

BUCKINGHAM

REPORT

AN IN-DEPTH CRITIQUE OF THE ISSUES, PEOPLE & EVENTS AFFECTING TODAY'S CHRISTIAN LEADERS

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Recently someone asked me to talk about the "secrets of my success" as a pastor and communicator.

I have no secrets—and I am no more successful than anyone else who is obeying God. The principles of success, however, are available to all of us. The wise man simply sorts them out and disciplines himself in priorities.

Here are seven of those principles I use in my daily life. I could list a dozen others. But these will apply to you, no matter what your ministry is.

1. Never go in debt for anything which does not appreciate in value. In these days, the only things which are appreciating in value are houses, land and businesses. Everything else depreciates the moment you take it out of the store. Unless you've just taken a job as a ditch-digger and need to borrow money to buy a shovel, stay out of debt. The only legitimate use of a credit card is to keep from carrying cash. If you can't pay it off at the end of the month, don't charge it.

2. Never work more than half a day at a time. This can be either the first 12 hours of the day or the second 12 hours.

3. Treat everyone—whether they like you or not—as if they are about to name you in their will. A wealthy friend once told me his two secrets of running a successful business:

1) Never write a nasty note on company stationery; 2) Always smile at the customer. I have a little sign I can see on my wall as I am writing this. It's a phrase taken from something I wrote years ago which a friend immortalized in needlepoint: "It's better to be kind than right." Nowhere in the Bible does God command us to be right. But He does command us to be kind, tenderhearted and forgiving. When Oral Roberts went on Larry King's television show back in August and publicly apologized to Jimmy Swaggart for attacking him during the early days of the PTL scandal, my estimation for him shot up a hundred times. Anyone can criticize. It takes a big man to say, "I was wrong."

4. Listen to what people are saying—even if they are criticizing you. In every criticism there is a nugget of truth. I recommend my book *Coping With Criticism* (Bridge Publishers) as the classic in this field.

5. Look people straight in the eye. Make them feel important. Don't glance at your watch during the conversation. It was my dad who taught me, as a boy, how to shake hands. "Take the initiative," he used to say. "Grab his hand before he grabs yours. That gives you the better position. Hold his hand firmly. If he's a friend, grasp it with both hands. Look him straight in the eye—never at his mouth, chin or feet. Force him to look at you, hold his eye and speak directly. That puts you in control."

6. Submit to your elders, even if they ask you to do something you find distasteful. The major mistakes I've made have happened because I didn't listen to godly associates.

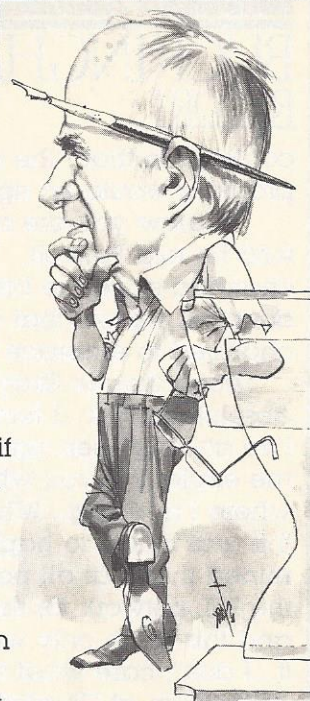
7. Never conceal anything—especially your feelings and your weaknesses—from your spouse.

Editor's Note: *The following was written before Jerry Falwell resigned as chairman of PTL on Oct. 8, just days before this went to press.*

PTL'S TANGLED WEB

Lies. Deceptions. Half truths. It's all coming to the surface. Sir Walter Scott said it best: "O what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."

I have in my possession the transcription of a sermon preached by Bob Gray, fundamentalist pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, on April 26. Gray, saying he was "shocked" on learning that his good friend, Jerry Falwell, had taken over PTL, flew to Lynchburg to get the story firsthand. Gray was disturbed that Falwell was sending out letters asking for money to save PTL. He challenged Falwell's statement on a televised news



Jamie Buckingham

DRAWING BY BRUCE STARK

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conference that "the charismatic influence and program would go right on."

"I know you are not charismatic," Gray said he told Falwell, "and unless you've changed since the last time we talked on your doctrine, I know that you certainly have not changed to embrace the charismatic position."

According to Gray, Falwell replied, "You're absolutely right...I haven't changed one iota. I've always been against it and I still am...Let me explain to you what my motive is and where I'm going...When I received word that this was about to happen," he said, "I determined that if at all possible I would try to get the PTL network for the Old Time Gospel Hour and this is the only way I felt like I could do it...I don't care what happens to the country club down at Charlotte nor the jamboree stuff that goes on there...I'm only interested in the PTL cable network."

Gray went ahead to quote Falwell who said he planned to expose Jim Bakker "not only for immorality with a woman but homosexual immorality...I plan to fire 1,600 workers on Tuesday. Probably it will be in bankruptcy before too long and the sooner the better...all I want out of it is the cable network for the Lord."

Gray remonstrated with Falwell, saying he had confused his fundamentalist supporters. Falwell reiterated that he was firmly opposed to the charismatic movement and that the application blanks for his Liberty University clearly ask each student, "Do you believe in speaking in tongues and have you ever spoken in tongues?"

"And if a person says yes, they don't get enrolled in Liberty University," Falwell said.

Gray said Falwell "also said that he thinks the sooner the organization goes bankrupt, the better off it will be because the assets will then be auctioned and disposed of and the network will then be free for purchase and they hope to purchase it and go on from there."

I admire Gray for his consistency and his unwillingness to buy into the Falwell charade. Gray told his congregation: "I love Dr. Falwell. He's still my dear friend. But until this issue is clear, I hope you'll not send money."

The issue is far from clear. In September PTL supporters—primarily charismatics—once again "saved" the ministry from destruction by sending money. Falwell, outdoing even Jim Bakker's theatrics, put on a full dress suit and came down the water slide in "appreciation" for the support of charismatics.

Whom can you believe? Whom can you respect? Who is like Jesus anymore?

In the meantime, I heard from an attorney representing Richard Dortch's former assistant. In April, when I asked Dortch how the legal charges sent by Paul Roper, who represented Jessica Hahn, got out of Dortch's briefcase and became public knowledge, Dortch told me the documents were stolen "by his former aide at PTL." I quoted Dortch in my July/August issue. At that time I did not know the name of Dortch's former aide.

Now I discover, through his attorney, that the former aide, now working as an associate pastor in an Assemblies of God church feels I maligned him. "Everybody" he said, "knows you were talking about me."

I proposed he had an exalted view of himself, saying I didn't even know I was talking about him until I received his lawyer's letter. I suggested we let the matter drop and move on to better things. However, in fairness to "the former aide" I want to state he categorically denies releasing any information to anyone except the Assemblies of God officials. He was the one who handled Paul Roper's charges in behalf of Jessica Hahn when they first arrived by mail at PTL in January 1985. He says he gave them to Richard Dortch and has not seen them since. Saying he was "sickened" by all that was going on, the aide resigned in July 1985. He says he took no documents with him and denies revealing information to the *Charlotte Observer*. I checked with the *Observer* but they were not free to release the names of their sources. In May 1986, the former aide says he felt God wanted him to return to South Carolina and confront Richard Dortch about the entire scandal. He says he did not speak to anyone else until asked by the Assemblies of God earlier this year to give testimony.

BEING YOUR OWN BOSS

So you want to be a professional writer (singer, artist, evangelist, consultant, musician and so on).

Last year more than 600,000 people struck out on their own to go into some kind of entrepreneur business. Some were men and women who wanted to go into "full-time ministry." Quite apart from the "call of God," which is mandatory for the Christian, there are some other tough questions you should ask yourself before joining this marathon of people who want to work for themselves.

Before you strike out on your own, consider these points.

1. Are you risking everything you have?

While there are those people to whom the Holy Spirit says, "Lay down your nets and I will make you fishers of men," it is wise to remember that even those early apostles maintained a reserve. They did not sell their nets nor their fishing boats. Nor did they give up their business contracts.

I began my writing career as a moonlight venture. I am grateful I did not give up my career with my church, but let both grow side by side. During the lean years, when my books did not sell, my church supported me. In the rich years, when my books sold abundantly, I was able to support my church. I know only two or three *free-lance* writers who are able to make a living from their writing. The rest, wisely, have a back-up income. Low-risk moonlighting is a good way to test out an idea rather than throw all caution to the winds and have to crawl back home at a later date saying you acted in haste.

This is not to say you should not "sell all" and follow Jesus. In fact, most of history's really substantial ministries were started by people who did just that. I am simply saying, before you do—count the cost.

2. *How disciplined are you?* Face it, a lot of people are not disciplined enough to work for themselves. They need someone telling them when to come to work and what kind of work to do. I get up early and go to my word processor, seldom take a day off, give full time to leading my church while working full time as a writer—usually on several projects at the same time. I do this not because I am forced by outside pressures, but because of many years of discipline.

Lack of discipline does not exclude you from entrepreneurship, however. The fact you are impulsive could be the source of your initial success. Once you are underway, however, if you do not surround yourself with detail people who can fill in your broad strokes, you'll quickly bog down in your visions and wind up in the boneyard filled with the sad remains of other dreamers who dared not let others do their work for them.

3. *What is your idea of maximum achievement?* I remember the disillusionment I felt when I walked on my seminary campus 33 years ago and discovered a huge number of students were not there to learn. Those same students, now in various places of ministry, are still with us. These are the people who don't want to devote all their time to maximum achievement—who are satisfied just to "get by." None of them ever achieves the maximum. They may share my philosophy of

ministry, but they do not share my personal goals. They want a nine-to-five job. They jealously guard their days off, grumble if they are called on to work overtime and are living for retirement. They are like kids in school whose favorite subject is recess. They do well as staff members in a church, but they will never reach the top of the mountain, preferring to stop and play along the way to the more arduous task of reaching the summit. There's room in church leadership for both kinds of individuals. But not at the top.

4. *Are you a number one or a number two man?* It is possible to attain maximum achievement working for someone else. For instance, for me to achieve what I want to as a magazine columnist, I must work within the magazine organization, submitting my work to the various restrictions laid down by my editors and publisher. I know both my limitations and my gifts. To try to achieve what I want to do by publishing my own magazine would be awesome. I'd never achieve my goal as a columnist, analyst and feature writer. If you have a brilliant idea for ministry, evangelism or mass communication, you are far better off working inside your church than hanging out your own shingle and going it alone.

5. *Are you willing to innovate?* My philosophy professor used to remind his class that when you invent the car you also invent a car wreck. That means you not only need automobile designers, but you also need mechanics, body repairmen and junk yards—not to mention hospitals and insurance companies.

In 1951 Bette Nesmith was an executive secretary at a major Texas bank. She was having to support herself and her 9-year-old son. That was the year her boss gave her an electric typewriter. With the typewriter came the typo—and electricity increased the errors proportionately. Bette decided to innovate. She took some water-based paint, mixed it with a coloring agent so it would blend with her stationery and came up with a correction fluid. Other employees asked for the liquid. In 1956 she quit the bank and started making and selling her product full time out of her garage. The business evolved first statewide, then nationwide. She called it Liquid Paper. In 1979 she sold out to the Gillette Company—for \$47.5 million.

6. *After you've achieved, what's next?* There are a number of one-shot opportunities out there that can make you money, achieve your goal or fulfill your dream. But after you've done that, are you willing to drop back and do

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the mundane until another one-shot opportunity appears? If you are not willing to wash the communion glasses after that moment of eucharistic elation at the high altar, you'll never make it in the ministry.

7. *Are you a hero or a winner?* Of the 410,000 millionaires in the United States, 75 percent are more than 50 years old. Of these, nearly all say they made their fortunes by working seven days a week for 20 or 30 years in a relatively humdrum business.

The other 25 percent either inherited their money (from their fathers, who worked 20 to 30 years in a humdrum business) or became rich overnight by striking oil or selling something the public wanted.

Compared with the overnight millionaires, the others are more than heroes—they are winners.

Scott Hamilton, Olympic men's figure-skating champion, was interviewed the night before the finals in the last Winter Olympics. "What if you lose tomorrow?" the interviewer asked.

"I can't lose," Hamilton replied. "I've already won everything there is to win. All I can do is win more."

That's the reply of a winner—one who has paid the price.

WHAT IS MINISTRY?

In a recent leadership conference in Seattle, Jerry Cook asked the group for a definition of ministry. I was interested in the answers as pastors from several denominations attempted to define their call. Off-the-cuff definitions were concepts such as: "caring for people," "serving people," "exercising my gifts." The group finally settled on "people meeting the needs of people in Jesus' name."

I noticed, however, that all the definitions dealt with horizontal ministry—and none with vertical ministry. All definitions had people as the object of ministry rather than God. Perhaps in a more liturgical group that would have been different, but it struck me that most of us relate ministry as something we do toward people, rather than toward God. When I raised the question most of the men had difficulty catching the concept that our primary call to ministry may be to minister to God, rather than to people—that there can be no adequate ministry to people until we have learned to minister to God.

What is the primary role of pastoral ministry? Should the pastor be primarily a prophet, with

his back to God and his face to the people—speaking the word of God; or is he to be a priest, with his back to the people and his face to God—ministering to the Father and interceding for the flock? Is it not true that ministry must be in terms of BEING before it can be discussed in terms of DOING? What is a "ministering church"? What is required of each of us when it comes to personal ministry? Are there certain things God requires of all of us? Should each of us have a stash of food, clothing and money which we use to help the poor? How much time do we actually spend in ministering toward God? How often should we, personally, receive the Eucharist? How much time do we spend in personal worship and praise? What actually constitutes "ministry to the Lord"? It should make an interesting study, and I suggest you and your staff or elders take time apart to search the Scriptures and discuss the subject.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

ASSOCIATION WITH SUCCESSFUL MEN

Not all pastors are eager to hobnob with the bigwigs. Some are intimidated by meetings in which the TV personalities and big-name pastors dominate the scene. Such men prefer to stay at home. Here they are secure among people they know, who look up to them. Attending a meeting and watching the Jack Hayfords and Karl Straders, the Adrian Rogerses and Pat Robertsons talk to each other—while they play the role of wallflower at the school dance—is not their idea of having a good time.

Some pastors don't want to leave the nest. They're more comfortable hanging out with their staff and church members than with other ministers who may be considered "more successful" because of the size of their churches or their public exposure. Such devoted attention to subordinates will instill loyalty ("Our pastor would rather associate with us than with Billy Graham."), but when the pastor is compensating for fear of, or hostility toward, those he deems more successful, he or she may also instill a hostile, paranoid attitude in the hearts of his subordinates toward these same people—and the institutions they represent.

Kenneth Copeland

One elder proudly told me his pastor did not attend the National Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, this year because Kenneth Copeland was a primary speaker. "We," the elder said—totally identifying with his pastor—"do not agree with Copeland's

theology." When I said I didn't agree with all his theology either, the man was flustered. Then why, as president of the NLC, would I invite Copeland, or any television preacher, to speak? He was unable to understand that learning demands we listen to those who have a different approach. If all we do is listen to those with whom we agree, we'll never grow. He was even more confused when I told him I had learned something profound listening to Copeland at the conference.

This really blew him away. "But I've read material you've written, criticizing the lavish life-styles of television preachers."

"First of all," I told him, "I have no personal knowledge of Ken Copeland's life-style. I've never been in his house. I've never examined his bank book. The same is true with Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart and Bob Schuller. However, even if they were wasting God's money (and I do not believe they are), that's no reason I should not listen to them. I've learned much from all these men."

When I asked him if he had ever met or heard any of these men speak in person, he confessed he had not. All he could say was he disagreed with the "health and wealth" theology of "television preachers." His entire opinion had been shaped by his pastor's attitude. This hostile attitude, I later discovered, was not limited to television preachers but was toward all successful men—businessmen as well as pastors. As a result his entire church had developed a hostile attitude not only toward successful men—but toward success. And it all stemmed from the pastor's insecurity and his inability to associate with those who had achieved numerical and financial success. Such an attitude was ironic, because in subsequent conversation with the pastor I discovered he was not only insecure but filled with lust for the success which others had attained but always seemed to elude him.

Some pastors have trouble dealing with successful peers because such men take on the role of authority figures and remind them of harsh or demanding parents. Some feel insecure or inadequate, in which case they'll see peers as rivals and superiors as critics.

Filling a Personal Need

Some leaders rely on their subordinates to fulfill a strong need for affection and approval—which they cannot get from those who have moved up the scale of worldly success where they form certain cliques—much as the royalty who only associate with other royalty, and the landed gentry who belong to exclusive clubs which do not allow admission

to persons of "lesser stature."

One youth director confessed he did not enjoy staff meetings—preferring to spend the time with his youth council which was composed of high school and college kids. At the staff meeting he felt insecure. He was never able to enter into the subject discussed. He felt the pastor looked down on him as a kid himself—because he was the youngest member of the staff and the only one without a seminary education. But at the meetings of the youth council he was king. The kids looked up to him, fulfilling a deep need in his life.

When any leader spends too much time with subordinates, however, he becomes isolated from the politics (and I use that word in its classic rather than vulgar sense) of the kingdom of God. One of the obligations of leadership is to touch both the personalities and issues on the larger scale and translate them to the people who need (and want) to be informed for the sake of spiritual growth. This allows the leader to return from a meeting where he has hobnobbed with the "shakers and the movers" and interpret to his people what is going on in the broader kingdom of God. To do less is actually to encourage narrowness—as the pastor had done with his church by attacking Ken Copeland.

Help Yourself

How do you break out of this net of insecurity?

Start out by forcing yourself to attend conferences where you feel uncomfortable because the others are more successful or live a different life-style. In short, learn to assert yourself. Every conference I attend I am always approached by at least one person who introduces himself and says, "May I sit with you at lunch (or breakfast, or dinner, or in a group prayer session)? I promise not to monopolize your conversation, but I want to learn and the only way I can do that is to be around people like you."

I encourage men like this, and the only times I refuse are when I am scheduled to use that time to discuss confidential matters. Most successful leaders feel the same. We do not view these conferences as times when our exclusive clubs gather. We are eager to reach out and share our lives with others who are willing to break through the wall of intimidation (which is a false wall erected by Satan) and express a desire to expand their concepts of the kingdom.

At a ministers' meeting in Tulsa recently, Jackie and I were having breakfast in the hotel coffee shop. We had empty seats at the table. I

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looked around until I saw a couple waiting to eat. I went over, introduced myself and asked if they would like to join us. They were honored and we were blessed to be able to share their lives.

Assertiveness is imperative to growth. It's much easier to give in to the urge to withdraw into your cocoon and stay home where you feel secure. Once you are acquainted with others who have larger ministries—that is, TV personalities, pastors of larger churches, heads of national and international ministries—you discover they are no better or wiser than you. Granted, they may have mastered certain principles you are striving for, they may have a broader knowledge of the activity of the Holy Spirit, and they may have a background of experience which could save you years of struggle and pain—but they are just like you. Often, you'll discover, they are not nearly as mature spiritually. They may be lonely, insecure, biblically illiterate or extremely narrow in their understanding of God. But you can learn from them if you are willing to break through your own insecurities and assert yourself in their presence.

One thing this necessitates, however. Learning firsthand who some of these people are, you will now have to fight the urge to expose their flaws (as you see them) to your subordinates or your church members. Exposing flaws may raise you in the eyes of some (as the elder admired his pastor who opposed all television preachers) but it retards your own spiritual growth and quenches the flow of the Holy Spirit through you into your church.

I remember the first "Word/Faith" conference I attended. I would not have gone had I not been invited to speak. I disapproved (or thought I disapproved) of the life-style of the leaders of this particular movement—private jet airplanes, BMWs and Mercedes automobiles, portable telephones in attache cases, enough gold bracelets and diamond rings to feed the hungry for a year. Yet I went with an open mind, met the men and their wives, and was blessed. My horizons were expanded. Even though I have not (and pray to God I am never even tempted to) adopted that life-style, I returned home with an enlarged understanding and a far less critical attitude. As a result, I was able to help my people with their understanding of this life-style on the part of others.

In short, I recommend every pastor attend at least one—better, two—leadership conference

each year. Exposure to men and women who operate at different levels of kingdom activity will be immensely helpful to your own ministry—even if you don't do anything but sit and listen at the conference.

Bottom line: By meeting these "successful" men you will also discover something you have suspected but would have never learned had you not met them personally: "Success" has nothing to do with the size of a ministry. The only successful men are those who obey God and serve Him faithfully wherever He puts them.

Helping Your Subordinates

How can you go about helping your staff members who suffer this same intimidation? Why not start by spelling out (in performance appraisal and in behavioral job description) how each staff member is expected to interact with peers, superiors and subordinates—including how much interaction with subordinates is too much. A youth director, for instance, is in for trouble if he spends an inordinate amount of time with his kids. The same is true if your singles' minister never associates with married couples, or your minister of music spends all his time with choir members rather than large hunks of time with people who don't sing—as well as staff members.

Point out that if the staff person really wants to help the folks he is working with, he should establish contacts with a broader circle of ministers—not only at the staff level but on a national and international level as well. Here he will get resources, advice and even opportunities for advancement and ministry for those with whom he is working. The youth director who attends a national leadership conference will make contacts which might benefit some of his kids who want to go to Bible school, enter the ministry or perhaps go to the mission field.

Your job, as local leader, is to encourage your staff to get out and attend a few leadership or professional conferences. You should also help the withdrawn staff member to know his peers and superiors better. He simply may not know where to start. Include him in a few meetings that he might not ordinarily attend. Discuss his feelings about peers and various "successful" ministry heads. If possible, disabuse him of any false notions about these leaders and their ministries. Finally, help him plan for the sense of abandonment some of his subordinates will feel as he focuses attention on the larger scene, and the guilt he will feel, as his behavior changes.

