

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



The tragedy of so many charismatic churches is they are built around a single leader.

That's not bad in the beginning. In fact, it's probably the best way to start. However, the church that continues to base its existence around a charismatic leader is in for a great fall some time in the future.

When Charles Haddon Spurgeon was in his prime, his followers erected a massive church building, the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, in 1861. Spurgeon preached there to overflowing crowds for almost 30 years. But after his death in 1892, attendance at the Tabernacle fell off. Now it is a mere showplace of the greatness of a former era.

It's normal to flock to hear a popular leader. I used to enjoy attending the Kathryn Kuhlman meetings, and I enjoy going to a Billy Graham crusade. But when Miss Kuhlman died, her ministry died with her. The same will be true of Graham. That, too, is normal, for such ministries are not churches--they are

extensions of the minister's personality. Many para-church ministries are such.

However, that is not God's intent for a church. A church is to be the Body of Christ. Although it may be influenced, even flavored, by its leader--it should never be centered around him. It must be centered around the person of Jesus Christ.

The true shepherd does not stand in the middle of his flock. He remains on the periphery, guarding his flock from danger, scouting ahead for fresh food and gently coaxing the strays back to the fold. He doesn't lay claim to the flock by plastering his name all over the sheepshed, and he constantly discourages those who would call the flock by his name. He knows the flock belongs to Jesus.

With Curry Vaughan's arrival as pastor we have moved a step closer to God's highest will for this church. My task as overseer, or chief elder, is to give direction. Curry's task is to make sure you keep your eyes on Jesus. Your task is to draw closer to Him. Thus the church glorifies God.

THE TRUMPET, Publication #642700 is published monthly by Tabernacle Church, 1616 Ferndale Ave., Melbourne, FL 32935. Second class postage paid at Melbourne, FL.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Tabernacle Church, 1619 Ferndale Ave., Melbourne, FL 32935

A NEW PERSPECTIVE 02680

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Mr. & Mrs. James Buckingham
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Palm Bay FL 32907

More than a year ago I began to feel it was time to have a Sunday evening service

at the Tabernacle. We used to have services on Sunday evening. We filled the little building with enthusiastic people, many of whom came from other churches in the area who attended their own church on Sunday morning and then came to the Tab to participate in the free worship and ministry which we enjoyed.

Across the years, however, many of these people migrated to the Tab and became part of our permanent family. Others returned to their own churches and helped bring life there. Our purpose for the evening service abated and soon it was obvious we were having a Sunday evening service simply because it was Sunday evening. Since we were majoring on the home groups at that time (as we are now) we called off the Sunday evening service and suggested people stay home with their families or use the time for their home groups to meet.

About a year ago it became evident things had changed in the area. Our home groups have

multiplied with excellent ministry taking place on the personal level. At the same time thousands of people have moved into the Melbourne area who have never been exposed to the kind of ministry and worship we love at the Tab. Besides that, I have felt strongly that our pastor, Curry Vaughan, should be preaching at most of the morning services since they are basically pastoral in nature, with an emphasis on the local body.

That has freed me to get involved with a Sunday evening service, with a strong emphasis on ministering to the entire community through free worship and teaching. Although I shall continue to share the Sunday morning preaching duties with Curry I shall be majoring on the evening service. We have a large group of musicians, vocalists and instrumentalists, who are leading the worship time and God has freshened my heart with new teaching and preaching as we lead people into the walk of the Spirit. I urge you to be part of this each Sunday night at 7:00 p.m.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

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As the church grows in size, it becomes even more apparent that the staff cannot give personal ministry to everyone who needs it.

Indeed, the church staff has not been charged, primarily, with personal ministry. They are the "enablers." Their task is like that of a team coach--to help train the players, not to play the game for them. Of course, on occasion, these player-coaches will get out on the field. But their primary responsibility is to help the rest of us function as ministers--not to minister for us, or even to us.

It is at this point that we see God's wisdom in establishing home groups in the body. These groups, functioning as individual cells in the larger body, provide a place of individual ministry, fellowship, and healing. They are not meant to be teaching (or even worship) centers--although teaching and worship may occur. We receive excellent teaching and participate in superb corporate worship in our

Sunday assemblies. But because of the size of the crowds on Sunday--and because we are now divided into three groups (two on Sunday morning and again on Sunday night), our fellowship is at best superficial. And the ministry--either at the altar or in our seats--impersonal.

We have growing reports of people being healed, saved, delivered, and baptized in the Holy Spirit in the home groups. We also have reports of marriages which are being salvaged, children who are being prayed back into the Kingdom, lonely ones finding companionship and love, and men and women entering into deep koinonia--fellowship.

No groups are alike. Some are "closed." These are folks who have entered long term relationships. Others are "outreach" groups, welcoming in new people, then dividing to form more groups. Each group has its place in the body and I am thankful for all of them--especially the one I am part of.

I urge you to find your place in a home group at the Tab.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



Our two oldest daughters, Robin and Bonnie, didn't date much in high school. Both wait-

ed until they were students at Oral Roberts University before getting serious. They married fine young men they met at ORU. Robin and Jon now live in Palm Bay next to us and we look forward to Bonnie and Marion moving back from Tulsa this year.

Our youngest daughter, Sandy, walked a different path. She began dating Jerry Smith when she was in the 8th grade. It has been a stormy relationship fraught with tears, anger, and a lot of prayer--on our part, the part of our home group, and with Bill and Mary Smith. We did our best to separate them. They cooperated. We kept them from dating for a year in high school. Jerry left for Evangel College Sandy's senior year in high school. Then Sandy spent a year at ORU. When she returned to Melbourne to continue her education, Jerry was in the Coast Guard in New Orleans. Yet through it all they have remained deeply committed to each other. And they have grown. Emotionally, and best of all, spiritually. And both have had faith to wait.

Sandy told us last year she was submitted to us. She would not marry Jerry without our blessing. But she wanted us to know she felt God had ordained this marriage and she was willing to wait until her overly-protective parents could accept that as well.

I've learned some lessons in faith from watching them through these stormy years. We now celebrate with them for on Saturday, March 10, at 2:00 p.m. Sandy and Jerry will consecrate their vows at the Tabernacle. They've grown up here--we invite you to be with us, surrounding them with your love, on that day.



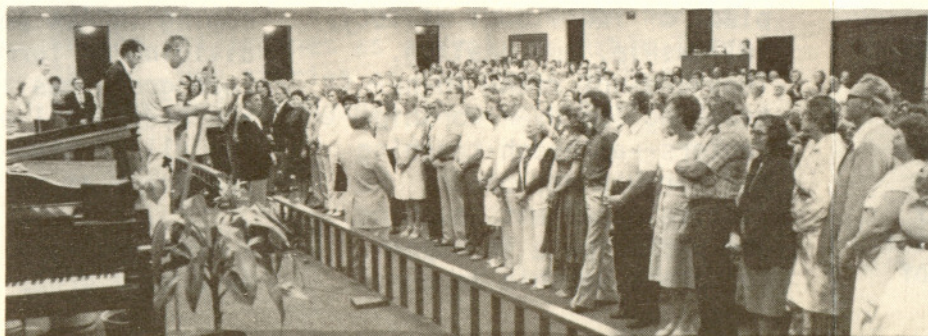
COMMISSIONING OF HOME GROUP LEADERS



ELDERS
 ↓
SENIOR PASTOR
 Curry Vaughan
 ↓
HOME GROUPS
DIRECTORS
 Don & Linda Lees



<u>Lees</u>	<u>Bauman</u>	<u>Chapman</u>	<u>Bourgeois</u>	<u>Barchie</u>	<u>Watson</u>	<u>Weaver</u>	<u>Saunders</u>	<u>Brooks</u>	<u>Norris</u>
Kiley	Bauman	Chapman	R. Smith	Barchie	Berrey	Anderson	Clift	Jenkins	Riffel
Kruger	Likens	Tufts	Frahm	Goodrich	Howard	Allenbaugh	Rowland	Chambers	Strongitharm
Bradley		Hitt	B. Smith		Slaughter			McKemy	Manning
Warner		Moore	Price		Bliss			Hillegonds	D. Smith
O'Brien/ Hanson		Crumley	Keesler		Erzinger				
					Finch				



UPDATE ON HOME GROUPS

DON LEES

When the present home group structure began in August 1982, God gave us a 3-fold purpose: to help people find Christ as their Savior and grow in relationship with Him, to build meaningful relationships with others, and to discover their spiritual gifts and use them to edify and build up the body of Christ.

As the groups began to function within the revised framework, we observed several things. Some group leaders discovered they weren't suited for that role and took their places in another part of the body where they could serve according to their gifts. Others emerged as leaders who had not thought they could fulfill that role.

Some groups had to go through the "sand-paper" stage, rubbing against each other, before meaningful relationships could begin. Then, working through difficult situations, relationships blossomed into close friendships.

The groups are becoming families. Each person has a special place. Together they seek to become the persons God intends for them to be.

Something beautiful transpired in leaders and overseers also. These, people who were as unqualified and ill-equipped as the fishermen Jesus chose, were being anointed by God and placed in spiritual authority in the groups.

Therefore the March 25 commissioning service was not a recognition of something that was going to start but a confirmation of what God had already set in motion.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

JAMIE BUCKINGHAM



In Gareth and Lynette, Alfred Tennyson tells of Gareth, the youngest son of Lot and Belli-

cent. Gareth wants to join his brothers at King Arthur's Court, searching for the Holy Grail. Bellicent, his mother, does not want to release him.

"Hast thou no pity on my loneliness," she wails. She reminds him that his father, Lot, is old and "lies like a log all but smouldered out."

The plea is the plea to keep things the way they used to be. Her youngest son has grown up. But it is so difficult to turn loose. She holds on, tugging with apron strings attached to his heart.

Both his brothers are following the king. Must he go too? If he will stay home she will arrange to let him hunt deer every day. She will find a beautiful princess for him to marry. She justifies her selfishness saying it is love that holds onto the past.

It is the cry of all of us who are faced with inevitable change. How we cling, so tenaciously, to the way things

were--listening to the voices of the Tempter who speaks through love and loved ones.

Gareth, however, who loves his mother, loves Truth even more. He knows what he must do, and dares to be strong.

O Mother,

How can you keep me tethered to you? Shame!

Man am I grown, and man's work must I do.

Follow the deer? Follow Christ, the King.

Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King--

Else, wherefore born?

I, too, struggle with change. The voices of Bellicent plead in love: "Why not leave things as they were?" Yet growth demands change. Those of us who follow the King have set our feet on what Robert Frost called "the road less traveled." It is a narrow road; a road of misunderstanding; a road of change.

The higher call leaves us no choice but to follow the King. Why else have we been born!

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A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



Last fall, in the jungle of Irian Jaya, I read a survey report by a team of Wycliffe Bible Translators who had just discovered a never-before-known tribe of people deep in the heart of the Indonesian jungle. These tribal people--who called themselves "Doa"--lived on a small river hundreds of miles from the nearest settlement. They had no alphabet, no written language, and had never been exposed to the outside world. They stayed alive by hunting with bows and arrows. Tragically, they had never heard about God, much less about His Son Jesus who had provided for them eternal life.

When I returned to the States I couldn't shake my burden for this small tribe (less than 300, I'm told) who lived in such spiritual darkness. I wrote Wycliffe headquarters in Huntington Beach to ask if anyone was praying on a regular basis for the Doas. You see, Wycliffe has a program whereby one can write, obtain the name of some Bibleless tribe someplace in the world (there are 3,600 such tribes) and agree to pray for them until someone takes them the

Word of God. My friend Betty Baptista, who heads up this program, wrote back that no one was praying for the Doas. In fact, since they had just been discovered, they weren't even in the various anthropology reports. She sent me a little card which I taped over my desk to remind me to pray daily for the Doa people--that one day they would have the Word of God in their own language.

Several weeks ago I was in California to speak to the combined boards of Wycliffe meeting in a retreat center in the high mountains above Los Angeles. I mentioned I was praying for the Doa people. At the close of the session, one of the board members from Indonesia came forward. He was excited. "Just last week," he said, "Peter and Mary Jane Munnings, Wycliffe members from Canada, entered the Doa village as translators." They were years ahead of schedule, but when doors opened they stepped forward.

To my knowledge I was the only one in the world praying for the Doa people. And my prayer was answered. I can't tell you how good it makes me feel. You should try it too.

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Sitting in the congregation with my wife and our squirming grandchildren these last Sundays has opened up a new world for me. It's been 27 years since I've been part of a church congregation. Oh, I've sat in services at conferences, but I've always been about to speak or just finished. But to get up on Sunday morning and "go to church" like any other Christian...well, it's been a big adjustment.

At first it was difficult. I wanted to jump up and take over as I've done for the last 17 years here at the Tab. But Curry has done a splendid job (either his jokes are getting better or I'm not as up-tight as I was when I was on the platform gritting my teeth), and I appreciate the times he's asked me to take charge of the worship. But over these last few Sundays, as I've become a worshiper rather than a worship leader, a listener rather than a speaker, one being fed rather than one feeding, I have picked up a different perspective.

For one, I've discovered it's difficult to get much out of a church service when you

have squiggly little ones on your lap. I've also realized how boring and time-consuming "announcements" are. I'm annoyed by those on the platform who whisper to each other during prayer times. And I look forward to those times when the Bible is opened, when an invitation is given for those who are hurting to come forward and kneel at the altar, when the worship reaches the place of high praise, and when an opportunity is given for those of us in the congregation to somehow participate in the ministry.

In short, the view from the pew is much different from the view from the pulpit.

When we begin our Sunday Evening Services on September 16 at 6:30 p.m., I intend to remember all this. I've enjoyed my time in the congregation and will continue to be part of it on Sunday morning when I'm here, sitting out there with my grandchildren, teaching them how to clap their hands and praise the Lord, and listening to Curry's good preaching. But I'm looking forward, more than I can say, to being "back in the pulpit" on Sunday night--with all you pew-sitters in mind as I stand to preach.

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JAMIE BUCKINGHAM



Even before Curry Vaughan arrived I knew that one day I would turn over

the operations of the church to his authority.

That day has now come.

This does not mean I am leaving the Tabernacle Church, nor does it mean I am going to spend more time away from home. In fact, to some degree I will be even more involved with the leadership--but only as an overseer and not in any pastoral capacities.

I have released to Curry full authority as the pastor of the church. That also means, and this will be the change most evident, that he will be in charge of the Sunday morning services. I am doing this out of a conviction that the man who pastors the flock--if he has the gift of preaching as Curry does--should also have prime time with them at the corporate gatherings. The only way this can be possible is for me to step off the platform on Sunday morning.

This will become effective the third Sunday in August.

Some people have interpreted this to mean I am leaving. Not so. As far as I can tell, God has told me I am to continue in oversight of the ministry, and to continue as the final authority. While Curry will be giving guidance to the staff of the church, I will continue to give leadership at the elder level. But I am moving up from president and chief operating officer to chairman of the board, from head coach to athletic director, from pastor to overseer or apostle.

While this is frightening, it is also a wonderful challenge I sense the Lord is going to open up a multitude of new ministries under the umbrella of "Tabernacle Ministries." The first of these will be a community-wide Sunday evening service which I will be conducting--beginning September 16. We are also moving strongly in the direction of providing a healing center for wounded pastors and weary missionaries. There is, on the horizon, a growing ministry to homeless children. And more.

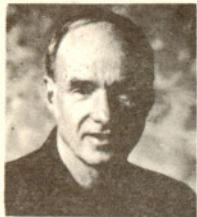
Hang on. The ship is only turning--not turning over.

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The Sunday night services are all I had prayed for --and more.

I am grateful for your enthusiasm. Much more, I am grateful for the obvious anointing of the Lord on the worship.

A couple of weeks ago I stood on the platform as Jimmy Smith and Jeff Reed (along with our growing orchestra) led in spirited praise. On one side of the auditorium a group of teenagers were dancing in the aisle. (Bruce Truitt has his gang sitting down front and they are adding LIFE!! to the services.) On the other side Pam Taylor, one of the counselors at the Hacienda Girls Ranch, kicked off her shoes and began to dance before the Lord. Suddenly four of the little Hacienda girls--all about 8 years old--joined hands in a circle around her, all laughing and dancing and clapping as they praised the Lord freely.

"Let all that is within me bless His holy name..."

I realize we have people coming to the services who have never been exposed to "free worship"--the kind where you praise the Lord with your

body. But I am convinced there is within every born-again soul a dancing spirit. And even if your body is too old, or your muscles are too uncoordinated, or you're jammed in the chairs between two folks in a body cast, you can still let your heart dance along with these young people who are worshipping in utter abandonment--without inhibition.

For years church musicians wrote music which was calibrated to keep people from dancing. It was dour, mournful, or written to a cadence designed to keep the foot from patting and the hand from clapping. Now the Holy Spirit is giving the church new songs. Now we can express our joy and praise through the dance as well as through our lips.

Gypsy Smith, the great old evangelist, used to say, "God planted me in a field. Don't try to put me in a flower pot." I think of that often when I'm singing. My voice teacher used to say, "Sing from the diaphragm." Now I'm singing from the heart. Come join us on Sunday nights. It's fun.

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MARRIAGE IS FOREVER

jackie buckingham

When Jamie and I married, more than 30 years ago in the First Baptist Church of Vero Beach, Florida, our pastor, C. E. Rogers, used a special phrase in the wedding ceremony. He warned us not to enter into marriage "lightly and unadvisedly." At that time I had no more idea what that meant than I knew what it meant when I repeated "hereto I plight thee my troth."

But looking back on all those years--filled with tumult and triumph--I realize why every young couple should approach marriage seriously. Because it is forever.

That came to mind last Saturday morning as I listened to Jamie read the wedding vows for our oldest son, Bruce. Although he didn't ask Michele to "plight her troth," he did use Brother Rogers' phrase--reminding them not to enter into marriage "lightly or unadvisedly."

I'm glad Bruce decided to wait until he was 29 years old to get married. There was a period in his life when I was afraid he would marry too soon. Even after he graduated from Oral Roberts University and went to work for Congressman Bill Nelson, we were "advising" him to hold off on marriage. Then, after he moved to Washington, D.C., we were afraid he might not marry at all. The rest of the children grew up and married. Robin and Bonnie married young men they met at ORU. Tim and Sandy married their high school sweethearts. The house was filling up with grandchildren, and still our firstborn remained single.

Then, the night of Sandy's wedding back in March of this year, Bruce announced that he and Michele wanted to plan for a September wedding. We were pleased. Bill Nelson had told Bruce that if he waited to get married--as he had done--he would find someone as good as Grace. Grace said she was praying that Bruce would wait for just the right girl.

Looking at Michele, standing beside Bruce as they exchanged their vows, I breathed a prayer of thanksgiving. Grace's prayer, and my prayer, and the prayers of a lot of friends had been answered. Michele is the "right" woman. Not only do they have a lot in common--both work for congressmen, both have a love for writing, both are athletic, both love the Lord deeply--but I believe God had them in store (they say storage) for each other.

I'm glad they waited, because marriage is forever.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



The ordination of Bernie May on Dec. 2 is something of a milestone for the Tabernacle.

Bernie has had a long and distinguished career in the ministry--first as a jungle pilot in the Amazon regions of South America, later as Executive Director for the Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS), and more recently as Director of the U.S. Division of Wycliffe Bible Translators--the largest missionary organization in the world.

For a number of years I have worked closely with Bernie. Our friendship started when I was writing Into the Glory, the story of the ministry of JAARS. It has continued across the years as I have served as a personal consultant, advisor and sometimes co-pilot with this special friend. In fact, as I count those men in my life who have wrought the most profound influence, Bernie stands right at the top of the list.

Gradually that relationship has spread to others in this body. Several years ago our home group "adopted" Bernie

and Nancy--along with their three boys, Bern Jr., Bob and Dan--as sort of ex officio members of the group. Across the years a number of Bernie's associates--members of Wycliffe and JAARS--have "joined" our church. These are part of our "active missionary" staff--and as such are counted as extensions of our staff. Bernie, however, is the first one to be actually ordained by this body (although the others are eligible if they so desire).

Our elders realize that ordination is simply recognizing what God has already done. In Bernie's case his life speaks for itself--and the fact he heads up what I believe is the greatest missionary task force in the history of the world--a group of more than 5,000 highly trained and committed men and women dedicated to translating the Bible into every language on the planet--makes his ordination a time of humble celebration.

Usually we look at ordination as a time of "honoring" a man for something God has called him to do. In this case I feel the Tabernacle Church is the one honored, for it allows us to link even closer with the Spirit-anointed ministry of Wycliffe Bible Translators.

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