



Middle District  
Missionary Baptist  
Association

Elizabeth Williams Young  
Institute

**CHANGE WITHOUT  
DESTROYING  
THE CHURCH**  
February 21, 2022

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Regional Site Session  
Hosted at: E.E. Smith High School, Fayetteville, NC



Session Topic:

## **Change Without Destroying the Church January 25, 2020**

Based upon the books, The Church in Transition by Ron Richardson  
& Steering Through Chaos by Scott Wilson

***Presenter: Reverend Matthew D. Rouse, III, M.Div., Pastor***

***Piney Grove East Missionary Baptist Church***

***Wingate, North Carolina***

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The author, Lee Kricher, is the Senior Pastor of Amplify Church, and he had this to say about his ministry in 2003...

*“The average age of our church attendees was over 50 years old - more than 15 years older than the average age of our community. I knew that prayer would provide the foundation of hope for our future as a church...I also knew that we had to change some things.”*

*“We did not have to change our core beliefs and values. They were not the problem. The problem was that our approach to church was stuck in the distant past. Our services, programs, ministries and practices were perfectly designed to reach the people we were reaching. While preserving our core beliefs and values, we had to find a way to make the kind of changes to our services, programs, ministries and practices that were needed to reach people we were not reaching - particularly the next generation.”*

**Five Change Leadership Strategies**

**#1 - Create a Sense of Urgency & Adopt a New Mindset** - Do whatever is needed to shift the mindset of the people of your church away from the statement “If it was good enough for me, it should be good enough for our children and grandchildren,” and replace it with the question – “What will it take to reach and continue to reach the next generation?”

*"The most pervasive and common thread of our autopsies was that the deceased churches lived for a long time with the past as hero. They held on more tightly with each progressive year. They often clung to things of the past with desperation and fear. And when any internal or external force tried to change the past, they responded with anger and resolution: 'We will die before we change.' And they did."*

- Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*

**In what ways does the mindset of the people of your church need to change? What practical actions can be taken to inspire a positive shift in the mindset of the leaders and members of your church?**

**#2 - Identify the Essentials** – Clarify the vision that you believe that God wants for your church and then identify your "vision essentials" - the handful of things that deserve your full time, attention, energy, and resources because they are absolutely essential to achieving your vision.

*"Contrary to popular wisdom, the proper first response to a changing world is not to ask, 'How should we change?' But rather to ask, 'What do we stand for and why do we exist?' This should never change. And then feel free to change everything else."*

- Jim Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last*

**What is the core vision and mission of your church and the primary reason that you exist? What are the truly essential things on which your church should focus to make sure that your church's core vision and mission continues into the next generation?**

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**#3 - Reduce the Distractions** - Identify and eliminate as many church programs, ministries, and practices as possible that potentially distract members and visitors from your vision and divert your time, attention, energy and resources from the things that are essential to fulfilling your vision.

*"Your programs are not sacred...What is sacred is the mission of the church. You are called to shine a light and demonstrate God's love and grace to those who need it. Our mission is not to preserve the local church as it presently exists in its various forms or models; our mission is to be the church...All along (God) has planned this thing called the church, so we could send a collective message to a generation that needs to know Him."*

- Reggie Joiner, founder of The reThink Group

**Which first impressions, programs, ministries and/or practices in your church may be a minor or major distraction to fulfilling your vision and reaching the next generation?**

**#4 - Elevate Your Standards** - Close the gap between where you are as a church and where you have the potential to be regarding the excellence of your weekend service(s) and other “vision essentials.”

*“Capable leaders are willing to set standards that scare them. Ask yourself the question, ‘Are you operating at good, better or best?’ Good is doing what is expected of you. It is slightly above average and requires some focus and determination to get there, but it is relatively easy to achieve. Better is rising a little higher than good. It typically means you are comparing yourself to the next one in line. But best is where you want to live. It is greatness and doesn’t mean you are better than everyone else, but that you’re working to your maximum capability.”*

- Brad Lomenick, *The Catalyst Leader*

**In what areas do you need to elevate your standards of excellence as a church in a way that would better fulfill your church vision and reach the next generation?**

**#5 - Empowerment Through Participation** - The process of empowerment brings with it a deep conflict and having the vision of what we want to achieve is not enough. Empowerment is only achieved when the most marginalized in an organization have the same opportunities as the person with the most influence or power in that organization. The means of achieving these fundamental opportunities is either by being directly grasped by those people who are disempowered, or through the help of the more powerful who must give up some of their own power and apportion their own access to power and influence.

*“Just about anybody can make an organization look good for a moment - by launching a flashy new program or product, drawing crowds to a big event, or slashing the budget to boost the bottom line. But leaders who leave a legacy take a different approach. They lead with tomorrow as well as today in mind....When all is said and done, your ability as a leader will not be judged by what you achieved personally or even by what your team accomplished during your tenure. You will be judged by how well your people and your organization did after you were gone.”*

- John Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*

***Make Lasting Changes That Will Make a Difference***

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**The post-quarantine era may prove to be one of the most challenging seasons for churches and their leaders. IT IS A SEASON OF OPPORTUNITY. As we enter this unknown era, we are uncertain about the specifics of what will unfold, but we remain certain that the God of all wisdom and power will be with us every step of the way. After Jesus gave his disciples the mandate of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, he reminded them that they were not going it alone: “Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20) With the same promise, we lead our churches into the future. And with the same confidence, we know we will not be alone, regardless of what unfolds.**

**When it is all said and done, nothing else matters.**

