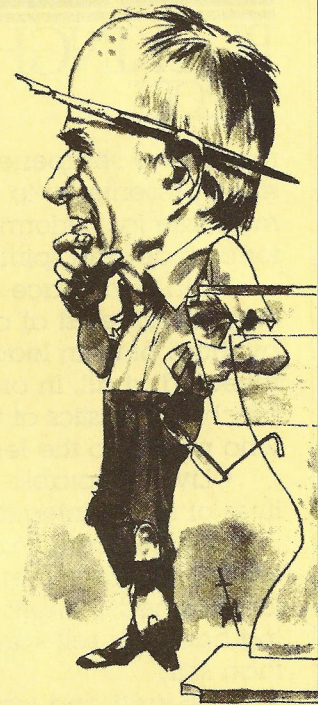


# BUCKINGHAM

## REPORT

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



### AMERICAN BELIEVERS AND SOUTH AFRICA

In his latest blast against his own countrymen, South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu is urging Western nations to break diplomatic relations with South Africa and expel its diplomats. Fired by our liberal press and strong statements by politicians such as Ted Kennedy, many American Christians have been duped into believing that current sanctions by the United States are justified.

While the practice of apartheid is evil, most knowledgeable Christians in South Africa—both black and white—believe political and religious leaders are working hard to correct the complex and highly volatile situation.

"Just as a Pentecostal pastor would not want a Roman Catholic bishop coming into his church and telling him what was wrong—and splitting his flock—so we South Africans who despise apartheid prefer to work out our own problems," commented one black leader (who asked not to be named for fear of reprisals against his family by militant blacks whom he says are incited by Tutu's rhetoric).

"Tutu has done a lot of good inside South Africa by putting pressure on government leaders. However, when he travels abroad—and asks foreign governments to put pressure on us—he harms our economy and brings horrible suffering to the poor. It's as though he has bought the Communist line that it's okay for this generation to suffer and die as long as it benefits the Party."

Now touring the United States, this same man claims that sanctions, which force all U.S.-based industry to pull out of South Africa, are hurting only the poor—many of whom are believers. By closing down industrial plants and cutting off exports, hundreds of thousands have been forced out of work—driving them back into their "home country" ghettos where the fires of crime and lawlessness are fanned by idle minds and desperate people.

Last year when Derek Crumpton, a charismatic Anglican, came to the United States to try

to counteract some of Tutu's statements and present the plight of the poor Christians in South Africa, he was not received in many American churches.

"We cannot afford to get involved in foreign politics," one pastor told me. (Ironically, that same pastor was busily involved in supporting a certain candidate for U.S. president.) Many churches, it seems, have bought the line fed them by the liberal press that South Africa is a "terrorist" nation.

Although apartheid is evil, imposing sanctions on those who are trying to work out their own problems is equally bad. American Christians need to recognize Tutu's leftist leanings, stop believing the slanted views of the media, and start listening to the sane but desperate statements coming from the genuine spiritual leaders of the nation. One look at what has happened over the last 10 years in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), where Marxism is now in full control, should convince us that it is possible for even prosperous Christian nations to fall to godless powers.

### CODE OF ETHICS

Last fall I realized that the leadership in our church—not only staff but home-church leaders and the heads of various ministries and committees—had never been told exactly what was expected of them. All had job descriptions of sorts, and all knew to whom they reported. But as their spiritual leader I had never spelled out what I felt God expected of them in the performance of their duties. By "performance" I mean spirit, attitude, behavior and Christian example. Taking my cue from McDonnell Douglas, which has a code of ethics for all employees, I drew up a "code" for our leadership. At one of our monthly half-day staff

Jamie Buckingham

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retreats we sharpened the language and have since presented it to our leadership—not as a mandate for performance, but as a guideline for attitude and spirit. Here it is.

Truth and Grace exist in the individual or they do not exist at all. They must be revealed by those of us in leadership or they will not be revealed at all. In order for Truth and Grace to be characteristics of the Tabernacle Church, we who make up the leadership will strive to:

- Live honorable and Christ-exemplifying lives of moral integrity and biblical ethics.
- Be dedicated to serving, rather than being served; washing feet rather than having our feet washed; honoring others rather than seeking honor for self—always counting others better than self.
- Be kind and forgiving, honest and trustworthy in all relationships.
- Be cheerful, prompt and reliable in carrying out assignments and responsibilities.
- Hold one another in high esteem—keeping confidences and refusing to speak evil of each other even to our friends.
- Be cooperative and constructive in all work undertaken.
- Be fair and considerate in our treatment of each other and all other persons regardless of worldly status.
- Be law-abiding in all our activities; and to abide by the Spirit of Christ when law and conscience are in conflict.
- Accomplish all tasks with excellence.
- Be economical in utilizing church resources—remembering each penny has been given sacrificially by others to God.
- Dedicate ourselves in our words, deeds and finances to the Tabernacle Church as our primary expression of corporate service to God.
- Cheerfully submit to our spiritual and managerial authorities, yet never hesitate to speak the truth in love to one another regardless of status or rank in the church structure.
- Graciously step down from leadership rather than be disloyal to our spiritual authorities.

Living lives of truth and grace requires hard work, personal sacrifice, courage and difficult choices. Consultation between leaders and supervisors will sometimes be necessary to determine a proper course of action. Integrity and ethics may sometimes require us to forgo certain programs, goals and/or personal oppor-

tunities. In God's economy, however, both we and the kingdom will be better served when we do what is right rather than what is expedient.

### HIRING A NEW MAN

In the April 1988 issue of *Success* magazine, Harvey Mackay, author of *Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive* (William Morrow & Co.), talks from a straight industry perspective on his technique in hiring new people. Mackay, the scrappy CEO of the Mackay Envelope Corp., says hiring the right people is the greatest talent a leader can have. Good people do good work, lousy people don't.

While Mackay would not list "the call of God" or "the anointing of the Holy Spirit" as a prerequisite for hiring a staff member—and there is no evidence he prays before making such a decision—his other principles are sound. We need to be wise as serpents and learn from the world.

Mackay says his firm, which did \$35 million in sales last year, may take 30 days to two years to hire a new man. They can afford to take a long time because they plan their needs. Also, their selection process is so rigorous—getting hired by Mackay is like a battlefield commission—that the retention rate is above 80 percent. Few churches can do that well.

Here are Mackay's hiring procedures:

1. Preliminary personnel interview.
2. Follow-up interviews with six to eight managers, who make detailed hire or reject recommendations.
3. Mackay talks personally with the candidate. Or rather, he listens while the candidate talks.
4. The candidate and Mackay talk by telephone, since phone conversation is a big part of the sales business.
5. Mackay calls some outside sources in the industry who know the candidate, or ought to.
6. Mackay interviews him at home with his family. He wants to see his values at work.
7. He socializes with him and his spouse at the theater or concert. It's crucial in sales to be socially skillful.
8. The candidate talks briefly to a few of Mackay's peers at other companies.
9. Mackay brings the candidate in for an interview with someone he considers to be a "master" at the job the candidate is applying for. For instance, if he's hiring a new controller or an executive secretary, he brings the

candidate before the top controller or executive secretary in the city. The candidate must pass muster with the master.

10. The candidate talks with Mackay's industrial psychologist. This is primarily for information to be used in helping the person fit into his new role and to allow his supervisor to understand certain personality quirks. This interview, while not binding, is enlightening.

According to Mackay the acid test in hiring a new man is: How would you feel if he worked for your competition?

## IDOLS IN THE CHURCH

Are you encouraging idolatry in your church? Many pastors do. Not that they ask people to bow down to idols, but they allow themselves—or some popular staff member—to become an object of adoration.

Pastors must learn the difference between an icon and an idol. An icon is an object which points beyond itself. In the early churches, men used icons to remind them of truth. These statues, paintings and mosaics were not intended to be objects of worship, but were designed to tell a story, to convey a message, to point the viewer to a deeper dimension. However, the icons quickly became idols. The eye of the viewer seldom went beyond the beauty of the icon. Perhaps this is the reason God forbids "graven images," for a picture of Jesus, or a statue of Mary, can quickly become an idol.

In the past the reformers were often called "iconoclasts"—those who pulled down the icons. Despite the original purpose of the icons, they often became idols in the eyes of the people—objects of worship rather than reminders to worship.

We see it today in people's reverence of the Bible. I remember the day I stood in the pulpit and played the role of the iconoclast. I was decrying "bibliolatry"—worship of the Bible. I wanted to call people to the God of the Bible, for many had made the Bible a god. As the old hymn writer said, in what must have sounded like heresy in his day (and still does to many), "Beyond thy sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord; my Spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word." So I took an old Bible and began ripping the pages out of it, throwing it to the floor to demonstrate it was only a book—not a sacred idol. Some of the people were shocked, offended and infuriated. I had pulled down their idol.

We see it in music when people begin worshipping the song. Most so-called worship choruses—and many gospel songs—are not wor-

ship songs. They're not sung to God. Rather they are songs about God. Or songs about events. Some are exhortations. Or explanations. How many times have I stood watching a crowd—their eyes closed in ecstasy, their hands raised, tears streaming down their cheeks—singing, "There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place.... There's a sweet expression on each face"? That's not worship. There's nothing in that chorus which is directed toward God. The song becomes an end in itself—an object of worship.

I do not know a single pastor or Christian leader who has deliberately set himself up to be an idol—an object of people's worship and affection. But I know of many instances where this has happened. Some leaders are so powerful, successful and influential that they are central to their church or organization. It's not unusual for their church—even though it has a formal name—to be called by the name of the leader. They have made, or allowed themselves to become, indispensable to the organization. As such a true successor is virtually impossible to have. When the pastor dies or leaves, the church dies, or the people leave (for their attraction was to him—not the body), or it goes through a wrenching time of leadership crisis.

Pity the next man who takes over—although the one that follows may finally pull the thing back together.

Other pastors stand for ideas or values with which their people identify. Such a pastor, while not denying his call or his mantle of single leadership, involves many others in the ministry. He works hard at making himself *dispensable*. He is constantly paving the way for a successor—but one who embodies his ideals, for he does not want his dream to die, only change and expand.

We see it in politics and business. Ronald Reagan never saw himself as a permanent resident of the White House. Much of his time was spent grooming his successor—one who would, hopefully, continue his policies. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, wore the presidency as ancient monarchs wore the divine right of kings. Turmoil followed his leaving.

We see that same idolatry at Chrysler Corporation, where the board may one day regret allowing Lee Iacocca to promote himself into the position of an automotive deity. In the eyes of most people Iacocca *is* Chrysler.

I admire men like James Dobson who have built a team. Despite Dobson's centrality to his ministry, "Focus on the Family" is far more than

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one man. Oral Roberts, who many feel has built a one-man empire, is now wisely distributing responsibility and authority to younger leaders in his organization. He knows how easy it would be to allow a golden calf to be erected in Tulsa, and is working hard at making himself expendable.

Pastors can serve as icons rather than idols if they will constantly remind the people that Jesus is Lord—not the pastor. Sure, there will always be those in the congregation who will sit with sweet smiles and say, "I know he says Jesus is in charge, but don't you just love the way he says it." We'll always have these people. When Paul was not killed by the poisonous snake the citizens of Malta worshipped him as a god (Acts 28). He couldn't help that. But he never believed it. (It's hard to believe you're God when you're in chains and on your way to your beheading.) In fact, he constantly pointed his fans beyond himself.

Constantly reiterate to your people the church's transcendent purpose. Cite it explicitly from the pulpit. And most important, gather around yourself good, young leaders who will share in the policies and decisions of the church—for they will remain when you are gone.

### LISTEN TO YOURSELF

Very few things ripple the intelligence as much as listening to a person who sprinkles his conversation with "junk words." A friend of mine used to use the expression "you know" every other sentence—sometimes twice in a sentence. I finally called him down. "Do you realize how many times you used 'you know' over the last two minutes?" I then told him. He asked me to start holding him accountable whenever we were together. It was impossible, in the beginning, for him to recognize his junk words since they had become a habitual part of his conversation—like biting your fingernails or twitching your nose. But when he heard me echoing his junk words he soon caught them and is at least working on cleaning up his conversation.

Other words, such as "like", or "uh" or "ah" or "so," also clutter otherwise intelligent conversation. As an editor I delete 90 percent of the demonstrative "that" in an article, every "very" and every "nice."

As a communicator these are easy to spot in

others, but can be elusive when they crop up in your own conversation. Peter Giuliano, senior vice president of In-Person Communications Inc., New York, suggests you check your conversation for junk words by taping your side of a telephone conversation and playing it back. Once you hear the problem you can then go to work on it. When you catch yourself using a junk word, pause and collect your thoughts. In time your speech will convey a more positive impression.

So...like, that's an...ah...very nice thing to do, you know.

### HIKING THROUGH ISRAEL

Many of you have contacted me asking if I am going to lead an "outdoors in Israel" tour in 1989. The answer is yes. My first love is the Sinai. I've been there six times—hiking and camping out—two weeks at a time. But since the Sinai has been handed back to Egypt things are different and I have shifted my attention to Israel. However, I don't think I'll ever be content to lead a regular tour of Israel—the kind where you stay at the fancy hotels, spend a lot of time visiting tourist spots and spend the rest of the time looking out of bus windows while a guide drones on about the exciting places "out there." I want to be "out there," and when I go back in September it will be just that kind of trip. Instead of looking at places the guide points out—we'll hike there ourselves.

The dates are September 18-29. You'll need to be in relatively good physical shape for we'll be taking at least one major hike a day. We'll spend one night on Mount Carmel where Elijah called down fire on the priests of Baal. We'll spend four nights in a kibbutz on the Sea of Galilee. We'll scale down (no ropes, but there is some hand-over-hand climbing necessary) rugged Mount Arbel towering above Galilee and visit the seldom-seen ruins of the zealots. We'll spend two nights at the Dead Sea and hike the seven miles up beautiful Wadi Ein Gedi to the waterfall where David confronted Saul in a cave. We'll spend a day hiking through the Negev desert to ancient Mount Paran and another four days in a beautiful kibbutz outside Jerusalem. From there we'll walk the top of the city wall around the old city and hike through the countryside to where Stephen baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. We'll take the fascinating walk, waste deep in water, through the quarter-mile-long Hezekiah's tunnel deep beneath the old city wall.

My wife, Jackie, will be along to (sigh!) lead shopping trips for those who want to visit

the sites but aren't up to the hikes and mountain climbing. And there will be much time for personal silence and meditation under the stars, or relaxing on the banks of the Galilee—listening to God.

If you're interested contact our tour coordinator: Jim Jackson, CBU Tours, Box 1000, Montreat, NC 18757. The price will be in the neighborhood of \$1,900.

## MEN OF VISION

Much of what happens in today's world grows out of work done or discovered through some kind of scope. Microscopes, telescopes and oscilloscopes play a big role in our modern world. The word "scope" comes from the Greek root *skopos* meaning "to watch out, notice, spy, consider," and by extension, "to aim or set a goal." In the New Testament this term was combined with the prefix *epi*, meaning "over," to form the word *episkopos* or "overseer."

Later, as the church became institutionalized, the word was translated "bishop." However, the significance remains—a Christian overseer should be a man of vision.

Paul Thigpen, a free-lance writer, says leaders must use this spiritual sense of sight in at least four directions:

- Looking at group members. One task of the *episkopos* was to make an *episkope*—a visitation for the purpose of scrutinizing those under his care. That is, he makes and maintains disciples. Thus Luke 19:44 describes Jesus' visitation on earth as God's *episkope*.
- Looking outside the group. An *episkopos* is a guardian or sentry who looks out over the horizon to warn people against enemy infiltration and attack.
- Looking at the whole picture. From his vantage point as the overseer, the *episkopos* is in a position to see how his church fits into the larger picture of the kingdom of God. Just as a construction supervisor refers to the blueprint, so the overseer seeks an overview of the corporate structure and function of the church.
- Looking at the goal. The overseer is a goal-setter. Like Moses, he knows there's a promised land and is constantly "pressing on toward the *skopos* to win the prize" (Phil. 3:14).

Thus, if you are a Christian leader of any kind of body, small or large, your task is to be the eyes for your group. For without vision the people will perish.

## CLOWNS IN THE PULPIT

Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once told the story of a fire which broke out back-

stage in a crowded theater. To warn the audience, the manager grabbed the first man he could find—a clown—and sent him on stage to make the announcement.

The clown rushed on stage, shouting at the people, telling them to flee, that the theater was on fire. The crowd shouted their approval and applauded. The clown repeated his announcement with greater earnest. The audience interpreted his persistence as only a larger jest and applauded even harder. Finally the clown began to cry, pleading through his tears for the people to leave. His makeup smeared as tears ran down his face. It was viewed as a marvelous performance and the people gave him a standing ovation.

Not until the people saw the flames did they flee in panic.

Clowns are the wrong people to warn of impending disasters. Clowns merely entertain.

Could it be that this is one of the reasons people do not take some of us seriously? After all, it's difficult to be a prophet and a clown at the same time.

## CHANGING TRENDS IN COMMUNICATION

Today's Christian leader is first and foremost a communicator. In fact, this is now called "the age of communication." Industry no longer produces just products, it produces words. Billions of them. Computers talk to computers. Television, radio, newspapers, billboards, books, magazines—it's a world of words.

Never in history have preachers had such fierce competition. Now our problem is not just getting people to the meetings, it's getting them to listen after they arrive.

Fifteen years ago, when I was first thrust out on the full-gospel circuit I quickly discovered a hunger on the part of listeners I had never experienced in my denominational church. People were driving for miles to sit in conferences that extended far past reasonable time limits. For that period in time, it seems, the old truism—"the mind can absorb only what the seat can endure"—was set aside.

Thousands of modern Eutychuses crammed into halls, hotel ballrooms, civic auditoriums, retreat grounds, even churches to hear modern Pauls wax long. The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, Women's Aglow, Camps Farthest Out, conferences sponsored by Christian Retreat, Christian Believers United, Christ for the Nations and others drew tens of thousands. People would show up with workbooks, Bibles and tape recorders—prepared to stay all night.

David du Plessis was renowned for speaking

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up to two hours. Derek Prince was almost as bad. (And he often followed his midnight sorties with another three hours of ministry.) I found if I spoke for less than an hour the people felt cheated. It's a wonder any of us lived through it.

Back home in my church I experienced the same thing. My congregation not only wanted meat, they wanted a lot of it—all at one time.

But the times have changed.

Maybe it's television—which has conditioned us to listen shallow while we're watching and eating at the same time. Maybe it's the hurry-up age we live in: fast foods, instant results, learn Bulgarian in four easy lessons. A few of the old guys are still hanging on to their old methods—but they are a dying breed, preaching to dying churches. Incorporating new methods of communication is a necessity for survival.

Last year I produced four videotape curriculums composed of ten 12-minute segments taped in Israel along with a workbook to be used in Bible study groups. No Christian publisher would publish them. They preferred the one- and two-hour reels of 16mm film. Christian bookstores were afraid to carry it, so a friend and I formed a little company and started marketing them ourselves—by telephone. The response has been unbelievable. The public is eating them up. They like short things, it seems.

My Sunday morning crowd gets restless if I preach more than 30 minutes. In fact, with our multiple services, I'm lucky if I get to speak for more than 20 minutes. The idea of exploring a thought in depth is possible only at conferences—or on Sunday night.

The same is true with the written word. Magazines are in—books are out. The only books consistently selling today are those cranked out by people like Swindoll, Dobson and Schuller. Short words. Short chapters. Nibbles rather than banquets, and promoted on their radio and TV shows as giveaways (for a donation, of course).

Instead of cursing the darkness, we need to explore how we can use these trends to our advantage. I'd have given you more this time, but I've limited myself to 500 words. Try it sometime. Be what Francis Anfusio calls "brief and amazing." Your people will not only appreciate it—they just might remember

what you say.

## LOSERS AND WINNERS

**Losers:** "It may be possible, but it's too difficult."

**Winners:** "It may be difficult, but it's possible."

**Losers:** See a problem in every answer.

**Winners:** See an answer in every problem.

**Losers:** "That's not my job."

**Winners:** "Let me do it for you."

**Losers:** See the sand trap near the green.

**Winners:** See the green near the sand trap.

**Losers:** Always have an excuse.

**Winners:** Always have a program.

**Losers:** Are part of the problem.

**Winners:** Are part of the answer.

