



MESSAGE

Culture of Change

"Ideas have consequences."

British historian Paul Johnson

REFLECTION

For a long time I have been captivated by the idea of creating a *culture of change*! Let me explain this concept. A *culture of change* is a place where people are switched on about the vision, gripped by the values (of the ministry or cause) and are so intentionally focused on where God is leading them that they would be consistently observing the necessity to always be re-calibrating and course correcting as they go.

A *culture of change* does not advocate change for change's sake! This is a no-no. A culture of change means that each leader and person within the culture (organisation or ministry) is responsible for both initiating change and enabling it to occur.

What often happens in an organisation or ministry is that the point leader (if leading well) becomes the change agent, but those in the leadership team take their cues from the leader, not from the vision and values agreed upon. When this occurs it means that initiatives are dulled and often suppressed and people are not free to lead or respond appropriately to what God's Spirit is doing (for fear of doing something not agreed to by the leader). This causes the ministry to develop rather severe limitations. For example, forward movement can only occur within the capacity of the point leader. People are not free to use, rely on, explore or exercise their own giftings and instead of the culture becoming contagious and causing forward momentum, it grinds along at the pace of the point leader.

A *culture of change*, however, says that everyone in leadership has the right to forge ahead toward fulfilling the vision, providing it is not to anyone's detriment and it doesn't sabotage the core values. So how does a culture, as such, develop, let alone thrive? It's a two-way deal!

- 1) Each leader in the culture has to own the vision deep in their soul; they have to know, believe and yearn to see it become a reality.
- 2) The point leader needs to trust her/his leaders to be able to do this and therefore give them the appropriate space and permission to succeed. I think when these things begin to occur, *change to help us fulfill the vision*, begins to become the expected norm, and therefore a *culture of change* emerges.

CHALLENGE

What difference would a culture of change make to where you are? Are you contributing to it becoming a reality? Are you standing in the way of it becoming a reality? What's the next step in your journey?

What would a culture of change look like in your organisation or ministry? The answer to this question is different in every context, but if you are looking for an example, read the book of Acts. The leaders of the Early Church were passionate, tenacious and incredibly intentional about fulfilling their vision: reaching the world with the good news of Jesus Christ. To achieve this they were willing to be constantly open to change, to alter direction mid-course, to listen to the whisper of the spirit, and to chase after it with determination and urgency.

The Gospels' portrayal of Jesus Christ's life was about developing and thriving in a culture of change; souls were transformed; people moved toward the cross with passion; bodies were healed; lives were restored; change after change after change occurred. Yet we, the Church, who follow the same Jesus Christ, operate in a completely opposite way to how the Gospels portray life in Christ to be. We hold fast to *how it used to be*, we don't go forward for fear... of... something, we are content to stay in our comfort zones. Is that the passionate movement Jesus had in mind when he hung on the cross?