



CHURCH COMMUNICATION NETWORK  
PRESENTS

# **No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come-As-You-Are Culture**

Featuring

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## Introduction

Chaos in the first small group: What do you do?

Either your group is way more like that than you know...

...or it's full of super-Christians who need to open up to the world

If the church doesn't get messy fast, it's going to die fast

We as a church are not offering hope for healing to a hurt, broken world

Your small group holds the potential to make a redemptive change

*Our goal cannot simply be a timid, powerless survival; it must be the role that Christ called the Church to play, that of a loving, authoritative, healing, and compelling influence upon the world... lacking such a turnabout, we may rightfully anticipate the virtual disappearance of the Christian Church in this nation."*  
—George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*

## God is in the chaos, creating something new

To be okay with the messiness is an act of trust in God

We don't have to do the cleaning up

Jesus' ministry was messy!

The Pharisees didn't like it, but...

Jesus came for messy, broken people who realize their need for God

The Church needs to be about that as well

How? By Creating Culture in your group

It's God that causes the growth, the change, the cleaning up, the fixing, the changed hearts

Our responsibility as leaders: The soil—the culture

*"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*  
—1 Corinthians 12:27

*<sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" <sup>12</sup>On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup>But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"—Matthew 9:11-13*

*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are God's co-workers....*  
—1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NIV)

## Culture creation, 1: Grace-giving acceptance

“Come as you are”: accept people as is

Miraculous spiritual growth only starts with God’s grace

People have to experience God’s grace to believe it

To create a Grace-giving culture of acceptance:

- Accept the person first
- Fix Mr. Fix-It

*There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*  
—Romans 8:1

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God*  
—Romans 15:7

*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. We should all please our neighbors for their good, to build them up...May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.*  
—Romans 15:1-2, 5

## Culture creation, 2: Create a culture of authenticity

If we agree to be authentic with our real struggles, we can walk together and pray for each other

And God will do an amazing healing work

Can people come to your group to get well, or do they have to get well to come?

To create a culture of authenticity:

- “The speed of the leader, the speed of the team”
- Help people find spiritual running partners

<sup>7</sup>*But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. <sup>9</sup>But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.*  
—1 John 1:7-9

*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God*  
—Romans 15:7

## Culture creation, 3: Create a culture of growth

“Come as you are—but don’t stay that way”

Spiritual growth is really simple: staying connected to God’s Spirit

To create a culture of growth:

- Being intentional about staying connected to God’s Spirit moment by moment
  
- Encourage intentional practices
  
  
- Habit-breaking practices

*...the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit...Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*  
—Romans 8:4-5

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*  
—Psalm 139:23-24

## Resources

*No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a  
Come As You Are Culture in the  
Church*

by John Burke  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**ELI Church Planting Web site**  
[www.eli.com](http://www.eli.com)

**Spiritual Running Partner card**  
[www.WayofChrist.info](http://www.WayofChrist.info)

**Gateway Church Web site**  
[www.gatewaychurch.com](http://www.gatewaychurch.com)

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