

Biblical Foundation of Disciple-Making Culture

Series: Culture Eats Strategy

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In order for our church to grow we must develop a Disciple-making culture. Over the next four weeks my task is to talk about

- the essential ingredients of such a culture,
- give some direction as to how this culture can evolve and take hold,
- and to explain how “culture eats strategy.”

There are four essential ingredients of such a culture:

- Biblical Foundation of Disciple-Making Culture
- Intentional Leadership in Disciple-Making Culture
- Relational Environments in Disciple-Making Culture
- Reproducible Process in Disciple-Making Culture

Biblical Foundation for Disciple-Making Culture:

- **What is a culture?**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

1a: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group *also* : the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time *popular culture or Southern culture*

b: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization *a corporate culture focused on the bottom line*

- **What is a church culture?**

There are layers of culture within a local church affected by:

- History of Protestantism/Catholicism
- History of churches of Christ
- History of Central
- Maturity levels of each member (Biblical Understanding/Spiritual Practices)
- Experiences of each member (Before and after becoming a Christian)
- “The way we have done things.” Or traditions.

- **Church cultures can be either conducive to growth or not!**
- **What Biblical Foundation Must We Share IF We Are Going To Have A Genuine Disciple-Making Culture?**
 - Disciple-Making Culture by Brandon Guindon: “When I write about ‘culture,’ I don’t mean the culture of society as a whole. I’m writing about culture in churches and I use the term ‘culture’ in this book to mean *the way a church naturally functions when they are not under pressure*. Culture is not what happens in a simulated experience or in a classroom, where people can provide right answers when prompted; culture is what happens naturally *as the way things normally go*.I want to help you create...an ‘early church’ culture. Jesus’ way of life transformed his followers and affected the culture of the first church.” (p.17-18)
 - The heart of a disciple-making culture is love for God and others. But this love must be practical and targeted:
 - Out of the heart of God! What is God’s heart? John 3:16
 - Into the hearts of men! Go make disciples. Matt.28:18-20
 - The culture we need is the culture Jesus established while on earth among His disciples:
 - It was not based on mere knowledge of some truths.
 - It was not classroom centered.
 - It was a radical change from how they lived in their culture to how they lived in the new Jesus culture.
 - It was totally focused on being like Jesus in lifestyle, message, and in mission.
 - Let me give you an example of the Jesus culture (as opposed to societal culture). Read Mark 10:35-45. **35 *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. 37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” 38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” 39 “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have***

been prepared.” 41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- These disciples were thinking according to the worldly culture they grew up in.
- Jesus challenged them by presenting the new culture of the kingdom which was based on:
 - Sacrifice
 - Service
 - Sovereignty
- Jesus brought them back to the focus of His and their mission: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (10:45)

- **So how does culture eat strategy?**

Churches for years have been trying to grow through various means:

A new series of classes

A new program of outreach

A change in personnel (get a new preacher)

However, without a change of culture, these often very good ideas get consumed by the culture of the church. The best strategies cannot survive in a culture or environment that is not conducive to growth.

But, let me alert you to a very important point-culture does not change easily, and the process a church has to go through to see that change will challenge every person in the church to give up some ways of thinking and behaving, and take on a transformed mind-the mind of Christ.

Last week I challenged you with one of these changes-prayer and fasting. Does Central want to be culturally characterized by prayer and fasting-

that is just what we do because we are serious about seeking the Lord's will? Will 10% do so, how about 25%, or 50%, or more-depends on what kind of culture we want at Central.

This is why we are doing A Faith Challenge-not to have another class-but to challenge us culturally to change to be a faith-based people and to relate to one another in faith. (Enroll)

Remember our Mission: It is the mission of the Central Church of Christ to lead people to have an authentic and growing relationship with God the Father and with others through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.