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(Article Continued from Pg. 1; "Taking Your Church to the NEXT LEVEL")

The church was not moved by a program, but rather by a set of values they inherited through the Tanakh. Each healthy church I interviewed had this same value set guiding the church towards the mission and vision.

Here they are again:

- ▣ **Worship**
- ▣ **Fellowship**
- ▣ **Discipleship**
- ▣ **Service**
- ▣ **Outreach**

As these values turned into culture, each pastor saw the congregation taking these values and turning them into practices. This fits within their local church mission and vision. The church in the Book of Acts and the healthy churches I interviewed were not driven by a new program. They were driven by values. No church



looked the same; each had a contextualized feeling about them. They used different words to describe these values, but they were all driven and creating congregational culture through these five values.

Maybe it is time we move from programs to the Biblical values that have steered the church from its inception. Let's take a step forward by grabbing ahold of our biblical past. Then start building a culture of health rather than exchanging programs every five years.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Rev. Steven White serves as pastor of Life Church, a rural church in Osage, Iowa. Steven has been in ministry since 1999 and has served in Seguin and Borne, TX; Blackwell, OK; Charles City and Osage, Iowa.

Steven is currently working on his Masters Degree in Practical Theology with an emphasis in Rural Church Planting and Revitalization.

As a member of the IMA and Board Member of the NCD, Steven has found a community of leaders and churches who seek to expand the Kingdom of God globally and locally. "The IMA is a brother and sisterhood of like-minded followers of Jesus, seeking to expand His Kingdom across the globe."

**Relational
Actional
Missional**

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PROCLAIM

SEPTEMBER 2021

Taking Your Church to the NEXT LEVEL

Moving from a Program-Driven to a Value-Driven Church

By Rev. Steven White



We have probably all experienced the scenario where the church mission and vision statements are pointing the church in a healthy direction. Yet, it seems like the church is moving in the opposite direction. Just then by chance our new Bible study magazine arrives in the mail and right in the middle is an advertisement for a new church program that promises to move the church to the next level.

Perhaps you are like me and in the past, you have tried the "purpose driven" church, "missional" church, "church without walls," or the "CEO model" church. Maybe you even delved into the "emergent" church, hoping it would capture the imagination of the church and move it toward the vision. Yet, here you are reading this article, hoping I can share with you the next BIG THING that will work.

Let me say right here: Program-driven churches are killed off by culture change. Culture on average changes every five years. Are you tired of looking for a new program yet? Maybe it's time to make a more fundamental change.



Recently, I have been doing a study on healthy rural churches. I am defining a "healthy church" as one that is growing, reproducing, faithful, and that honors Scripture. The one common denominator I found shared between all these churches is not a program, nor even their mission and vision statements. Rather, it is a set of values that

act like a ship rudder. These values create a culture that organically steers the church toward mission and vision. Each church shared five values, though often worded differently. Of the thirty healthy, rural churches I studied, these five values were always present.

What are these values and are they Biblical? Let's start with the Bible first. Acts 2:42-47 states:



And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common... as anyone had need.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

The church started with a call to WORSHIP Jesus! This is not about music, but rather about allegiance. Then, we see the life of the early church in action through FELLOWSHIP, arm in arm, moving in the same direction on the same mission. Then we see DISCIPLESHIP, followed by SERVING both in the new faith community and outside to unbelievers. Finally, there is evidence of outward action, or OUTREACH. The rest of Acts displays these five values as the Church moves from a local presence to a global community.

(Article Continued on Pg. 4)

Taking Your Organization to the NEXT LEVEL



By Rev. Travis Moffitt



When a Chinese Bamboo tree is planted as a seed, it must be watered and fertilized daily without fail. The seed will begin to grow an underground root system while remaining below the surface of the soil.



The seed will not sprout or break the surface of the soil for five years. Daily, the farmer must water and fertilize the barren ground. In the fifth year, the sprout will finally break through the soil. Once this occurs, the Chinese Bamboo tree will grow an amazing ninety inches in five weeks.

Does the Chinese Bamboo tree grow ninety inches in five weeks or in five years?

Ministry can be much like the Chinese Bamboo tree. Daily you water and fertilize what can look like barren ground. At times, it seems like there is no visible progress. The opposition remains and the fruit is unseen. My friend and mentor, Dr. David Shibley, once told me, "The toughest season in the life of a for-profit business is the first year. In this first year, the business is earning the trust of the community. For non-profit organizations, this season is the first five years." It takes longer for non-profit organizations to earn the community's trust.

The Bible affirms this principle in Galatians 6:9. It says, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." When it comes to the idea of taking our churches and ministries to the next level, there are a few lessons we can learn from the Chinese Bamboo tree.

☐ **Daily Diligence.** When we are growing a new organization, a new team member, or a new initiative, we must be mindful of the daily diligence we are applying to the matter. Overnight success

takes years to develop. The more diligent you are each day, even if it feels like watering barren ground, the greater harvest you will reap in the future.

☐ **Continual Care.** DO NOT QUIT! If the Chinese Bamboo tree farmer stops the daily care, even for a short period of time, the seed will die in the ground. I wonder how many God-ordained ministries have died in the ground because we quit when we did not see quick results. Our care must be continual. Resist the excitement of the "new thing" when you're already committed to the right thing.

☐ **Future Focus.** Look around you. See the results of those who have gone before you. Realize they walked the same path. Remember the promises God spoke to you. Focus on the future. Focus on where God is taking you

In 2004, we made our first mission trip to Honduras. From the very first trip, we began investing in education by making repairs on the local public-school building. In 2017, we launched the Connect Global Honduran Educational Scholarship Fund. To date, we've invested over \$40,000 in scholarships. In 2021, we were given a Christian school complete with staff, a multi-acre, multi-building campus and 172 bright, young students. That's sixteen years of watering and fertilizing the soil followed by ninety inches of growth in the final year.

IMA members, wherever you are today; whatever you have committed to; whatever seed you have planted, water and fertilize the barren soil with Daily Diligence, Continual Care, and a Focus on the Future. The growth God has promised will come!

Quotable Quotes

<p>"Every new level of growth we hope to experience as leaders calls for a new level of change. You cannot have one without the other." ~ John C. Maxwell</p>	<p>"God uses change to change us. He doesn't use it to destroy us or to distract us, but to coax us to the next level of character, experience, compassion, and destiny." ~ Beth Moore</p>	<p>will remove the difficulty and bring you to your next level." ~ Taken</p>
<p>"Amen is not the end of a prayer, it just gets us ready to go to the next level." ~ Gary Busey</p>	<p>"Nothing that has happened to you is a surprise to God. In your due season, when it's best for you, God</p>	<p>"New level, New Devil!" ~ Joyce Meyer</p>
		<p>"Getting to the next level always requires ending something, leaving it behind, and moving on." ~ Henry Cloud</p>

IMA Home Office
 P.O. Box 242
 Shell Lake, WI 54871
EMAIL:
 imahdq@gmail.com
WEBSITE: imainfo.org
Members Password:
 imamembers
PH: 812-550-1240



DNA of IMA

Part 8: NEXT LEVEL Ministry



By Dr. Timothy L. Warner; IMA National Chairman

IMA is all about growth in Biblical knowledge and development of Christian character! We are a "NEXT LEVEL" ministerial group. From its inception, IMA has a DNA that challenges our ministers to go onward and upward on this journey of faith with our Lord.

Notice these line-items from our purpose statement. This dates back to 1959. It emphatically states that we are a "next level" ministry. Truly, our Beloved Fellowship of ministers began with a couple dozen ministers. They were tired of "shackles of ecclesiasticism" and desired to be "brethren...who would manifest that true spirit of brotherly love." Further IMA purpose:

- ☐ Urge mankind to turn from sin to serve the Living God;
- ☐ [we] desire...greater love, and closer fellowship;
- ☐ [we] will preach Bible truths with compassion;
- ☐ [endeavor] to keep the unity of the Spirit;
- ☐ ...until we all come to the unity of the Faith!

DNA of IMA began with a cry for freedom. We then started an annual conference. Our next level was to add mission statements, doctrinal beliefs, and send missionaries around the world. WE ARE NEXT LEVEL PEOPLE. This was followed by state chapters, which morphed into Districts. Within just five years, membership increased to over 400 ministers!

When challenged by a new truth called restoration ministry, IMA took a "next level" approach. A portion of IMA ministers had their

eyes opened to five-fold ministry (Eph. 4:11) and gifts of healing. This was a new concept to most ministers at the time. Notice the next level position our leaders penned for our benefit: "The IMA took a position that we endorse a complete restoration of the New Testament Church." Further, their resolution stated that no member would be "forced to subscribe to these new views."

Their outcome stated: "Difference of opinion in doctrine shall not be a barrier to membership as long as there shall be no contention in the pulpits and churches of others are respected..." (compiled from newsletters 1958-59). That is next level thinking!

It is amazing that most IMA ministers did embrace the (then) new doctrine. Five-Fold ministry clearly emerged in the greater body of Christ. Early leaders of the IMA were at the forefront taking ministry to the next level of biblical truth. IMA's DNA was and is to bring those called by God and related churches to our next level.

What are practical steps to keep present and future ministers moving toward our next level in God? The IMA has used three solid principles. First is to bring in dynamic conference speakers to address current issues. We have reached inside to gifted leaders in the IMA. We have also reached out to others God is using to bring about something fresh. Second is the lateral communication and camaraderie of fellow members of IMA. We ask questions and connect with those of "like precious faith." Third is to utilize the full

measure of the printed page (and now the internet). Articles in our monthly newsletter are intended to take us to the next level.

DNA of IMA continues. We encourage growth and development. We welcome challenges to old ways of doing things. Our conferences often host a ministerial "round table" discussion to find pathways in which the Holy Spirit may lead us.

So, take your personal life, ministry, church, or organization to the next level. Jesus Himself "increased in wisdom and knowledge, and in favor with God and man [Luke 2:52]. Go the "next level" in your journey of faith.



PLEASE NOTE: IMA National Board is planning not to send out the IMA PROCLAIM Newsletter in paper copy after 2021. Rather, the newsletter will be emailed to members and found on the IMA website.

If this poses a problem for you or your ministry, or you have any comments to make regarding this decision, please contact Dr. Timothy Warner, National Chairman, at: imadrtimothy@gmail.com

PROCLAIM Newsletter is read and appreciated by many pastors and missionaries. We want members and others to continue reading IMA articles and announcements contained in monthly newsletters.