

CHURCH CULTURE *Check Up*

There are prescribed times in any organization—including a church— when it would benefit from a culture checkup.

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WHEN THERE IS A PASTORAL CHANGE

Is the change involving a founder or long-tenured pastor leaving? A retirement? An abrupt change due to ineffectiveness, mis-match, or behavioral issues? Or simply A more typical 3-7 year change?

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WHEN DISRUPTING EXTERNAL INFLUENCES STRIKE

Pandemic, denominational uncertainty, social polarization, and economic upheaval are examples of pressures that create shock and turmoil.

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WHEN DISTURBING INTERNAL ISSUES ERUPT

A church endures culture changing pain when there is bad behavior or malfeasance among staff or laity.

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WHEN GLACIER-LIKE CHANGES ERODE EFFECTIVENESS

Sometimes a church isn't really aware of slow, generational declines or changes which diminish relevancy and effectiveness, often resulting in the church no longer looking like its community.

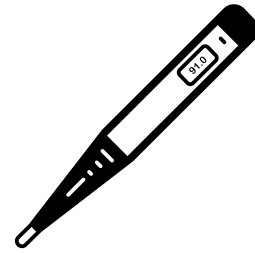
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WHEN NEW & DIFFERENT RESULTS ARE DESIRED

Leadership intentionally and strategically decides there needs to be a culture change to get needed new and different results in its ministry and for its mission.



COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CHURCH *Cultures*



It is often said that the best way to take the temperature of a church is to put the thermometer in the leadership's mouth. While this is true and necessary, you can also take the temperature of a church's culture by observing the congregation's behavior. The following are common symptoms most often seen in the churches we work with. What is the cultural temperature of your church?

1. CULTURE IS UNHEALTHY AND NEEDS TO BE CHANGED*

- Lack of joy; burdensome feel; sterile feel; maybe even toxic.
- Inwardly focused culture directs church resources, energy, and emphasis almost entirely on maintenance rather than its mission.
- A growing prevalence of complaining, criticizing, negativity and blaming while there is noticeable lack of personal responsibility and accountability.
- Downward trajectory of nearly all measurables in life of the church.

2. CULTURE IS OK BUT NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED

- Fatigue, but people dutifully 'hanging in there.'
- Stake holders feel proud of good things being done, but express lack of focus.
- A lethargic spirit of volunteerism; fewer and fewer people doing more and more work.
- Not many first- time guests and very few return.

3. CULTURE IS GOOD BUT NEEDS TO BE BETTER MESSAGED

- Leadership becomes aware of plateauing impact accompanied by desire to do better.
- Outwardly focused culture making a difference accompanied by desire to see exponential impact.
- Pleasant, "Feel-good" church family spirit accompanied by desire to become more welcoming and inviting to make a difference in the community.
- Church rightly focuses on its aspirational dreams, but frustrated over slow results.

**A complete cultural transplant may be needed and may work, but should only be considered in the most extreme of circumstances, such as in the strategic "Friendly takeover" of a struggling church by a larger, healthier church.*