

# Review: Soul Culture

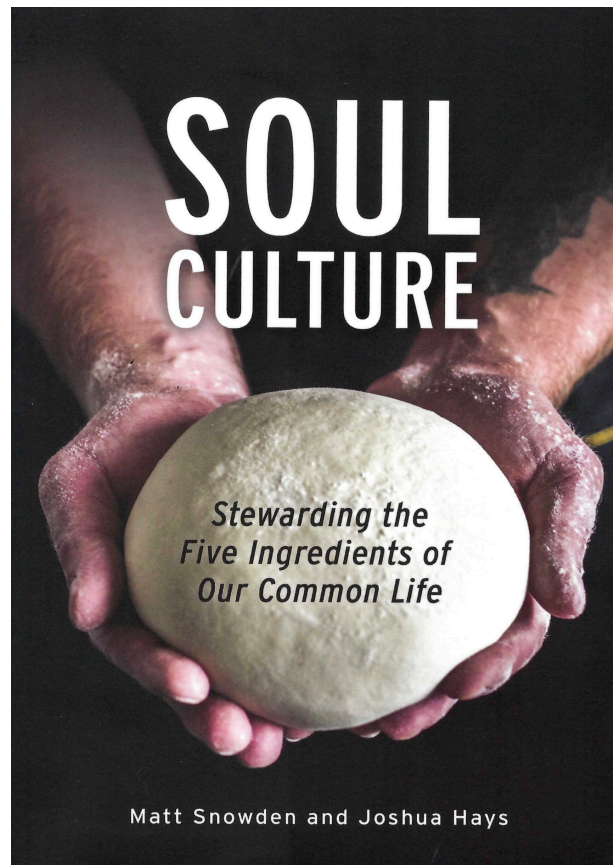
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## *Soul Culture: Stewarding the Five Ingredients of Our Common Life*

**By Matt Snowden & Joshua Hays (Smyth & Helwys)**

Every preacher likes a good metaphor. *Soul Culture* doesn't disappoint. But being a pastor is more than preaching—much more. It involves the rest of *Soul Culture*, the *Stewarding the Five Ingredients of Our Common Life* part.

Forming the culture of a church is like preparing pizza dough. At least, that's how Matt Snowden and Joshua Hays describe it, with inspiration from J.B. Gambrell, a Southern Baptist and Texas Baptist leader at the turn of the 20th century. Just as dough requires a set of ingredients worked and kneaded together, so does the culture of a church.



Dough is a combination of basic ingredients worked together in a deliberate way. Snowden and Hays say the same of the church. Beliefs are as foundational to a church's culture as flour is to dough. Water, salt, soda and yeast are the other basic ingredients of dough—like attitudes, values, goals and practices together form church culture.

Each of the five ingredients of church culture gets its own chapter, each one a worthy study all its own. These and the other chapters of *Soul Culture* conclude with questions for individual and group reflection.

The ingredients are essential but not sufficient to make good dough. They also require the right technique, temperature and time. These are explained in the last chapter.

In the last chapter, Snowden and Hays finish *Soul Culture* in conversation with three pastors demonstrating their own soul culture work within their respective congregations—Steve Bezner at Houston Northwest Baptist Church, Maddie Rarick at Meadow Oaks Baptist Church in Temple and Ralph West at The Church Without Walls in Houston.

Pastors can chew on *Soul Culture* together with the authors, Bezner, Rarick and West during the [Truett Pastors Conference](#) at First Baptist Church in Waco, April 18-19, 2024.

Ministry resources often fall into one of two categories—practical or smart. Here is one that is practical *and* smart. And refreshing. Wit, wisdom and humor are scattered throughout like chocolate chips in cookie dough. Perhaps chocolate chip cookies will be the metaphor guiding Snowden's and Hays' next book.

*Eric Black, executive director/publisher/editor  
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