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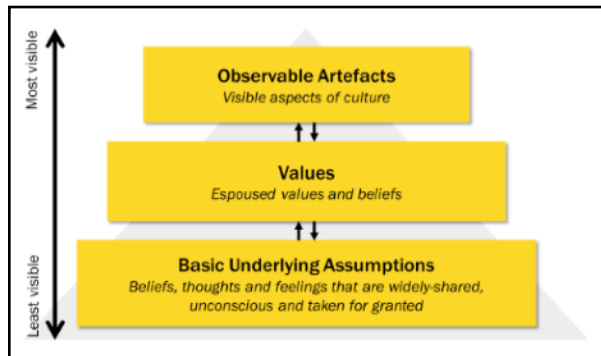
Organizational values are rooted in beliefs.

Introduction

In this lesson we will walk through the process of coming up with another aspect of a congregation's culture, its beliefs or assumptions. We are now at the core of Aubrey's apple. By the end of the lesson your matrix will show how a culture's behaviours, values and beliefs fit together to make up a congregation's complete culture.

I. What are beliefs?

"A belief is a conviction or opinion that a person holds to be true about the church and its world as based on limited proof" (Aubrey, p. 60). The beliefs that the culture acts on become actual values. Those the culture doesn't act on remain beliefs and aspirational values at best. The diagram on the right uses another word for "beliefs" "Basic Underlying Assumptions". It shows how these assumptions relate to "values" and "artefacts". To better help you understand is watch the video [What Is Belief?](#) ([here](#)).



A. There are core beliefs which are essential for the organization.

While we should be aware of most of our beliefs in general, we need to focus on core or essential beliefs in particular. Thus, when we seek to discover a congregation's or pastor's beliefs, we will focus on the beliefs at the core. This isn't to say that other beliefs aren't important, but we need to be aware first of our essential beliefs.

B. All organizations have a set of shared core beliefs.

People in the church may hold beliefs about the congregation that may or may not agree with all the beliefs of others. However, the church's beliefs are those that represent the majority of people in the church. These are their shared beliefs—the ones that the majority of people agree on consciously or unconsciously. These beliefs may be what attracted them to the church in the first place. Because so many agree with them, they have become mutually reinforced over the years.

1. In an organization members must agree on what is real and true.

When we seek to discover a congregation's or pastor's beliefs, we will focus on the beliefs at the core. Assumptions about what is the 'truth' in physical and social matters, how reality and truth are determined, and whether truth is to be revealed or discovered.



2. In an organization members must agree on the importance of time.

Assumptions about the importance of time in a group, how time is to be defined and measured.



3. In an organization members must agree on how space should be allocated.

Assumptions about how space is to be owned and allocated, the symbolic meaning of space around persons, the role that space plays in shaping relationships between individuals, and boundaries between intimacy and privacy.



4. In an organization members must agree on human nature.

Basic assumptions about the intrinsic or ultimate aspects of human nature, whether human nature is fundamentally good or bad, and whether it can be perfected.



5. In an organization members must agree on how active or passive people should be.

What is their understanding of work and play, and how much activity and passivity should be appropriate.



6. In an organization members must agree on how people should relate to each other.

Assumptions about the right way for people to relate with each other, the appropriate ways to distribute power and responsibilities, the relative merits of cooperation vs. competition, individualism or group collaboration, the basics of leadership – whether it should be a traditional authority, law or charisma. Appropriate ways of resolving conflicts and making decisions.



C. Beliefs and values look the same but are really very different.

1. Beliefs have a predisposition to action, whereas actual values involve action.
2. There are many more belief's than values.

A congregational culture will have many beliefs. If you were to attempt to inventory a church's beliefs, it would take all day or longer. On the other hand, a church will likely have fewer actual values. In a sense, it's easier to be a belief than a value. Beliefs simply exist, whereas values require effort—they're beliefs that people act on.

3. Beliefs help us make sense out of life but values guides us through life.

Beliefs and values have different purposes. The purpose of a belief is to guide or orient people in life. They help people make sense out of life in general and their lives in particular. Values, on the other hand, are more focused. They do more than exist; they guide or direct specific behavior that affects or impacts a culture or a person's life.

4. Beliefs, unlike values, are slow to change.

Beliefs differ from values in terms of change. Beliefs are tenacious—they're slow to change. Once we've embraced our beliefs, it takes evidence before we move to change them. Values are also change resistant, but it takes more evidence and time to change our beliefs than our values.

D. When beliefs are questioned there is usually trouble because they form our worldview.

If you want to discover how mature and patient a church is, simply challenge its beliefs. A church's beliefs come together to form its view about the fundamental aspects of its life or existence, such as: the church's nature, how it views reality, its purpose and mission, people's roles, and so on. All together a congregation's beliefs form its Churchview. But what does that mean? An understanding of the concept of worldview will help us understand the concept of a churchview. So let's first look at worldview as the broader concept.

1. Worldview

Here is a video entitled “What is your worldview? Quiz ([here](#))? It’s a big subject and the video only looks at some aspects of what worldview means. But it’s a good start. Our worldview provides us with the answers to the basic, fundamental questions that we ask or should ask about our world. Our answers to these worldview questions inform the beliefs that influence our total belief system—what we think is true and real about our world.

- What is really real?
- Who are we?
- Where did we come from?
- Why are we here?
- What is the basis for morality and ethics?
- What is the nature of the world around us?
- What is a human being?
- What happens to a person at death?
- Why is it possible to know anything at all?
- How do we know what is right or wrong?
- What is the meaning of human history?

2. Church view

A church view is a set of beliefs that may be true, partially true, or entirely false that a congregation holds consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently about the basic makeup of its world. Whereas it’s not likely that many people in the church have a consistent, coherent theology or ecclesiology, right or wrong they will have a church view. The reason is that their church beliefs supply answers to rock-bottom questions that work together to provide a seemingly coherent frame of reference for what they believe and think about the church. Together their sets of beliefs form a paradigm—in this case a set of ecclesiastical glasses—through which people view their church and ministry world and that of others.

Ultimately their beliefs help them make sense of their church world for better or worse. Not to have a church view is to be disoriented mentally and emotionally in terms of the member’s church life. Consequently, to challenge or suggest altering a church view will upset people. In time, people will either adopt the church’s new view, try to change the church, or leave the church. Just as discovering one’s worldview involves asking a number of basic, fundamental questions, so discovering one’s church view involves asking key questions about the church. Your answers to the following questions as well as others represent a number of the beliefs or assumptions that make up your church view, which in turn provides a seemingly coherent frame of reference for all thought and action regarding the church. Note that there are more church-view than worldview questions.

1. What for the church is real?
2. How does the church determine truth?
3. What is the nature of the church?
4. What is the purpose of the church?
5. What is the mission of the church?
6. What are the church’s theological beliefs (the church’s doctrine, traditions, and so on)?
7. What does the church believe about the Trinity?
8. What does the church believe about Christ?
9. What does the church believe about salvation?

10. What is the church's polity (how does it handle authority issues)?
11. What is the nature and role of the pastor?
12. What is the nature and role of the congregation?
13. What is the role of women?
14. How does the church view time?
15. How does the church view space?
16. How does the church view technology?
17. How does the church view change and innovation?

E. In the modern world the very idea of beliefs is being turned on its head.

This is because in the modern world anything coming from outside our world is viewed as oppressive, bad. The result is that without "beliefs" cultures no longer have their foundational building blocks and so they turn very dark. In this dark world abortion, gender reordering, even infanticide can be OK. The Philippines may not yet be affected as much by these changes so leaders can carry on normally but those of you living in the modern world will have to take this into account. A good YouTube series on this topic has just been released. It's Carl Trueman's: Great Lectures from the Grove ([here](#)). There are eight lectures in this series. Each one is about 30 minutes in length.

II. Why are an organization's beliefs important?

A. To sort out what an organization says and what it actually does.

Most churches would agree that the church's mission is to make disciples, according to such passages as Matthew 28:19–20. When some churches hear this, they say, "Yes, that's what we believe—that's our mission." However, when you probe at the belief's level, you discover that their mission is to feed the hungry, take care of the people of the church, especially the elderly, and so on. As you can see the espoused belief in this church is different than its actual belief. It is important for the pastor or pastoral candidate to know about this gap between espoused beliefs and actual beliefs. Watch the video *The 3D Gospel* ([here](#)).

B. To sort out which beliefs fit with what the congregation wants to accomplish.

As a rule, good beliefs such as those that align with the Bible lead to effective ministry. For example, we have people of all ages in the congregation but we can't please everyone's taste in worship music and instrumentation. Older people who realize that our churches aren't keeping their young people may desire the church to pursue a more contemporary format so as to keep and minister to the young. They don't want to lose them. Here the good belief is that a contemporary as well as a traditional worship format can reflect true worship.

C. When a congregation clarifies its beliefs it can link them to its values and behaviours.

If changes in behaviour are going to come about the beliefs they are based on must be tackled. People persist in their beliefs and resent the change because leaders haven't addressed it at the beliefs level. Thus the leader must discover the basic beliefs and address them as the church works through the change process. Eg., music, location, programs, etc.

D. After surfacing your beliefs you can figure out which values you are missing.

Values are built on and derived from a congregation's beliefs. In planning, we start with assumptions and then go to values before moving on to other concepts, such as mission and vision. The order is important because the one leads to the others. The presence or absence of a core value can be directly traced back to the church's beliefs. If there's no belief, there will be no value.

E. Differing beliefs will lead to conflict in the congregation.

People's core beliefs shape and direct their expectations of a church or person within the church. For example, many people assume that the pastor is supposed to function as a chaplain and his role is to take care of them. Consequently, they expect the pastor to visit them at home and especially in the hospital. If visitation doesn't happen, the pastor loses face with these people. They believe either he's not doing his job or he doesn't like them.

F. Leaders can't solve congregational problems until they know their members beliefs.

A common assumption among some churches is that the deacons, elders, or trustees are to lead the church, while the pastor is to preach and take care of the people. In these churches, if the pastor desires to lead and challenges the people on this issue, he'll likely lose unless he adjusts his belief first.

G. When the congregation's beliefs are clarified leaders can understand how the members are sorting information.

The church's beliefs provide a mental frame of reference for what its people think and ultimately act on in regard to the church. People operate within this framework whenever they think in some way about their church. Beliefs act to filter incoming information. Congregants accept thoughts and ideas that agree with their frame of reference and reject that which challenges or differs with what they view as true.

H. Unchallenged beliefs give the congregation's members mental and emotional stability.

Beliefs help explain not only the world out there but the world of the church, providing a sense of stability. This makes it most difficult to bring change to a church. Change threatens stability. It's the reason leaders may meet with strong resistance when they propose change, especially from people who have held their beliefs for a long time.

I. Once leaders know the organization's beliefs they know if they fit.

Every pastor comes into an established church with a set of beliefs. The church also have a set of beliefs that may not be consistent with those of its new pastor. Eventually the two sets will collide with one another, producing friction that will prove problematic for all involved. Usually in such instances, the pastor leaves the church and this solves nothing. The pattern will be repeated over and over until it is addressed from a beliefs perspective. Therefore pastors would be wise to know at least their core beliefs when considering a ministry change, and churches would be wise to know their shared beliefs when seeking a new pastor or staff. There must be some beliefs alignment between them if they are to work together for future church success. The wise pastor

and church should be aware of this and address their beliefs or assumptions in the candidating stage.

J. Some beliefs need changing because they no longer bring success.

Churches and leaders take notice of what does and doesn't work. What seems to work over time is taken for granted and operates as a silent filter on what a culture perceives and thinks about. The problem comes when these beliefs stop bringing success. The church's environment changes and these beliefs no longer work, but the church doesn't or won't realize this. The culture needs to regularly evaluate what it's doing, address what no longer works, and embrace what does work as long as it doesn't violate any biblical teaching.

III. Unwrapping organizational beliefs?

A. Complete the Belief's Audit.

A congregations beliefs can be made clear if the church leaders complete the Belief's Audit which is found in Appendix D. Here is sample of the items on this audit.

Directions: This is an exercise to help you discover some but not all of your core church beliefs or assumptions. Which beliefs listed below are your church's beliefs? Place a check by the statement that most closely summarizes them in each area. There is a space for you to add information and make any comments you deem appropriate.

1. What is the nature of reality? What is real?

- The church believes in a natural or material world and a spiritual world (angels, demons, the devil, etc).
- The church believes only in a natural world, not a spiritual world.

2. What is the nature of truth?

- The church believes that truth is what works (pragmatism)—what consistently solves their problems.
- The church believes that all truth is God's truth, and God has revealed his truth to man in the Bible (special revelation) and in nature (natural revelation).
- The church holds to both beliefs above, though they appear inconsistent.

3. What is the nature of the church (the definition of the church)?

- The church is the body of professing believers in Christ, who is the hope of the world.
- The church is primarily a family made up of families. In some cases, people are actually blood relatives or family by marriage.
- The church is an organization that provides certain services for people.

B. Write down the congregation's beliefs in this format (Aubrey, p. 65)

The Beliefs Format is a way of recording what a congregation believes. *Beliefs Format:* "We believe/assume _____."

IV. Broadcasting organizational beliefs?

A. Just Like Values are Communicated

1. Life and example of leadership
2. Written statement
3. Sermons
4. Formal and informal conversation

5. Stories
6. Bulletin
7. Framed posters
8. Church brochure
9. Training materials
10. Slide presentation
11. Audio- and videotapes
12. Skits and drama
13. Newcomers' class
14. Newsletter
15. Performance appraisal
16. Cartoons
17. Website

B. Beliefs can be highlighted through a doctrinal statement

Congregations often write down their beliefs in a Doctrinal Statement such as the one in Appendix E. Here is a sample of how such a statement is written down.

1. We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21.

2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3–4; John 5:18; 10:30.

V. Complete the organizational culture matrix.

The matrix in its final form can be found in Appendix F.

	Belief	Value	Behavior/Expression
Definition	A conviction of the existence or truth of something not subject to rational proof (scientific method). It is an assumption (we assume it is true).	A belief that guides and drives an individual or organization to act on a belief or assumption.	The results of acting on a value.
Action	A predisposition to action (people do evangelism, for example).	A belief that people act on. It guides/directs behavior—the reason we do what we do.	The resulting behavior—what we do.

6

How organizations relate to outside cultures?

Introduction

There are other cultures in any church's external environment. In this lesson we will look at how the church responds to these external cultures. By the end of the lesson you should be able to tell us where some congregations you know are relating poorly to their external environment and how they could improve.

I. How Should An Organization Respond To Outside Culture?

In our modern world we are rarely on an island, rather we are always bumping into other cultures. Watch the video "HSBC Funny Culture Ads (Subway, Bart, Golf)" ([here](#)). These ads illustrate culture bumping which is also illustrated in "HSBC Funny Culture ads Subway, Bart, Golf 2" ([here](#)). What's your reaction to all the bumping you see in the ads? How should we handle these?

A. Some equate culture with worldliness and isolate themselves from it.

1. The "World" and "Culture" are Not the Same

Many would equate culture with the term "world" in the Bible and believe that John is warning us to avoid culture in such passages as John 12:31; 16:11; 1 John 4:4; 5:19. Thus, they say, we should separate from culture. Supposedly Paul is doing the same thing in Ephesians 2:2 where he says, "in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—". Some churches practise first and even second degree separation from anything worldly.

2. The Incarnation refutes Isolation

Isolationists have difficulty explaining Christ's incarnation, when he came into this world, became a man, and embraced the good aspects of the culture. They must explain how Christ could become part of our culture if it is all bad.

3. Culture is "in us" not "outside of us".

The truth is, while culture is "out there," it's also "within" us. Not only is culture all around us, it's part of us. The beliefs we hold and the values that direct and empower us are part of our culture. Our ethnicity, our language, even our thoughts are culturally distinctive.

B. Some accommodate themselves to culture(s).

1. The First Form of Accommodation: Theological Liberalism

The first form is that of theological liberalism. It believes that much of the culture is a friend of the gospel and argues that we must adopt the beliefs and values of modern science, sociology, philosophy, and theology. The problem is that while leaning over to speak to the world, there's a danger we might fall in.

2. The Second Form of Accommodation: Conservative

Conservative arguments betray a subconscious belief that God endorses a particular culture or subculture as distinctly Christian. For some it's the first-century culture. Those, for example, who

embrace patternism—we should follow the patterns of the first-century churches or do church the way they did.

Have you ever heard the term Cultural Christians? In the quick to listen podcast put out by Christianity today Australian Kylie beach argue that Christianity in the US has been corrupted by politics. She said that many Christians in the US are really just cultural Christians. See Morgan Lee’s article and podcast ([here](#)), “How American Evangelicals Lost Credibility with the Global Church”.

The Amish and the Hutterites illustrate this position. Joseph Graber has put out a series of videos on the Amish people. It's called “Breaking the Silence”. Here ([here](#)) is the first episode. During this course you will have the option of looking at this video and identifying the artefacts, values and beliefs of the Amish. You will also have the opportunity to identify some values that are counterproductive for the Amish and could lead to their decline.

3. Coexistence is better than Assimilation

The gospel, however, doesn’t presuppose that any culture is superior to another. While some cultures are more advanced than others, the gospel views them not as superior or inferior but as different.

C. The third view is contextualization.

Some organizations use external cultures to communicate their ideas. They try to understand a culture well enough to communicate with the people in it.

1. In this view there is much in an outside culture that is helpful gospel teaching.

Cultural relevance isn’t blindly succumbing to worldly practices, as some argue, but understanding a culture well enough to articulate and communicate to the people of that culture in a way that they can hear and, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, understand the gospel. (Aubrey, p. 71)

2. Example 1: Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

The Apostle tried to see how he could fit himself into the Jewish culture without of course compromising the gospel.

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

3. Example 2: Baptist missionary Timothy Richard in China.

Unlike most of the other missionaries in his day Timothy tried to figure out which part of the Chinese community was open to the Gospel and then he tried to harmonize his work with that way their culture worked. At the time his approach was very radical. His opponent said he was compromising the gospel.

Three Responses to Culture

4. Here is a summary of the three views we can take to culture.

Isolation	Contextualization	Accommodation
Attempts to withdraw from culture	Uses indigenous cultural practices to clearly communicate biblical truth and make the gospel clear	Embraces either a sinful use of culture or a particular culture as uniquely Christian

II. Churches can use culture to transmit the gospel.

A. The gospel is both distinct from and yet integrated with cultures.

The gospel is supracultural in its origin and essence but cultural in its interpretation and application. God, who transcends man's culture and is thus supracultural, is the source of the gospel (Gal. 1:11–12; 2 Tim. 3:16). However, Christians originally recorded and communicated the gospel in the context of the Greco-Roman culture. (Aubrey, p. 73)

B. The gospel is distinct from any culture.

Integrating the gospel and culture does not mean that certain cultural practices or expressions, such as singing the great hymns of the faith played on a piano or organ; wearing formal clothing such as coats, ties, and long dresses; or even wearing your hair in a bun are also integrated. There are distinctions.

C. We can use culture to create a pathway for presenting the gospel.

We must discover how to use our culture and that of others to best clarify and promote the gospel. When we put the gospel into other people's cultural forms or expressions we make it possible for them to understand it, embrace it, and communicate it to others.

D. Here is how the gospel and culture complement each other

Some Implications of Culture and the Gospel

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| • The gospel is supracultural in its origin and essence, but cultural in its interpretation and application. |
| • It's imperative that Christians and churches distinguish between the gospel and their culture. |
| • We must discover how to use our culture and that of others to best clarify and promote the gospel. |

III. How does external culture impact an organization's culture?

A. Cultures affect all organizations in good and bad ways.

We live in a multi-cultural world. Our churches must cope with these ever changing cultures. If any external culture forces us to abandon one of our core beliefs then that culture must be ignored. For example, if a culture says that anyone who converts to another religion, Christianity, then that person must be shunned, perhaps even killed. In that case God's people must say, "No!" So culture can be bad. But what about the case where a prostitute visited your church? How should your church respond to a visitor who is a known prostitute. Shouldn't it accept her for who she is and view her coming to church as a potential inroad to reach a unique culture—the culture of prostitutes—with the gospel?

B. Since most of a culture is invisible it affects organizations more than we realize.

1. Eighty percent of what we do in church is cultural.

Aubrey is convinced that as much as 80 to 90 percent of what we do in our churches is culturally, not biblically, directed. An example is church music. The problem is that most pastors

and congregations aren't aware that the culture of the church is turning young people off. For others, unfortunately, power is the issue. Church leaders in established church must become students of culture and be willing to "change".

2. The culture in our organizations exclude some people.

Who will we reach? The answer is people who are attracted to us and our culture or expression of our values and beliefs. Those, for example, who like our style of church in general. Face it, your church's culture or unique expression of its beliefs and values will exclude some people.

3. Our culture is not superior nor inferior to any other culture.

This is an important matter in former colonial nations where the colonizer's culture was assumed to be superior. The "colonial mentality" is not right.

4. Organizations should study their culture in order to remain relevant to it.

If a church exegetes the culture as well as the Scriptures, it should remain relevant to that culture. Like the men of Issachar¹, we should understand our times so that we know how to communicate well with and reach people (1 Chronicles 12:32). Exegeting our culture helps us understand it, discern what is good and bad about it, and know how to minister well to those who are part of it. If you want to know more about what's called "The Issachar Factor" look it up in this book. See Gary McIntosh's, "The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends That Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success".

The Culture and the Church

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| • Culture affects all churches. |
| • Culture affects our churches more than we realize. |
| • Our church cultures will exclude some people. |
| • No culture is distinctly Christian and superior to all the rest. |
| • The church that exegetes the culture should remain relevant to that culture. |

D. Lesson Output

Do you understand the three possible responses to outside cultures: isolation, accommodation, or contextualization? You should now be able to name which response of the three responses to culture mentioned earlier is best for your church. Why did you choose it. How would your response help your church if that was its response to Filipino culture?

If perhaps if its not clear how these three responses fit into your world and church here is a video that may help. The video is [Filipino Values - Understanding Culture \(here\)](#).

¹ See McIntosh, Gary L's book *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends That Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success* (Scribd)