

## *Tending a Culture of Grace*

by: Mike Wilkerson

### **Explicit vs. Implicit Theology<sup>1</sup>**

#### *Explicit*

“Explicit theology, on the one hand, is a theology that is proclaimed from the pulpit, taught in Sunday school classes and stated on the church’s website as its statement of faith. In short, this is what the church confesses and proclaims as its shared beliefs.”

#### *Implicit*

“Implicit theology, on the other hand, is what the congregational leaders and members do when they gather together. It includes, among other things, how they make their decisions and communicates them, how they allocate the church resources, how they worship and fellowship, and how different groups of people are valued or are marginalized. Implicit theology is thus formed and sustained by various – intentional and unintentional – practices of the congregation.”

### **Three Levels of Culture**

#### *Artifacts*

“At the surface is the level of artifacts, which includes all the phenomena that you would see, hear, and feel when you encounter a new group with an unfamiliar culture. Artifacts include the visible products of the group, such as the architecture of its physical environment; its language; its technology and products; its artistic creations; its style, as embodied in clothing, manners of address, and emotional displays; its myths and stories told about the organization; its published lists of values; and its observable rituals and ceremonies.”

#### *Espoused Beliefs and Values*

- Ideals, Goals, Values, Aspirations
- Ideologies
- Rationalizations

*“May or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts.”*

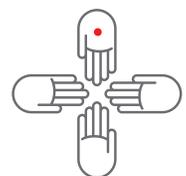
#### *Basic Underlying Assumptions*

- Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values

*“Determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling”*

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<sup>1</sup> Peter T. Cha, *Building a Healthy Congregational Culture*



## Redemption Group Values

- **Gentleness:** patience and humility; self-controlled strength; can be firm without being harsh; not rash, hasty, or pushy; respectful of the other's dignity.
- **Grace:** extending God's one-way steadfast love; accepting and blessing others, especially in times of need and vulnerability.
- **Christ-centered ministry:** ministry is grounded in Christ, as taught in the Bible, and deepens a transformative relationship with him.
- **Candor:** direct, open and sincere dialogue.
- **Entrusting growth to God:** humble hope for God to bring the right amount healing and help at the right time; satisfied with God's pacing for change in another's life, whether big or small, fast or slow.
- **Spirit-led:** prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide us in how best to help one another.
- **Wholehearted:** when helping others to change, attending to the thoughts, emotions, and motives of their hearts, and their relationships to God and others; not merely addressing outward behavior.
- **Always needing mercy:** progressive growth in Christlikeness includes a growing awareness of our need for God's mercy amidst particular sins, sufferings and weaknesses.

## Three Pupils of the Law

The law has three kinds of "pupils."

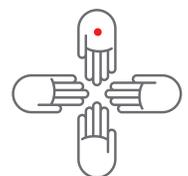
The first is the kind who hear the law and despise it; who lead an impious life without fear. To these the law does not come...

The second is the kind that attempt to fulfill the law by their own power, without grace...The law comes to them but they cannot endure it. They therefore put a veil over it and lead a life of hypocrisy, doing outward works of the law...The law shows that our ability counts for nothing without Christ's grace.

The third is the kind that sees Moses clearly, without a veil. They understand the intention of the law and how it demands impossible things...Indeed, if Christ's glory did not come alongside this splendor of Moses, no one could bear the brightness of the law, the terror of sin and death. These pupils fall away from all works and presumption and learn from the law nothing else except to recognize sin and to yearn for Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*. Edited by William R. Russell and Timothy F. Lull. Third Edition. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012, 103.



## Three Perspectives on Spirit-leading<sup>3</sup>

Perspective	Key Question
God's Word	Does it point toward Jesus Christ?
Created World	Does it fit the situation?
Personal Experience	Does it feel right one who is mature in Christ?

## Bibliography

Cha, Peter T. 2008. Building a Healthy Congregational Culture in Today's Postmodern World. *Common Ground Journal* v6 n1 (Fall): 21-30. ISSN: 15479129. URL: [www.commongroundjournal.org](http://www.commongroundjournal.org).

Schein, Edgar H., 2010. *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (The Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series). Wiley. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Mike Wilkerson, "Following the Holy Spirit's Lead in Biblical Counseling: A Triperspectival Approach", Society for Christian Psychology blog, [http://www.christianpsych.org/wp\\_scp/author/mikewilkerson/](http://www.christianpsych.org/wp_scp/author/mikewilkerson/)

