

How do you change a culture to become missional?

I have thought a lot about your question(s). It doesn't have to do with modeling, or structure or even finances. It has everything to do with the leader being consumed with fulfilling the great commission through the local church. To be missional is to evaluate everything in your ministry by its impact on transforming individuals and communities for Christ through the local church, his body in local expression.

It is like in business, if your mission is simply to survive, usually within one or two product life-cycles you are out of business. Once you settle on your mission, vision and values, you must be dogged in your pursuit of it. You must be willing to change whatever it takes to accomplish your vision. And change is an essential part of keeping doing so (Building the Bridge as you walk on it by Quinn). Obviously, you don't necessarily change your mission, vision or values (Built to Last & Good to Great), but your expression must continually change. For me missional is keeping the mission of the church the mission. That is, to keep it clear before everything else. Then the staff will change, the structure will change, the ministries will change, all of the strategies will change to keep the mission (and obviously the Word of God) central.

The reason I exist is to create healthy churches led by healthy pastors who can transform their communities by multiplying converts, disciples, leaders and churches. SHAPE for me is simply one piece in creating healthy pastors and churches. What SHAPE transformed for me was the WAY I can accomplish my vision. Through learning clusters and coaches we have created a culture that values healthy pastors SO THAT they can be instrumental in producing healthy churches SO THAT both together (pastors and churches) can be productive communities that transform their communities. For that reason, church interventions (we call them consultations) are as important as the learning clusters. Learning clusters without church interventions are like drying the alcoholic out and sending him back into a sick system.

I have no need for learning clusters that cause pastors to feel better about themselves if their congregations aren't on mission. Pastors shouldn't feel good about themselves if their congregations aren't about Kingdom work. And yet you know how few churches really are changing the spiritual landscape of the communities in which they find themselves. So we really don't want pastors to feel good about themselves unless they are on mission. This is one of the crucial differences between Florida and every other region. Most of the other regions did a much better job than we did at following the protocol and helping their pastors feel good about their experience.

But my goal wasn't to make the pastor feel good about his experience, but to be challenged to be about the work of the Kingdom and to give him/her the tools needed to accomplish that mission. I had a person from cohort one tell me today, that he enjoyed the camaraderie with the other participants, but that wasn't what changed his life. What changed his entire ministry world view was the four times we brought Reggie McNeal to meet with the cohorts to knock their missional socks off and then how (in the cluster) we continued to bring them back to how are they engaging the lost in their personal lives

and through the church.

The assessments & LAMPS are essential. The group experiences & accountability, critical. But all of this must be with the end of creating transformational productive communities in mind. For that reason we didn't even have the cohorts read all of the core curriculum books. This wasn't intentional, we just didn't even think about those core curricular issues. To be very honest, much of that was developed by good Churchmen/women and not by people who are storming the gates of hell through their personal lives (please don't tell them and cause me to lose my friends!). I didn't really care if the pastors understood the historical nuances of Church of God doctrinal formation (I Saw the Church), but I do care that they understand how to develop a caring community with a heart for the lost and dying who are all around their churches.

I believed that cohort one was a learning experience for us, only now are we really getting into the swing of how to make this a reality. We needed three swings, but as you can tell it has changed the way we do

I believe that the greater connectivity they are experiencing has the potential to produce long term systemic change. However, having seen this before in our state (10 years ago my predecessor instituted "chords of three" where every pastor met with two others every month), two things happened: 1) they met only as long as there was some outside motivation to do so (pressure, guilt, financial, etc), & 2) these relationships didn't produce health in the church, it only made the pastors feel more connected.

My take is that unless there is an intentional effort to work with pastors to help them see their need for missional emphasis, no amount of connection with others will cause them to develop it. They have a higher sense of satisfaction when connected, which is good (necessary), but not sufficient to produce healthy change. That is where the missional component was left out of SHAPE, which means that pastors will have a higher satisfaction factor in their job performance, but my question is whether that will ever translate into effective missional ministry. My experience says no. I think I could argue that from research as well. Just because one is more content and stays in place longer does not necessarily impact missional concerns. However to impact missional concerns, you must stay longer. Yet as you can see that just keeping one in place longer is not sufficient for community transformation. **THAT IS THE MISSIONAL COMPONENT** that was left out of an emphasis of creating longer pastorates.