



## Executive Director's Communique November 2021

### School Culture: What and How?

As was mentioned in the August 2021 *Communique*, culture is described as an integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas, values, ideals, and products characteristic of a particular group of people. The group may be as small as a family, consist of those associated with an institution, or be a large ethnic people. The ideals, values, and patterns of behavior are established, modeled, and maintained by the leaders and influencers in the group. For your school, consider what ideals, values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior should distinguish your school from other schools, whether it is another Bible school, a local college, or a national university. How is your school culture distinct? I encourage you to meet with your school board, administrative team, faculty, and support staff to develop a list of beliefs, values, and traits that describe your institution and your graduates (your product). What are the behaviors, values, and attitudes you want to see exemplified by your faculty and replicated in your students?

Some key dimensions of your school's culture might include being biblically grounded, Pentecostal, prayerful, missional, service oriented, teachable, honest, transparent, committed to excellence, reliable, loving, and unified while respecting diversity. The list can be expanded.

Your school culture will be caught rather than taught. So how will each one of these unique dimensions of your culture and ethos be developed? You should take each behavior, value, attitude, and ideal – one at a time – and determine how this trait can be developed and modeled in the school by every member of the group. Keep asking the question: how can we see this trait actualized in every dimension of the school? Let us take the example of being Pentecostal.

You will need to define what it means to be Pentecostal. What are the external, measurable manifestations of a Pentecostal, Spirit-filled person? What are the inner traits of one who lives and walks in the Spirit? Yes, they pray in tongues. Is that all? And when do they pray using tongues? Is it only during the chapel service? Do they also pray using their mind to articulate their prayers to God (1 Cor. 14:15)? Do they stop from time to time, quiet themselves, and listen to the soft voice of the Spirit? Do they give prophecies, messages in tongues, and interpretations? Do they share words of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment? Do they pray for the sick? Directed by the Holy Spirit, are they involved in the evangelization of their own people, ethnic, and tribal group? And do they cross cultural-linguistic barriers, led by the Spirit, and share the gospel to those who do not have an understandable witness of the person and work of Christ? Does the faculty member and does the student exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in terms of being loving, joyful, a pursuer of peace, patient, able to experience suffering without complaining, gentle, and humble? Filled with the Spirit, are they submissive, teachable, accountable, and correctable? Are teachers and students Pentecostal in the dormitory, chapel, classroom, football pitch, prayer room, principal's office, and board room? How will we teach and model what it is to be Pentecostal? How will "Pentecostal" be part of our distinct culture? Keep asking the "how" question then live out the answer and encourage others to follow.