

## BUILDING A LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Lt Gen (Rtd) Lee, Kap Jin

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this session is to present a personal viewpoint helpful to those emerging MCF leaders for building a leadership culture in their MCFs.

A leadership culture can be formed by the combination of the following three components:

- 3 Building Blocks: Actors, Goals, and Instruments
- 4 Ways of Building Skills: Ardently, Biblically, Consistently and Strategically
- 5 Building-up Works: Heating-up, Valuing, Living, Connecting, and Team-building

### 2. Defining Culture

a. Defining culture in general.

"Culture is the unique character of a social group: the value and norms shared by its members set it apart from other social groups" (Lytle, Brett, & Shapiro)

"Culture is a set of shared and enduring meanings, values, and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic, or other groups and orient their behavior" (Faure and Robin)

b. Biblical perspective on culture

1) God's cultural command

God gave His culture command at Creation (Genesis 1:28) anticipating His gospel command (Matthew 28:19).

*"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"* (Genesis 1:28 NIV)

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey what I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19).

If we fail to form His cultural command by worshipping the created, it will be against His gospel command. Therefore, Christian leaders should carry out God's cultural command in support of His gospel command. Building a leadership culture for a MCF should be sought from this context.

2). Transforming Culture (Romans 12:2)

God wants us to transform our secular culture into His culture.

The vision of "*Christianization for Whole Culture*" should be conceived by every Spirit-filled Christian. It is critical for military Christian leaders to learn about how God would have them take part in building their leadership culture under the different cultural environment, while seeking to do so in a way that best relates to a particular culture.

### 3. Leadership Culture

a. Why leadership culture?

The entire purpose of leadership is to create a culture. Shaping a culture is a formidable task, since many of the valuable qualities a leader might have are never taught in a classroom.

Jesus is the essence of culture-shaping leader. His ways of selecting, teaching, training and sending His apostles is the process of shaping a new leadership culture for carrying out His Great Commission that turns the world's culture upside down.

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b. Defining MCF leadership culture.

MCF leadership culture may be defined as *"a unique inter-relationship of AMCF values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions within MCF leaders that reproduces patterns of thinking and behaving among them and their followers."*

c. AMCF references for building MCF leadership culture.

AMCF is a worldwide association of national Military Christian Fellowships (MCFs) and individual military Christians in nations that do not have an organized fellowship.

The AMCF Manual provides valuable informative reference material about the AMCF worldwide and is helpful for MCF leaders who desire to build a leadership culture within their MCFs.

#### 4. Building a leadership culture

a. 3 building blocks

1) Actors

Actors who build a leadership culture may include: leader(s), followers, and mentor(s). For example Exodus 18:17-22 shows three actors (Moses, Israelites, Jethro) building a new intermediate leadership system to create a culture of delegation.

Jesus Himself is the most powerful culture-building actor. The Gospel of Matthew shows how He established a new leadership culture for his apostles in order to be ready for the situation after He left.

Examples of His way of preparation for his own ministry include: (Matthew 4:1-11), His way of valuing (Matthew 6:1-7:27), visioning (Matthew 9:35-10:5), communicating (Matthew 12:33-37, 13:3-58), empowering (Matthew 10:1-15, 11:28-30), reproducing (Matthew 4:12-25, 10:16-33), and serving (Matthew 20:20-28).

2) Goals

Goal-setting is the most influential factor in making your vision real.

Nehemiah exercised his faith for an unshakeable goal. His prayer, his petition to the king, his journey to Jerusalem, his effort mobilizing all resources, his commitment, his dealing with the opposition and every part of his activities were oriented to achieve his goal, leading to "Mission accomplished!" Nehemiah showed no compromise in pursuing his God-given goal (Nehemiah, Chapters 1-7).

3) Resources

i) Story

Storytelling is an indispensable tool for communicating heart-to-heart things like values, passion, convictions, history, and vision. You may be able to use His (God's) story, your MCF's story, other individuals' story and your own story for creating your culture. In particular, personal testimony can be a useful tool for shaping the culture of your MCF.

ii) Symbol

Jesus sat with his twelve disciples, held up a loaf of bread, and said, "This is my body." As Jesus did this, we can see that symbols are an important tool both to define and reflect culture. Leaders who want to shape leadership culture must be intentional in using symbols. Any special mark like red stripes on your military uniform, or a certain color representing your service are symbols of your military culture. How about the AMCF badge? You may want to have certain symbols for your MCF.

3) Shared Experience

Shared experience may reinforce or reflect the leadership culture. Any particular experience uniquely shared with MCF leaders and followers may help to build a special MCF culture. Shared experiences create culture because they can expand

perspectives, challenge confronting barriers, and enhance relationships.

4) Structure

The structure and status of each MCF can vary greatly between countries. In spite of any differences, national MCFs are usually a key vehicle for building leadership culture. The structure of the local civilian church may also be important, particularly for those smaller MCFs and those in difficulty.

5) Scripture

God's Word is the most significant instrument in the task of creating a God-honoring leadership culture. This is where we learn from Jesus how to use all the other tools: stories, symbols, shared experience, and structure.

b. 4 Ways to Build Skills

1) Ardently

*Prayer* is the key word: ardent prayer.

*"I urge you, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone"* (1 Timothy 2:1 NIV)

Prayers should cover everything. Leaders not only pray but pray ardently. To discern the will of God is a focus for prayer. Leaders must know that it's God who moves people, not the prayer itself. AMCF has an excellent culture of prayer including the practice of "pray and plan." I strongly recommend you to practice this in developing your decision-making culture.

2) Biblically

*Principle* is the key word: biblical principle

Biblical values, norms and standards should be the foundation of building your leadership culture. It is essential that all MCF leaders seek for biblical principles and standards. The question/ study of "What does the Bible say?" often helps in discerning God's answer e.g. the process of choosing the seven deacons in the early church (Acts 6:1-7) models how to follow biblical principles in solving a problem created by the church community.

3) Consistently

*Program* is the key word: consistent program

Building a culture is a long-term process - it takes time. Individual events may create emotion, challenge or motivation, but these may not last very long. Developing a culture-driven program is preferable. A culture can be built daily but not in a day. The best way to reach the goal of your culture-building is to take a step at a time and one day at a time.

4) Strategically:

*Procedure* is the key word: strategic procedure

A strategic process is best developed in the following sequence:

- Assessment of situation
- Exchange of information
- Execution
- Final Commitment

Examples are found in the episodes of Nehemiah's wall rebuilding process (Nehemiah 1-7) and Rahab's negotiation process with the two spies (Joshua 2:1-25).

Consider carefully the cultural sensitivities of your political, legal, religious, military and ethnic situations. Relatively few countries enjoy the freedom to hold MCF activities within a military compound. Having a cross-cultural mindset is important in this work. A strategy to reconcile opposing viewpoints (both for intra- and inter-cultural conflicts) without giving offence or compromising principle is essential (Eph 6: 5-8).

Through your prayers, maintain or adjust the tempo of your culture-building. If you can find any appropriate welfare system or cultural/community program in your military organization, develop your own plan to take part in them where possible.

c. 5 Building-up Works

1) Heating-Up

Leaders must be environmental change-agents. “Heat up” a positive climate. Don't leave your MCF with a passion-vacuum. Your personal attitude, coupled with the passion of a positive atmosphere, can encourage your people to accomplish great things. A well-paced sense of momentum is a great change-agent for creating warmth and positivity.

When a crisis comes, that will often be the finest hour for both creating and proving a leadership culture. Encourage and affirm your people as a family.

2) Valuing

Shaping your underlying values to Biblical standards and norms will create unique benefits for your corporate MCF culture. Sharing those values will make your people see the bigger picture which you are seeing to help accomplish your goals.

Biblical values are especially valuable when they succeed from generation to generation. Recognize the value of your people.

3) Living

Live and lead by example. It's the most powerful and effective way to reinforce your culture-building effort. Remember, positive example-positive response, negative example-negative response. Live by serving. When you serve your people, they will see how to serve each other. Follow Jesus' way of a serving culture (Matthew 20: 25-28).

Also lead by good living - Spirit-filled character, charisma and commitment will attract your people to follow.

4) Connecting

“Join the dots” of your MCF activities to form a big and coherent picture. You may need help with this from those you lead – ways to do this may include asking questions, offering your appreciation, or responding to a crisis together.

Taking opportunities for interaction and communicating with each other enhances the sense of connection.

5) Team-Building

Jesus trained his apostles as a team. He also sent his disciples out in twos; two-man teams (Mark 6:7, 11:1, 14:3). Paul proclaims the value of team-building in the midst of diversity by insisting one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father (Ephesians 4:1-8, 16).

Successful team-building can produce a culture of momentum and unity in an organization. A unified team of leaders provides incredible power for building the leadership culture e.g. teams of leaders of ACCTS, MMI and MSO cooperate together to achieve successful AMCF business. This unique cultural heritage was necessary in making GI-2014 in Cape Town available today!

## 5. Conclusion