**Descriptive Culture Map**

*(Plotting Theological Perspective & Flexibility)*

See Vital Signs report page 15

**Hearth and Home Culture** (Theologically Conservative & Low Flexibility)

Members of the church like to find familiar ways of doing things and stick with them. On average, the church is theologically more conservative. The combination of a settled approach to change and a more conservative theological perspective gives the church potential strengths in the areas of moral and spiritual clarity, stability in the face of chaotic, societal change, and maintenance of important traditions. On the other hand, the church may find it difficult to make the changes required to achieve its goals without triggering debilitating conflicts.

*Strengths:*

* Offers ample clarity and clearly defined faith that’s lived out in a community with structure and stability
* Members appreciate the clarity provided by the unchangeable nature of the Word proclaimed and lived.
* Line between right and wrong is bright and articulated.
* Where the biblical mandate is perceived, members provide services to those in need, often with remarkable perseverance. Ministry must come from a biblical mandate to do it.
* Straying members are welcomed back with open arms and ready forgiveness. This is family.
* High level of hospitality and care for each other when this culture is working and everyone has strong relational connections. Caring for each other is very important.

*Shadow side:*

* With low flexibility/adaptability, it is difficult to enact changes to increase satisfaction energy without experiencing conflict. (Enact changes with clear rationale, concrete first steps and an invitation for all to contribute to the change for the sake of raising satisfaction and energy).
* The clarity of biblical views doesn’t help people understand the world around them. “We are custodians of the gospel amidst the few that are preserving its truth.”
* Intellectual examination and application to daily life of their theological and biblical perspective is avoided. There is a “guardians” approach to everything this culture understands about the Bible and how to apply it to world.
* The sense of family can entail a family “code” (i.e. “Here’s how you can be part of our family successfully.”) but you have to guess what that involves. Guessing wrong may result in being relationally apart.
* Conflict tends to be avoided – which leads to denying it – even as it fractures relationships and dents the sense of family. When this happens, hospitality scores decline and this in turn impacts morale, satisfaction and energy.

**Paraclete Culture** (Theologically Progressive and Low Flexibility)

*Paracletus: means comforter, advocate, counselor, and helper. In scripture Paraclete means “Holy Spirit.”*

Members of the paraclete church are intellectually open and reflective but pay attention to structure and ritual. Hospitality, inclusiveness, and spiritual practice carry weight. They are comfortable with the unique spiritual path everyone must follow but believe that there are important patterns to spiritual practice. Paraclete churches are uniquely equipped to focus on ministries of healing-often engaged in front line work-when the community is warm and hospitable, it can be a haven for those in need of healing or recovery.

**Strengths:**

* Develop communities that are intellectually open and reflective but that pays attention to structure and ritual.
* Common to hear conversation about hospitality, inclusiveness, and spiritual practice.
* Comfortable with the unique spiritual path each individual must follow but believe that there are important patterns to spiritual practice.
* Uniquely equipped to focus on ministries of healing-often engaged in front line work-when the community is warm and hospitable, it can be a haven for those in need of healing or recovery.
* Prepares members to deal with the harshness of cultural and political realities in ministry

*The shadow side*: long established programs/ministries can become siloed and not tied to the church’s overall mission and vision, thus lowering overall satisfaction in the congregation. Watch the temptation to overcommit to meeting the needs of others to the extent that there is burnout. The power of the gospel to transform must remain a focus, not just its power to comfort.

* If missional focus is lost, they may find themselves going through the motions of set routines, rather than finding the deeper meaning.
* Watch the temptation to overcommit to meeting the needs of others to the extent that there is burnout.
* May get trapped in the acceptance of where people are without adequate levels of accountability that can help make people whole.
* The power of the gospel to transform must remain a focus, not just its power to comfort.

**Magi Culture** (Theologically Progressive and High Flexibility)

Members of the church are likely to embrace changes from time to time either because they enjoy variety, or they know that change is necessary to reach a changing society. They are capable of intellectual curiosity and an immediate application to how they understand their faith life and how it plays out in their understanding of justice. This is motivating to them. They are not averse to wandering aspects of faith and they embrace meaningful changes necessary to engage a changing society.

**Strengths and Shadows**

* Exhibits deep knowledge, open discourse and intellectual curiosity (Education Engagement)
* Enjoys challenging education that helps them learn, and they do not mind debates.
* Penetrating analytic culture (Clear priorities and Mission and Vision that rolls off the tongue)
* Can be extremely skilled at Strategic Thinking and Planning
* Powerful ally for those with minority status or who lack power to protect themselves (Readiness for Ministry)
* They are moved to ministry by this sense of justice.
* Not averse to wandering aspect of faith (ie. travel/pilgrimage, lecturers brought on site, international exchanges for leadership) (Engaging Worship, High flexibility and Education)
* Embraces meaningful changes necessary to engage a changing society (Hospitality and Flexibility)
* Inclusion can be extremely impressive.
* Capable of having an immediate application to how they understand faith playing out in their understanding of justice. (Spiritual Vitality and Missional focus)
* On the flip side, Magi churches must overcome the temptation to over think issues or try to be everything to everyone.
* The church may find it difficult to develop a clear and compelling vision for its future and rely too heavily upon reason to generate enthusiasm.
* Because care for others is often expressed in terms of fairness and justice, the Magi church will need to develop interpersonal skills that prevent being misperceived as unapproachable or impersonal, making sure there is a focus on developing the relational and emotional aspects of life in community.
* Be sure to give proper weight to the role of emotion in generating enthusiasm that leads to action.

**Performance Culture** (Theologically Conservative and High Flexibility)

Members of the church are likely to embrace changes from time to time either because they enjoy variety or believe that change is necessary to reach a changing society. On average, the church is theologically more conservative. Worship is outstanding and offers high impact. People welcome changes in worship. The combination of an adaptable approach to change and a more conservative theological perspective gives the church potential strengths in the areas of relevance, religious experience, and spiritual/moral clarity.

*Strengths:*

Concerned with what works now and discovering ways to increase the impact of their message rather than changing the basic message.

* Willing to adapt their worship and programs to those they want to reach in the community
* Tend to not stay close to the established way of doing things
* Ultimately concerned with faith presented in a way that people find accessible and compelling.
* Serves as bridge between traditional understandings of Christian beliefs and contemporary life
* experiences
* Concerned with what works now, not by changing basic message but by discovering ways to
* increase impact of that message to connect faith to life
* Maintains strong missional focus to prevent chasing a religious high where change does not have
* adequate roots to be sustainable
* Service to others, spiritual discipline, and clear missional focus are important to maximize vitality.

*Shadow side:*

* Lack of depth. If deeper dimensions of community life isn’t adequately developed, the risk is shallowness and pretense.
* Thin authenticity in the relational connections of the congregation
* In the effort to make an eternal message fresh and accessible, the performance culture church may fail to recognize the importance of a shared tradition.
* If missional focus is lost, the performance culture church may find themselves chasing a religious high where lives are rarely changed and where the change that occurs does not have adequate roots to be sustainable.

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