***A Church Called Tov*** **Book Study: Session #5**

***Discussion Sheet for* Chapters 11-12**

**Discussion Questions:**

How has an achievement and accomplishment culture (aka a leadership culture) shaped our churches and how does it get in the way of a *tov* culture? How do expectations of the congregation on the pastor and the culture of the church contribute to the making of celebrity pastors?

Celebrity culture seems to be a particular phenomenon of large evangelical non-denominational churches. Do you think the CRC struggles with celebrity pastors and celebrity churches? In what ways has this culture impacted/influenced our pastors and congregations?

McKnight and Barringer define the role of a pastor as someone who is called to nurture Christoformity in her or himself and others, to help each person become more like Jesus. They define the church as a community of believers who are striving to become more like Christ, both as individuals and as a congregation.. What do you think of those definitions of pastor and church? What changes can you make in your behaviors and attitudes to join with and encourage others to become more like Jesus?

What can you do to help nurture a culture of *tov* in your congregation?

**Notes on Chapters 11, *Tov* Churches Nurture Service**

In toxic churches, leaders make themselves and their successes the center of attention. In *tov* churches, leaders seek to empower and help others to flourish.

* “In a *tov* church, leaders maximize their giftedness when they *empower* *others* to maximize their own giftedness.” p. 176

Temptations for Service-Oriented Churches:

1. Taking service to the heroic extreme in order to achieve greatness
2. Drawing attention to how sacrificial our service is. (p. 179-80)

“Even if we give with pure intentions and avoid the traps laid out above, we must always be aware of the effects of our service on those we serve.” p. 180.

Resisting a celebrity culture:

* Difference between serving people for the sake of the people and serving people for the sake of one’s own benefit or gratification.
* “Celebrity pastors don’t arise in service-oriented churches. They need the toxic soil of a celebrity-driven church culture.” p. 187 - celebrity is both a person and a product

Jesus, the Anti-Celebrity:

* “There is only one who deserves glory, honor, and praise, and that’s Jesus, our Lord and King. He refused to play the celebrity game, and he didn’t mince words with the celebrity-seeking Pharisees of his day.” p. 190
* “Jesus wants followers who deny glory and fame to pursue a life of service . . . pastors, leaders, and churches are to be known for what their Lord and Savior is known for: sacrifice for the sake of others.” p. 193

Suggestions for Developing a Servant Culture (pp. 195-200)

1. Leaders leading to serve others
2. Stop shining the spotlight
3. Avoid benevolence and paternalism
4. Make service a spiritual discipline
5. Share the pulpit
6. Develop the discipline of losing arguments
7. Lead with transparency

**Notes of Chapter 12, *Tov* Churches Nurture Christlikeness:**

“The more we practice *tov*, the more the culture becomes *tov.*” p. 201

**What is a pastor?** “Leader” vs. “Pastor”

* “But while being a pastor certainly has some of these components (of getting things done), the pervasive element in our two-thousand-year pastoral tradition is not someone who “gets things done” but rather the person placed in the community pay attention and call attention to ‘what is going on right now’ between men and women, with one another and with God--this kingdom of God that is primarily local, relentlessly personal, and prayerful “without ceasing.” p. 211
* “A pastor is someone called to nurture Christoformity (or Christlikeness) in himself or herself and in others. . . . The pastor’s goal is to help each person he or she shepherds become more like Jesus ” p. 211.

**What is a church?**

* “A church is a local community of believers who are striving to be like Christ, both as a congregation and as individuals.” p. 215.
* “Every church should be on a journey toward becoming a church called *tov*.” p. 221

**Success Redefined:**

“The pastor’s calling and the church’s calling are to nurture people into Christoformity--to nurture people into *tov.*” p. 217

**What Can We Do?**

1. Express the mission of God for your church as *tov.*
2. Open space for the creative work of God’s Spirit to lead your church into *tov*.
3. At all levels, become available to the revealing discernment of the HS for how *tov* can take root in your church.
4. Dwell in the Word.
5. Cooperate with other churches in the process of eradicating a toxic culture . . . p. 221-22.