

# Written assignment #2

Business, Management



Written Assignment What important perspectives regarding organizational culture can we learn from Acts 15: 129 (The Council at Jerusalem)?

Acts 15: 1-29 discusses how the church was addressing changes in its organizational culture especially on the outreach ministry (Pimentel, 2012).

The verse specifically addresses outreach ministerial changes among the Gentiles. The big question at the council was whether it was outright to circumcise the Gentiles according to Moses's laws. The scenario, thus, represents how diversity can influence an organizational culture. A new employee in a firm or a company comes with his or her perception of the organization. However, the organization has a prevailing culture that defines norms or regulations governing individual behaviors. When answering the question of forceful circumcision of the Gentiles, the organizational culture of the Church comes into the picture. Therefore, the scenario is a good reference for explaining organizational culture where the church had to make some decisions based on its beliefs as well as values. In this case, the church, as an organization, engages in decision-making process, but also makes sure that they reflect values of Christianity.

Nonetheless, the church had to communicate its decision to the Gentile. Communication is an important aspect of organizational culture where the management must ensure that their decisions follow the right channel before reaching the target audience. For instance, sending a letter to the Antioch church was not enough to communicate the message thus the council sent Paul alongside Barsabbas and Silas (Pimentel, 2012). In this case, the council was trying to make the message clear through a letter and word of mouth from the messengers.

The lesson that comes out clearly from the case scenario is that the issues surrounding the decision-making process as a function of an organization. In this case, the council was trying to answer theological questions since the new Christian Church was growing. Nonetheless, it was difficult for the Antioch church to come to a consensus about circumcision of the Gentiles (Pimentel, 2012). Therefore, the Council experienced hard time in reaching a final decision as with the case with contemporary organizations. The church, as an organization, was trying to bring new changes, and it was difficult implementing them.

Managers and other executives can learn a good lesson from the church's change initiation process. The underlying assumption is that change initiation will always attract resistant from people in the organization and its success depends on the existing organizational culture. On the other hand, decision-making process must consider the hierarchy in the organization. As with the case of Jerusalem Council, the church had to rely on top authorities when it sent Barnabas and Paul to consult with the elders and apostles in Jerusalem (Pimentel, 2012). The elders and apostles, in this case, are equal to senior executives within an organization. Upon learning about the new changes, the top authority convened a meeting that discussed the issue into details and settled on a final decision.

The council also discussed the circumcision issue by focusing on beliefs as well as values of the church. For instance, it was difficult to recommend that circumcision was in line with Christian beliefs. Going further in verse eleven, Peter tells the council that salvation by grace is crucial in Christianity thus would form the basis for the argument about circumcision (Pimentel, 2012).

He further tells the Council that the same way the Jews got saved through grace of the Lord Jesus would the Gentiles also receive salvation. Eventually, Peter convinced the council to a common belief that salvation was through grace and not by circumcision as the old rules stipulated. In this case, the church represented an organization whose values are common to all individuals. Therefore, Jerusalem Council represents the organizational culture of Christian Church where the elders had to make decisions based on the existing culture in the church; the same way decisions in modern organizations come from executive authority.

#### Reference

Pimentel, S. (2012). *Witnesses of the Messiah: On Acts of the Apostles 1-15*. New York: Emmaus Road Publishing