing the culture is the hardest thing they’ve ever done.”\textsuperscript{79}

“Changing a culture requires tremendous patience. We can rearrange boxes on an organizational chart in a moment, but changing culture is heart surgery.”\textsuperscript{80}

“Most organizational consultants report that it takes about three years to change the culture of a team, a church, a nonprofit organization, or a business.”\textsuperscript{81}

“Expect blood on the floor.”\textsuperscript{82}

6. *What impact does it have on an organization?*

“Culture – not vision or strategy – is the most powerful factor in any organization.”\textsuperscript{83}

“ Toxic culture is like carbon monoxide: you don’t see or smell it, but you wake up

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2146.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 406.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 403.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., Chapter 3, Loc. 835.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., Chapter 3, Loc. 1087.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., Chapter 5, Loc. 1748.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 1884.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 195.
dead.”84

7. **What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?**

“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.”85

“Top leaders need to spend at least as much time analyzing their culture as they do crafting their new vision, strategy, and marketing plans.”86

**Conclusion**

**Strengths**

Chand grapples with some of the fundamental aspects of organizational culture more than most of the other authors writing from a church perspective. He illustrates his points with real life experiences. Although formulating the seven keys of culture into an acrostic may be a bit cute and requires a little twisting (i.e. “Unafraid”), he at least has sought to identify factors that shape organizational culture and addresses particular attitudes and behaviors in those factors. These seven keys form the structure of the free CULTURE survey (www.freeculturesurvey.com).

The book also seeks to address how to bring about change to a culture, while still acknowledging the difficulty.

**Weaknesses**

The approach is fundamentally judgmental – assessing cultures based on whether they are Inspiring, Accepting, Stagnant, Discouraging, or Toxic. This holds a church’s

---

84 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 352.
85 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 335.
86 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 347.
culture up for analysis on how they meet Chand's criteria for healthy or unhealthy culture. This could be seen as subjective and arbitrary.

There is very little if any theological perspective to the book.

**Cracking Your Congregation’s Code: Mapping Your Spiritual DNA to Create Your Future**, by Richard Southern and Robert Norton

Yes, this is a different book from above, although cracking a code seems to be popular. This book uses the basic imagery of DNA to reference church culture. Southern and Norton write, “From our perspective, congregations don’t grow because they fail to take into account the most essential ingredient of good health and growth: their spiritual DNA, those intrinsic characteristics and traits that give each congregation its unique identity.”

Although this imagery has promise, especially as they note the emphasis in the New Testament on the church as a body, the book generally reads like a self-help book on evaluating and addressing four areas of church life.

They give a very shallow treatment of culture as primarily Core Values (Where Do You Draw the Line?), Mission (What is your Reason for Being?), and Vision (What Do You See in Your Future?). They use the DNA imagery to highlight “four key systems that carry, distribute, and circulate the spiritual DNA throughout the living body of the congregation: the welcoming system, the nurturing system, the empowering system, and the serving system.”

Perhaps the most helpful part of this book is Part 3 that deals with the strategic mapping process. There are at least some tools and direction there that could help a

---

88 Ibid., 7ff.
89 Ibid., x.
church evaluate where they are and construct a plan for moving forward, although it seems pretty complicated and built entirely around the four key systems. This could be valuable, especially if a church senses a particular weakness in any of these systems. However, the book does not really give much help on the subject of church culture. Nor does it address the subject theologically, other than a brief reflection on the church as a body.

Key Books on Organizational Culture

The following four books were especially key in preparation for this thesis. They each address the topic from different perspectives that when combined, offer a well rounded treatment of organizational culture.

**Organizational Culture and Leadership**, by Edgar H. Schein

If there was a standard text on organizational culture, it would likely be this one. Schein was Sloan Fellows Professor of Management at MIT and is recognized as a foremost authority on the subject of corporate culture. An in-depth analysis of this book is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the bottom line is if you are studying organizational culture, read this book. It is comprehensive and detailed, academic yet not difficult to read. Coming to this book from those written to a church audience is like wading out into the water and stepping over a drop-off. The contrast, at least in terms of exploring the basic nature of organizational culture, is dramatic. Those writing from a church perspective are using a different approach (less academic, almost non-academic) and have a more focused purpose, but a book like this is important for gaining a more thorough understanding of organizational culture, out of which the arguments and principles of the other books can be better analyzed and applied.
The main focus of the book is organizational culture, but Schein begins by outlining four categories of culture. They are:

- Macrocultures – Nations, ethnic and religious groups, occupations that exist globally
- Organizational cultures – Private, public, nonprofit, government organizations
- Subcultures – Occupational groups within organizations
- Microcultures – Microsystems within or outside organizations

He writes that “Culture can be thought of as the foundation of the social order that we live in and of the rules we abide by,” and also notes that there is a depth and breadth to culture that has a profound impact.

- Depth – “Culture is the deepest, often unconscious part of a group and is therefore less tangible and visible.”
- Breadth – “Culture is pervasive and influences all aspects of how an organization deals with its primary task, its various environments, and its internal operations.”

Although the emphasis is on culture, Schein also makes leadership a major focus because he feels that “leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.”

He makes a distinction between culture and climate, and observes that these are sometimes confused in writing because they mix up “culture as what is with culture as what ought to be.” Schein defines climate as, “The feeling that is conveyed in a group by

---

91 Ibid., 3.
92 Ibid., 16.
93 Ibid., 17.
94 Ibid., 3.
95 Ibid., 13 (italics his).
the physical layout and the way in which members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders.”

Confusing culture with climate leads to “the assumption that there are better or worse cultures, stronger or weaker cultures, and that the ‘right’ kind of culture would influence how effective organizations are.” He goes on to write, “whether or not a culture is ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘functionally effective’ or not, depends not on the culture alone but on the relationship of the culture to the environment in which it exists.”

Schein proposes a model that views culture on three levels based on the degree to which the aspects of the level are visible. Level one is the most visible and level three is the least. Exhibit 2.1 outlines the Three Levels of Culture.

1. Artifacts
   • Visible and feel-able structures and processes
   • Observed behavior
     o Difficult to decipher
2. Espoused Beliefs and Values
   • Ideals, goals, values, aspirations
   • Ideologies
   • Rationalizations
     o May or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts
3. Basic Underlying Assumptions
   • Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values
     o Determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling

One of the most helpful parts of this book, from a practical standpoint, is a process for rapidly deciphering an organization’s culture outlined in chapter 18.

Schein claims that this interview process is superior to surveys or other interview programs because it is faster and more valid, in that it arrives at shared assumptions more

---

96 Ibid., 15.
97 Ibid., 13.
98 Ibid., 14.
99 Ibid., 24.
100 Ibid., 315ff.
quickly.\textsuperscript{101} He feels that the process is most useful “in the context of a change program in which the \textit{change goals have already been made explicit} so that the culture can be assessed as a potential aid or hindrance to the change program.”\textsuperscript{102} In fact, unless this process is done in the context of a change program, he feels it will seem boring and pointless.

A culture assessment is of little value unless it is tied to some organizational problem or issue. In other words, assessing a culture for its own sake is not only too vast an undertaking but also can be viewed as boring and useless. On the other hand, when the organization has a purpose, a new strategy, a problem to be solved, or a change agenda, then to determine how the culture impacts the issue is not only useful but in most cases necessary.\textsuperscript{103} 

Schein proposes a ten-step process and even includes estimated time frames with the instructions.\textsuperscript{104} Those steps are:

1. Obtaining Leadership Commitment
2. Selecting Groups for Self-Assessment
3. Selecting an Appropriate Setting for the Group Self-Assessment
4. Explaining the Purpose of the Group Meeting (15 mins.)
5. A Short Lecture on How to Think About Culture (15 mins.)
6. Eliciting Descriptions of the Artifacts (60 mins.)
7. Identifying Espoused Values (15-30 mins.)
8. Identifying Shared Underlying Assumptions (15-30 mins.)
9. Identifying Cultural Aids and Hindrances (30-60 mins.)
10. Decisions on Next Steps (30 mins.)\textsuperscript{105}

He claims that the process can be done in a day or less. This process alone may be cause enough to buy the book, although there is much more value in it.

The Questions

1. \textit{What is organizational culture?}

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 315.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., italics his.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 327.
\textsuperscript{104} The relative merits of this model in identifying organizational culture will be explored further in the section on suggestions for further research in Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 317ff.
“The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” 106

“The most important lesson for me is the realization that culture is deep, pervasive, complex, patterned, and morally neutral.”107

“Culture as a set of basic assumptions defines for us what to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations.”108

“One of the most important categories of culture is the assumption made about how reality, truth, and information are defined.”109

“In another sense, culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual.”110

2. What is organizational culture composed of?

See the discussion on the Three Levels of Culture above.

3. How is it formed?

Schein makes a strong argument for the role of leadership in the formation and reformation of culture. “What we end up calling a culture in such systems is usually the result of the embedding of what a founder or leader has imposed on a group that has worked out. In this sense, culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately

106 Ibid., 18.
107 Ibid., 53.
108 Ibid., 29.
109 Ibid., 123.
110 Ibid., 14.
manipulated by leaders.”  

However, the connection of leadership and culture is a two-edged sword. “At the same time, with group maturity, culture comes to constrain, stabilize, and provide structure and meaning to the group members even to the point of ultimately specifying what kind of leadership will be acceptable in the future.”  

Part 3 of the book (chapters 12-16) deals with the role of leadership in culture at various stages of the organization’s life cycle.

4. *Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?*

He sees culture as being largely integrated in an organization. “Culture by this definition [see question 1], tends toward patterning and integration.”

He also recognizes that there are subcultures and microcultures at work in many if not most organizations.

“Much of what goes on inside an organization that has existed for some time can best be understood as a set of interactions of subcultures operating within the larger context of the organizational culture. These subcultures share many of the assumptions of the total organization but also hold assumptions beyond those of the total organization, usually reflecting their functional tasks, the occupations of their members, or their unique experiences.”

However, these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. “Martin’s categories are a powerful way to describe organizations that have different kinds of cultural landscapes within them, but they do not require any redefinition of the basic concept of culture as a shared set of assumptions that is taken for granted.”

5. *Can it be changed, and if so, how?*

---

111 Ibid., 3.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid., 55.
114 These will be discussed in the next book reviewed.
115 Ibid., 175.
Culture can be changed, but the fundamental stabilizing effect of culture makes it difficult. “Culture is hard to change because group members value stability in that it provides meaning and predictability.”\textsuperscript{116}

However, culture can and does change. A number of corporate examples are included. Chapter 16 is “What Leaders Need to Know About Culture Changes,” and lists Culture Change Mechanisms for three organizational stages: Founding and early growth, Midlife, and Maturity and decline.

1. Founding and early growth  
   a. Incremental change through general and specific evolution  
   b. Insight  
   c. Promotion of hybrids within the culture
2. Midlife  
   a. Systematic promotion from selected subcultures  
   b. Technological seduction  
   c. Infusion of outsiders
3. Maturity and decline  
   a. Scandal and explosion of myths  
   b. Turnarounds  
   c. Mergers and acquisitions  
   d. Destruction and rebirth\textsuperscript{117}

Chapters 17-19 (Part 4) deal with how leaders can manage cultural change.

6. What impact does it have on an organization?  
   “Culture is pervasive and influences all aspects of how an organization deals with its primary task, its various environments, and its internal operations.”\textsuperscript{118}

7. What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?  
   As discussed above: knowing your culture has strategic advantage when linked to initiating change or addressing a problem.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 16.  
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., Table 16.1, 273.  
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 17.
Conclusion

Strengths

1. An intelligent and thorough analysis of organizational culture within the broader context of macroculture.
2. Strong, detailed emphasis on leadership, both in developing and shaping culture and in managing it.
3. The outlined process for an organization to decipher its culture and what to do with that information in chapter 18.\textsuperscript{119}

Weaknesses

Identifying weaknesses in a book always needs to be done with humility – perhaps even more so with a book like this. It is a standard textbook on the subject that has been around for decades and is in its fourth edition. There is also so much information to sift through that identifying weaknesses can be like trying to isolate an ingredient by taste in a complex recipe. It is easy to get overwhelmed by the overall flavor of the dish.

One of the greatest weaknesses may be from what will be discussed with the next book, an overemphasis on the integration of a single culture. Although Schein acknowledges the existence of subcultures and microcultures, he may be oversimplifying how they fit into an overall understanding of the culture of an organization.

\textit{Cultures in Organizations}, by Joanne Martin

Joanne Martin writes from an entirely different perspective than Edgar Schein and her book is a helpful counter-balance to Schein’s work. In fact, she is quite critical of Schein’s perspective, almost an anti-Schein. She references him numerous times and

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 315ff.
acknowledges him as “the finest of critics – disagreeing with me vehemently, cogently, and openly.” She returns the favor.

They likely agree far more than they disagree, but reading them is a like listening to a Baptist and Pentecostal debating Pneumatology. Martin (the Pentecostal) would feel that Schein’s position may be accurate as far as it goes, but is merely a small piece of the reality of organizational culture, essentially superficial and one dimensional, and thus fatally flawed. She would see Schein being a primary advocate of one of the three perspectives from which she writes (and the one she criticizes the most).

This book seeks to consolidate much of the study that has been done on organizational culture into a theoretical framework that sees it from three different perspectives. “This book delineates three competing perspectives that researchers use to understand cultures in organizations. It offers a way out of the conceptual chaos caused by conflicts among the three perspectives.” These three perspectives, or frames, are:

Integration, Differentiation and Fragmentation. They are summarized in Table 1-1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Differentiation</th>
<th>Fragmentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to consensus</td>
<td>Organization-wide consensus</td>
<td>Subcultural consensus</td>
<td>Multiplicity of views (no consensus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation among manifestations</td>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>Complexity (not clearly consistent or inconsistent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to ambiguity</td>
<td>Exclude it</td>
<td>Channel it outside subcultures</td>
<td>Focus on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors</td>
<td>Clearing in jungle, monolith, hologram</td>
<td>Islands of clarity in sea of ambiguity</td>
<td>Web, jungle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

121 Ibid., Preface, Loc. 39.
122 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 438.
The Integration view looks for what is shared by the whole organization. Ambiguity falls outside this shared essence. The Differentiation view says that different values and priorities are shared by different groups within the organization, and that there is not a unified set of shared assumptions, attitudes, and values. In this view, ambiguity is transitional; it reveals the conflict between groups. The Fragmentation view focuses on the ambiguity. “Whereas the Integration perspective seeks similarities and the Differentiation perspective relies on an oppositional mode of thinking, the Fragmentation perspective focuses on delineating multiplicities.”

Martin states four objectives to her writing:

1. The primary objective is to examine certain basic questions about culture from the perspective of each of the three frames.

2. The second goal is to address why she feels that the lack of a common definition of culture or a shared theoretical paradigm is understandable and perhaps even desirable. She writes, “The blindspots and distortions associated with each of the three perspectives are complementary. Often one perspective’s blindspot is another’s focus…”

3. A third objective is to critique her own approach (a meta-theoretical approach), by addressing its oversimplifications and oversights from a post-modern perspective.

4. The fourth goal is to ensure that the voices of lower-ranking employees, women, and/or minorities, often ignored in thinking about organizational culture influence the theoretical conclusions. At this point Martin shows her hand. “Once the voices of

---

123 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3133
124 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 208ff.
125 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 214.
these people are heard, the idea that any organization has a single culture, understood in the same way by all its members, seems oversimplified.”

This book is written from an academic, theoretical perspective, but Martin adopts an interesting structure to explore the three perspectives. She intersperses her indepth examination of each of the three frames with practical examples of a company: OZCO, a pseudonym for a Fortune 500 company that employed 80,000 people worldwide. The company is looked at from within all three perspectives. What makes this approach so helpful is that by exploring the company from within, each perspective has a chance to make its argument; and by using the same company to explore each, ensures that apples are being compared to apples. She writes, “This book’s meta-theory explores each perspective from within, leaving its integrity undisturbed by pressures toward merger.”

As each perspective is analyzed, some common themes are addressed: how each would define culture; the role of ambiguity; the impact of culture on effectiveness; how each views cultural change; how each addresses individuals who deviate; and the question of organization-wide consensus. The approach is balanced, although her bias is unapologetically obvious. She writes, “Perhaps most obvious, I do not believe all three perspectives are equally valuable. I have tried to be even-handed in my presentation of each, but in some places in this book my preferences are evident.” In her attempts at even-handedness, each perspective is critiqued for methodology and substance, and her whole approach is critiqued from a post-modern perspective.

The Questions

---

126 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 238.
127 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 226.
128 Ibid., Chapter 10, Loc. 4651.
1. What is organizational culture?

Integration – Culture is a clearing in the jungle.

Key words: Shared and Consistency

She includes definitions of culture from a wide variety of authors from this perspective. What they have in common is that certain things are shared throughout the organization. Where the definitions differ is in precisely what is shared: assumptions, values, behaviors, customs, rituals, etc.

Differentiation – Islands of clarity with ambiguity channeled into the currents swirling around the edges of the islands.\(^{129}\)

Key word: Inconsistency

“Differentiation views of organizational culture have three defining characteristics. First, interpretations of content themes, practices, and forms are often inconsistent. Second, the Differentiation perspective is suspicious of claims of organization-wide consensus... Third, within subcultural boundaries, clarity reigns, while ambiguity is relegated to the periphery.”\(^{130}\)

So, sharing is among groups rather than the whole organization.

Fragmentation – Culture is not a clearing in the jungle. It is the jungle.

Key word: Ambiguity

“Ambiguity is perceived when a lack of clarity, high complexity, or a paradox makes multiple (rather than single or dichotomous) explanations plausible.”\(^{131}\)

“The Fragmentation perspective brings ambiguity to the foreground, rather than excluding it or channeling it outside a realm of cultural or subcultural clarity.”\(^{132}\)

“From a Fragmentation perspective, then, an organizational culture is a web of

\(^{129}\) Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2268.
\(^{130}\) Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2007.
\(^{131}\) Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3221.
\(^{132}\) Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3119.
individuals, sporadically and loosely connected by their changing positions on a variety of issues. Their involvement, their subcultural identities, and their individual self-definitions fluctuate, depending on which issues are activated at a given moment.”\textsuperscript{133}

2. \textit{What is organizational culture composed of?} And ...

3. \textit{How is it formed?}

“As individuals come into contact with organizations, they come into contact with dress norms, stories people tell about what goes on, the organization’s formal rules and procedures, its informal codes of behavior, rituals, tasks, pay systems, jargon, and jokes only understood by insiders, and so on. These elements are some of the manifestations of organizational culture... The patterns or configurations of these interpretations, and the ways they are enacted, constitute culture.”\textsuperscript{134}

4. \textit{Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?}

Certainly not. That is the main thrust and the obvious trajectory of the book’s argument.

5. \textit{Can it be changed, and if so, how?}

Integration

“Once a culture is established, most Integration studies argue that it must be actively, continually maintained, monitored, and renewed.”\textsuperscript{135}

“Integration studies that emphasize cultural inertia tend to be pessimistic about the possibility (and sometimes even the desirability) of management control of the cultural change process. These studies place relatively greater emphasis on finding a fit between an existing culture and various business strategy options.”\textsuperscript{136}

Differentiation

“To summarize, when change is viewed from a Differentiation perspective, it appears

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3697.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 188.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., Chapter 4, Loc. 1570.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., Chapter 4, Loc. 1607.
localized, incremental, and triggered (if not controlled) by pressures from a segmented environment.”

Fragmentation

“Integration and Differentiation accounts of planned change emphasize conscious, goal-directed decision-making and ideological solidarity within a culture or a subculture. These aspects of organizing for change are fundamentally incompatible with the Fragmentation perspective’s stress on negating clarities and disrupting shared assumptions.”

“Given these difficulties, it is not surprising that the Fragmentation perspective offers few specific, well-articulated guidelines for those who would normatively control the cultural change.”

6. **What impact does it have on an organization?**

 "Now is the time, then, to acknowledge the obvious: after listening to all the evidence, it seems to me that the Integration perspective presents a relatively unlikely scenario (consistency, organization-wide consensus, the absence of ambiguity), more reflective of the desires of top management than the realities of most employees’ working lives.”

 “Differentiation and Fragmentation studies have convincingly demonstrated that cultural descriptions which exclude conflict and ambiguity disproportionately silence the relatively powerless.”

7. **What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?**

 Serious doubt is given to even the ability to know the culture of an organization, or that

---

137 Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2581.
138 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3867.
139 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3882.
140 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3985.
141 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3992.
the organization has any kind of cohesive culture, so the question of strategic advantage is moot.

Conclusion

Strengths

This book is also a “must read,” especially if Schein’s work is consulted. It demonstrates compellingly that the subject of culture in an organization is more complex than would be assumed by much of the literature aimed at a business market. It is a relatively balanced appraisal of each of the three views of organization culture. Her treatment of the Integration perspective is less so, which serves as a good counter-weight to Schein. She may be, in part, reacting to her observation that the Integration perspective is the dominant view in North America. There seems to be a sincere attempt for balance and objectivity.

Weaknesses

This book can be very academic at times, bordering on too theoretical. The interspersed chapters on OZCO definitely help.

While this book has established the probability (if not certainty) that there are subcultures in any organization and that ambiguity is a given and a constant, taken to its logical conclusion, any attempt to understand an organization quickly descends into chaos. In an attempt to acknowledge more complexity, there is danger in going too far the other way and missing the possibility that there are common characteristics in an organization that impact its performance and open up strategic possibilities to be explored.

_Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind_, by Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov

This book adds a very interesting dimension to the study of organizational culture.
Although it includes a section on Cultures in Organizations (Part 3), it focuses more on National Cultures. What makes it particularly helpful for an understanding of organizational culture is that the original research, done by Geert Hofstede in the late 1960’s, looked at employees of IBM from more than fifty countries. He found that although they had similar occupations in the same multinational company, “from one country to another they represented almost perfectly matched samples: they were similar in all respects except nationality, which made the effect of nationality differences in their answers stand out unusually clearly.”\textsuperscript{142} The results of this study were written up in 1980 in \textit{Culture’s Consequences} aimed at a scholarly audience, and in 1991 the authors published the first edition of this book written for “an intelligent lay readership.”\textsuperscript{143}

In 2005 the book was rewritten and updated, and Hofstede was joined by his son Gert Jan Hofstede. The current edition was completed in 2010, and the father-son team were joined by a Bulgarian researcher, Michael Minkov.

The book is exhaustively researched and the authors are firm believers in mining data that has already been collected. They write, “Research is about interpreting data, not necessarily about collecting them.”\textsuperscript{144} In addition to Hofstede’s original research with IBM, the authors have done statistical analyses on several subsequent studies: Chinese Values Survey (CVS), World Values Survey (WVS), Project GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness), and IRIC (Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation).

They identified a four-dimensional model of differences among national cultures from the

\textsuperscript{142} Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov, \textit{Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind} (McGraw-Hill, 2010), Chapter 2, Loc. 461, Kindle.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., Preface, Loc. 102.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 679.
IBM data:

1. Power distance (from small to large) – “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”

2. Collectivism versus individualism – whether the interests of the group or the interests of the individual are the higher priority (chapter 4).

3. Femininity versus masculinity – whether emotional gender roles are clearly distinct or overlap.

4. Uncertainty avoidance (from weak to strong) – “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.”

Added to these four were two more gleaned from the Chinese Value Survey and World Value Survey.

5. Long-term vs. short-term orientation – fostering of virtues oriented toward the future or related to the past and present.

6. Indulgence vs. restraint – a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires or a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.

These dimensions of national culture were identified as values.

In addition, they identified six dimensions of organizational culture that they labeled as practices rather than values. They are:

---

145 Ibid., Chapter 3, Loc. 751.
146 Ibid., Chapter 5, Loc. 1607.
147 Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2140.
148 Ibid., Chapter 7, Loc. 2619.
149 Ibid., Chapter 8, Loc. 3057.
1. Process oriented vs. results oriented
2. Employee oriented vs. job oriented
3. Parochial vs. professional
4. Open system vs. closed system
5. Loose vs. tight control
6. Normative vs. pragmatic

The Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

The image they use to describe culture in general is software of the mind. “Using the analogy of the way computers are programmed, this book will call such patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting mental programs, or as per the book’s subtitle, software of the mind.”

“There is no standard definition of the concept [of organizational or corporate culture], but most people who write about it would probably agree that organizational culture is all of the following:

- Holistic: referring to a whole that is more than the sum of its parts
- Historically determined: reflecting the history of the organization
- Related to the things anthropologists study: such as rituals and symbols
- Socially constructed: created and preserved by the group of people who together form the organization
- Soft: although Peters and Waterman assured their readers that “soft is hard”

---

150 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 160, italics theirs.
• Difficult to change: although authors disagree on how difficult”\textsuperscript{151}

“Consequently, organizational culture can be defined as ‘the collective programming of
the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others’.”\textsuperscript{152}

2. What is organizational culture composed of?

“Culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. It is the collective
programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of
people from others.”\textsuperscript{153}

3. How is it formed?

“Culture is learned, not innate. It derives from one’s social environment rather than
from one’s genes.”\textsuperscript{154}

4. Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?

“Our own culture is to us like the air we breathe, while another culture is like water –
and it takes special skills to be able to survive in both elements.”\textsuperscript{155}

5. Can it be changed, and if so, how?

Culture is not easily changed. In noting how much has changed in the last 120 years,
they write, “So, on the surface, change is all-powerful. But how deep are these changes?
Can human societies be likened to ships that rocked about aimlessly on turbulent seas of
change? Or to shores, covered and then bared again by new waves washing in, altered ever
so slowly with each successive tide?”\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., Chapter 10, Loc. 3688.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., Chapter 10, Loc. 3692.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 174.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 175.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 381.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 326.
“National value systems should be considered given facts, as hard as a country’s geographical position or its weather. Layers of culture acquired later in life tend to be more changeable.”

6. *What impact does it have on an organization?*

“Corporate culture is a soft, holistic concept with, however, presumed hard consequences.”

**Conclusion**

Although not a “must read” as the last two were, this book adds valuable texture to an understanding of culture, both nationally and organizationally.

**Strengths**

Perhaps one of the greatest strengths was that it was written by people outside of North America and involves world-wide research. This gives it broader, more international scope that brings balance to the bulk of organizational culture literature written from an American perspective.

Another strength was that although it is highly statistical and technical, it is quite readable, with many interesting examples, both personal and historical. It is perhaps unusual to have a book that likely appeals primarily to an academic audience quote from the French cartoon Asterix.

A third strength was the depth and breadth of statistical research.

**Weaknesses**

One possible weakness parallels one of its strengths – the preponderance of statistical data. To those who are not particularly strong in this area, the amount of data

---

157 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 341.
158 Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 656.
and the number of charts can become overwhelming.

Another possible weakness is that, although the research has been reinforced by a number of major subsequent studies, the original IBM study that formed the nucleus of this book was conducted half a century ago. It would be interesting to see how that might have changed since then.

*The Character of Organizations: Using Personality Type in Organization Development,*
by William Bridges

What made this book helpful to this project was that Bridges looks at organizational culture from the perspective of character and uses the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to help an organization understand itself. This was one of the books on organizational culture (along with Schein) that Douglass discovered during his PhD studies that helped him make sense of his own experience in church leadership.

Bridges also has developed a tool that adapts the MBTI for organizations. It is called the Organizational Character Index (OCI) and is included in Appendix A of his book.159

Where Douglass’ survey looks at the personality of the person taking it under the assumption that the personalities of the top opinion leaders is the personality of the church, Bridges’ survey tool is designed to determine how the person taking it perceives the organization. He speaks to one of the concerns about Douglass’ assumption. “The organization has characteristics that are only partly explained by the people that make it up, so getting everyone who works there to take the MBTI instrument gives you only part of the story.”160

---

159 The relative merits of this model in identifying organizational culture will also be explored further in the section on suggestions for further research in Chapter 5.

160 Bridges, xiii.
Using the four opposing tendencies of the MBTI: Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I), Sensing (S) or Intuition (N), Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), and Judging (J) or Perceiving (P); he categorizes organizations under sixteen types of organizational character using the sixteen possible combinations of letters (i.e. ESTJ). Chapter 3 explains each of them.

Bridges looks at organizational culture as basically neutral – not good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. He uses an excellent analogy of different grains of wood. He writes,

“An organization’s character is like the grain in a piece of wood. There is no such thing as good or bad grain, but some kinds of grain can take great pressure, other kinds can withstand bending or shearing forces, and still others are lovely and take a fine polish. Some are too soft or hard, too light or heavy for a particular purpose, but each has some purpose for which it is well fitted.”

He also suggests some other metaphors that would support that view. “Character is the typical climate of the organizational country; it is the personality of the individual organization; it is the DNA of the organizational life form.”

He feels that this way of looking at organizations is preferred to trying to describe “culture” for several reasons. Some of the problems he addresses are because of the differences between anthropological study and understanding of culture and the way it is used in much of the speaking and writing on the subject.

The Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

Bridges defines organizational culture as the character of the organization, similar to character in a person. At the same time, he recognizes that there are limits to the analogy of thinking of organizations as being like individuals.

“Like any analogy, this one must not be pushed too far. Individuals are biological

---

161 Ibid., 1
162 Ibid.
163 Ibid., 139.
creatures, while organizations are social creations. Individuals have a finite life expectancy and a biologically based life cycle, while organizations do not – they may die a natural death at the age of fifteen, or they may still be going strong at two hundred. Organizations divide, combine, grow, and shrink. There are no meaningful individual equivalents to such words as divestiture, acquisition, new leadership, expansion, and downsizing."\textsuperscript{164}

2. \textit{What is organizational culture composed of?}

- Extroversion (E) and Introversion (I) refer to “two different locations for organizational ‘reality,’ and two different sources of organizational energy.”\textsuperscript{165}
- Sensing (S) and Intuition (N) refer to “two different styles of perception, two different ways of paying attention to the world and taking in information.”\textsuperscript{166}
- Thinking (T) and Feeling (F) refer to “different ways in which organizations make decisions – two different ways of judging situations and processing information.”\textsuperscript{167}
- Judging (J) and Perceiving (P) refer to “two different emphases that organizations demonstrate in dealing with the world.”\textsuperscript{168}

3. \textit{How is it formed?}

“Individuals might be born to a particular type, but organizations certainly came to their particular typology in a more complex way. The founder(s) left a clear mark on many organizations, but then so did the business or field that the organization was part of. Even traumatic chapters in an organization’s history can leave their mark on its character.”\textsuperscript{169}

4. \textit{Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?}

Bridges writes about his own experience.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 3, italics his.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., xii.
I had not gone very far in my quest for ‘organizational type’ and a way to identify and describe it before I was confronted by something that initially frustrated me greatly, but that I finally decided was both very interesting and important: the fact that most of the organizations I studied did not have a solid and unified character, but instead were made up of a mosaic of sometimes quite different characters.\(^\text{170}\)

5. *Can it be changed, and if so, how?*

“Once again, we see that there is no good or bad character – just character that fits or fails to fit a particular situation.”\(^\text{171}\) Since organizational character is neither good nor bad, whether it should change or not depends on the situation. He evaluates change in organizations based on how each of the four opposing tendencies responds.

- Extroverted organizations handle change that comes from the outside more easily, while Introverted organizations are better at handling intrinsic changes.\(^\text{172}\)
- Sensing organizations believe in step-by-step change, while Intuitive organizations are more open to a big transformation.\(^\text{173}\)
- Feeling organizations are more likely to engage in change based on values and people, while Thinking organizations will be more likely to change if it is based on logical principles.\(^\text{174}\)
- Judging organizations look at change as disruptive while Perceiving organizations are more likely to see change as normal.\(^\text{175}\)

None of these actually address the idea of changing the culture, instead they look at how the different characters address change in circumstances. About changing the culture of an organization he writes, “An organization’s culture changes very, very slowly over a

---

\(^{170}\) Ibid., xiii.  
\(^{171}\) Ibid., 10.  
\(^{172}\) Ibid., 75.  
\(^{173}\) Ibid., 76.  
\(^{174}\) Ibid., 78.  
\(^{175}\) Ibid.
period of years, partly through intentional interventions but largely through the sum total of people’s only partly articulated responses to a changing world or marketplace.”

6. **What impact does it have on an organization?**

   “So I came to see that organizational character would help explain the difference that one can always feel (but seldom describe easily) not only between one organization and another, but also between different elements of the same organization.”

7. **What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?**

   “Assessing an organization’s character is the essential first step in any developmental effort.” The other three steps are helping the leaders understand the implications of their character as it relates to development, designing a developmental plan for the organization, and “undertaking some of those interventions that people usually refer to as OD work.”

Conclusion

**Strengths**

This book was quite helpful to this research because it approached organizations in a very similar way that Douglass views churches and provided a tool that accomplished similar ends. Having the survey participants answer the questions as they perceive the organization rather than how they themselves respond seems more logical than Douglass’ view.

**Weaknesses**

The same hazard of subjectivity that is found in Douglass’ model is found in this one. In

176 Ibid., 140.
177 Ibid., xiii.
178 Ibid., 90.
179 Ibid., 90.
fact, this may be even more subjective in that people tend to be able to answer personality-type questions better when they relate to themselves than to a larger organization. He describes some of the disadvantages in this approach:

1. Questions can be interpreted differently by people who lack the opportunity to discuss them and who do not understand the concepts behind them.
2. Some people answer the questions in terms of the real organization that operates every day, while others answer the question in terms of the organization that its leaders describe.
3. Everyone inevitably characterizes the organization that he or she has personally experienced. When this is done by an isolated individual with a piece of paper, that subjectivity may not be as clear as it is when issues are discussed in a group.
4. The OCI has not been statistically validated. It is simply the current best tool for inventorying the character-related qualities of an organization.\(^{180}\)

The book used as the primary focus of the research

*What Is Your Church’s Personality? Discovering and Developing the Ministry Style of Your Church*, By Philip D. Douglass

This section will take a closer look at Douglass’ book, particularly looking at his motivations, underlying assumptions and his conclusions, as they relate to the questions we have been exploring in this chapter.

Motivation

Philip D. Douglass was motivated to develop his system of identifying a church’s personality out of his own experience as a pastor, church planter, and seminary professor (as described in the Preface of the book). He learned first hand the challenges of pastoring a church that was not a good fit for one’s own personality. In the pastorate, not understanding the dynamics of church culture, he struggled with depression and burnout.

\(^{180}\) Ibid., 129-130.
As a church planter, he thrived in a ministry where he was able to form the personality of the congregation (Inspirational). However, because of differences in the leadership and later in staffing, he inadvertently allowed two distinct personalities to thrive (Inspirational and Organizer). As long as he was there, his personality was dominant. However when he left, the other personality became more dominant creating unnecessary stress and conflict for the church.\textsuperscript{181} As a seminary professor, he became distressed at the number of students who left school and began serving churches that were incompatible with their ministry styles, often resulting in short pastorates and emotional and spiritual burnout. As he learned about personality studies and became exposed to information on corporate culture, he decided to bring what he was learning into a system of helping churches match with new ministry workers.

Assumptions

Douglass builds his system around some basic assumptions. Following are four of them:

1. Although each church is unique, their personality will fall within eight basic personality types. “Personality varies significantly from church to church. At the same time, distinctions can often be subtle. In one sense, there are as many personalities as there are churches. But those endless, varied distinctions can be clustered into eight basic categories.”\textsuperscript{182} (p.21)

2. Although there may be evidences of more than one type of personality in a church, there will be a dominant type. “You will likely be able to see aspects of your church in more than one of the descriptions that follow. However, research demonstrates that one of these eight profiles will be most descriptive of your church.” (p.28)

\textsuperscript{181} Douglass, 15-16.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 21.
3. The top thirty opinion leaders determine the church personality. “This diagnostic...is based on the assumption that the personality of a church is determined by the true leadership of the church: the thirty individuals who exercise the greatest official and unofficial influence on the church.” “Fundamentally, your church’s personality is a set of shared values among its most influential members.”\textsuperscript{183}

4. The fourth assumption has already been touched on in chapter 1 of this thesis. He approaches each kind of personality in a church as neutral and valid. As opposed to some books that focus on strong vs. weak or healthy vs. unhealthy cultures, his “personality” approach enables him to celebrate each of the eight different personalities without passing judgment on them.

This does not mean, however, that he adopts an “anything goes” approach. He writes, “Not every aspect of the church ethos is positive because each personality has its challenges – forms of temptation to which it is more susceptible.”\textsuperscript{184} He then elaborates on that with specifics for each category.

There are no right or wrong church personalities. But every church personality experiences temptations to engage in particular types of sinful behavior. For example:

- \textit{Practical} churches are sometimes tempted to do something simply because it is the next feasible thing to do, rather than because it honors Christ.
- \textit{Innovative} churches are occasionally tempted to become so enthralled by future possibilities that they do not pay attention to necessary aspects of everyday ministry.
- \textit{Analytical} churches are tempted, from time to time, to study situations and people logically, while remaining aloof and personally uninvolved.
- \textit{Connectional} churches are now and then tempted to use emotional manipulation to bring about results.
- \textit{Structured} churches are tempted, on occasion, to be rigid in their direction once they have made decisions, and may try to control people who do not submit.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 25.
Flexible churches are sometimes tempted to be impulsive in their ministry and unwilling to make long-term commitments.\textsuperscript{185}

The book is designed as a self-study for congregations. The process is described more fully in chapter four of this thesis. The diagnostic survey is designed to help the congregation discover its dominant personality. This forms one of three elements of a church's philosophy of ministry.\textsuperscript{186} The other two elements are their theological convictions and the community context. He notes that,

Most churches are adept at expressing their theological convictions, most have established biblical standards of godly character for their leaders, and most work capably toward assessing how they can minister effectively in their community contexts. But, sadly, many do not understand the nature of their church personalities – and therefore the roots of the conflicts they experience.\textsuperscript{187}

Although one could argue that he may be optimistic in saying that most churches have a good handle on both their theological convictions and how to effectively minister to their broader community, his observation that many do not understand their unique personality is likely all too accurate.

The Questions

1. What is organizational culture?

Douglass defines a church's personality or culture as “an identity – a set of values, beliefs, norms – that shapes its practices and behavior....”\textsuperscript{188} He uses the imagery of a mold shaping plaster. He writes, “The ideals of your denomination or church association are like the plaster: what goes into the mold is essentially the same for every church, but the shape it takes is determined by the mold itself. One mold is not inherently better than

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 26.
  \item \textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 4-5.
  \item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 4.
\end{itemize}
another, simply different.”

2. **What is organizational culture composed of?**

“Church personality can be viewed at two levels: some aspects of its personality are visible and concrete, while many characteristics are intangible and subconscious.” He goes on to suggest that “Some of the most powerful expressions of a church’s personality are the architecture and décor, the clothing people wear, the church processes and structures, its rituals and celebrations.”

He suggests that newcomers are able to both consciously and unconsciously identify a church’s personality within a few minutes. Some of the things that help them recognize a church’s personality are the friendliness of the people, clothing, the bulletin (or lack of one), what is emphasized during the announcement time, and the worship style.

3. **How is it formed?**

Douglass states that “a church’s personality is greatly influenced by its traditions and origins.” Among other things, this is influenced by how long the church has been in existence; their denominational affiliation, and how much or little the church seeks to reflect that; the Seminaries or Bible Colleges where their pastors have been trained; and how they handled “debatable matters,” which he claims are the areas in which cultural differences are most clearly expressed.

4. **Is there such a thing as a unified culture in an organization?**

Douglass acknowledges that different cultures can exist in a church, especially larger
or mega-churches. He writes, “It can be almost as if two distinct churches exist in one body, because the functions that a church undertakes – and the people who fulfill those functions – are so different.”

He uses two different departments: outreach and bookkeeping to illustrate. Their functions are very different, they focus on different aspects of the total ministry, and they attract different kinds of people. He recommends, “Therefore, leaders in larger churches who use the diagnostic tools in this book to determine the personalities of their churches should not stop with assessing personality for the church as a whole. It is important to conduct the assessment for each specific subdivision of the church as well.”

5. *Can it be changed, and if so, how?*

Douglass strongly argues against trying to change a church’s fundamental personality. He writes, “Programming shifts should initiate change in your church structures, methodologies and processes, but they should not tamper with your fundamental church personality.” And again, “Your fundamental church personality should not be tampered with – so it is important that the pastoral leadership that best fits your church personality be chosen in such a manner that the church grow and develop in its own unique way.”

He uses two metaphors to demonstrate this. One that has already been mentioned is that he compares a church’s personality with the operating system of a computer, and suggests that it might be easier to change that than the personality of a church. The other metaphor uses the medical example of finding suitable donors for organ transplants to...

---

195 Ibid., 19.
196 Ibid., 20.
197 Ibid., 15.
198 Ibid., 17.
demonstrate the importance of finding pastors who are matches for the church’s personality.¹⁹⁹

6. What impact does it have on an organization?

In his section on a church’s personality being like the operating system of a computer, Douglass writes, “Personality drives a church and its actions.”²⁰⁰ He goes on to say that “your church’s personality is always working quietly behind the scenes, guiding how your church thinks, feels, and acts, and directing ‘how we do things around here’. ”²⁰¹

7. What strategic advantage does knowing its culture have on an organization?

The whole rationale behind the development of the survey and the chapters on each personality type is that personality or culture has a huge impact on the church. Each personality type is given a chapter detailing information on what kinds of ministries each personality thrives at, what kinds of people are attracted to that kind of personality, and even what kinds of occupations tend to gravitate to that culture. Understanding a church’s personality enables the leadership to develop a more comprehensive ministry style description. “This process will move program development and conflict resolution along in a focused manner, because you will begin with a framework of descriptions from which to work rather than try to create each statement afresh.”²⁰²

Theological Considerations

Douglass does not make a theological defense of his methodology, nor does he make a point of differentiating between churches and other organizations as it relates to corporate culture. As he writes from the perspective of a pastor, church planter, and

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰⁰ Ibid., 8.
²⁰¹ Ibid.
²⁰² Ibid., 32.
Practical Theology professor (in fact, chair of the department) – and focuses the whole book exclusively toward churches – it would have been helpful if he had given some theological rationale. Instead the book assumes that churches, like any other organization, have a corporate culture or personality and takes a pragmatic approach to helping churches identify and utilize their personality.

There are a few ways that he addresses the biblical. One of the ways is that in each chapter describing the different personalities, he includes Scripture verses for various aspects of that personality. For instance, in the chapter on Fellowship he includes Scripture references for Supportiveness, Conscientious Service, Orderly Planning, Tradition, Change, Conflict, Decision-Making, Communication, and Outreach through Fellowship.203 There are similar sections for each of the eight personalities. There is no explanation as to why these verses are included. A positive aspect to their inclusion is that it enables church leaders to use them as they reflect biblically on how their personality can help them in their ministry and outreach. A concern is that simply listing verses that address certain qualities could result in a proof-texting approach rather than a solid theological foundation for who we are and how we behave.

A second way Douglass addresses the biblical is that for each personality he includes a section on how that personality learns or how best to communicate to those attracted to that personality. He introduces this in his first personality profile in a section entitled Sermon and Teaching Style. He writes, “Armed with an awareness of the Fellowship church’s primary learning style, the pastor, staff, and lay leadership can adapt their sermon and teaching methods to the way the people learn and grow best. Instead of

203 Ibid., 41-66.
undermining the confidence of the people or frustrating them, the sermon/teaching style should fit the way they learn and lead to their spiritual growth and development.”

A similar section is included for each of the personalities, although in some of them it is identified as Learning Style or Communication Style. This information seeks to assist those conveying biblical truth to have a greater understanding of how to communicate as effectively and efficiently as possible. Although this could become manipulative if utilized with the wrong motives, it can be very helpful. The task of preaching and teaching is not to dump information but to communicate truth in a way that transforms. We see this in the ministry of Paul, who adopted a drastically different methodology in Athens (Acts 17) than he did in his very next stop, Corinth (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

A third way Douglass addresses the biblical is that he attaches a Bible character to each of the personalities: Fellowship – Ruth; Inspirational – Barnabas; Relational – Peter; Strategizer – Paul; Organizer – Abraham; Adventurous – David; and Expressive – Solomon. These sections are interesting, and help put a flesh-and-blood perspective on what could be abstract information.

Conclusion

In general, this book is very helpful for churches that want to better understand their basic culture and to leverage that culture for more effective ministry and outreach. Douglass writes both as an academic and as a practitioner. His experience as a pastor, church planter, and seminary professor give him both an aerial view and ground level perspective to church personality. His heart for churches and church leaders also comes through his writing.

204 Ibid., 55.
Strengths

1. Since this is not a textbook on organizational culture, Douglass does not go into a lot of general detail about the topic. However, he gives enough helpful foundational information for someone new to the subject to understand its value and to use this book in their church.

2. The opinion-leaders’ survey and the system to identify a church’s personality are also strengths. He has been able to capitalize on the extensive work done by Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers in their personality profile while customizing it for churches. This gives a church an immediate head start, in that they do not have to do the work of adapting a tool and developing a system, but can save that time and energy for implementing what he has already done. Whether it is any better than a comparable tool and system based on a different form of personality profile (Taylor-Johnson, DISC, Spirit-Controlled Temperament, etc.) is a valid question, but this is already developed and tested. Our own experience (outlined in chapter 4) has been generally helpful.

3. The separate chapters on each personality contain a wealth of information on each. A lot of work has gone into exploring the different personalities from a variety of perspectives, summarized in a chart for each that includes strong points, challenges, ministries that they are especially good at, the typical tempo of their ministry, what inspires them, what demotivates them, how they react to stress, how they make decisions, their desires, priorities, church ethos (i.e. visionary, task oriented, efficient), outward appearance, what gives them confidence, and what they fear. In addition to addressing learning and communication styles, each chapter includes a section on
outreach as well as what kinds of people and what kinds of occupations are attracted to that ministry personality. All of this is very helpful both in helping a church understand itself and also understanding how that personality can help and hurt them.

Weaknesses

1. It would be helpful to have some of the basic assumptions explained and defended. Since the whole system flows out of the underlying assumptions, those become very important in assessing the value of the survey and its follow-up information. There are perfunctory comments made from the areas of organizational culture theory and statistics, but a fuller explanation could enhance confidence in the system.

2. Since this is designed as a self-study, there could have been more guidance on how to interpret the results of the survey. Although it is helpful to be able take the three letter combinations and plug them onto the wheel, there are certainly subtleties to the individual scores that could add to the understanding of the general personality of the church. Three attempts were made to contact the author with the hope of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of our own results, including requesting a Church Personality Report on their website. There was no response, so the logical conclusion is that this is going to be a self-study limited to the information given in the book.

3. A further weakness in Douglass’ book and model is where do you go after you have identified your personality? The book’s focus seemed to narrow toward the end to using this system to find the right pastoral fit so that other values of the process seemed to get left behind. How does a church go from understanding their personality to leveraging it for more effective ministry? Are there any tools or processes to help a church make practical use of the knowledge they have gathered?
4. As was already mentioned, the book could have included a more robust theological treatment.

In summary, this is a helpful turnkey system for evaluating a church’s culture and addressing its implications for ministry and outreach. There is enough information to get a basic understanding of organizational culture and to take a congregation through the process. To gain a more well-rounded understanding of organizational culture, or to understand more fully how to bring change to the congregation, other resources will need to be accessed. However, just applying the book will likely lead to a better understanding and appreciation of a church’s culture and will form a strong starting point for staffing and developing a more comprehensive ministry plan.

Summary

Looking at the summary of the books reviewed in this chapter shows the wide variety of opinions on all seven of the basic questions: what organizational culture is, what it is composed of, how it is formed, whether there is a unified culture, whether it can be changed, what impact it has, and what strategic advantage there is to an organization knowing their culture. Yet in all the responses, there are also similarities:

1. Whatever else is involved in defining culture, all agree that it includes basic assumptions, values, and beliefs.

2. Most if not all the books acknowledge that culture includes visible as well as invisible components.

3. Most if not all the books recognize the role of leadership, history, stories, and rituals in the formation of an organization’s culture.

4. All recognize the presence of groups, departments, or factions that may be at
dissonance with the assumed culture of the organization, even if they differ on what that means and whether it is normal or a sign of dysfunction.

5. Most if not all accept that a culture can be changed, although they differ on how hard it is, how long it takes, or whether one should even try.

6. Most if not all recognize that the culture of an organization has a significant impact on the organization.

7. Most if not all acknowledge that there can be strategic advantage to knowing an organization’s culture.

In chapter one a preliminary working definition was given: Organizational Culture is the essence, underlying values, attitudes, character, and basic personality of an organization that both influence and are in turn influenced by stated mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and behaviors. The validity of this definition has been confirmed by an examination of the literature. It seeks to emphasize the underlying, often unconscious essence of an organization, while acknowledging the influence of and resulting impact on those cultural aspects that are more intentional and visible.

One notable absence in the literature written from a church perspective was any significant discussion on whether there is a difference between a church and other organizations. That question will be addressed in the next chapter as the subject of organizational culture is viewed from a theological perspective.
CHAPTER THREE: A THEOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

This chapter will address four specific questions related to a theological understanding of organizational culture, especially as it relates to the church.

1. The first is whether it is theologically valid to use a secular survey of personality types to examine a church.

2. A second question relates to identifying a theology of organizational culture. How is the broader concept of organizational culture informed by theology? What evidences of the presence, distinctiveness, and impact of organizational culture can we find in the Bible, and how does Systematic Theology, specifically the areas of Theology, Anthropology, Christology, and Ecclesiology help our understanding?

3. A third question is how the church differs from and is similar to other organizations, as it relates to organizational culture. This will be looked at as part of the section on Ecclesiology.

4. The fourth question is whether there are evidences of what today would be identified as organizational culture in the churches of the New Testament. Specific attention will be paid to the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3.

Is it theologically valid to use a secular survey of personality types to examine a church?

An attempt to apply business and academic learning to better understand the church invariably leads to questions about the legitimacy of using secular models, methods, and tools to study the Spirit indwelt Body of Christ. Is this a contemporary example of David trying to fight with Saul's armor? What does business have to do with the church? How can tools developed from a non-Christian mindset and world-view help Christians better
understand themselves?

These are important questions that Christians need to ask when discerning the applicability of any contemporary area of knowledge and research. Among the questions that Ray S. Anderson seeks to answer in his book, *Minding God’s Business*, are:

- In what ways can Christian organizations use the so-called secular aspects of managing without compromising the integrity of the Christian organization?
- Is it really “spiritual” to use management practices that are also used in non-Christian organizations?  

Theologically, all truth is God’s truth, whether discovered by God-followers or not. Proverbs reminds us that the fear of God is the beginning of both knowledge (Proverbs 1:7) and wisdom (9:10), then proceeds to address a wide variety of social subjects including marriage, morality, money, our attitudes toward work, health, friends, and others. Stephen reminded his listeners that “Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.” (Acts 7:22) God, in his sovereign plan, allowed for this kind of educational foundation to prepare Moses for the task of delivering his people.

Later, when some of the choice royalty of Israel were carried off into captivity by the Babylonians, Daniel and his three friends received a comprehensive education at the hands of their pagan captors that prepared them to serve God and influence more than one national culture. “To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of

---

206 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV® Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.
all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.” (Daniel 1:17)

When God made Solomon the wisest man alive, that wisdom was not limited to spiritual subjects, but encompassed at the least politics, literature, music, biology, and zoology.

30 Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 From all nations people came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (1 Kings 4:30–34)

In one respect, disallowing a tool like the Myer’s-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (from which Douglass’ Opinion Leaders Inventory is adapted) because it is not Christian calls into question any insights that might be derived from the social sciences. But why stop with the social sciences? Is it legitimate for a Christian to benefit from medical advancements, accounting procedures, environmental information, computer technology, economic forecasts, statistical models, or governance practices merely because they are not developed by Christians? Organizational theory, like medicine, science, and mathematics discovers truth because it seeks to understand and describe a world that has been created with order and reason. Although the church is a unique organization in some ways (more on that later), it is filled with human beings and exists in society.

At the same time, it is important to examine whatever information we receive theologically. It would be unwise to indiscriminately adopt all that comes from the world of psychology, medicine, ethics, politics, economics, education, or business. All truth is
God’s truth, but not all is truth. Malcolm Goldsmith writes that since the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was made widely available in 1975, it has “become the most widely used personality assessment in the world.” He goes on to say, “It is being used increasingly within the churches to help people understand not only their own personalities and the personalities of others, but also to understand their spiritual explorations and journeys.”

His book shows how the MBTI can be used to help one understand why they respond to some spiritual practices and traditions more than others and how they can grow spiritually within their God-given personality.

One rationale he gives for the value of the MBTI for spiritual exploration is in the basic approach of Myers and Briggs. Jung, who pioneered some of the underlying concepts, as a psychoanalyst, was most interested in those who deviated from normal. Myers and Briggs took his ideas and further developed and refined them, but their interest was much more on the normal rather than abnormal. Their concern was to see how personalities were different and how different personalities could relate to each other most effectively. Their desire was to help people understand themselves so they could grow and develop.

Goldsmith (1997, p.24-25) writes,

> It is their positive approach to human differences and their valuing of people as unique individuals which makes their Indicator such a useful and appropriate instrument through which to explore spirituality. Our experiences of God, and our longings for God are different and unique to ourselves even though they may sometimes be shared by some other people, but not by all other people.

Many of the insights Goldsmith gave on how the various personalities respond spiritually are very informative. Some of his insights on people who are iNtuitive Thinkers

---

208 Ibid.
209 Ibid., 24-25.
(INTP, INTJ, ENTP, and ENTJ) had personal resonance because they help explain an approach to spiritual disciplines and spiritual growth that to many may seem dry and overly academic. He writes, “Intuitive Thinkers often find that their devotional life is enhanced by theological questioning, and they look to develop a spirituality which draws upon reason as a basis for thought and reflection.”210 A little further, he wrote, “It is important to realize that for Thinkers the very process of thinking can be a form of spiritual exercise. Their capacity and determination to think clearly itself can be an offering to God.”211 This helps clarify some of the “why” for one approach to spiritual formation that may not always be articulated.

Using a tool such as the Opinion Leaders Inventory or the MBTI does not threaten the theological integrity of a church or the Church in general. It is a recognition that individuals with personality come together in community, and that this combination of personalities, values, priorities, beliefs, and experiences shape a corporate culture or personality in the group. This neither lessens the role of the Holy Spirit in the community nor leads to a dilution of sound doctrine. It is a fundamental recognition that the individual is shaped by community and community shapes the individual in adherence to God’s word and reliance on God’s Spirit.

In conclusion, we are a Kingdom people, indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, committed to God and his Word, who are being transformed through exposure to the Word and the experiences of life and community into the image of Jesus. We are also human beings living in a particular historical and cultural context. Learning that one is an INTP (Myers-Briggs) or IAF (Douglass) does not threaten our faith anymore than learning

210 Ibid., 67.
211 Ibid., 78.
we are genetically predisposed to certain health issues. We can benefit by the discriminate use of social science tools and research in the same way we can benefit by the discriminate use of medical, technological, economic, environmental, and health study and resources.

A Systematic Theology Perspective on Organizational Culture

This section will seek to look at some of the categories of Systematic Theology to see how they might inform our understanding of organizational culture. There will be the following limits to this study.

1. Although much theological work has been done on the relationship between theology and culture in the broad sense of that word (i.e. civilization or society), little work has been focused on the narrower topic of organizational culture. Although the question of organizational culture cannot be divorced from broader cultural reality, this study will attempt to stay focused primarily on organizational culture.

2. One of the challenges of looking at culture theologically is that theologians are not agreed (any more than non-theologians) on the nature and definition of culture. This study will work with the definition of culture already explained as the underlying definition used in the thesis: Organizational Culture is the essence, underlying values, attitudes, character, and basic personality of an organization that both influence and are in turn influenced by stated mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and behaviors.

3. Another challenge of looking at culture theologically is that our understanding of theology is affected by our culture. This is articulated by D. Stephen Long, “Theology provides answers to the questions culture poses, but every answer it provides will
inevitably be an expression of a culture in a particular time and place.”

This chapter is not going to (consciously, at least) enter the debate on the relationship of theology and culture: that is, whether culture is separate from theology requiring correlation, or internal to theology. Undoubtedly the following study will interact with the topic subconsciously within one (or both!) of those views, but will not intentionally engage the debate. That subject is broad enough to require much more research and reflection than the scope of this chapter allows. Without delving deep enough to understand all the implications of each position, an attempt will be made to adopt a "both/and" approach: evaluating the concept of organizational culture theologically while recognizing that theology envelops culture. We seek from within cultural context to understand and articulate timeless theological truth that was revealed to us within cultural context.

4. This section is not an attempt to fully develop the various categories of systematic theology but to primarily look at how they relate to community and culture.

5. Finally, although other theological works will be referenced, the primary resource for this section is Stanley Grenz’s *Theology for the Community of God*, principally because he built his work around how theology and community intersect.

Theology

Our understanding of human character, personality and community flows out of Theology, the study of God. Any concept of organizational culture, especially but not

---

213 There is a helpful introduction to this debate in Long (2008).
exclusively within the context of the church, must start with God. If humanity is created in the image and likeness of God, what implications does that have for individual and organizational potential, for what moral and ethical standards organizations should strive for, and the nature of community and cooperation?

The intelligence, creativity, drive, strategic orientation, ethical awareness, and unique character of every organization, whether church, business, school, club or family, are grounded in humanity’s design, and reflect (all too dimly) the image and likeness of our Creator. Our natural tendency to band together in community and the dynamic potential of cooperation and teamwork make sense in light of the three-in-oneness of the Trinity.

Grenz writes “The doctrine of the Trinity forms the foundation for the Christian conception of the essence of God.”215 Trinity forms both the foundation and goal of all human interrelationships. It forms the foundation in that creation flows out of the person and character of God and humanity is created in God’s image. It is the goal in that every aspect of Trinitarian interaction is absolutely perfect in every way – unity, love, justice, cooperation, holiness, truth, and work – and forms the model for all human interaction. Everything we do at some level longs for that. Jesus prayed that for his people (John 17:11, 22). We are called to that (Philippians 2:3–7).

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

---

215 Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 1207.
Community is born in Trinity. Grenz writes, “Because he is three-in-one, the God we know is internally and externally relational.”\textsuperscript{216} Since our understanding of relationships and organization flow out of the Trinity, an interesting question for reflection is whether anything resembling an organizational culture can be found within the Trinity. This in itself might be a fascinating area of study and seems largely unexplored. What can be discerned about the interrelationship of Father, Son and Spirit in terms of role, relationship and character? The Oneness of God is central to our understanding of God. “Hear, O Israel: The L\textsuperscript{ORD} our God, the L\textsuperscript{ORD} is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). At the same time we see throughout Scripture the functional interdependence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit: in creation, revelation, redemption, sanctification, and ultimate triumph. In fact, Grenz notes: “The economic unity of the three trinitarian members means that, despite their varying functions in the one divine program, all are involved in every area of God’s working in the world. The divine activity is characterized by cooperation among the three members of the Trinity.”\textsuperscript{217} If we were able to identify some kind of organizational culture in the Trinity, it would certainly be centered in love. God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Grenz writes, “Throughout all eternity the divine life – the life of the Father, Son, and Spirit – is best characterized by our word ‘love;’”\textsuperscript{218} and “Trinitarian ‘love’ describes God’s inner life – God as God throughout eternity apart form any references to creation.”\textsuperscript{219}

It is frankly impossible to apply a concept like organizational culture to an infinite God who is Three in One. We are not only unable to comprehend that reality, but no organizational model is capable of addressing that kind of dynamic. However, Trinity

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., Introduction, Loc. 620.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 1144.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 1209.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., Chapter 2, Loc. 1212.
lends credence to the concept of organizational culture that flows out of the unique interaction of personalities banded together with common vision and values for a common purpose and task.

Anthropology

Three aspects of a study of humanity as it relates to personality, community, and culture are Creation, the Fall, and Redemption. These three are defining events of humanity. Grenz writes, “We may encapsulate our human identity as God’s creatures in three postulates: We are the good creation of God, we are marred through our fall into sin, but we are also the object of God’s redemptive activity.”

What in creation relates to organizational culture, how is this affected by sin, and how can or does redemption impact how humans interact with the church and society?

Creation

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:26–27).

One way the biblical teaching on Creation can inform our understanding of organizational culture is through reflecting on what is involved in humanity as image-bearers of God.

One of the major emphases in the Genesis account of creation is that mankind was created in the image and likeness of God. Very little explanation is given in the Scripture for what that means. Grenz notes, “with the possible exception of human sin, perhaps the single most debated topic of Christian anthropology is the meaning of the designation

---

We are not told what all being created in the image of God entails, thus the debate. However, there are certain human characteristics that seem to flow out of that divine image.

One of those characteristics is our individuality. In very economical language, Genesis 1 describes extensive diversity in creation:

- Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:11–12)
- God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. (Genesis 1:16)
- And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:20–21)
- And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:24)

God created an amazing variety of galaxies, vegetation, water life, birds, and animals both wild and domestic. Nine times in Genesis 1 we are told that God created according to kind. The uniqueness of God’s creativity is displayed in species, races, colors, fingerprints, and DNA.

This individuality is reflected in humanity. God said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5) The Psalmist wrote, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together

---

221 Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2605.
in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” (Psalm 139:14–16) This individuality is part of our design, at least in Jeremiah’s case before he was even developing in the womb. Each person is an individual, a one-of-a-kind creation.

We see this individuality in many ways every day, such as the different tastes in makes, models, styles, and colors of cars and trucks; in the variety of restaurants and kinds of foods people eat; in fashions; in music; in art. It is seen in the number of clubs and special interest groups, sports, crafts, and hobbies people enjoy. It is obvious from just walking past the magazine rack in a store. Everything mankind touches reflects the creativity and variety of a Creator who loves to make one of a kind. Because God designed us for community (more on that later), people with similar tastes, values, and interests tend to group together, and as they do, organizational culture forms.

Another characteristic of God that shows up in humanity is creativity. This creativity shows up in every culture in music, architecture, literature and stories, fashion, art, dance, even weaponry. It is fascinating to see how throughout history all over the world, even the common, everyday tools and utensils of life are embellished artistically, whether through design, carving, bead work, or painting. Grenz writes, “More significantly, as God’s creatures, we are capable of being co-creators with him. Our creative capabilities surface through various human cultural expressions, including art, music, and literature, but even the development of language itself.”222 This creativity, when part of a group identity forms part of organizational culture. It is seen in elegant coding of software, immediately identifiable technology, in logos and architecture, and in many other ways.

---

222 Ibid., Chapter 7, Loc. 2787.
Another characteristic seen in humanity is personality. There are a multitude of personality differences described in Scripture, such as the differences in personality between Abraham and Isaac; Jacob and Esau; Moses and Joshua; Elijah and Elisha; Mary and Martha, and Paul and Barnabas to name a few. We see evidences of communal personality reflected in regional and national cultures, such as Sodom or the tribe of Benjamin; or Egypt, Babylon, and Rome; even distinctions between the sister nations of Judah and Israel. We see how culture was impacted and shaped by different judges, prophets, and kings. We see it in the early church in Jerusalem and the challenges of game-changing cultural transition from a church with Jewish roots being flooded by Gentiles. One of the assumptions of organizational culture is that when a group of unique personalities are attracted to each other and join together in a common interest or for a common purpose, those combined personalities form a unique organizational personality.

A major characteristic of God evidenced in humanity is the desire for community. As was discussed earlier, community flows out of Trinity. Grenz writes, “It is not surprising that ultimately the image of God should focus on community. As the doctrine of the Trinity asserts, throughout all eternity God is community, namely, the fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who comprise the triune God.”223 Mankind was created for community. God placed man in a cultural context, the Garden. In this context we first see interaction between Adam and the animals (and plants) of the garden. But interaction at that level was not enough to meet the deeper need for community, even though anyone with a much-loved pet, or who spends as much time in the garden as possible, can appreciate that it was not insignificant emotionally. So God created Eve, and man and woman enjoyed

223 Ibid., Chapter 7, Loc. 2761.
work, companionship, intimacy, and responsibility together. Even beyond that, Adam and Eve enjoyed community with God. The Genesis account describes in an almost matter of fact way God coming down to the garden for what would seem to be his nightly walk with Adam and Eve.

This desire for community is seen throughout Scripture and appears very early. When Cain was banished, he went off and built a city. Genesis 10 describes the vast kingdom built by Nimrod. After the flood, the people banded together in community in Babel to try to keep from being scattered. Grenz observes,

The narrative of a person’s life is always embedded in the story of the communities in which the person participates. The community is crucial in the process of identity formation, because it mediates to us the transcending story, bound up with which are traditions of virtue, common good, and ultimate meaning, by means of which we construct our own narrative.224

All of these human traits are evident in God and may be part of what is inferred by being made in the image of God. We bring these attributes into every part of our lives and they shape and color every social interaction.

Another dimension of meaning in being created in the image and likeness of God relates to mankind’s responsibility to function as God’s representatives to creation. Grenz writes, “The Creator has given this creation to humankind to manage. But our management has as its goal that we show to creation what God is like.”225 This involves design, purpose, and destiny. God’s evaluation of his creation was that it was “very good.” (Genesis 1:31) As the image-bearers of the Creator, mankind's responsibility is to restore creation to his designed and intended “very good-ness.” K. Stuart Douglas writes:

The emphasis of “Let us make man in our image” (Gen 1:26) is not ontological but

224 Ibid., Chapter 1, Loc. 926.
225 Ibid., Chapter 6, Loc. 2737.
vocational. It refers to humans being heaven's representatives on earth to do what God wants done on earth (cf. “as it is in heaven,” Matt 6:10), as the remainder of Gen 1:26 goes on to clarify (“let them rule over ... all the earth”). God’s genius in creation is demonstrated partly in his delegation of important assignments to humans—assignments of divine design but of human fulfillment.\(^{226}\)

The implications of this destiny are comprehensive, including issues of environment, treatment of animals, justice, health, safety, economy, government, business, and religion. Thus, the attempt to understand and leverage organizational culture for increased effectiveness goes beyond building a better business or church. It is part of being God’s image-bearer on earth. Anderson writes, “The doctrine of creation, which flows out of the covenant purpose of God for his people, teaches us that all created social structures (organizations) can serve as a provisional means to the ultimate end, which God determined beforehand to exist eternally for his glory.”\(^{227}\) Being more effective in ministry and outreach is an important part of stewarding creation and drawing humanity back to God. “The created cosmos is intended to serve as an environment of space and time for the preparation of human society to be the people of God. The organizational structures and functions of society can be called into the service of that preparation.”\(^{228}\)

The Fall

Sin changed everything. The Fall affects every area of our lives. The impact of sin has distorted our view of relationships, authority, work, logic, ethics, and morals. Chan writes,

> Scriptures underscore the dynamic nature of sin with expressions like ‘hardening the heart’ (compare Ps 95:8; Heb 3:8) and the ‘searing of conscience’. (1 Tim 4:2) Paul describes sin as a debilitating power that prevents the will from carrying out its good intentions (Rom 7:18-24). James pictures it as a restless agitation deep within

---


\(^{227}\) Anderson, 23.

\(^{228}\) Ibid.
the heart that breaks out in external conflicts."229

The effect of the Fall is immediately evident in Adam and Eve’s relationship with each other and with God. Innocence turned to shame, and they were no longer comfortable with their nakedness. When God came to visit, they hid. When God confronted them with their sin, they blamed each other, Satan, and even God Himself. We continue to see evidence of the Fall in the reaction of Cain to the acceptance by God of Abel’s offering. We see it in all the heroes and villains of the Old and New Testaments. We see it in families, nations, and churches. We see it in ourselves. Anderson writes, “Human society no longer is a sign of the formation of a people of God; human organizations no longer embody the purpose of God; and the enterprise of human management no longer is characterized by a servant leadership that carries out the plan of God.”230

Organizations are collections of individuals, each of whom has a personality tainted by the Fall, and organizational culture is a product of this collection of personalities and their interrelationship to each other. Community is at the heart of our heart, although sin keeps all our organizations, businesses, churches, schools, families, and governments from reaching the Trinitarian ideal. The impact of the Fall distorts and stains all these interactions with exploitation, greed, immorality, thirst for power, war, and violence. Chan writes, “The social dimension of sin is demonstrated in ‘structural evils’ such as racial and sexual discrimination. The evil within individuals contributes to a larger, deeply entrenched sinful social structure.”231

230 Anderson, 28
231 Chan, 67.
Redemption

Redemption brings us back to relationship with God and identification with his character. The death and resurrection of Jesus on our behalf brings forgiveness, cleansing and transformation. It brings us into God’s family, clothes us with Christ, and heals divisions caused by the Fall. (Galatians 3:26-28) What Adam ruined, Jesus restored. (Romans 5) God’s grace showers us with undeserved and unearned favor, and empowers us to respond. Chan writes,

It is my position that any sustaining spiritual theology must keep the two aspects of grace together. We need a concept of grace as God’s unmerited favor to undeserving sinners or the cultivation of virtues will be reduced to mere moralism... On the other hand, grace must also be understood as an empowering gift, or we cannot hope to develop any meaningful human response.  

He goes on to show how Augustine summed up the relationship between prevenient and concomitant grace, “God ‘begins His influence by working in us that we may have the will, and He completes it by working with us when we have the will’.”

As transformational as redemption is, there are some things that seem, at least visibly, to be left as they are. Although there may be miraculous exceptions, we generally seem to remain essentially the same physically after conversion as before. We do not gain or lose weight, grow more or less hair, bulk up, slim down, or get any taller or shorter at the cross. Police officers and border guards can still recognize us by the pictures on our driver’s license or passport. Redemption affects us physically in many ways, and the reality of Christ in us likely will have a positive affect on our demeanor, posture, discipline, and health, but we are still much the same physically.

---

232 Ibid., 83, italics his.
It could be argued that the same is true of our basic personalities. Conversion and sanctification will redeem unhealthy and toxic aspects of our personality, but much will remain the same. The Apostle Paul was ambitious, dogmatic and driven before his encounter with Christ. And he was much the same after, although what drove him, what he was ambitious to accomplish, and what he dogmatically believed were entirely different. Pride and anger were replaced with love and grace.

Goldsmith, in addressing some of the common objections he has received from church people, specifically spoke to the criticism that a personality inventory does not allow room for the Holy Spirit to work. He quotes Mark Pearson,

> When God goes to work making us holier people, He does not destroy the personality we have. He transforms it... The Peter of the Gospels is spiritually immature. But in the Acts of the Apostles, by which time the Holy Spirit has accomplished some spiritual growth in Peter, we don’t suddenly find an introvert mystic. We find the same extrovert, plain-spoken man, but with maturity. God didn’t give Peter a different personality. God improved the personality He had already given him.\(^\text{234}\)

God has created us in a certain way that has been terribly disfigured by sin. Redemption restores us (both immediately and over time) to the person and personality God originally intended for us. By extension, the gathering of redeemed people has this same potential as the collective personality experiences the redeeming and sanctifying power of Christ within. Anderson writes, “Reconciliation as the work of God is the good news of the gospel. But it is also the mission of the church as it penetrates the fallen and alienated structures of human society and seeks to create new structures that liberate human persons from sin,

despair, and impoverishment of life.”

Christology

D. Stephen Long in his book, *Theology and Culture*, writes:

I am convinced that our questions – how do we relate theology and culture? – is ultimately one of our answers to Jesus’ question to his disciples and to us, “who do you say that I am?” In other words, the answer to this question will depend on who we think Jesus is. If we do not find him to be One Person who is both divinity and humanity, then we will not need to see the close relationship between God and culture as human making.

He goes on to say: “Interestingly, the best answer to the question of the relationship between theology and culture is to be found in an orthodox Christology.”

The aspect of Christology that relates most visibly to the subject of organizational culture is Jesus’ humanity. There was some attention paid to the relationship of the Three in One in the section on Theology, but the connection between culture and Trinity is more obscure because it is both incomprehensible and unobservable. One of the fascinating aspects of the Incarnation is that the eternal Son of God – God Himself – who exists before, beyond, and above time and culture, was born into, ministered within, adapted to, and challenged culture. He was male (which is an issue to some in contemporary theology), a Jew, a Galilean, and a Nazarene. He was born in a family, grew up in a community, and gathered around him disciples who were with him day and night. He lived his life on earth within culture. There were times he accommodated the culture of his day. He observed Passover and other Festivals. He paid the temple tax. In Mark 1:29-34, after a long and intense Sabbath, crowds showed up after sunset to be healed. In spite of the fact that he had, perhaps that very day, publicly demonstrated his attitude toward healing on the

235 Anderson, 39.
236 Long, 50.
237 Ibid.
Sabbath by casting a demon out of a man at the synagogue and had healed Simon’s mother-in-law, they waited until the Sabbath was officially over before lining up outside Jesus’ door. Yet there is no hint of censure in Jesus’ response. He takes the time to heal and deliver in spite of the fact that he would have been tired and it was getting late.

Sometimes Jesus challenged culture. He cleared the temple courts, frequently “violated” the Sabbath, talked to a Samaritan woman at the well, and was criticized for being a friend of tax collectors and sinners. He chose only men for disciples, but allowed women to travel with them. He chose women to be the primary witnesses to his resurrection. He challenged his (indeed all) culture in its attitude toward leadership and authority. Long writes, “This Jesus of Nazareth, a human creature, born of Mary, nurtured in a culture, now mediated historically in and through every culture that has arisen, arises, and will arise, is also no One less than God.”

This speaks to the question of church culture. Churches differ dramatically in their worship styles, architecture (or lack thereof), ministry priorities, attitude toward non-primary (and even primary!) doctrinal issues, whether they are methodical or energetic, light hearted or serious, affirming or polemical; yet, Jesus continues to work within culture.

One question sometimes asked is what was Jesus’ personality? How would he score on a personality profile? Our initial thoughts might be that he would score all areas equally. But is that the goal? If someone scored 100% on every category, would that be a perfect personality or no personality? This idea may come from the implications of Jesus’ perfection. But is being an introvert any less perfect than being an extrovert? Or being

---

238 Ibid, 110.
more structured or flexible? Or being more task oriented or relationship oriented?

Goldsmith includes a chapter where he attempts to look at the personality of Jesus from the perspective of the MBTI. He writes, “While it is quite impossible for us to know how Jesus would have scored on a Myers-Briggs questionnaire, it is clear that he used all the functions described and explored by Myers and Briggs.”239 He goes on to give examples from the Gospels of how Jesus “had to live and work and minister both as an Introvert and an Extrovert, as a Senser and also as an iNtuitive, as a Thinker and a Feeler, and finally as a Perceiver and also as a Judger.”240 The chapter is an interesting way of looking at the MBTI through the lens of the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus. He concludes the chapter by saying, “Jesus seemed to know how to respond appropriately in whatever situation he found himself, and in that way he is the role model and an example for us all to follow.”241 Even though we have a personality that has both dominant and secondary characteristics, there are times when we need to and are able to bring different aspects of our personality to a particular need and time. This was a helpful chapter in showing the various qualities of personality being demonstrated in perfection.

It is interesting that a number of the metaphors for the church in the New Testament show the ongoing relationship between Jesus and the church: Body of Christ, Bride of Christ, flock with Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and the family of God with Jesus as Brother.

239 Goldsmith, 98
240 Ibid, 99.
241 Ibid., 105.
Long writes, “So, what has theology to do with culture? Everything. Because Christians confess that the Triune God created the world in, through, and for Jesus Christ, no autonomous realm of culture can escape bearing witness at some level to or against Christ.”\footnote{Long, 110.}

Ecclesiology

This section will seek to answer two questions. The first is how the church differs from other organizations as it relates to organizational culture. The second is what we can learn about culture and the church from the New Testament. This section will also look at the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3 for evidences of organizational culture from what was written to those congregations.

There are a number of ways that churches are similar to other organizations. Organizations, including churches, are formed around a shared interest, challenge, burden, threat, task, or opportunity. Like-minded people are naturally attracted to each other, and there is a dynamic to a shared vision in community that supercedes individual vision and effort. As people form a group, leadership emerges, organizational structure begins to take shape, and there is some kind of articulation (formally or informally) of mission, vision, and values. Some kind of system is devised to determine who is part of the group and who is not, as well as a procedure for how one joins or is removed. Personality characteristics and quirks begin to form either from the personalities of strong individuals, the intensification of shared personality characteristics, or the bonding of certain shared personality elements to form a separate personality. All organizations, churches included, have to work through how they will change, how they will deal with conflict, and how they
will determine if they are succeeding or not. They are gathered from (and influenced by) a particular community with its own cultural flavor. Most have to work with money, personnel, systems, and legal restrictions. They are also composed of people with their own unique experiences, priorities, agendas and spiritual/theological understanding. So there are many ways that churches are like other organizations.

However, there are also important distinctions between churches and other types of organizations that will impact organizational culture in a church. The church is a living organism formed and led by Jesus himself. The church has the Bible as its rule of faith and practice. The church has a purpose that is spiritual rather than commercial. And the church has the indwelling Holy Spirit who guides, empowers, and transforms.

One area of Ecclesiology that has a bearing on the subject of organizational culture in the church is the tension between the church as organism and organization. The church is both. Some of the New Testament images of the church emphasize the fact that it is an organism – the church as Body and Bride of Christ, and Temple of God. Other images point more to the church as an organization, such as a flock or the Kingdom, or a covenant people (ekklesia), nation, household or building of living stones, picturing a grouping of individuals. (Ephesians 2:19-22) The church is a living organism commissioned by, married to, functioning with, and indwelling God. At the same time it is an organization of people with leaders and followers, identity and order. Bloesch writes, “The church is essentially neither a sociological institution nor a divine organism but a divine-human fellowship animated by faith and love and sustained by hope. It is a paradoxical event with

---

243 This is not intended to equate the Church with the Kingdom of God. However, the church is certainly part of the Kingdom, and most of Jesus’ teaching emphasized the Kingdom. C.f Bloesch, 2002, p.70; Grenz, 2000, loc.707ff.
two sides – the human and the divine. These sides are never to be identified but always held together in creative tension.”

Our theological understanding of the church in the New Testament cannot be entirely divorced from culture. The New Testament writers were influenced by their culture: Jewish, Galilean, Pharisaic (in Paul’s case), and part of the larger Roman Empire. The Epistles were written to churches that were birthed in a cultural context with people who were part of that context: Roman, Jewish, Pagan, and the cultures of their particular communities. Culture is like water to a fish: it is not only what they swim in, but what they breathe. In spite of the fact that there are important differences between the church and other organizations, the church is still composed of human personalities in place and time, and it is illogical that those who join would not then bring that cultural smorgasbord into the church. David Bennett notes the shift in the early church from rural to urban:

As the gospel spread outward from Judea and Galilee, Christian communities began to take root in the major cities of the Mediterranean world. The action in the book of Acts takes place not along the seashore, or on the mountainside, but in the crowded marketplace, the tentmaker's shop, the theater, and even the city jail. The context is no longer primarily rural, but urban. The languages spoken are usually not Hebrew or Aramaic but Greek and possibly Latin. The focus shifts from the temple at Jerusalem to the temple of Diana in Ephesus and the altar to the unknown god in Athens.

One area the early churched struggled with over church culture was the ongoing tension between Jewish and Gentile backgrounds and forms of worship. Those who came to Christ from a Jewish background were born and raised with a deep-seated prejudice against Gentiles. They were outsiders, dogs, unclean. Peter was criticized for even going

---

into Cornelius’ house and eating with them. When they heard that even Gentiles had been granted repentance that leads to life, they stopped complaining, but it was years before this crisis was resolved. The cultural differences were too different and too ingrained. This tension led to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 where the decision reached acknowledged the distinctiveness and sensitivities of each group – not mandating the keeping of the Law, but forbidding immorality, eating blood and eating meat offered to idols. This was a long-standing tension in the church as they grappled with societal differences that affected the culture and personality of the churches.

Another cultural tension was the issue of eating meat offered to idols. For many this seems to have been nothing more than a ready source of cheap meat. To others it was capitulation to a whole system of pagan idolatry. This issue that was serious enough that it threatened to be a stumbling block to faith, was a result of cultural factors within the churches outside Palestine. Although these examples do not prove that each church had a unique organizational culture, it demonstrates that cultural factors impacted the church’s unity and mission right from the very beginning.

In chapter one (p.10), it was suggested that in some respects, a church’s culture may be seen as a gift from God designed to help them accomplish what he wants to do through them in their community. In other words, different kinds of churches have an advantage in reaching certain types of people because of their particular culture or personality.

There are a few theological considerations that could speak to this idea. The first is God’s involvement in individual creation and life. Both from the comments God made to Jeremiah (1:5) and the song of the Psalmist in Psalm 139, we see God’s active work in making us the way we are and being involved in our lives. Paul claimed in Romans 8:28
that God is taking the good and bad his people are experiencing and turning them into something good.

The New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts emphasizes that God has specifically gifted people and actively placed them where he wants them. (1 Corinthians 12:11, 18) If he is that involved in our lives regarding spiritual gifts, how much is he involved in each of our lives personally in all the other things that go into who we are: intelligence, personality, genetics, skills and abilities, experiences, and interests? What all goes into the forming, knitting, and weaving of a person in the womb and throughout life? The consistent message of the Old and New Testament is that God is actively involved in the life of his people individually and corporately.

This question leads to a second question: how much is God involved in who peoples his church, in bringing together enough “body parts” for the body to function as he intends? Again, the New Testament teaching on spiritual gifts seems to indicate that God determines who gets what gifts and where they are placed. So if God is actively involved in shaping the lives of his people and actively involved in peopling his church, and the culture or personality of the church is shaped by the people who are part of it, then, at least to some degree, that church’s culture is a gift from God.

The Seven Churches in Revelation 2-3

In Revelation 2-3, we find letters from Jesus through John to seven churches in Asia Minor. These letters reflect a deep familiarity with the character, values, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses of each church. They were well known to the Apostle John and even better known to Jesus Christ. Jesus understood each of these churches, as well as each of the people in them. He reviews their strengths and weaknesses. Although any
study of these letters from the perspective of organizational culture has yet to been found, within some of these letters there are references (or at least hints) to aspects of organizational culture. This will not be an in-depth analysis of these letters. There are excellent books looking at the letters from various perspectives that reveal helpful information about the locations, and physical and cultural elements of these cities that give depth and texture to understanding the letters. This study has a more narrow focus and is an attempt to explore these letters from an organizational culture perspective and identify various cultural markers in some of the churches. Included in this will be a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on each church from information in the letters.

One of the things that we can learn from these letters is that it is legitimate to evaluate a congregation based on their attitudes, values, and behaviors. In this case, it was Jesus doing the evaluation, so there can be no question of the accuracy of the analysis. The problem for us today is that the One who knows us perfectly is not dictating consultation evaluations to us. One of the values of a personality or cultural profile is that it helps identify some of the factors that are at work under the surface. It gives us something that the Spirit can use to connect us to his Word and guide us into a deeper understanding of our church.

In each of the letters, Jesus begins by revealing something about himself.

- Ephesus (2:1) – him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.

---

• Smyrna (2:8) – him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.

• Pergamum (2:12) – him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.

• Thyatira (2:18) – the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

• Sardis (3:1) – him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

• Philadelphia (3:7) – him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

• Laodicea (3:14) – the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.

In each of the letters he assures them that he knows them, and this detailed knowledge forms the basis of their examination. Stott writes, “He walks among the lampstands, patrolling and supervising his churches. He is the chief pastor of his people.” With the exception of the letter to the Laodiceans, there is something that he commends in each of them. To all but Smyrna and Philadelphia he has something against them that they need to address. He tells each of them what they need to do to improve (or in some cases survive), and what awaits those who obey what he prescribes. Each of the letters ends with an exhortation to pay attention to what the Spirit is saying to them.

Working with the definition we have been using in this thesis, that organizational culture is the essence, underlying values, attitudes, character, and basic personality of an organization that both influence and are in turn influenced by stated mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and behaviors, what are some cultural indicators in these letters? All three of the primary books used in this study have helpful geographical, cultural, and archaeological information about the cities where these churches were. It is

---

likely that some statements in the letters reference this information. Although this information adds a dimension of understanding to the letters, for this analysis, an attempt is made to look specifically at the clues that come out of the text. Although there is not enough data on any of the churches to identify their personality using Douglass’ model, insights from his material and other sources that relate to specific qualities will be included. Because there is not a lot of data in the letters, and because this is not the normal way they are approached, it would be easy to get overly speculative. Effort will be made to avoid this as much as possible, but there are indications that can give us helpful insight into culture in a church.

SWOT Analysis on the Seven Churches

This exploration will begin with a SWOT analysis on each of the churches. A SWOT Analysis is a popular planning system for evaluating the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of a project or business endeavor. Although there is occasionally some overlap, generally the Strengths and Weakness analysis looks at internal factors in the organization or project, and Opportunities and Threats focus more on external factors in the market, community, environment, economy, competition, etc. This is an excellent exercise for church leaders to do in strategic planning. This format is being used in this case to summarize and categorize what was written to the churches, as a way to outline the passage thematically. Prescriptions are made to each of the churches based on the examination, and many of the opportunities and threats relate to whether the church acts on the prescriptions or not.

1. Ephesus

   Strengths
• Hard work
• Perseverance
• Cannot tolerate wicked people (accountability for personal holiness)
• Have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false
  (uncompromising theological discernment)
• Have persevered and endured hardships for Jesus’ name
  o Did not just persevere, but did it for the right reason.
• Have not grown weary (Dependability)
• Hate the practices of the Nicolaitans

Weaknesses – Yet I hold this against you...
• Forsaken the love they had at first
  o Text does not stipulate whether this was love for God or love for people.
  o Although it is likely Jesus is referring to love for God, Jesus linked the two in his discussion on the greatest commandment and John emphasizes in his other writings that the two cannot really be separated.

Opportunities
• Right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God

Threats
• Removal of their lampstand

Prescriptions
• Consider how far you have fallen
• Repent
• Do the things you did at first
2. Smyrna

**Strengths**

- Rich in spite of afflictions and poverty
- Slandered by those who say they are Jews and are not
  - This is a strength in that the charges being made against them are untrue

**Weaknesses**

- Afflicted and poor

**Opportunities**

- Victor’s crown
- Will not be hurt at all by the second death

**Threats**

- Experiencing opposition from the Jewish community
- The devil will put some of you in prison to test you
- You will suffer persecution for ten days (a period of time)
- The persecution may be severe to the point death

**Prescriptions**

- Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer
- Be faithful, even to the point of death

3. Pergamum

**Strengths**

- Remain true to Jesus’ name in spite of living where Satan has his throne
- Did not renounce their faith in him, in spite of the martyrdom of Antipas

**Weaknesses**–I have a few things against you...
• Some hold to the teaching of Balaam (food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality)

• Some hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans

**Opportunities**

• Given some of the hidden manna

• Given a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it

**Threats**

• I will soon come to you and will fight against them (those who hold to false teaching) with the sword of my mouth

**Prescriptions**

• Repent

4. Thyatira

**Strengths**

• Your love and faith

• Your service and perseverance

• Now doing more than you did at first (growth, improvement)

• Not everyone has been led astray by “Jezebel” or has learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets

**Weaknesses** – I have this against you

• Tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet
• She is misleading some by her teaching into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols
• She is unwilling to repent in spite of being given ample opportunity

*Opportunities* – to those who are victorious and do his will to the end

• Will receive authority over the nations, as Jesus received authority from the Father
• Will be given the morning star

*Threats*

• Will cast Jezebel on a bed of suffering
• Those who commit adultery with her will suffer intensely
• Her children will be struck dead
• They will be an example to all the other churches (Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds)

*Prescriptions*

• Repent (those who have followed Jezebel’s teaching)
• Hold on to what you have until I come (for the rest)

5. Sardis

*Strengths*

• They have a few worthy people who have not soiled their clothes

*Weaknesses*

• Have a reputation of being alive, but are dead
• Deeds unfinished (have not followed through on their intentions)

*Opportunities*
• Those who have not soiled their clothes will walk with me dressed in white, for they are worthy
• The one who is victorious will be dressed in white
• I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life
• I will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels

_Threats_
• Dead, and what yet remains alive is dying
• If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know it

_Prescriptions_
• Wake up
• Strengthen what remains and is about to die
• Remember what you have received and heard and hold it fast
• Repent

6. Philadelphia

_Strengths_
• In spite of your weakness, you have kept my word, and have not denied my name
• Have kept my command to endure patiently

_Weaknesses_
• Have little strength (literal weakness or smallness)

_Opportunities_
• I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut
• I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars – I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you

• Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth

• I am coming soon

• The one who is victorious
  - I will make a pillar in the temple of my God
  - Never again will they leave it
  - I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem
  - I will also write on them my new name

**Threats**

• Criticism (at the least) from the Jews (Synagogue of Satan)

• Possibility of losing their crown

**Prescriptions**

• Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

7. Laodicea

**Strengths**

• Are wealthy financially (potential strength)

**Weaknesses**

• Lukewarm - neither hot nor cold
• In reality, although they have a lot of money, they are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked

• They do not realize their true condition

**Opportunities**

• Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline

• I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me

• To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne

**Threats**

• I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

• Although you feel you are rich and do not need a thing, you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

**Prescriptions**

• Buy from me
  
  - Gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich

  - White clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness

  - Salve to put on your eyes, so you can see

• Be earnest and repent

• Open the door

**Cultural Analysis**

The church at Ephesus, in many respects would be a pastor’s dream. They had a high sense of duty, worked hard, and just did not give up. They were passionate for holiness
and truth. They cared about personal holiness and kept people accountable to not compromise to the standards of their larger culture. They had theological discernment and carefully evaluated what they were taught. As a result, they were able to expose false teachers who had visited their church claiming to be apostles. They even endured hardship for their faith and persevered. They knew what their task was and stayed on mission in spite of internal threats and external opposition. Ramsay writes, “The past history of the Ephesian Church had been one of labour and achievement, enduring and energetic. Above all it had been distinguished by its insight into the true character of those who came to it with the appearance of Apostles.”

But they had one problem, and it was fatal. Although they had started on this mission out of love for God and others, somewhere along the line that love had faded and duty seems to have become the motivation. Ramsay writes, “The fault of the Ephesian Church was that it no longer showed the same spirit: the intense enthusiasm which characterized the young Church had grown cooler with advancing age.” On the outside, they were just as busy and were working just as hard, and were still holding the line personally and doctrinally and just would not quit. But everything had changed on the inside.

Douglass emphasizes that there are no right or wrong church personalities. However, every church personality has vulnerabilities. In his description, he mentions what may have been a factor in Ephesus. He writes that churches that score in the Practical component “are sometimes tempted to do something simply because it is the next feasible thing to do, rather than because it honors Christ.” And churches that are analytical are occasionally tempted “to study situations and people logically, while

248 William Mitchell Ramsay, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia (1904), Chapter 18, Loc. 3045, Kindle.  
249 Ibid., Chapter 18, Loc. 3082.
remaining aloof and personally uninvolved.” 250 In his chapter on The Organizer Church he mentions some things that could apply to the Ephesian Church. He writes: “The basic driving passions of these churches are duty, service, and the desire to belong. They have an especially strong sense of responsibility to take care of ‘their own’.” 251

Where Ephesus was faithful to confront false teaching, Pergamum and Thyatira had the opposite problem. They both faced the same, or similar doctrinal challenges and, although not everyone was influenced, both congregations were reluctant to confront theological drift and it became their biggest threat. In Pergamum the letter specifies the teaching of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitans. In Thyatira the problem was an influential prophet, whom the letter writer calls Jezebel, whose teachings were leading fellow church members into immorality and eating meat offered to idols. We are not given much information on any of the three, but Ramsay, Stott, and Hemer all suggest that the Balaamites, Nicolaitans and the teachings of “Jezebel” were similar. Hemer writes, “We conclude that Nicolaitanism was an antinomian movement whose antecedents can be traced in the misrepresentation of Pauline liberty, and whose incidence may be connected with the special pressures of emperor worship and pagan society.” 252 Ramsay (1904) is surprisingly kind to Nicolaitanism to the point of suggesting John was somewhat bigoted in his condemnation. 253 He suggests that it was “evidently an attempt to effect a reasonable compromise with the established usages of Graeco-Roman society and to retain as many as possible of those usages in the Christian system of life.” 254 He is also

250 Douglass, 26.
251 Ibid., 236.
253 Ramsay, Chapter 22, Loc. 3789.
254 Ibid., Chapter 22, Loc. 3785.
quite positive in his assessment of Jezebel. He writes, “It seems therefore to be beyond all
doubt that, as a rule, the Nicolaitans of Thyatira, with the prophetess as their leader, were
still active and unwearied members of the Church, ‘full of good works,’ and respected by
the whole congregation for their general character and way of life.”255 He even says that he
would “be glad to know more about this Thyatiran prophetess, a person of broad views
and reasonable mind, who played a prominent part in a great religious movement, and
perished defeated and decried.”256

Whatever the specific teaching referred to in Pergamum and Thyatira, there was
some kind of moral compromise that was diluting the purity and testimony of the church.
And although not everyone in either church was convinced, they allowed this teaching to
take root and did not deal with it.

There are two ways that this connects with our study of organizational culture. The
first is that it would seem there was not a single, unified culture in Pergamum, Thyatira, or
Sardis. Although they continued to function as single congregations, there was significant
difference in convictions in all three. In his book The Character of Organizations, Bridges
describes the sixteen different types of organizational character. In his description of the
ENFJ (Extraverted, iNtuitive, Feeling, Judging) organization, he gives some insights that
may help explain some of the tension experienced in these three churches. He writes,
“Because human needs are taken so seriously, this kind of organization frequently has an
undercurrent of conflict and turbulence beneath the cooperative surface. Cooperation and
conflict are the two sides of the same people-are-important coin.”257

255 Ibid., Chapter 24, Loc. 4244.
256 Ibid., Chapter 24, Loc. 4265.
257 Bridges, 41.
The second way this dynamic connects with our study of organizational cultures relates to Douglass’ explanation of some of the vulnerabilities that the different personalities experience. He writes that the “more a church personality focuses on freedom of expression, spontaneity, flexibility, creativity, and quick action in a crisis, then the more likely is that church to tolerate not only cultural variations, but also differences with other churches regarding core convictions that should not be negotiable.”

We just do not have enough information on the three churches that struggled with this, but Douglass’ comments certainly could apply to what they were experiencing. Bridges writes about the ENFP (Extroverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving) organization that they are very people oriented, tend to be egalitarian, and generally see the best in one another. “But there is a shadow side to all this: painful, confusing, or difficult things may be discounted and swept under the rug. In the name of getting along together, people may avoid problems that are thus left to grow unchecked until a crisis point.”

Again, there is not enough data to identify what their organizational types are, but this could be an accurate description of the problem in Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis.

There are other possible cultural indicators in these letters, such as Smyrna’s steadfast faithfulness under very difficult circumstances, the tendency in Sardis to not finish what they started, the Philadelphian’s bias for outreach (their open door) in spite of their weakness, Pergamum’s ability to stand up well under the pressure of being where Satan’s throne was and the martyrdom of one of their number, and Laodicea’s attitude of self-reliance and pride. There are aspects of each of these attitudes or behaviors that fit in the definition of organizational culture as the essence, underlying values, attitudes,

258 Douglass, 14.
259 Bridges, 44.
character, and basic personality of an organization that both influence and are in turn influenced by stated mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and behaviors, and that would find correlation in the literature.

The situation with two of the churches, Sardis and Laodicea, could be argued to reinforce the value of doing some kind of culture/personality assessment of a church. Both churches were unaware of their true situation. Sardis had the reputation of being alive, but in reality was dead. It was not too late for them to wake up and work on what was still alive, but the dual references to waking up would indicate that they needed someone from the outside to alert them to their danger. Laodicea focused on its material wealth and self-sufficiency and as a result would never have imagined that they were actually wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. Nor did they realize how desperate their situation was, that Jesus was just about ready to spit them out because of their lukewarmness. They needed Someone to evaluate them, to point out their blind spots, and to counsel them to put their focus on real riches and clothing and salve, and to open the door for the Lord to come in and fellowship with them.

Conclusion

There is legitimate theological basis for organizational culture that can be seen from an examination of certain categories of Systematic Theology, specifically Trinity, in the study of God, the implications of Creation, Fall, and Redemption in the study of mankind, the Incarnation of Jesus within culture in the study of Christ, and the examples of cultural dynamics in the New Testament church and organizational culture clues in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.
There are several ways that a church is distinctive of other organizations because of the purpose, power, revelation, and presence of God in the church. However it is also similar to other organizations in that it is composed of unique personalities who combine to give the church a unique personality, and in that it exists in a cultural context. Anderson writes,

Now that God has grasped the world again through the incarnation, the cosmos itself is given the promise of liberation from its bondage (Rom. 8:20,23). But the cosmos does not experience this liberation independently of the liberation and reconciliation of human society. And this reconciliation does not take place through a spiritual “implant” where only “souls are saved,” but through the very structures of human society and by means of the organizations that now are called into being as servants of this redemptive goal.²⁶⁰

Thus there is value in using tested analytical tools and methods to bring a fresh perspective on the church, giving greater understanding of who they are and why God has formed them as he has. This increased understanding of their culture or personality can give a strategic advantage as they seek to leverage their uniqueness for more effective ministry and outreach. This process is not an end in itself, designed merely to help the church get bigger and healthier, but enables it to better live out Kingdom values, give a picture (albeit weak and distorted) of what heaven will be like, and reach out to people far from God and help them become citizens of his Kingdom.

²⁶⁰ Anderson, 40.
CHAPTER FOUR: PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to determine whether the system proposed by Dr. Philip D. Douglass in his book, *What Is Your Church’s Personality?* is useful in helping an older, established church recognize its church culture and leverage it for greater ministry effectiveness. The study was done in the church that I have pastored for eleven years. The research consisted of three components.

Stage One

The first component of the research involved thirty-five of the church’s opinion leaders taking a survey to identify their own personality traits in three different areas:

1. How they gather information (practical vs. innovative),
2. How they make decisions (analytical vs. connectional), and
3. Whether their lifestyles are more structured or flexible.

Douglass explains the differences in these components as: 261

1. INFORMATION-GATHERING - Practical vs. Innovative
   1.1. Do the church leaders depend on their personal observations in order to gather data about what’s happening, or do they rely more on their intuition and hunches in order to form impressions about what’s going on?
   1.2. Do the church leaders prefer straightforward ways of communicating - the more specific and concrete the better, or do they prefer to use imagery and symbolism to engage the imagination of the people of the church?
   1.3. Are the leaders of the church observers of tradition who do not easily break with custom, or are they able to break with tradition and lay aside customs that seem

261 These sections are quoted from Douglass, 22-23.
too cumbersome for a new situation?

2. DECISION-MAKING - Analytical vs. Connectional

2.1. Are the church leaders secure in basing their decisions on objective analysis – weighing the pros and cons of a situation – or, regardless of the pros and cons, are they more confident when they feel their conclusions are based on what is important and valuable?

2.2. Can the church leaders usually conduct their work and ministry, regardless of relational harmony, or do they find that harmonious relationships are essential for them to function effectively in a situation?

2.3. Does making a critical evaluation come more naturally for the church leaders than speaking an appreciative word, or are they more spontaneous with an appreciative word than with a critical evaluation?

3. LIFESTYLE - Structured vs. Flexible

3.1. Do the church leaders prefer to plan their work first and then work their plan, or do they tend to be more casual and informal in developing their plans?

3.2. Do the basic contributions by the leaders often stem from being systematic, orderly, proactive, and decisive, or do they bring to church leadership such characteristics as spontaneity, open-mindedness, tolerance, and adaptability?

3.3. Do the church leaders prefer bringing programs and projects to completion – finishing one task at a time – or, do they like the feeling of getting new things started and having many things going at the same time?

He includes tables to outline each of them.²⁶²

²⁶² Douglass, 24, 26.
Table 1: Practical churches vs. Innovative churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
<th>Innovative churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• live in the “here and now”</td>
<td>• prefer to live in the past and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• work well with facts and details</td>
<td>• are interested in new and unusual experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• like realistic challenges and problem solving</td>
<td>• do not like routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are experienced and action-oriented</td>
<td>• are attracted to theory rather than practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are realistic and matter of fact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Analytical churches vs. Connectional churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
<th>Connectional churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• are interested in systems, structures, patterns</td>
<td>• are interested in people and their feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• like to expose issues to logical analysis</td>
<td>• easily communicate their moods to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• can be aloof and unemotional</td>
<td>• pay attention to relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to evaluate issues through their intellect and decide on the basis of right and wrong</td>
<td>• tend to evaluate issues through their ethical system and decide on the basis of good and bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• may have difficulty talking about emotions</td>
<td>• can be sensitive to rebuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• may not work as diligently at clearing up arguments or quarrels</td>
<td>• may tend to give compliments to please people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Structured churches vs. Flexible churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
<th>Flexible churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• do not like to leave many unanswered questions</td>
<td>• may act impulsively in their ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to plan their work ahead and finish it in a timely fashion</td>
<td>• can do more things at once without feeling compelled to finish them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make an effort to be exact in what they do</td>
<td>• prefer to be free from long-term obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• do not like to change their decisions once they are made</td>
<td>• are curious and like taking a fresh look at things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to demonstrate stable work habits</td>
<td>• are likely to work according to their mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• easily follow rules and discipline</td>
<td>• often act without as much preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the various combinations of these three components, Douglass identifies eight distinctive personalities that he describes as: Fellowship (PCS), Inspirational (ICS), Relational (ICF), Entrepreneurial (IAF), Strategizer (IAS), Organizer (PAS), Adventurous (PAF), and Expressive (PCF). He uses a wheel to graphically represent the various personalities. When each of the thirty opinion leaders completes the survey, they will end up with three letters that correspond to one of the eight personalities. These results are then plotted on the wheel.

Douglass claims that understanding the personalities of a church’s most influential people will show you the personality of the church. He writes, “Fundamentally, your

---

263 This is slightly adapted to combine two wheels into one. Douglass used a separate (but otherwise identical) wheel to show Structured vs. Flexible.
church’s personality is a set of shared values among its most influential members.”

This is an assertion that is neither explained nor defended in the book, although there is some logic to it. Leadership is an important part of the culture of any organization, and one of the definitive characteristics of leadership is the influence of others. Both official and unofficial leaders of a church impact, and to a significant extent, determine the vision, values, priorities, and ministries that help form the culture or personality of a church. But is it reasonable to assume, therefore, that the personality of the church will be the same as the personality of its primary opinion leaders?

As critical as leadership is, it is certainly not the only factor in organizational culture. There may be historical considerations that complicate the cultural picture, the personality of those who started the church, theological, cultural and personality issues they may have had to work through, and formative experiences, such as big wins and tragedies they faced. Whether the church is stable or going through a period of change or upheaval will have an impact on its culture. There may also be one or more significant sub-cultures that are flexing their muscles, because they are struggling with the leadership or direction of the church. These are only a few of the factors that might suggest that the church’s personality is more nuanced and complex than simply the composite of the leaders’ personalities. Richard Gallagher describes the paradox well, “Leadership is what mathematicians would call a ‘necessary but not sufficient condition’ for the growth of a corporate culture. Leaders cannot, by themselves, determine corporate culture.”

Douglass’ instructions are that after determining where the opinion leaders cluster on the wheel, the chapter in the book corresponding to the highest cluster should be

264 Ibid., 24.
265 Gallagher, 177.
referenced. Approximately 80% or more of the descriptions in that chapter should fit the church.\textsuperscript{266} If that is not the case, he recommends going to the chapter that corresponds to the next highest cluster of responses. Thus the survey itself seems primarily designed to point in the right direction(s), but relies heavily on the leaders' knowledge of the congregation to determine the church's personality with more precision. This shows that there is a significant element of subjectivity rather than being an exact science, and the more the leaders understand their congregation, the more they will be able to recognize the descriptions that best characterize it. However, that does take you one step further away from the numbers and also opens up the possibility that the leaders are interpreting the congregation through the filter of their own personalities.

Our Experience

Thirty-five people who are actively involved in leadership and ministry and are recognized as opinion leaders took the survey. Douglas outlines some criteria for knowing which men and women to select.

- An opinion leader whose perspectives are valued by the people of the church. This may include some who do not fit the rest of the criteria because of age or disability, but are still very influential.
- Active in the ministry of the local church – attendance, giving, etc.
- Involved in a small group – Sunday school class, prayer group, Bible study, support group, etc.
- Involved in a ministry role – Sunday school teacher, board member, small-group leader, prayer ministry, children's ministry, youth ministry, etc.\textsuperscript{267}

The church board put together a list that included pastors/staff and spouses (8), deacons and deaconesses (11), and other involved, influential people in the church (16). They were evenly divided between men and women, and ranged in age from just under

\textsuperscript{266} Douglass, 355.
\textsuperscript{267} Douglass, 350.
twenty to eighty. Most were members, although there were a few who are active, influential people who for one reason or another have not become official members.

The surveys were taken confidentially, in that they did not put their names on the survey, but staff and spouses marked their surveys with an “S”, and deacons and deaconesses marked theirs with a “D” in order to be able to cross reference where the vocational and elected leaders fit in the personality profile.

The delimitations of this project are the instrument itself, the number of participants and they way they were chosen, and the decision to limit this study to one congregation. The limitations are that it was a one-time assessment, the more subjective aspects of the study, and the researcher’s ability to understand, interpret, and communicate the results.

The individual responses from the survey were then plotted on the wheel to identify the dominant personality or personalities of the church. Below is a copy of the wheel with the results filled in. Staff and spouses are indicated with an “S”, deacons and deaconesses are indicated with a “D”, and the others with an “X.” There were some surveys that had a tie for one of the categories. These are indicated on the wheel with a line connecting them to the section the tie would have resulted in, and they were counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ in each section. The expectation was that a definite pattern would emerge with one, or possibly two sections receiving the greatest cluster of entries. At first glance, the results were more complex.
An initial review of the results seems to indicate that there is more than one dominant personality. Results are spread out with all of the sections getting at least \( \frac{1}{2} \) an entry. Douglass allows for the possibility that there might be more than one dominant cluster. The key to identifying a church’s personality is in the explanatory chapters on each of the eight personality types. He writes that if the chapter corresponding to the dominant cluster does not seem to apply, then go to the chapter that corresponds to the second group of clusters. He gives a specific example of a survey where, interestingly, the primary
group (33%) clustered as an Organizer church, and the second largest group (27%) clustered as the Fellowship church. He instructs to “first read through the Organizer church chapter and secondly read through the Fellowship church chapter to determine which ministry style fits better.”

The results of our survey showed that 25.7% of the participants clustered in the Organizer (PAS) church section, 21.4% in Fellowship (PCS), and 20% in Relational (ICF). Although there are some similarities between these personalities, there are also some significant differences. Appendix 3 is a table comparing these three personalities. Below is a summary of the three.

**Organizer churches** like to solve complex problems in a methodical manner by using logical analysis to critique their ministry programs, spot flaws, and make necessary changes that complete their ministry tasks efficiently. They are organized and competent, priding themselves in getting the most accomplished in the least time. Before they mobilize people to engage in a new ministry, they systematically analyze all the opportunities and then painstakingly undertake their plans. Because their Christian education programs are so important to them, they take satisfaction in developing them to a high level.

**Fellowship churches** are conscientious, hard-working, orderly, and sensitive to the needs of people in general, but especially those who are members of their church. These churches bring out the best in people by helping them work toward personally meaningful goals in an organized manner. Therefore, they usually have many people who are eager and willing to serve. Usually, they are especially strong in children’s programs, shut-in

---

268 Douglass, 355-6.
269 Ibid., 28-30.
visitation of relatives, neighbors, and longtime members of the church, as well as programs that train their laypeople in practical care ministries. However, these churches may tend to resist disturbances to their routine even when the disruption is good for the health of the church.

Relational churches focus on personal connections, values, opinions, and interactions. They actively strive to bond with one another, create harmony, and cooperate, making sure that everyone is involved and positive about the church. Because they place a high priority on meeting the needs of everyone in the church, they focus on organizing and coordinating events, projects, and activities that genuinely help people grow, develop, and be all that God intended them to be. They naturally care about people in the community and want to be appreciated for their unique effort to make the community a better place in which to live.

Conclusion

Although there were characteristics of all three personalities that relate to our church, the description of the Fellowship church seemed to have the greatest resonance.

Patterns

Upon closer examination, some definite patterns in the scoring seemed to surface to confirm this conclusion.

1. The first is that the difference between the Organizer (PAS) and Fellowship (PCS) church is in the middle letter of the three-letter combination. The Organizer church is practical, analytical and structured, while the Fellowship church is practical, connectional and structured. The individual surveys that scored either PAS or PCS were examined again and the scores were calculated looking just at the Analytical and
Connectional columns. The results were very close: the Analytical column added up to 434 and the Connectional column added up to 436.

2. This led to a further review of the scores from all the surveys to see if any patterns emerged (Appendix 4). The results of this tally are grouped by Staff and Spouses, Deacons and Deaconesses, and other Opinion Leaders.

2.1. The scores of the staff and spouses were higher in the connectional and flexible categories, and were very close in the practical/innovative (204/200). This would make the combined personality of the staff PCF (Expressive) or ICF (Relational).

2.2. The combined score of the deacons and deaconesses was decidedly Fellowship (PCS).

2.3. The combined score of the other opinion leaders was also clearly Fellowship (PCS).

2.4. When all three groups were totaled, the result was also solidly Fellowship (PCS).

3. Another interesting observation from the results is how the deacons/deaconesses and staff/spouses plotted on the wheel.

3.1. A significant percentage of the deacons and deaconesses (59%) were in Organizer (PAS) or Fellowship (PCS), with the remainder (41%) being in the Expressive (PCF) or Inspirational (ICS) sections.

3.2. Five of the eight staff/spouses (62.5%) were in the Relational (ICF) and Inspirational (ICS) sections. My score was the only entry in the Entrepreneurial (IAF) section.

4. Breaking the rankings on the Wheel down further by their individual components (e.g. Practical vs. Innovative, Analytical vs. Connectional, Structured vs. Flexible), rather
than looking at them in their combinations (e.g. PAS, PCS, etc.), also revealed some interesting information.

4.1. Among the deacons and deaconesses there is a strong tendency toward the Practical (10 of 11, 91%), Connectional (7 of 11, 64%) and Structured (7½ of 11, 68%).

4.2. Among the staff and spouses there is a strong tendency toward Innovative (6 of 8, 75%) and Connectional (6 of 8, 75%), while being evenly divided between Flexible and Structured.

4.3. Among the other Opinion Leaders, there was a strong tendency toward Practical (10 of 16, 62.5%), Connectional (10½ of 16, 65.6%) and Structured (9½ of 16, 59.4%). They were also evenly divided among the three personality quadrants that scored the highest overall, with 4 each in Organizer, Fellowship, and Relational.

4.4. When all three groups are totaled together this way, there was a strong tendency toward Practical (22 of 35, 62.85%), Connectional (23.5 of 35, 67.14%) and Structured (21.5 of 35, 61.43%). So of all those taking the survey, more than 60% scored in the Practical, Connectional and Structured categories each. Thus, looking deeper into the rankings and scores reinforces the conclusion that the dominant personality/culture of the church is Fellowship (PCS).

Further Conclusions

In addition to the above conclusion that the dominant culture of our church seems to be Fellowship, two other conclusions suggest themselves.

1. One is that attempting to strictly identify a uniform culture for an entire church or

---

270 Number of each: P = 22, 62.85%, I = 13, 37.14%, A = 11½, 32.85%, C = 23.5, 67.14%, S = 21.5, 61.43%, F = 13.5, 38.57%
organization is more complicated and subjective than some of the literature seems to assume. Although it is possible to recognize a dominant culture, it would be naïve to suggest that it is the culture. The uniqueness of each of the individuals involved, the virtually infinite number of factors that have shaped and formed them both personally and corporately, the broad variety of interests and influences that have attracted the congregation as a whole and various groupings within the congregation to each other, and the constant shifting of people coming and going, all suggest that it may be difficult to plot a church definitively within eight segments of a wheel. It could be argued that it is this variety and complexity that produces a unique culture or personality for a church that has to be broad enough in its definition to embrace the variance and even contradictions that surface in a tool like this. This cultural richness is a reflection of the creative genius of a God who loves to continually astonish us with the simplicity within complexity, and the complexity within simplicity of his Creation.

2. Secondly, the closeness of the scores for the three dominant personalities suggests that they help form the richness of our church culture, and also interact to help balance the whole ministry. In trying to take a step back and analyze the three dominant groupings, there are at least three different ways to try to understand how they relate.

2.1. It may be that this shows a transitional arc moving from Organizer through Fellowship to Relational, perhaps partly due to the influence of the staff. The church may have historically been more Organizer (PAS), is now more Fellowship (PCF), but is moving toward Relational (ICF). There may be some validity to this perspective in light of the high scores for Innovative and Connectional among the staff and spouses. There seems to be a desire to have pastoral and staff leadership
that is more open to innovation and sensitive to its impact on the people involved. If there is effective leadership, and the primary characteristic of leadership is influence, this cannot help but filter its way through the congregation.

2.2. Another perspective might be that the three personalities form a type of bell curve, with Fellowship being larger and central and Organizer and Relational at the ends of the curve. This perspective makes more sense when the individual scores are looked at rather than just the composite results. The other personalities are still there, but Fellowship is the more dominant.

2.3. A less statistical and more creative way to look at it might be seeing the results as a canoe with outriggers on each side. The dominant personality (the canoe) is Fellowship, but elements of Organizer and Relational (outriggers) give balance and stability. The Organizer influence helps us stay grounded in the truth, keeps us more organized and methodical, and recognizes the seriousness of what we are about. While the Relational influence helps us be more creative and outward focused, fun and funny, more energetic and relaxed, and more open to change and innovation. These are both important influences that help make the Fellowship personality effective and sustainable.

Fellowship churches attract hurting people and work hard to bring relief and healing. They can be so focused on the people, their feelings, and their needs that they can miss underlying doctrinal or theological factors. Douglass writes, “The challenge is that the percentage of people in Fellowship churches who suffer from chronic pain or other long-term physical maladies is higher than for any other type of church. Therefore, these churches can become so caught up in ministering to the physical suffering of people that
the spiritual needs of people are overlooked.”

On the other hand, Organizer churches place a high value on doctrinal purity and theological precision. This provides an invaluable counterweight to ensure that both physical and spiritual needs are addressed. The Organizer influence also helps put in place systems so that the caring ministry is conducted in a systematic enough way to be sustainable and creates a degree of emotional space. “They tend to exhibit a composed, unruffled, dispassionate demeanor that critics may interpret as detachment and coldness. This is because they develop deliberate, cautious methodologies to accomplish their goals.”

“Organizer churches’ natural orientation is toward tasks rather than people.”

On the other side of the boat, Fellowship churches can become too motivated by a sense of duty and can get overwhelmed by the number and seriousness of the needs they are attempting to help. This can lead to joylessness, resentment, tunnel vision, and burnout. The Relational influence is always on the lookout for new, creative ways to do things, and is enthusiastic and visionary. Douglass writes, “These churches are known for being fun-loving and energetic in their zest for helping people. They are big-picture visionaries who produce innovative, cutting-edge ministries, programs, and services that help people solve their problems, no matter how complex and confusing they may be.” This influence can help lighten the heaviness of people’s needs and stay focused on results.

Together the Organizer and Relational influences give energy, humor, systems, perspective, and vision to the Fellowship heart. When working against each other they can result in conflict and loss of momentum, but when unified by love and vision, they can

---

271 Douglass, 62.
272 Ibid., 261.
273 Ibid., 262.
274 Ibid., 119.
enhance the strengths and compensate for the weaknesses of a single culture or personality.

Stage Two

The second stage of the research was a meeting on May 4, 2014, where the results were reported. A copy of the report that was circulated and the PowerPoint slides used are in Appendix 2. Everyone who took the survey was invited to attend this report session. Most were there, although a few could not make it. A make-up session will be scheduled to inform those who were not able to be at the first meeting. One of the difficulties was that two or three who were in the follow-up interview had not been at the reporting session. That limited what they could contribute about the whole process, although they could still interact regarding taking the survey.

The participants were seated at round tables so they could interact with each other about the information that was being shared. One interesting development was around confidentiality and them knowing what their own scores were. The survey was administered confidentially, identified only by whether they were staff/spouses or deacons/deaconesses. This was probably overly cautious, as the survey is a personality profile and the results are neutral. There was a brief explanation of the survey and what it was measuring at the original session where they filled them out, but most people did not know what the results meant and did not remember how they scored. Those that did were quite open about sharing their results, and there was some good-natured bantering going on between people who scored differently. One person, who openly admitted to being an Organizer (PAS) and thus more exact and particular, joked about how frustrating the grammatical inconsistencies were in the words used to identify the various personalities
(i.e. Adventurous, Strategizer, Fellowship).

Because the survey was measuring certain aspects of their personality and each was valid, neither positive nor negative in themselves, it was probably unnecessary to insist on confidentiality. It would have been more helpful to the individuals if they had at least written down their three-letter combination for future reference. But it would have been even more advantageous if they had put their names on the surveys so they could see specifically how they had answered in each of the categories. Several of them thumbed through the surveys after the meeting trying to identify the ones they filled out. In retrospect, it would have been preferable to give more information at the time of the survey so they could have better understood their own personalities or at least have had a more complete picture of the implications.

The report went into detail about the three categories being tested (information-gathering, decision-making, and lifestyle) and the implications of each. The characteristics of the three personalities that scored the highest were carefully reviewed and an attempt was made to interpret what that meant for our church. However, there could have been more directed group discussion around the tables and more extensive information about the Fellowship personality.

In general, there was consensus that the Fellowship personality resonated more with their understanding of our church culture, and they were very receptive to some of the ministry and outreach implications that were highlighted in Douglass. There was also discussion about the possible reasons why so many of the deacons/deaconesses scored in the Organizer section but none in the Relational. One theory was that people who value the more official and organizational aspects of church life are attracted to the board, which
is the primary group addressing those aspects. There was also an appreciation with the fact that the staff scored heavier in Innovative and Flexible, seeing those as positive characteristics in setting direction and implementing ministries.

Stage Three

The third stage of the research was a follow-up interview with the staff and board. This happened as part of our monthly board meeting on May 20, 2014. Appendix 5 is a rough transcript of the audio recording of that interview. The following were the questions that formed the core of the interview:

1. In what ways did you find the process helpful?
2. In what ways did you feel the process could have been improved?
3. In what ways did you find the inventory helpful/less helpful?
4. In what ways do you feel that the results accurately portray your church culture?
5. Were there conclusions that you didn't feel fit your church culture? If so, what?
6. How comprehensively do you think these conclusions reflect the views of those outside the primary opinion leaders?
7. What did you learn about your church culture from the inventory?
8. How do you expect to use (or have used) this information to leverage your ministry planning and implementation?

There were some general considerations impacting the value of this follow-up interview. The first is that the whole process from survey to report to interview happened in a short period – within a month. The survey was administered on April 27, the report was given a week later on May 4, and the follow-up interview happened on May 20. The advantage of this is that the information was still reasonably fresh in people's minds. A
disadvantage was that they had little time to absorb the information and reflect on how it could best be applied strategically to our ministry and outreach.

Another consideration, already mentioned, was that a few of those who were at the follow-up interview had missed the information session. This meant that although they could interact with the experience of taking the Survey and had the advantage of having a deeper understanding of our church because of their position and ministry, they did not have the opportunity to receive all the information that was given at the meeting. Copies of the report were made available to them, but that was not an adequate substitute for being in the information session. They did not have time to carefully read and reflect on the information, had not heard the presentation and explanation, and missed out on the group discussion. This posed a significant limitation to their helpfulness in this stage of the research.

A third consideration was that although all of the staff and some of the board came to the meeting prepared, having their information sheets with them, a few others did not bring their sheets, nor had they seemed to spend much time thinking about the conclusions. This meant that some of the comments made in answer to the questions were vague and unfocused. Also, as would be expected, a few people’s opinions and responses were more indicative of their general attitudes and philosophy about church rather than addressing specific aspects of the survey or subsequent conclusions about our culture.

Responses to the questions:

Following is a summary of the responses to the specific questions. As in any free ranging conversation, statements were sometimes made in the context of one question that fit better in the discussion of another question. They were sharing insights as they
had them, sometimes prompted by an earlier question that just took longer to percolate, or not knowing that another question dealing with that specific insight was coming. Although the transcript reflects the statements as they were being made, this summary will seek to include comments in response to the questions that are most relevant.

1. In what ways did you find the process helpful?

There was a general agreement that there is value in the various tools and systems that get people thinking more deeply and specifically about themselves and the church. Just having the opportunity to think about their own personalities and reflect on how that affects the church in general gives a deeper understanding of our church. They were interested and appreciative in the diversity of our group and wondered if that was representative of the church in general. One specific question was how the results might differ by age group in the church. One advantage to the people invited to take the survey was that there was a good cross-section of ages, from late teens to seniors. However, with a total sample size of 35, there was not a significant concentration of any age group, and the results were not calculated from that perspective. Would the results be different if we administered it by age range with the results grouped that way?

There was a general sense that the results were accurate, and that it was helpful to see how we all fit. They expressed that hopefully this will help us see the bigger picture of who we are and what the next five or ten years could look like if we use what we learn about our church culture to shape our ministry and outreach. One of our newer people commented that it was very interesting to see how the opinion leaders plotted out on the wheel. Seeing all of them on the chart was helpful in giving a better picture of our congregation.
2. In what ways did you feel the process could have been improved?

One person came back to the question about age groups and wondered if it would have been helpful to divide by age ranges and also reflect on how many opinion leaders we have in each of the age groups to see if those chosen were more heavily weighted to one age group over another. Someone else commented that our congregation seems quite balanced with the various age groups.

One thing that a few of them struggled with was limiting the survey to thirty people (or 35 in our case). With an average attendance in the 250-300 range, limiting the group to thirty was not easy. In addition, it was difficult for some of them to have to narrow down the list.

About the feedback session, it was expressed that it would have been more helpful to have the presentation around more contextualized discussion about the church, to not only see the results, but to spend more time reflecting on how to apply those results. There was the sense that we have just started a process rather than having completed it. Knowing what we learned from the survey is just the very beginning of a process to leverage that information for more strategic ministry and outreach. That was one of the purposes of the follow-up interview, to stimulate thinking about how we can use what we have leaned to increase our effectiveness. The key will be taking time to reflect and plan together.

3. In what ways did you find the inventory helpful/less helpful?

In general, people seemed to appreciate the insights about themselves they received from the survey, and although they may have questioned certain specifics, they felt that it was generally an accurate picture of their personality. There was the typical concern
expressed about not liking surveys because they feel too cut-and-dried and tend to pigeonhole people. Also, it was noted that some of the questions seemed very subjective and one might answer differently under different circumstances. One person said that a frustrating element of the survey was when both answers seemed applicable but you had to choose one of them. There was some uncertainty about how to score contrasting statements. Does a 5 on one side mean that the other side is a 1, or is it possible to be a 4 on each? One participant observed that he had to keep reminding himself “in most cases...” because thinking of specific scenarios could result in a different result. He had to keep thinking, “What does most of the time really look like for me?” Someone also said that having the numbers going in opposite directions (5-1 on the left and 1-5 on the right) was confusing at first. It was reproduced this way on the surveys they filled out because that was how it was presented in the survey in the book, but the online survey (http://douglassandassociates.com/cgi-bin/d3.cgi) has both sets of numbers going the same direction. Another person reacted to the suggestion that if you are this, you are not that. She felt that it led to an oversimplification of one’s personality.

There were a couple of especially interesting insights about the survey. One felt that he may have been subconsciously biased toward one kind of answer because of knowing what the questions were weighing. That was because the questions were grouped by category. Would the answers have been more objective if they had been random and unlabeled? Interestingly, the online version of the survey does not give the categories for the questions, although they are in the same order as on the paper survey. Presumably they are grouped on the paper version because it makes it simpler to add up the totals manually in each category.
Another interesting insight was that some of the questions made them think, “If I’m not like that, why not?” They recognized that different is not wrong, just different, but some of the questions dealt with attitudes or actions they felt should be part of their lives, and having to acknowledge a different answer triggered deeper thoughts about themselves. It could be argued that this is one of the greatest values of a survey such as this, no matter what model it is based on. It forces one to look inside and be honest about who they are. This self-revelation can be the starting point of personal change.

There seemed to be a general agreement that although there was a strong element of subjectivity, both in the questions and in the interpretation of the scoring, that it gave us a good snapshot of our church for right now.

4. In what ways do you feel that the results accurately portray your church culture?

The responses to this question seemed to center on two issues. The first, articulated primarily by one person, was that although the results were likely accurate, they did not necessarily line up with her own understanding. Interestingly, this was not a criticism of the survey. In fact, her assumption seemed to be that it was accurate. It was more an observation that she had some different perceptions of our church culture, although she did not elaborate.

The other issue was whether the results accurately reflected the broader congregation beyond the opinion leaders. This was a recurring concern throughout the interview. One concern expressed was whether those in leadership might be looking at the culture of the congregation through different glasses than those who were less active and involved. Someone else countered with the observation that it is the opinion leaders who drive which way the church goes and others have less influence on direction and decision.
making.

This led to a discussion on the unity or diversity of our church culture. How does our size impact the homogeneity of our culture? We’re not small, but we’re not big, so we are still at a size where an individual or a small group can carry a lot of influence. One statement made was that we seem to be a culture of subcultures, although they work well together. This means that a variety of types of new people can come in and still find a place to belong. However, someone else observed that often people would begin coming, find that they are not like us, and stop, and that someone who is really different probably is not going to stay in our church. Someone else replied to this that since Jesus is for everyone, there may be more diversity in a church than in a typical workplace, especially in workplaces that employ a high concentration of the same kind of people (e.g. “software techies”). Concern was expressed that although we know that our personality will be more attractive to some people than others and we cannot appeal to everybody, we want everyone to come to the Lord and do not want to ever exclude anybody from the church.

This question, perhaps more than the previous ones, seemed to demonstrate the ambiguity of organizational culture in many people’s minds and the challenge of being able to identify it. This is understandable in that most have not given much thought to the subject. It also may be an acknowledgment that organizational culture is more complex and dynamic than often assumed.

5. Were there conclusions that you didn’t feel fit your church culture? If so, what?

There was some surprise that Organizer came out as strong as it did. They definitely saw that Fellowship and Relational very clearly fit, but although they saw some Organizer tendencies, they tended to find things more relational and laid back than one would think
of with Organizer. There is definitely organization here, but it does not seem to be the highest priority. There was general agreement that we are strongest in Fellowship, that people are a higher priority than tasks. One thought was that this may have been more of a reflection of the opinion leaders selected, although someone suggested that there may be a lot of “closet organizers.”

6. How comprehensively do you think these conclusions reflect the views of those outside the primary opinion leaders?

The question itself generated other questions: If you asked the majority of people who had not taken the survey where they felt the majority of the leaders would be on the wheel, would they answer the same way? Or, if you had them take the test themselves, would the answers be similar to the leaders? Would the responses be different if we had taken a random sample of the congregation? If we had, would that give us more of a picture of the whole church? I reiterated the author's presupposition that the leaders of the church determine the culture and that one question was whether that is an accurate presupposition. Two immediately said they felt it was true.

This question about whether the responses were reflective of our broader congregation was a major question for a few of the board and staff. One concern was whether we had “stacked the deck” by handpicking the people to take the survey. One asked about those who are no longer opinion leaders but are opinionated and still around. Do we not ask them because we do not want to hear what they have to say? Were we truly nonpartisan and representative? Someone asked if I had considered giving the survey to a broader cross-section for comparative purposes.

As this discussion progressed, it seemed that there were some issues from the past
that were fueling the concern, primarily for one individual. Several years ago, the congregation went through a difficult process of addressing the question of gender and leadership that spanned a few years and resulted in a sharp and acrimonious polarization. Partly as a result of this, the congregation went through a consultation process with our regional denomination that recommended, among a number of prescriptions, that we go through a period of repentance and reconciliation, and that we shelve that issue until we were able to get back on mission. This was very helpful and had a positive and re- energizing effect on the church. The question about non-partisan representation seemed to be a concern whether those who had been in opposition had been purposefully excluded from participation. Were the ones we chose selected because they would be more positive and veer to one side? This showed a misunderstanding of what the survey was designed to measure that was picked up by others in the group. They pointed out that this is a survey about personality, not about attitudes toward any specific issue. Whether you were positive or negative in your opinion on a certain issue would not change what your basic personality is and the results of a broader survey may not be exactly the same, but would likely be similar.

An interesting observation about this question is that it became less about whether the results accurately portrayed the culture of the church than about whether the results would accurately portray the personality trends of a larger group who were not opinion leaders in the church. Ironically, this concern would seem to be further evidence for the accuracy of the results – a concern for conducting things in a proper way (Practical and Structured) and a concern that everyone’s opinion should be valued (Connectional).

7. What did you learn about your church culture from the inventory?
This inventory seemed to reinforce the respondents’ understanding of our church as warm, loving, and caring. They also noted and appreciated that we are a diverse, yet complementary group. They felt that each of these – caring, diverse, and complementary – were accurate representations of our culture. Whereas the former did not surprise anyone, there were two things that came up as things they learned from the inventory. The first, as has already been mentioned, was that we scored more Organizer than some would have thought. The other was that my score was different from all the others.

The discussion around this question seemed to indicate that for the most part, the results confirmed what they already understood about our church, and that seeing the results from the survey was helpful in being able to better understand and articulate our culture.

8. How do you expect to use (or have used) this information to leverage your ministry planning and implementation?

There were some underlying questions that came out of this discussion. The first was whether we should look to our strengths so we can better minister to those who share those strengths, or work on our weaknesses so we do not leave people behind who are strong in our areas of weakness. This is an important question, and not everyone agrees on the best solution. Two well-known authors with contrasting viewpoints would be Christian Schwarze and Marcus Buckingham. Christian Schwarze’s Natural Church Development275 surveyed churches on eight essential qualities of healthy congregations. These qualities were graphically represented as staves of a barrel and the assertion of the book was that water will only rise to the height of the lowest stave. Therefore a church

---

275 Christian Schwarze, Natural Church Development, (Carol Springs, Ill.: Church-Smart, 1996).
needed to find their weakest quality (lowest stave) and work on it in order to grow.

Marcus Buckingham, on the other hand, feels that the key to our success lies in our strengths rather than our weaknesses. He has written several books building on the theme of focusing your energies on developing and refining your strengths, and dealing with your weaknesses only to the point where they do not become an impediment to success. He asks why you would focus all your energy on areas where you will only ever be adequate and not on the areas where you can be great? Both authors make valid points, but Buckingham’s model seems to be gaining momentum. Although Buckingham does not claim to write from a Christian perspective, his views seem to align best with the New Testament’s emphasis on serving primarily in our areas of giftedness.

As our discussion progressed on this question of the follow-up interview, the consensus seemed to be that we will be most effective if we focus on our strengths. One comment was that even if the information ends up being only 50-60% accurate for our church culture, we can be that much more strategic in how we reach that culture within our broader culture. People pick a church based on whether they feel they fit or not, so if we can be even just a few degrees more specific in our understanding of who we are and go hard on it, we can take advantage of our strengths. We want everyone to be saved, but recognize we will be most effective with people who are more like us. So this study can help us be more intentional in our ministry and outreach.

Another underlying question was how this information could help us grow, and whether growing numerically should even be a goal. This concern was expressed by one individual who seemed to be struggling with the whole concept of the study, yet who feels

---

passionately that we want to see our church grow spiritually. There was also agreement that we want both numerical and spiritual growth. An obsession with numbers can draw a church away from its mission of making disciples. However, if a church is serious about being and making disciples, numerical growth should follow.

Another question was asked at the end of the follow-up interview: What would you need to be able to take the next step in implementing this? This was designed to try to extend the discussion from the previous question and help us understand how we should proceed from here.

One person admitted the need for a more open mind and more openness to change, and reflected on a few ways things are already being done differently than in the past. Another expressed the need to know what we are trying to achieve in order to be able to know what the next step was. A suggestion was made that we think about each ministry and see if we have these elements of our culture in each of our ministries; for instance, whether we have some that are all organizational and no relational or all relational and no organizational.

There was the sense that this study gives us some great ideas we can run with. One newer staff member referenced a passion for creativity and imagination that came out of the study and noted that this is not always the case in churches. Knowing this is true for us gives us more freedom to take advantage of that creativity, confident that it is appreciated by the congregation. In general this gives us a better idea of what strengths we can leverage. We need to be aware of our weaknesses and always be trying to grow, but this gives us some great areas that we are strong in and passionate about that we can run with.

There was also the feeling that this study will help us better match up individuals
with needs in the ministries. Evaluating our ministries through the lens of our church culture will help us know what areas need to be strengthened and what kinds of skills and gifts are needed to meet that particular need. It was also felt that understanding our culture could help us in the areas of motivation and implementation. For instance, one of the characteristics of the Fellowship personality is “Doesn’t like drastic change.” Knowing that helps us realize that we need to introduce change more gradually than we might like in order to give people time to adapt. Another quality of the Fellowship personality (as well as Organizer) is a high sense of duty. Keeping these things in mind will help us more effectively come around who we already have in our church. As the leadership of the church uses the understanding from this study to lead toward change and growth, it will be easier for the congregation as a whole to embrace the changes.

Conclusions

The hypothesis of this thesis is that understanding and leveraging a church’s culture can help focus its ministry and maximize its effectiveness. The Research Question is, “How effective is the “Opinion Leader Inventory” and supplemental materials in What Is Your Church’s Personality? by Philip D. Douglas in helping the leadership in an older, established congregation better understand the cultural factors that are impacting its ministry effectiveness?” Although the research is focused on a particular tool to help understand a church’s culture, the broader question is whether having a more conscious understanding of our congregation will help us, and if so, how? In other words, what is the value of intentional reflection that is focused missionally? Overall, the three phases of research seem to support the hypothesis. Following is a summary of some of the observations, questions, and conclusions of the study.
The survey itself is designed to identify the individual personalities of the primary opinion leaders of the church. The stated assumption is that the personality of the top opinion leaders is the personality of the church. Although the results seemed to reinforce this assumption, whether the conclusions reflect the culture of the broader congregation was a recurring question throughout the rest of the research. Douglass does not articulate what research may have been undertaken to arrive at that conclusion, but this could be an area for further study. Although there were some minor frustrations with the survey, everyone seemed to find it helpful, and the leadership of the church agreed with the conclusions as they related to the church culture/personality.

Although the book seeks to identify a church's personality within eight basic personalities, the results (at least in our case) would suggest that the culture or personality of a church is more complex. While this may make the task of understanding and defining a congregation's culture more challenging, it should not be surprising, nor is it a problem. In fact, it could be argued that it is this variety and complexity that actually forms the unique culture or personality of a church, and our understanding of church culture must be broad enough in its definition to embrace the variance and even contradictions that surface in a tool like this.

One variable in the overall helpfulness of the study lies in the accuracy and effectiveness of interpreting and communicating the results. The Douglass and Associates webpage makes allowance for a congregation taking the survey online and the results being communicated, preferably as part of a broader consultation. Presumably, this would result in a more detailed and technically accurate result. However, three attempts have been made to engage the author and/or others in his organization, with no response. It is
unclear if the website is even still current. The book itself is designed to be a self-study for the church, and if used effectively, could be a valuable tool for churches seeking to improve their effectiveness. However, those congregations undertaking the study in this way are limited to the information in the book and their own familiarity with its contents.

Another observation was that in the follow-up interview, people tended to be all over the place. They were for the most part remembering vague results and, other than the staff and a few on the board, many did not even have their handouts with them, and it was not clear if they had reviewed them in preparation for the meeting. In spite of that, the interview itself was quite positive and there was excellent participation from everyone. There was general agreement with the conclusions of the survey and a desire to use that knowledge to be more effective in ministry and (especially) outreach. But it became obvious that this is just the beginning of a longer process. The key will be in the follow-up. There will need to be more reinforcement of the results as well as discussions about how we can use them and benefit from them.

Some further questions need to be explored as we seek to leverage what we have learned:

1. What can we do to sharpen and improve what we are already doing?

2. Are there new areas of ministry we should explore?

3. How can we protect ourselves from our vulnerabilities (without losing who we are)?

4. How can we focus on and maximize our strengths?
CHAPTER FIVE: WHAT NOW? CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This final chapter will look first at how well the literature review, theological reflection, and research project confirm the initial hypothesis and assumptions from chapter one. It will then review the Research Question from three perspectives: 1) a general analysis of the value of using some kind of survey process to help identify the church's culture; 2) an examination of the three options that surfaced in the literature that seem most viable for identifying a church's culture, along with a recommendation; and 3) a summary of our own experience: how well the process worked and what could have been improved, the perceived accuracy of the results, and next steps. Then some observations and four suggestions for possible future research will be explored that could build on what has already been done in the field. Finally, the conclusion will highlight the power of understanding and leveraging church culture and address five important cautions.

Does this project confirm the hypothesis and assumptions?

This project began with an hypothesis and seven assumptions. It seems fitting to evaluate those in light of the literature, reflect on the topic theologically, and the research project itself.

Hypothesis

The underlying hypothesis of this study was that understanding and leveraging a church’s culture helps focus its ministry and maximize its effectiveness. There are two parts to this hypothesis, understanding and leveraging. Understanding alone may make one smarter but will not necessarily translate into action. Trying to leverage something
that is not understood is a recipe for confusion and ineffectiveness. Both are important in order for the church’s culture to help them focus ministry and maximize effectiveness.

Summary of Assumptions

The following is a summary of the assumptions listed in chapter one.

1. Every church has a unique culture that is deeply imbedded in its identity and consciousness.

2. It is important to not oversimplify a church’s culture. As churches grow older or larger, or during times of change and/or conflict, subcultures form, and there tends to be more ambiguity in looking at the total church culture.

3. A church’s culture impacts its effectiveness in mission, either positively or negatively (usually both).

4. Church culture can be changed, but not easily.

5. It is perhaps more valuable for congregations to understand their culture and see its potential rather than attempting to make wholesale change to their basic personality.

6. A church’s unique culture, properly understood, sanctified and leveraged, can be a powerful force for ministry effectiveness. This process can inform their strategic planning, guide in their programming, and enhance their outreach and ministry.

7. Aside from obvious dysfunction, what exactly the culture is may be less important than that the congregation understands it.

Assessment

Although there is not universal agreement on what organizational culture is and its impact on the organization, this project confirms the hypothesis and assumptions. The literature review, research, and theological reflection function as a three-legged table
supporting the hypothesis and assumptions.

The literature reviewed for this thesis, as well as the other resources that were not reviewed in chapter two but helped formed the academic basis for the project, support the conclusions. There would be virtually no controversy over the hypothesis, although there would not be unanimity on what that culture (or cultures) would look like. Of the assumptions, there would be little if any disagreement on numbers 1, 2, 3, and 6, but some differences of opinion on numbers 4, 5, and 7. The books that focused most on changing organizational culture have a different perspective on those questions.

The literature reinforced the importance of culture to an organization. Even the books that either looked at culture from the perspective of health, like Chand’s *Cracking Your Church’s Culture Code*, or that focused on bringing about rapid and comprehensive culture change, like Connors and Smith’s *Change the Culture Change the Game*, recognized that culture was a key component in a church or organization’s ability to accomplish their mission and vision. Now it would be assumed that if someone goes to all the effort to write a book on organizational culture, that they are convinced of its strategic importance. However, the volume of focus and attention given to the subject, together with the research and experiences that inform the writing, lends support to the hypothesis and assumptions. Business writers typically focus on the subject of organizational culture because they feel that it will help the bottom line. Academics bring the rigor of critical thinking and research methodologies to the table. If an organization’s culture had no bearing on its effectiveness and provided no strategic advantage, it is reasonable to assume that this intersection of method and motive would have discovered that.

The research conducted as part of this thesis also lends support to the hypothesis
and assumptions, especially as it related to the primary resource for the research, Douglass’ *What Is Your Church’s Personality*. His conviction on the validity of each of the personalities and the supplemental follow-up material provided on all of them were key reasons for using this model for the research. The results of the survey were not only deemed accurate by those in leadership in the church, but the additional materials give invaluable help for ongoing strategic application of the results.

The hypothesis and assumptions are also supported theologically. There are facets of Systematic Theology that correlate with aspects of current learning on organizational culture. There are evidences of cultural factors in the early church, as seen in the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3. There are also theological implications in the comparison of organizational culture to individual personality. The Bible seems to indicate that God is actively involved in forming people a certain way, gifting them with interests, aptitudes, spiritual empowerments, personality, and experiences to provide a unique function in Kingdom service. Since churches are composed of individuals for whom God took this level of interest, it is inconceivable that he would not do the same for the church, drawing together the parts of the Body necessary to fulfill the function he wants accomplished in a local setting. To put that much intentionality into the individual yet allow for the random formation of those individuals into congregations would be similar to a craftsman machining parts with extreme precision, then throwing them together haphazardly into a machine. God is behind the formation of his church and everything he does is teleological in focus. “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.” (Ephesians 1:11)
If people need more confirmation, they just need to look around. What else could explain the myriad of different churches and denominations, the variety of theological and ministry priorities, the differences in the way congregations worship, treat each other, interact with visitors, and view the community around them? Every church has essence, underlying values, attitudes, character, and basic personality that influence how it sees its mission, what vision it is trying to realize, what values inform its priorities and interactions, and the what rituals and practices it engages. At the same time the mission, vision, values, rituals, experiences, and behaviors of the church are shaping its culture. If every church has a culture then it stands to reason that understanding what it is will benefit them as a church. Understanding the underlying culture can help make sense of things that on the surface do not make sense; and the more a congregation understands that underlying culture, the more they can leverage it for more effective ministry and outreach.

Reviewing the Research Question

The question that this project has sought to answer is, “How effective is the “Opinion Leader Inventory” and supplemental materials in What Is Your Church’s Personality? by Philip D. Douglas in helping the leadership in an older, established congregation better understand the cultural factors that are impacting its ministry effectiveness?”

This question will be reviewed from three perspectives.

1. The first will be a general analysis of the value of using some kind of survey process to help identify the church’s culture.

2. The second perspective will be to look at the relative merits of Douglass along with the two other viable options for identifying a church’s culture that surfaced in the
literature.

3. Finally, there will be a summary of our own experience, indicating how well the process worked and what could have been improved, the perceived accuracy of the results, and next steps.

The Benefit of Knowing

As has been mentioned before, the church has been slower to recognize the power of organizational culture than business and academia. This project has reinforced the value of a church learning more about its unique culture and its potential for strategic planning and ministry effectiveness. Since this is something many, if not most in the church have not given much thought to, it is important to have a process of gaining a more precise understanding of who they are and why they do what they do.

The process of understanding a church’s culture must begin with some system of self-evaluation. There are many kinds of evaluative tools available for churches that look at the church from a broad variety of perspectives, but very few focus on a church’s underlying culture or personality. If the goal is to identify a church’s culture, then a tool with that focus is important.

Options for Cultural Identity

That brings up the question of which model and approach will be the most helpful. Through the literature review, three different kinds of methods emerged for helping an organization identify its culture. The three are similar in that they view an organization’s culture as being primarily neutral. Thus the studies are not designed to approach culture in a critical or judgmental way, but attempt to inform and identify. The three methods are Philip D. Douglass’ *What Is Your Church’s Personality*, which was the method and tool used
in this project. The second is by William Bridges in his book, *The Character of Organizations*. As noted in the review in chapter two, Bridge's survey is called the Organizational Character Index and is patterned closely after the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The third is Schein's Culture Assessment as Part of Managed Organizational Change process outlined in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, also described in chapter two.

Interestingly, only two of all the other resources that were referenced for this thesis contained any kind of workable self-study for identifying an organization's culture that does not either take a lot of adapting for application in a church setting or require sophisticated statistical models. Chand was one of these in his book, *Cracking Your Church’s Culture Code*. His free CULTURE Survey analyzes seven aspects of organizational culture: Control, Understanding, Leadership, Trust, Unafraid, Responsive, and Execution. From this survey it assesses a church’s culture in one of five categories: Inspiring, Accepting, Stagnant, Discouraging, and Toxic. This method focuses on organizational culture, but is designed to assess the health or dysfunction of that culture.

The other book that had a workable model that included reflection on culture was *Church Unique* by Will Mancini. His model, called the Vision Pathway, involves Discovering your Kingdom Concept, which identifies your uniqueness, Developing your Vision Frame, which graphically illustrates that Kingdom Concept, and Delivering your Vision Daily, which is a strategy for constant communication of the vision.

Following is an explanation and assessment of the three options deemed viable for evaluating a church’s culture.

Douglass – *What Is Your Church’s Personality?*
Since this was the primary resource for the research of this project, much has already been said in chapters 1, 2 and 4 about the method and materials. This study concludes that Douglass’ tool and model is the most efficient and effective option as a self-study for understanding a church’s culture. In brief, Douglass’ model seeks to identify a church’s personality by having thirty primary opinion leaders take an inventory on their own personality. The inventory (modified from the Myers-Briggs MBTI) surveys opinion leaders on how they gather information (Practical vs. Innovative), how they make decisions (Analytical vs. Connectional), and “Lifestyle” (Structured vs. Flexible). The inventory leads to a three-letter combination for each person who takes the survey, which is then plotted on a wheel that describes eight different personalities: Fellowship, Inspirational, Relational, Entrepreneurial, Strategizer, Organizer, Adventurous, and Expressive. There is a chapter in the book on each of the eight personalities that includes a lot of useful information.

Advantages

There are a number of advantages to Douglass’ model and material. One advantage is that it is geared directly toward the church so there is no need to try to take an instrument that was designed for another organization, such as a business, and retool it for the church. It was developed by one who has extensive church experience as a pastor, church planter, and seminary professor. This experience also adds depth to the chapters describing each of the personalities, because he not only has good familiarity with the principles of Myers-Briggs, but also understands the practical implications of the various cultural dynamics for the church. Thus both the survey instrument and the follow up material are designed specifically for churches.
Another advantage is that there is a lot of information given about each personality. This not only aids a congregation to be able to identify their personality(ies), but helps them process what that means for staff search, addressing conflict, and planning ministry and outreach initiatives.

A third advantage is that a church can do this study on its own, without having to bring in an outside consultant. The survey is included in the book, along with instructions for administering, scoring, and interpreting the results. To get maximum impact, those who are leading the process would benefit by each having a copy of the book. That would still make it a very reasonably priced exercise.

Disadvantages

There are also some disadvantages to Douglass’ model. One is that the survey is based on the assumption that the personality of your top opinion leaders is the personality of the church. As has already been discussed, this is a questionable assumption that both has the potential to oversimplify the factors that go into the development and conservation of a church’s culture, and create insecurity over whether the results reflect the broader congregation.

Another disadvantage is that this method may be somewhat limiting in that it plugs a church’s personality into one of only eight categories. As was discussed previously, our experience suggests that the identification of a church’s personality may be more complex and nuanced than can be determined by one category. It would be helpful to have some guidance on how to interpret mixed results, such as how various combinations interact practically.

A third disadvantage is that the value of the study is limited to how well the person
who is leading the study understands the material and how to interpret the surveys. The fact that there is a lot of information in the chapters describing the personalities is a good thing, but there is no additional instruction or training for using and interpreting the survey. This limitation is true no matter what kind of evaluation is conducted, but some more widely used systems include better resources for those administering the inventories and interpreting the results.

A fourth disadvantage is that once you have administered the inventory and interpreted the results, then what? Douglass advises that the intention of the process is that the church would use the results to develop a ten to twenty page ministry style to facilitate staff search and move program development and conflict resolution along in a focused manner.\textsuperscript{277} This ministry style report would include the church’s personality, philosophy of ministry, qualifications and expectations for staff and lay leaders, mission values, and budgeting priorities. The idea is that this statement will stimulate further refinement and definition. However, more detail could have been given on how to leverage the information gleaned for greater unity and ministry effectiveness.

\textbf{Bridges –} \textit{The Character of Organizations}

A fuller review of Bridges’ book is given in chapter 2. Like Douglass, Bridges looks at organizational culture as personality, or character. He developed a tool called the Organizational Character Index (OCI), included in his book. This is technically not an adaptation of the Myers-Briggs Temperament Index (MBTI) for organizations, but is based on the four pairs of opposing tendencies used in the MBTI: Extraversion (E) vs. Introversion (I), Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N), Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F), and Judging (J)

\textsuperscript{277} Douglass, 31.
vs. Perceiving (P). It then categorizes organizations under sixteen types of organizational character using the sixteen possible combinations of letters (e.g. ESTJ). There is one chapter in the book explaining all sixteen of them. While Douglass’ survey has the person take it on themselves, Bridges’ survey tool is designed to determine how the person taking it perceives the organization.

Advantages

There are several advantages to Bridges' system. One is that he views organizational character as neutral, that is, every personality has validity. His metaphor of comparing organizational character to the grains of different kinds of wood is very helpful.

Another advantage is that his survey engages people at all levels of involvement in the organization (not just the opinion leaders), on what they see as that organization’s culture or personality. In fact, he advises not just doing it on the organization as a whole, but also on different parts of the organization (functional, operational, or geographical units), especially if there are some concerns about one or more of them. This allows for – even assumes – cultural differences within the organization.

A third advantage is that the OCI is focused on how the participants view the organization rather than on how they view themselves. This puts the focus where it most likely should be, on the organization rather than the individual personalities of the leaders.

A fourth advantage is that there are more character options. His system has four letters rather than three and sixteen categories rather than eight. One major difference is that his inventory includes Extrovert vs. Introvert, information that is certainly as pertinent to a church as it is to any other organization, and would be helpful insight to have.
A fifth advantage is that although the OCI tool was relatively new when the book was published and had not yet been statistically validated, there is significant correlation to the Myers-Briggs Index. There is much more written on the MBTI and more options for training available to those who want to use it. This means that although there is not a lot of information in the book on each of the sixteen personality types, that information is readily available.

Disadvantages

There are also disadvantages to Bridges’ system. One is that, although he references organizations quite broadly, including businesses, schools, nonprofits, etc., the tool is not designed specifically for a church. There are many references in the questions to employees, customers, products, profits, and competitors that would require adapting in a church setting.

Another disadvantage is that there is much less specific information on each personality than in Douglass’ book. All sixteen of the personalities are described in just one chapter, while Douglass includes a chapter on each of his eight. Because of the wide familiarity of the MBTI, much of this information would be available elsewhere, but it requires going to other sources and most would be focused on individual personality rather than corporate character.

Schein – Organizational Culture and Leadership

Schein proposes a multistep group process to enable the leadership of an organization to rapidly decipher their organizational culture. He does not include a survey tool. In fact, he resists that approach. “I have often been asked to design a survey or do an interview program in this context and have always argued that this is neither necessary nor
desirable. The group interview process described next is both faster and more valid because an interactive process gets to shared assumptions more quickly."

This process involves bringing a group or groups together that are representative of the organization for in-depth discussion on identifying the artifacts that are descriptive of the culture, such as dress codes, desired modes of behavior, the physical layout of the workplace, systems of reward and punishment, how decisions are made, etc. The focus on artifacts is to answer the question, “What is going on here?” Then the group seeks to identify the espoused values of the organization to answer the question “Why are you doing what you are doing?” After that they identify the organization’s underlying shared assumptions. This reveals the degree of alignment between the artifacts and values.

The next step is to categorize the shared assumptions according to whether they are aiding or hindering the proposed change process. Finally, they attempt to reach consensus on what the important shared assumptions are and what the implications are for what the organization wants to do next. Schein is adamant that attempts to identify an organization’s culture should be a means to a greater purpose, such as a process of change or growth, and not an end in itself. This process is designed to be used with a facilitator and be done in a day.

Advantages

One advantage to this process is that it is more in-depth and customized, since there is no stock survey or grouping of results. The result then is a document that is unique to the specific organization, not an attempt to categorize the results.

Another advantage is that it includes more than just identifying the culture. The

---

278 Schein, 315.
group discussion is designed to lead into a deeper discussion about what to do with the information to increase effectiveness.

Disadvantages

One possible disadvantage is that the process is more subjective and the results may seem less clear and defined.

Another possible disadvantage is that although the process is designed for rapid cultural deciphering, it requires a sizable investment of time (and in the case of a business, money) to pull together a large enough group to ensure the accuracy of the results. It also requires intensive work on the part of the group. In addition, since churches do not typically think in organizational culture concepts, this might be difficult to do in a church without more extensive teaching and training.

A third disadvantage is that there is no supplemental material to help a church understand itself. The process helps identify the unique personality, but there is no context for comparison and no additional information to know how this culture can be leveraged for strategic advantage.

Recommendation

Recognizing that there are advantages and disadvantages to all three systems, Douglass’ model would still seem to be preferred for helping a church determine its culture. Of the three, it is the only one designed specifically for a church by someone with extensive experience in different facets of church work. Although there could be more information provided on how to interpret the results and move on from there to leverage what has been learned, it is still a process that can be done as a self-study without bringing in an outside consultant or facilitator. In addition, there is a wealth of useful supplemental
information in the chapters on each of the personalities.

Our experience

Accuracy

Chapter four details the research and conclusions from our own use of Douglass’ inventory and supplemental material. Our initial conclusion was that the results were not immediately obvious. Three different personalities, Organizer, Fellowship, and Relational, scored very close to each other. Upon further detailed analysis of the results, it was concluded that Fellowship scored the strongest and most characterized our congregation, although there were evidences of the other two as well. There was general agreement in the accuracy of that result and general agreement regarding the value of the exercise. The leadership felt both that they recognized our church in the conclusions of the study and that they learned more about our church as they looked at some of the specific follow-up materials in the chapters on the different personalities.

Improvement

Some observations about how the process could have been improved have already been discussed in previous chapters. Three possible ways the process could have been improved will be reviewed here.

The first is that there could have been more communication of what was being tested for and what the implications of the findings would be. Since the inventory was the part of the process that had the most direct benefit on the individuals who were taking the survey, they could have been better informed of what the results meant. Ideally this would happen immediately after the survey was completed rather than before so there would be less chance of that information skewing the way they answered the questions.
There were three realities in our situation that would have made that a challenge. The first is that the inventory was administered after our second morning service, so they had already been there for the duration of one service, and a few had been there for both. By the time the process was explained and they filled in the inventory, and some explanation of how the surveys were going to be used was given, they were ready to go home. Secondly, some of those filling in the surveys could not be there in person so had filled theirs in beforehand. As a result, they did not even have the advantage of the information that was given at that meeting. The third challenge is that people filled in the surveys at different rates of speed. Those who finished more quickly were less interested in staying around until the slowest people were finished.

Another way communication could have been improved would be to emphasize the importance of writing down their three letter combinations so that when we shared the results, they could have learned how their individual scores related to their personalities. They were encouraged to do that, but not everyone did. Also, since there was no real need for confidentiality, they could have been given the option of putting their names on the paper so they could have the advantage of having their papers in front of them during the information meeting.

Another way the process could have been improved would be to have more guided discussion at the information meeting. They were seated at round tables, and did have opportunities to interact with what they were learning, but there could have been more intentional times of discussion.

A third way the process could have been improved, especially the second and third stages of the research, would have been for each of the staff and board to have a copy of
the book. They could at least read the appropriate chapters. The advantage of that is that having more eyes looking at the material would pick up more details and insights about our personality and the possible strategic implications than just one person interpreting and applying the results. This would potentially make leveraging what we learn about ourselves more efficient, and hopefully more effective.

Next Steps

There was general agreement that we have begun a process of understanding and leveraging our church culture rather than having completed one. What has happened through the three stages of the research for this project has laid a foundation for future reflection and planning. There are at least two next steps that can help us begin to maximize the effectiveness of this learning.

The first is to schedule another information meeting for those who missed the first one as well as for those who want to hear it again, now that all three stages of the research project have been completed and more knowledge has been gained. Additional insights have come through further reflection on the results of the inventory, on the valuable discussion in the follow-up interview, and in the writing of this thesis, that can enhance what has already been learned.

The second step is to have a leadership retreat to take the information we have gained and use it for strategic planning. It is this step that will enable us to leverage the culture of our church into more effective ministry and outreach. In addition to the questions mentioned for follow-up at the end of chapter four of this thesis (p.153), great value could come from using the information gleaned from Douglass and combining it either with Schein’s Culture Assessment Process or Mancini’s Vision Path Process. This would give
specific rails for further discussion and planning.

Suggestions for Future Research

This was a valuable study, to have the opportunity to not only test a tool and system for gaining knowledge of the cultural dynamics that shape our church life, but to be able to work with staff and board members to reflect on what was learned and how it might help us be more effective in ministry and outreach. In the same way that we were left with the sense that we still have work to do to be able to leverage what we have learned, there are some aspects of this project that would benefit from future research.

Four such thoughts come to mind.

Another Book

First, it would be helpful to have a book written about organizational culture from a church perspective, which gives a more robust treatment of the subject. This could involve a deeper exploration of what church culture is and its potential for greater effectiveness in ministry, a much stronger emphasis on the theology of organizational culture, as well as a practical framework for self-study. There seems to be a vacuum of literature that treats the subject with the same rigor as is done for business or academia and yet is practically useful. The information is out there, but it would be helpful to have it more readily accessible to church leaders who recognize its importance and want to tap into it for greater Kingdom impact.

Enhancing Douglass

Second, Douglass has brought a wealth of church, denomination, and seminary experience to produce a tool and system that is practical and relatively simple to implement. It affirms the basic personality of the church and outlines its strengths,
vulnerabilities, and potential. It is positive and optimistic in its approach and gives practical recommendations on how the information can be used to guard against the vulnerabilities and enhance its ministry. The chapters written on each of the eight personalities are comprehensive and extremely helpful.

There seems to be, however, some areas that would benefit from further research. One would be to put his assumption that the personality of the primary opinion leaders will be the personality of the church to a more rigorous test. This assumption has the potential to be the Achilles heel to the whole system. If it oversimplifies the factors that shape the culture of a church, it could result in an oversimplification of the results, and it might be the more subtle nuances that are overlooked which would lead to insights to facilitate needed change with less conflict.

Another area of Douglass’ work that could benefit from more research is how to interpret the results of the survey when a combination of personalities is indicated. Is there a more objective way to gauge how various personalities interact with each other? For instance, as was outlined in chapter four, the difference between Organizer (PAS) and Fellowship (PCS) is indicated by the middle letter, Analytical vs. Connectional. This relates to how decisions are made. How do mixed results in this dimension affect the overall personality of the church? What are the implications of this combination that could lead to better decisions and minimize conflicts in priorities? This kind of further study has the potential to muddy the water in that there are so many possible factors at work that the broader categories could be threatened. On the other hand, as Einstein is purported to have said, “Everything should be as simple as it can be, but not simpler.”279

A third area of Douglass’ work that would benefit from further research is to develop a practical framework to help a church know what to do with the information they have gathered. Douglass suggests the results of the inventory be used to develop a ten to twenty page ministry style description. However, what he takes two pages to outline could be greatly expanded. It seems a shame to invest that much effort in helping a church get a detailed and fairly comprehensive understanding of their personality, then give very little practical guidance on how to leverage that understanding.

Expanding Bridges

A third suggestion for future research would be to do what Douglass has done but building on Bridges’ work. As has been referenced earlier in this chapter, there are some attractive elements to Bridge’s system. One is the use of the four opposing MBTI personality tendencies and the sixteen personality types applied to organizations. Linking more directly to Myers-Briggs has the advantage of tying into a large body of existing research that has had more than a quarter of a century of use and analysis. In addition, Bridges’ book was written in 2000, but the survey was used for several years before that, so it has had well more than a decade and a half of use and testing itself.

Another attractive element to Bridges’ system is that the survey tool is designed to assess the organization rather than the individual taking it and is intended to be taken by a broader cross-section of the organization than the primary opinion leaders. This has the potential of giving a wider perspective on the church’s personality as well as alleviating the concern that the results do not reflect the views of those beyond the leadership.

Where Bridges’ work would be less helpful is that it is not written specifically for churches and there is not as much detailed explanation of the different personalities and
their implications for ministry. Some kind of amalgamation of Douglass’ church expertise and detailed, practical follow-up information with Bridges’ organizational expertise, broader framework, and focus on the organization rather than the individual, could be a potential sweet spot for a church-based system for understanding and leveraging a church’s culture.

Design an Experience

A fourth suggestion for further research would be to develop a method for churches, or at least their leaders, to periodically assess and monitor their cultural dynamics in a way that is both fresh and systematic. This annual or biannual experience would guard against the perception that this process of discovery is a one-time event, or that the church’s culture is static. It would give the leadership a continuing opportunity to better understand their congregation, identify attitudes and trends that should either be reinforced or altered, and refocus ministry priorities.

Conclusion

Every church has a distinctive culture, formed by a unique set of personalities, experiences, values, theological sensitivities, and ministry priorities. That culture has a profound impact on everything the church does, how it processes information and makes decisions, how it presents to those not part of the church, and how it sees its mission in light of Scripture and the world around it. Many churches function without any awareness of the cultural factors that are constantly at work, often undetected, under the surface. Gaining an understanding of that unique culture and how it can be leveraged positions a church to be able to minister more efficiently and effectively, work through conflict with greater sensitivity and understanding, add staff more strategically, and reach out to and
serve its community more intentionally. At present, Douglass’ book, *What Is Your Church’s Personality*, may be the best option for accomplishing that.

However, as important as it is to understand and leverage our culture, there are some vital cautions that need to be considered. The first is to recognize that as powerful as knowing and leveraging a church’s culture can be, great care must be taken to not use this as a tool of manipulation. James Heskett, in his book *The Culture Cycle: How to Shape the Unseen Force That Transforms Performance*, describes culture as a stealth weapon when thought of as an element of organizational strategy. However, he reacts to an assumption that understanding and working with culture needs to be manipulative. He writes, “Another interpretation is that culture is the humanizing element in what would otherwise be a drab and frustrating organizational existence. It can help establish expectations, foster trust, facilitate communications, and reduce uncertainty in relationships between human beings.”280 This points out the importance of motive. Understanding and leveraging culture can be a potent force for maximizing effectiveness in ministry and outreach, but can also be a deadly weapon if used to manipulate people or attempt to force change in a congregation.

Another important caution is that focusing too much on a church’s culture can lead to an overemphasis on organizational factors and cause one to ignore the fact that the church is essentially a spiritual organism led and empowered by God. This process needs to be fueled by prayer. Our desire in the church is to give God glory and serve him more faithfully, and a focus on prayer throughout the discovery process will be a critical

---

reminder that “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain....” (Psalm 127:1)

Another caution to a strategic focus on church culture is to ensure that we stay faithful to Scripture. John Wesley is said to have claimed to be a man of one Book. Now the fact that it was a quote originally attributed to Thomas Aquinas and Wesley wrote it in Latin is instructive. It is legitimate to use other tools and resources to enhance our understanding and sharpen our skills. All truth is God’s truth. However, we are essentially a people of one Book. The Bible is our final authority for faith and practice, and how we understand and leverage our culture must always be in alignment with Scripture. As well, since the church is a spiritual organism, gifted, empowered, and directed by the Holy Spirit, we must stay dependent on and submissive to the Spirit’s leading and empowering.

Finally, although there is validity in every kind of church culture (bathed in prayer, shaped by Scripture, and properly submitted to the Holy Spirit), an openness to change is vital if that culture is going to help a church adapt to the fast changing needs of our world. Richard S. Gallagher, in his book The Soul of an Organization includes a chapter on The Nimble. He writes, “Being Nimble is perhaps the most important long-term survival trait of any culture....”281 He goes on to say, “Your adaptability to change – in other words, how Nimble you are – is perhaps the ultimate measure of the strength of your business culture.”282 Not all change is good change, nor is change for the sake of change generally a wise choice. However, change is part of God’s plan for us as individual disciples and for us as churches. The goal of following Jesus is to be transformed into his image, and transformation always involves change. However, the Church is not famous for being...
“Nimble.” Leveraging a church’s culture will mean change. But if it is change that is bathed in prayer, dependent on the Spirit and faithful to Scripture, it will move us forward in our transformation and make us more effective in our mission to make disciples of all nations.
APPENDIX 1 – OPINION LEADERS’ SURVEY

What Is Your Church’s Personality? Opinion Leaders’ Survey

Explanation and Instructions
Thank you for your willingness to be part of this study. The purpose of the research is to determine the usefulness of this diagnostic tool and supplemental information in the book: What Is Your Church’s Personality in helping the leadership of LBC better understand our church culture and increasing our effectiveness in ministry and outreach. We also hope that this survey will help you better understand your own personality.

There are a series of eight questions in each category. Each question contains two opposite ideas that relate to our behaviors or traits. You may want to choose a number under each statement if you believe that both descriptions apply to you, or you may want to choose a number under one side only.

For each question, please circle a number from 5 (always true for me) down to 1 (only occasionally true).

1 – Only occasionally true
2 – Sometimes true
3 – True about half the time
4 – True most of the time
5 – Always true for me

Always go with your initial response.

The questions should be answered according to how you normally behave, rather than how you think you should behave. Try to express your own behavior rather than what you think others expect of you, or what your family, church, or job situation demands from you. Think especially of how you relate to the Lord and other Christians as you answer.

The scores for each column are totaled at the end of the section.

The Survey

Information-Gathering – Practical or Innovative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Do I depend on my personal observations in order to gather information about what’s occurring around the church?</th>
<th>Do I rely more on my intuition and hunches in order to form impressions about what’s going on around the church?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.</th>
<th>In church presentations, do I prefer simple ways of speaking and writing - the more specific and down-to-earth, the better?</th>
<th>In church presentations, do I like people to use images and concepts to engage my imagination?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.</th>
<th>Am I an observer of tradition in the church, one who does not easily break with custom?</th>
<th>Do I break with tradition whenever it seems restrictive for the church and lay aside customs that seem too cumbersome for a new</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. In church meetings, does the here-and-now hold my attention?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  
   In church meetings, am I interested in what could be, so that future possibilities occupy my thoughts?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  

5. In church meetings, do I usually “see the trees before the forest (i.e. details before the big picture)”?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  
   In church meetings, do I often “see the forest before I see the trees (i.e. big picture before the details)”?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  

6. Am I a practical sort of person with a commonsense approach to ministry?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  
   Am I more original and inventive with a creative approach to ministry?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  

7. If someone hangs a new picture or puts a new plant on a table in the church building, will I usually notice it?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  
   Am I often unobservant of things in the building and objects placed on the grounds of the church?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  

8. Am I a steady, dependable kind of person who can be counted on to be consistent in my work in the church?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  
   Do I tend to work by inspiration regarding my work in the church and find that when my understanding of the purpose for a task fades, so does my interest?  
   P-5 4 3 2 1  

Add the numbers circled in each column:

Practical (P) ________  
Innovative (I) ________

**Decision-Making – Analytical or Connectional**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I generally make my decisions about church matters on the basis of an objective analysis of the issues – weighing the pros and cons of the situation?</td>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>Regardless of a pro-and-con analysis, do I base my conclusions on what is important and valuable to the people of the church?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I usually continue with my work and ministry in the church, regardless of relational harmony?</td>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>Do I find that harmonious relationships are essential in order for me to function effectively in church situations?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my church activities, does offering analytical perspective come more naturally for me than speaking a word of approval?</td>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>In my church activities, am I more apt to offer an approving word than an analytical perspective?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When forced to choose in my church interactions, do I place straightforwardness above tactfulness?</td>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>In my church interactions, do I normally place tactfulness ahead of straightforwardness?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Do I find that my contribution to the church’s ministry often lies in my ability to help people see impartially?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do I find that my contribution to the church usually flows from my ability to empathize and to help others stay mindful of what’s best for people?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.</th>
<th><strong>In conversations at church, am I more concise and to the point than expressive and expansive?</strong></th>
<th><strong>In conversations at church, am I more expressive and expansive than concise and to the point?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.</th>
<th><strong>Regarding church matters, do I believe that I am more likely to make the right decision if I go with my rational head rather than my empathetic heart?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Regarding church matters, do I believe that I am more likely to make the right decision if I go with my empathetic heart rather than my rational head?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th><strong>Am I more task-oriented in my involvement at church, with a greater interest in the job being accomplished?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Am I more personal in my involvement at church, with a greater interest in people being served?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Add the numbers circled in each column:

Analytical (A) _______  
Connectional (C) _______

**Lifestyle – Structured or Flexible**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th><strong>At church, do I prefer to plan my work and work my plan?</strong></th>
<th><strong>At church, do I tend to be more relaxed in developing and accomplishing plans?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.</th>
<th><strong>Does my service offered to the church usually come from being systematic, orderly, proactive, and decisive?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do I more often exhibit spontaneity, open-mindedness, tolerance, and adaptability in my service to the church?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.</th>
<th><strong>Do I like to bring my church programs and projects to completion and finish the task before starting another?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do I like the feeling of getting new things started at church and having many projects going at the same time?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.</th>
<th><strong>In my work at church, do I like to get the information I need quickly for decisions and bring things to a conclusion in a rapid manner?</strong></th>
<th><strong>In my work at church, is it a higher priority for me to wait to be sure I’ve gathered sufficient information to make the best decision possible?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.</th>
<th><strong>Do I like to set standard operating procedures and routines for accomplishing my tasks at church?</strong></th>
<th><strong>Do I prefer to try out new and fresh ways of doing recurring tasks at church so things won’t get into a rut?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Would the phrase &quot;a place for everything and everything in its place&quot; be descriptive of my approach to church ministry?</td>
<td>Do I prefer to leave my schedule open so I can respond to new opportunities and changing events at church?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is it unsettling for me to keep church matters up in the air and undecided?</td>
<td>Do I prefer to keep options open at church so we don't rush into a decision and miss what's best?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>In my church work, do I consider it preferable to be too task-oriented than to be too casual?</td>
<td>In my church work, do I consider it preferable to be too casual than to be too task-oriented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add the numbers circled in each column:

Structured (S) ________  Flexible (F) ________

**Scoring the Survey**

a. Place your totals in the appropriate spaces below.

Information-Gathering:  Practical (P) ________  Innovative (I) ________

Decision-Making:  Analytical (A) ________  Connectional (C) ________

Lifestyle:  Structured (S) ________  Flexible (F) ________

b. Go back to “a.” and circle the letter in each set that has the higher score. The three letters you circle suggest your ministry style.
APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY REPORT

Leveraging Church Culture
Survey Report - May 4, 2014

Categories

INFORMATION-GATHERING - Practical vs. Innovative
1. Do the church leaders depend on their personal observations in order to gather data about what’s happening, or do they rely more on their intuition and hunches in order to form impressions about what’s going on?
2. Do the church leaders prefer straightforward ways of communicating - the more specific and concrete the better, or do they prefer to use imagery and symbolism to engage the imagination of the people of the church?
3. Are the leaders of the church observers of tradition who do not easily break with custom, or are they able to break with tradition and lay aside customs that seem too cumbersome for a new situation?

DECISION-MAKING - Analytical vs. Connectional
1. Are the church leaders secure in basing their decisions on objective analysis - weighing the pros and cons of a situation - or, regardless of the pros and cons, are they more confident when they feel their conclusions are based on what is important and valuable?
2. Can the church leaders usually get on with their work and ministry, regardless of relational harmony, or do they find that harmonious relationship are essential for them to function effectively in a situation?
3. Does making a critical evaluation come more naturally for the church leaders than speaking an appreciative word, or are they more spontaneous with an appreciative word than with a critical evaluation?

LIFESTYLE - Structured vs. Flexible
1. Do the church leaders prefer to plan their work first and then work their plan, or do they tend to be more casual and informal in developing their plans?
2. Do the basic contributions by the leaders often stem from being systematic, orderly, proactive, and decisive, or do they bring to church leadership such characteristics as spontaneity, open-mindedness, tolerance, and adaptability?
3. Do the church leaders prefer bringing programs and projects to completion - finishing one task at a time - or, do they like the feeling of getting new things started and having many things going at the same time?

Table 1: Practical churches vs. Innovative churches
Practical churches are influenced by leaders who:

- live in the “here and now”
- work well with facts and details
- like realistic challenges and problem solving
- are experienced and action-oriented
- are realistic and matter of fact

Innovative churches are influenced by leaders who:

- prefer to live in the past and future
- are interested in new and unusual experiences
- do not like routine
- are attracted to theory rather than practice

### Table 2: Analytical churches vs. Connectional churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
<th>Connectional churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• are interested in systems, structures, patterns</td>
<td>• are interested in people and their feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• like to expose issues to logical analysis</td>
<td>• easily communicate their moods to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• can be aloof and unemotional</td>
<td>• pay attention to relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to evaluate issues through their</td>
<td>• tend to evaluate issues through their ethical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intellect and decide on the basis of right and</td>
<td>system and decide on the basis of good and bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong</td>
<td>• can be sensitive to rebuke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• may have difficulty talking about emotions</td>
<td>• may tend to give compliments to please people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• may not work as diligently at clearing up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arguments or quarrels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Structured churches vs. Flexible churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
<th>Flexible churches are influenced by leaders who:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• do not like to leave many unanswered questions</td>
<td>• may act impulsively in their ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to plan their work ahead and finish</td>
<td>• can do more things at once without feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it in a timely fashion</td>
<td>compelled to finish them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make an effort to be exact in what they do</td>
<td>• prefer to be free from long-term obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• do not like to change their decisions once they</td>
<td>• are curious and like taking a fresh look at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are made</td>
<td>things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are likely to demonstrate stable work habits</td>
<td>• are likely to work according to their mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• easily follow rules and discipline</td>
<td>• often act without as much preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Church Personality Wheel

- Adventurous
- Expressive
- Fellowship
- Inspirational
- Relational
- Practical
- Connectional
- Innovative
- Structured
- Flexible

- Organizer
- Strategizer
- Entrepreneurial
- IAS
- PAS
- PAF
- PCS
- ICS
- ICF
- PCF
- PAF
- PCS
- PAS
- IAF
- ICF
- PCF

ANALYTICAL

CONNECTIONAL
The Church Personality Wheel (filled in)

Organizer (PAS) = 25.7%
Fellowship (PCS) = 21.4%
Relational (ICF) = 20%
Organizer
- Detailed
- Methodical
- Cautious
- Strong orientation to the truth - as it relates to everyday life and societal issues
  - Like it plain and straight up
  - Not particularly artsy
  - Want it well-researched
- Strong Christian Education ministries (and proud of it)
- Trustworthy
- Consistent
- Strong sense of obligation to their families
- Task oriented
- Calm
- Reserved - Can be aloof and seem uncaring
- Can be demanding and critical because they have such strongly held beliefs about what is right.
- More conservative and formal
- Sensitive to hierarchies and doing things in a proper way.

Fellowship
- Warm, loving and caring - especially toward their own group
- Conscientious, hard-working
- Love to serve their community in practical ways
- Strong kid’s ministries
- High sense of duty
- Friendship oriented
- Loyal to difficult people in their social network - will put up with a lot from their friends, relatives and neighbours.
- Super-dependable, but not happy serving in situations where plans keep changing.
- Like to know what to expect.
- “If a Fellowship Church decides to conduct a summer mission trip, the people begin months in advance to gather accurate information on costs, save money, and make lists of what to take. This means knowing exactly who is going to be in charge of what aspects of the mission.” (44-45)
- Don’t like drastic or sudden change - prefer incremental improvement
- “Once engaged in a ministry, they generally try to make the most of it, since the known is preferable to the unknown.” (48)
- Make careful and good decisions.
- Like time to think things through - don’t like to feel pressured into a quick decision.
- Go out of their way to care for people.
- Can be oversensitive to criticism.
- Really don’t like conflict - affects how well they can function in ministry
- Attract people in caring, hands on helping professions, who are used to adhering to standard operating procedures (i.e. health care workers, kid’s teachers and workers, coaches, special education workers, counselors, people in service industries where they
meet people, work hard and help people improve their lives.

**Relational**
- Creative, imaginative, enthusiastic, visionary
- Like to find new kinds of ministries and new ways to try things
- Love to connect with their community in new and creative ways.
  - “These churches encourage their people to create new ideas, programs, services, or solutions to problems in ways that will genuinely help people to be transformed and grow. They want their members to meet new people, learn new outreach skills, and continually expand the kingdom of God by working with a diverse group of people in the community through a variety of outreach programs.” (141)
- Energetic
- Funny
- Informal
- Flexible
- Not much attention to hierarchies and standard operating procedures
- Rules are more like guidelines and shouldn’t get in the way of accomplishing the mission.
  - “Talented at solving problems by overcoming obstacles, they find creative ways to bend rules they consider unnecessary.” (122)
- Can end up with too many balls in the air at once
- Can become unfocused and scattered under stress
- Attract artists, actors, musicians, marketing and planning people, counselors, development directors, social workers, advertising people, consultants, inventors.
- Attract people who enjoy freedom and flexibility in their work and having a positive relational impact on people.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Church Personality Characteristics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Organizer Church (PAS) - 25.7%</strong></th>
<th><strong>Fellowship Church (PCS) - 21.4%</strong></th>
<th><strong>Relational Church (ICF) - 20%</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong Points</strong></td>
<td>Preparation Troubleshooting Managing</td>
<td>Listening to people and understanding their feelings Valuing teamwork and harmony with others in the church Following-through on projects</td>
<td>Energetic, creative, and warm Stimulated by new people and new ideas Enjoy helping people achieve their potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td>Obsessive Fault-finding Unsympathetic</td>
<td>Can be Oversensitive to Criticism May Take on Too Many Projects May struggle to respond to changing needs and opportunities</td>
<td>Can be anxious during transitions Have difficulty with people’s negative feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Ministries</strong></td>
<td>Program Development Planning and management</td>
<td>Ministries of mercy, helps and compassion Children’s ministries</td>
<td>Developing a vision of the future that energizes people Enthusiastically and articulately communicating with people in ways that are inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry Tempo</strong></td>
<td>Deliberate Systematic</td>
<td>Deliberate and relaxed</td>
<td>Fast-paced and activity-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What Inspires Them</strong></td>
<td>Orderly procedure</td>
<td>Involvement in ministries that genuinely help people in practical ways</td>
<td>Cooperation, diversity, teamwork, harmony, creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What De-motivates Them</strong></td>
<td>Randomness Disorder</td>
<td>Insensitivity and impatience with people Disrespect for tradition and authority Disharmony</td>
<td>Insensitivity to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under Stress</strong></td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Can feel overwhelmed Become more submissive to authoritative people</td>
<td>Become overwhelmed with possibilities; indecisive Become obsessed with unimportant details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td>Through consensus building</td>
<td>Tend to procrastinate because they dislike their options being limited Have strong, people-centered values on which most decisions are based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire</strong></td>
<td>Exactness</td>
<td>Acceptance and approval from people important to them Peace and agreement in the church</td>
<td>Openness to the moment Minimal conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority</strong></td>
<td>The Method</td>
<td>Organize ministries to do what is best for people</td>
<td>Changes that make things better for people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church Ethos</strong></td>
<td>Efficient Proper</td>
<td>Personal Relational Loyal</td>
<td>Visionary Exciting Egalitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outward Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>More formal and traditional</td>
<td>Creative ministry that develops new ideas and programs for people Idealism that focuses on serving, developing, and growing people so they reach their potential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gain Confidence Through Attention to detail Research  
Friendships Cooperation Serving  
Connection first with what is best for people

Fear  
Emarrassment Sudden changes Being tied down

PowerPoint Slides

Leveraging Church Culture Survey Report

INFORMATION-GATHERING - Practical vs. Innovative
1. Do the church leaders depend on their personal observations in order to gather data about what’s happening, or do they rely more on their intuition and hunches in order to form impressions about what’s going on?
2. Do the church leaders prefer straightforward ways of communicating - the more specific and concrete the better, or do they prefer to use imagery and symbolism to engage the imagination of the people of the church?
3. Are the leaders of the church observers of tradition who do not easily break with custom, or are they able to break with tradition and lay aside customs that seem too cumbersome for a new situation?

LIFESTYLE - Structured vs. Flexible
1. Do the church leaders prefer to plan their work first and then work their plan, or do they tend to be more casual and informal in developing their plans?
2. Do the basic contributions by the leaders often stem from being systematic, orderly, proactive, and decisive, or do they bring to church leadership such characteristics as spontaneity, openness, mindlessness, tolerance, and adaptability?
3. Do the church leaders prefer bringing programs and projects to completion - finishing one task at a time - or, do they like the feeling of getting new things started and having many things going at the same time?

DECISION-MAKING - Analytical vs. Connectional
1. Are the church leaders secure in basing their decisions on objective analysis - weighing the pros and cons of a situation - or, regardless of the pros and cons, are they more confident when they feel their conclusions are based on what is important and valuable?
2. Can the church leaders usually get on with their work and ministry, regardless of relational harmony, or do they find that harmonious relationship are essential for them to function effectively in a situation?
3. Does making a critical evaluation come more naturally for the church leaders than speaking an appreciative word, or are they more spontaneous with an appreciative word than with a critical evaluation?

INNOVATIVE  PRACTICAL
ANALYTICAL  CONNECTIONAL

Organizer (PAS) = 25.7%  Fellowship (PCS) = 21.4%  Relational (ICF) = 20%
### Church Personality Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Organizer Church (PAS) - 25.7%</th>
<th>Fellowship Church (PCS) - 21.4%</th>
<th>Relational Church (ICF) - 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong Points</strong></td>
<td>Preparation Troubleshooting Managing</td>
<td>Listening to people and understanding their feelings Valuing teamwork and harmony with others in the church Following-through on projects</td>
<td>Energetic, creative, and warm Stimulated by new people and new ideas Enjoy helping people achieve their potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td>Obsessive Fault-finding Unsympathetic</td>
<td>Can be Oversensitive to Criticism May Take on Too Many Projects May struggle to respond to changing needs and opportunities</td>
<td>Can be anxious during transitions Have difficulty with people’s negative feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Ministries</strong></td>
<td>Program Development Planning and management</td>
<td>Ministries of mercy, helps and compassion Children’s ministries</td>
<td>Developing a vision of the future that energizes people Enthusiastically and articulately communicating with people in ways that are inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry Tempo</strong></td>
<td>Deliberate Systematic</td>
<td>Deliberate and relaxed</td>
<td>Fast-paced and activity-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What Inspires Them</strong></td>
<td>Orderly procedure</td>
<td>Involvement in ministries that genuinely help people in practical ways</td>
<td>Cooperation, diversity, teamwork, harmony, creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What De-motivates Them</strong></td>
<td>Randomness Disorder</td>
<td>Insensitivity and impatience with people Disrespect for tradition and authority Disharmony</td>
<td>Insensitivity to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under Stress</strong></td>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Can feel overwhelmed Become more submissive to authoritative people</td>
<td>Become overwhelmed with possibilities; indecisive Become obsessed with unimportant details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td>Through consensus building</td>
<td>Tend to procrastinate because they dislike their options being limited Have strong, people-centered values on which most decisions are based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire</strong></td>
<td>Exactness</td>
<td>Acceptance and approval from people important to them Peace and agreement in the church</td>
<td>Openness to the moment Minimal conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority</strong></td>
<td>The Method</td>
<td>Organize ministries to do what is best for people</td>
<td>Changes that make things better for people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

283 Compiled from summaries in each respective chapter, p.231, 38, 117.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Church Ethos</strong></th>
<th>Efficient Proper</th>
<th>Personal Relational Loyal</th>
<th>Visionary Exciting Egalitarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outward Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>More formal and traditional</td>
<td>Creative ministry that develops new ideas and programs for people idealism that focuses on serving, developing, and growing people so they reach their potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gain Confidence Through</strong></td>
<td>Attention to detail Research</td>
<td>Friendships Cooperation Serving</td>
<td>Connection first with what is best for people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fear</strong></td>
<td>Embarrassment</td>
<td>Sudden changes</td>
<td>Being tied down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Leaders Survey Tally</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff and Spouses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>204</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deacons and Deaconesses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>305</strong></td>
<td><strong>246</strong></td>
<td><strong>261</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other OL’s</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>455</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **In what ways did you find the process helpful?**
   Got you thinking a little more specifically
   There’s a lot of value and knowledge out there in systems that help you identify trends and personalities, etc. and it is good to help us get starting thinking around that.
   Showed how diverse a group we’ve got. All with the same purpose but with different means of getting there.  
   And that’s a good thing.

   Survey itself
   Frustrating element when you felt like you couldn’t really answer the question because seemed like both answers applied.
   Generally speaking were pretty accurate
   Very helpful for us to see how we all fit.
   Hopefully it will help us see the bigger picture of who we are and what the next 5 or 10 years look like if we cater our ministry to our personality.

   It would be interesting to see how different age groups thought.
   May have been subconsciously biased because knew what the questions were weighting.
   If the questions had been random and unlabeled, I might have thought differently.
   Would see a category and prejudice which he was before answering the questions.
   Some uncertainty about how to score the contrasting statements (i.e. 5 on one means 1 on the other or possibly 4 on each?).

2. **In what ways did you feel the process could have been improved?**

   Divided by age groups, and also some reflection on how many opinion leaders we have in each of the age groups. If the OL’s chosen were more heavily weighted to one age group over another.
   Congregation seems quite balanced with the age groups.
   Limiting to 30 people was hard. If have an average of 250, just taking 30 is hard.
   Hard to narrow down the list
   Re: Feedback session - would be some benefit to having the presentation, but having it building more around having contextualized discussion about the church. More than just these are the results, but how do we apply these results? Feel like we have just started a process than completed a process. I would need to sit down and think about what we do
with this. There’s a lot there, but don’t know what it is yet.

For me being new, interesting to see how the OL’s landed. Wasn’t super surprised, but neat to see the whole. Gave me a better picture.
Having the numbers go opposite directions (5-1, 1-5) messed with my mind at the beginning.

3. **In what ways did you find the inventory helpful/less helpful?**

Some of the questions were obvious about where I fit, but other questions made me think - if I’m not like that, why not?
Different isn't wrong, different is different
Had to think, “in most cases...” Thinking of a specific scenario can throw off the results.
What does most of the time really look like for me?
Element of subjectivity
This survey is trying to get a snapshot of our church for right now.
Don’t like surveys because it’s hard to slot people. Feels so cut and dried.
One of the problems I had with the results, that whoever put it together (the author) says that if you are this, you’re not like this.
Feel like the questions pigeon-hole people and we’re all more diverse depending on the situations.

4. **In what ways do you feel that the results accurately portray your church culture?**

This meeting seems to be reinforcing the results (Fellowship)
It is probably accurate, because that’s what the survey said, but it may be that my perception of our culture is different.
One older member noted that in some ways he is the same as he was when he was 35, but in other ways he has changed.
Survey only looked at those who were more committed and active. They may think about our church differently. Doesn’t take into consideration ordinary people who may not be leaders. What is their view of our culture? We may be looking through a different set of glasses.
I think I have a hard time defining the culture of our church. Been here a long time. Size where we can have different cultures. We’re not small, but we’re not big. We’re still at the size where an individual or a small group can influence a whole ministry.
Might have less diversity in a larger church, more homogenous culture?
We are a culture of subcultures. Lot of strong subcultures that all work together. New people come and find where they fit.
Opinion leaders drive which way the church goes. Others will have less influence on which way we go.
There are a lot of people who would come here, find that they are not like us, and stop coming. We’re like birds of a feather. Somebody that is really different probably isn’t going to come here.
We are all different. Jesus is for everybody. So more diversity in a church than perhaps a workplace (software techie guys are pretty much all the same...) So there is more of a mix in a church. I don't want to exclude anybody ever, especially in a church.
Different people like different ways of worship - liturgy, etc., but we can’t appeal to
everybody. We do want everyone to come to the Lord, but not everyone will be attracted to us.

I explained that one of my assumptions coming into the study is that our personality will be more attractive to certain people, so knowing what our personality is will enable us to be more strategic in what we do.

5. Were there conclusions that you didn’t feel fit your church culture? If so, what?
Surprised that Organizer came out as strong as it did. They definitely saw the Fellowship, Relational side very clearly, although they saw some Organizer tendencies. Coming from a more Organizer mindset, they have found things much more relational and laid back than was indicated.
When you explained the data more and showed how the Fellowship was stronger, that definitely resonated with what we have seen.
There is definitely organization here, but it doesn’t seem to be the highest priority. People seem to come higher.
“Probably a lot of closet organizers.”
Some of that could have been on the opinion leaders chosen.

6. How comprehensively do you think these conclusions reflect the views of those outside the primary opinion leaders?
If you asked the majority of people without taking the test to see where they felt the majority of the leaders would be on the wheel, do you think they would answer the same way?
Or if you had them take the test themselves, would they fall in the same way as the leaders?
That’s the difference with a random survey. Would have gotten more of a picture of the whole church. If you just take the opinion leaders, you’re probably not going to get the same answer.

I mentioned the author’s presupposition that the leaders of the church determine the culture. The question is whether that’s an accurate presupposition (two immediately said they felt it was true.)

Question as to whether this was an accurate representation of the people. Should we have chosen the 30 randomly?
Does it truly represent everyone?
What about those who are opinionated and used to be a leader, but we don’t want to hear what he has to say now, but he’s still here. Does it truly represent everybody?
Given that we had that consultation before, I wonder were we truly nonpartisan?
But these surveys aren’t designed to get everybody’s opinion.
But were the 30 selected because they would be more positive and veer to the one side? It’s hard not to think that way.
But this survey is about personality. It wasn’t asking about a specific issue. So if you are positive or negative in your opinion on a certain issue, it shouldn’t matter how you judge things, what your personality is.
Results would probably be similar if the survey is given more widely, but not universal.
Someone asked if I would consider giving it to a broader group to see how the results compared.

Observation: An interesting thing about this discussion is that it turned into less whether the results accurately portrayed the culture of the church than whether the results would accurately portray the personality trends of a larger group who weren’t opinion leaders in the church.

“If you want to get a survey that accurately portrays the people, it ought to be random.”

7. **What did you learn about your church culture from the inventory?**
   We’re warm, loving and caring.
   We’re willing to do surveys for those we love.
   Where I showed up – “I thought the funniest part was that our “Shepherd” was so different from everybody else.”
   Diverse group
   We complement each other
   And it is a more beautiful team as a result.
   More organized than I thought

8. **How do you expect to use (or have used) this information to leverage your ministry planning and implementation?**
   Some of the things are already being done
   Do we look at our strengths so we can minister to those who also have those strengths or look at our weakness so we don’t leave those people behind?
   How do we use this to see our church grow? Do we even want it to just grow numerically?
   We do want it to grow spiritually, not just numerically. We’d like both.
   Would tie in nicely to look at strengths and weaknesses in individual ministries – evaluating them in the context of our culture to see if they align or not.
   Will help us determine where we need to change.
   Even if the information ends up being only 50-60% accurate regarding our church culture, we can be much more strategic and intentional in how we reach that existing culture within our broader culture.
   People pick a church based on whether they feel they fit or not.
   If we can be even just a few degrees more specific in our understanding and go hard on it, we can take advantage of our strengths. As opposed to trying to be a church of every kind.
   We want everyone to be saved, but we will be more effective with people who are more like us. Being more intentional.

9. **What would you need to be able to take the next step in implementing this?**
   I need a more open mind.
   I need to know what we are trying to achieve.
   What are we going to do to reach out? To entice those people to come?
   Think about each ministry and see if we have these elements in each of our ministries.
   Whether we have some that are all organizational and no relational or all relational and no
organizational.

Gives us some great areas that we can run with (e.g. creativity...)

One newer staff member referenced a passion for creativity and imagination. In some churches that's not the case. That gives me license to run with this kind of thing more. Gives me a better idea of our strengths. OK, let's run with those. Sure we need to look at our weaknesses and always be trying to grow, but this gives us some great areas that we are strong in and passionate about that we can run with.

Helps us match up individuals with needs in the ministries.

How do you get people motivated and actually doing anything? Yet reading through this, it does help us. For instance, “Doesn’t like drastic change.” We read that and decide to do things a little slower than we would like. This gives us some starting points.

It's not the average Joe in the church that is going to be using this. We're the ones who are going to be leading the church toward change and growth. If we do it right, it will be easier for the average Joe to come along.

There are some really valuable things to look at: not drastic change, high sense of duty, keeping these things in mind will help us more effectively come around who we already have and are.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Parsons, George and Leas, Speed B. *Understanding Your Congregation As A System*. The Alban Institute, Inc., 1993.


