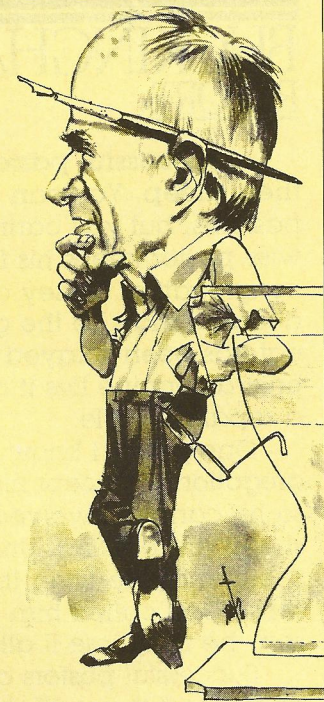


BUCKINGHAM

REPORT

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



THE ART OF BEING IN CONTROL

Did the dismissal of Jim Bakker as the head of one of the largest Christian corporations in the world cause you to ask, "Could it happen to me?" I'm not talking about his moral indiscretions or his life-style. I am referring to how easy it was for a man like Jerry Falwell to simply take over PTL as those corporate takeovers occur on Wall Street.

The issue, most agree, was not as much Bakker's morality (or immorality) as it was his executive competence. Or incompetence.

Scott DeGarmo, publisher of *Success* magazine, recently pointed out that "founding entrepreneurs lose control of their companies all the time." So do founding pastors. DeGarmo says the reason corporate executives often lose control is that being an executive "connotes certain values and outlooks, such as not getting too inflated about your past accomplishment, no matter how great. Entrepreneurs, initially indispensable, become accustomed to the 'I' mode of thinking even as the company outgrows the founder. When they need to shift to the 'we' mode, they often stumble."

That same principle applies to the pastor, who, as his church grows, often forgets you do not manage a large organization the same way you manage a small one. Sadly, it is not uncommon for a longtime pastor to move into a big, new building—and suddenly find himself out on his ear, fired by those he loved and led for years.

Peter Drucker, America's senior management consultant, says that failing to adapt to new positions is the most common reason for failure among executives. Implicit in being a church pastor is the idea that if you are not moving ahead, you're falling behind. Successful pastors are unfailing, progressive, positive, industrious and future-oriented. However, unlike Jim Bakker, they are also sensitive to public image and the needs and impressions of others—and they are meticulously in control.

But attitudes alone do not make a pastor or

leader competent. Truly effective executives—whether they have a huge staff of associates or are a single shepherd of a small flock—all follow six fundamental practices.

1. **Successful pastors start with their time, not the task at hand.** They

are more concerned with how they handle a thing than the thing itself. They regularly record and analyze their use of time, realizing that wasted time is the heart of poor stewardship. They do not spend time in meetings, travel and projects unless those things help them accomplish the thing God has told them to do.

2. **Successful pastors focus on results, not work.** It is not *who* gets the task done that is important, but whether it gets done.

3. **Successful pastors care more about strengths than weaknesses.** They know all men have flaws; and they wisely choose not to major on those flaws—but on the gifts each man has. They face every situation with the optimistic mentality that it is not only possible, it is probable. They always start out with what they can do, not with their limitations. The lack of money, lack of personnel, lack of anything is never of prime consideration. Instead of majoring on lack, they major on possibilities. In short, successful pastors keep their eyes on God and His commission instead of on giants and walled cities of Canaan.

4. **Successful pastors concentrate on areas where outstanding performance yields big payoffs.** Rather than majoring on doing things right (efficiency), they focus on doing the right things (effectiveness).

5. **Successful pastors are not afraid of making quick, tough decisions.** They identify the various elements of a situation, analyze the various options and avoid solving the same problems twice.

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6. **Successful pastors do not force-feed their sheep.** You can lead your flock to new pastures, but you cannot make them eat. A wise pastor keeps his finger on the pulse of his congregation. If they are not responding to his desires it may be the grass he wants them to eat has been sprayed with pesticide. He can only determine this if he eats with them, not at a separate table.

One pastor I know is trying to force his congregation to accept his son as their senior pastor so he can get involved in outside ministry. The sheep are balking. Unless the pastor realizes the sheep may be wiser than he is—because they sense God called him as their shepherd, not his son—he may lose it all.

Successful pastors can grow with their churches if they will stay in touch, stay in control, major on important things, not try to override the deep-seated wishes of the church, and—while delegating—never relinquish the spiritual authority given them by God.

HANDLING APPLAUSE

How do you react when your congregation applauds you? Many pastors can't fully enjoy their own competence and success because they feel like imposters. They worry that people will discover their faults and expose them as frauds.

Applause today, tar and feathers tomorrow.

They know their own limits and forget that others see only the finished results—not the effort, worry and mistakes that went into them. So they wonder why their congregations are so impressed.

How can you take care of this mental torture—this embarrassment you feel when your people applaud you, congratulate you or tell you what a great job you're doing?

1. **Trust feedback.** Do those who have nothing to gain compliment your work? Does someone you respect have faith in your abilities? Is the applause coming only from those who have vested interests, or are there people who genuinely respect your knowledge and skill—and depend on it?

You need to step back every once in a while, and with the help of your spouse or a trusted friend, talk about this—then try to understand what it is others value in your

contribution.

2. **Take advantage of opportunities to instruct those who can use your knowledge and experience.** Teaching can make it clear to you how much you do know compared to others. For instance, each year I teach a 13-week class in our church on "Bible Basics." Others tell me I know more about these combined subjects than anyone else in our church, but I need to teach the class at least annually just to let myself know their evaluation is true.

3. **Recall the steps by which you have arrived at your present position.** Remember the struggles of the past, and how proud you were of each small victory. Most people, once they master something, cease to be impressed by their mastery. Don't down-play victories earned.

4. **Look at the mistakes of a successful peer for proof that neither his church—nor yours—really expects perfection.** What your people do respect is a job well done.

FOUR ABSOLUTES OF QUALITY PASTORAL MANAGEMENT

Recently a high-tech industry in my hometown drafted a statement on quality management. Reading it I realized those same principles ought to apply to the church. I've adapted them here for churches of all sizes.

1. **Quality means conformance to requirement.** What's needed to run the church, work with people, handle the money and set the vision? If leaders are to do it right the first time, the pastor must specify what "it" is.

2. **Quality comes from prevention.** Training, discipline, example, leadership—these prevent problems and failures.

3. **Quality performance standard is zero defects.** In some churches, the standard is "some will fail and drop away," implying resignation to a certain amount of failure. Jesus set the pattern when He told His wonderful story of the good shepherd who left the 99 and went after the one lost sheep—indicating that there is no time when we can ever be satisfied with anything less than 100 percent of all church members moving in the Spirit.

Learn from marketing professor Philip Kotler of Northwestern University who says the real object is not "satisfy the customer" but "delight the customer."

4. **Poor quality management is the price of doing things wrong.** Manufacturing companies spend 25 percent of sales making mistakes; service companies, 40 percent.

Churches cannot afford to do this for it means hurting people and driving others away. In short, it does not please God to operate by trial and error. Get a jump on the devil—do things right the first time.

NEW RESEARCH ON BIBLICAL LANGUAGE LEADS TO STARTLING DISCOVERY

Almost 25 years ago two biblical scholars in Jerusalem, Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University and Dr. Robert Lindsey, the Southern Baptist pastor of the Narkis Street Church—the largest charismatic church in the Middle East—began to compare notes.

Even though Flusser was Jewish and Lindsey Christian, both had arrived at the same conclusions. Although popular opinion was that the Gospels were first written in Greek, Flusser and Lindsey, after extensive study of the languages, concluded the original written language of the Gospels was Hebrew.

It was a revolutionary discovery. While traditional New Testament scholars—most of whom knew only Greek—rejected the theory, Hebrew-Greek scholars slowly agreed. Over the years Flusser and Lindsey expanded their concerns. They gathered around them a group of other scholars, Jewish and Christian, and formed the Jerusalem School for the Study of the Synoptic Gospels.

The research done by the scholars in this school—most of whom are Spirit-filled—is challenging some of the most basic traditional assumptions of New Testament scholarship.

Dr. Lindsey, having supervised the rebuilding of the Narkis Street Church following a fire-bomb attack almost five years ago, has now retired. (I spoke in the still-smoldering ashes of the church the morning after the fire at the scheduled Sabbath service.)

Taking his place as the director of the Jerusalem School is Dr. David Bivin, one of the most brilliant and articulate Greek and Hebrew scholars in the world.

Bivin, who has lived in Jerusalem since 1963, also writes a word study regularly for *Ministries Today* magazine. The material for this study is adapted from his monthly newsletter, which for a monolingualist like myself is equivalent to a graduate course in Greek and Hebrew.

You may order his newsletter directly from Israel for \$36.00 per year. Address: *Jerusalem Perspective*, P.O. Box 31820, Jerusalem, 91317 Israel.

DISCIPLINES TO SET YOU FREE

Across the years I have developed a number of personal disciplines which have stood me in good stead. Wisdom says I should not force all of the disciplines on others. For instance, I am committed to keeping my weight under a maximum limit. To enforce this standard I weigh every morning. If the scales show I am over the red line, I am committed to fasting—starting immediately—until I am back in my acceptable range. Recently I completed a lengthy fast which—among other things—broke the “creeping increase” and lowered my set point. That works for me, but might not work for others.

However, there are some “everyman” concepts I have developed which I believe will bring spiritual health to all who practice them. Here are six disciplines I strongly recommend.

1. **Everyman should have something—some project, mission, person—that he can give himself to without wanting, expecting or ever receiving anything in return.**

I do this in my relationship with Wycliffe Bible Translators. It is my personal missionary project. Since I am not called to be a linguist (I am miserably monolingual), I sought other ways to help. I have a degree of influence, so I have become a vocal promoter for this ministry. I also have the ability to write, so on occasion, I help them in this area. I recently spent two days in California taping a two-hour video presentation of “How to Write Readable Letters,” which will be used by Wycliffe missionaries all over the world. I receive no royalty—but I did receive God’s blessing. That’s pretty good compensation.

2. **Everyman should have someone he can tell everything to without fear of reprisal or condemnation.** Pastors are often threatened by transparency, but there is great benefit in having a real friend who will listen, without compensation, and say, “I understand.”

I exclude your spouse. Husband and wife always should be totally open with each other, holding nothing back. However, apart from the marriage relationship, every man needs another man, every woman needs another woman, with whom he or she can share intimate secrets, acts, fantasies, fears, ambitions, dreams and hopes.

I remember the freedom I felt the first time I sat with my friend and revealed all my financial secrets—including my fears and ambitions.

I remember walking on a beach with him and telling him my sexual fantasies—and having him put his arm around my shoulder

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and pray for me.

I remember the relief I experienced when I shared my fears concerning the well-being of one of my children—and my guilt over my actions in raising that child.

The man or woman who says, "I confess only to God," really does not understand who God is—and what God wants of us.

Note: It takes a long time to build such a relationship. The wise person moves slowly. The woods are full of horror stories of people who have confessed, only to have their confessee squeal. That is one of the risks you run. But when a proper foundation in relationships is laid, then the benefits outweigh the risk factor.

3. **Everyman should have some place or something that he knows everything about.**

The child of God should be constantly expanding his intellect by reading, traveling, investigating, exploring and studying. One of the ways to do this is by selecting something you—and God—are vitally interested in. Then determine to know all you can about that one thing. (Not to exclude other things, of course.)

I determined, a number of years ago, to learn all I could about the Sinai. I knew I could never become THE world's authority on that subject—its history, its geography, its archaeology, its inhabitants, its military and political importance, the spiritual forces at work there, etc. But by reading, personal research, even living there for periods of time, I have satisfied that desire. It pleases me to know I have mastered something and now I am taking on another subject with the same enthusiasm.

Some people do this with stamp collecting, others with rare coins. My wife has become an expert on sourdough bread (which is one of the reasons I have to get on the scales every morning). I have a friend who has spent years studying the ancient Aramaic language, meaning he can more accurately understand the Gospels. Another is an expert on bees and supplies his entire church with honey—free of charge. Whatever your "hobby," do it with excellence.

4. **Everyman should observe a weekly Sabbath.** I have struggled with this for years. I grew up in a Christian society that said Sunday was the Sabbath. Only recently have I realized that's not only unscriptural, it is not practical. Sunday for those of us in kingdom leadership is a workday. Every man needs to work six days

and have one day he does not work. I use my personal Sabbath to do fun things, play things, rest things. That may mean physical exercise, working in the yard, taking walks on the beach or sleeping in. I do not keep it as the Pharisees kept the Sabbath. I keep it the way I think God intended it to be kept—giving my mind and body a rest from what I am forced to do the other six days of the week. For the sake of Scripture, I observe this on the seventh day of the week.

5. **Everyman should, on regular occasion, do something for someone else that can only be classified as serving that person.** One Saturday morning (on my Sabbath), for instance, my wife and I went out and shoveled dirt into a neighbor's driveway. Serving someone else not only purges the ego, it builds the soul.

6. **Everyman should, at least once a year, select some precious possession and give it away—to prove he possesses it rather than it possessing him.**

This last year I gave away my briefcase. I had searched a score of shops to find just the kind I wanted. But when a missionary asked me where he could find one like it, I realized I was too attached. I have since bought another, but my original is now in Kenya.

I'm not sure what I will give away this year. But in a few weeks I'll take a walk through the house. Anything I cannot willingly turn loose of will probably have to go.

TRY TITHING

Have you ever known a man who tithed his income—and quit? Ashley Hale, president of Church Development Center in San Jacinto, California, says he's never found a former tither. Tithers, says Hale, are nearly always happy people. They like the life they have led since they decided to tithe. That being so, why then aren't there more tithers?

Fear, says Hale. People are afraid to start because all they can see is a lifetime of tithing—and they aren't making ends meet now. Hale suggests we start using the words "I will try to tithe," rather than the absolute commitment of "I will do this the rest of my life." He says people who "try tithing" always keep it up.

"Encourage the trial tithers to let relatives, friends and fellow church members know what they are doing—that they are giving tithing a try." When the trial period is over, Hale says,

the decision to try will invariably become an affirmation. At that time, the pastor should encourage the family to stand and witness to three things: what they originally decided to do, what they experienced in coming to that decision and living with it, and how they feel about it now.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING NEWS RELEASES

Here are 15 techniques for better press coverage published last year by New England Marketing Communications Inc.

1. Discover who the religion editor is for your paper. Also discover the name of the various editors you may want to deal with. Send your material to an editor or reporter using their name, not just title. Find out ahead of time what they write about so you can send them only material they can use.

2. Find out what each person's deadline is. Delivering your material an hour too late may be a whole week late if you want it in a particular issue.

3. Mail a photograph with your release. The editor may not have room to use it, but give him the option. Studies show that an article accompanied by a photograph has a much greater chance of being read than one without. Use a five-by-seven black and white glossy done by a professional photographer. Clearly label each photo with captions.

4. Start your release with the news item. Remember: no news, no story. If you're commenting on a situation make it sound like the expert (you) was interviewed on the topic. Use the inverted pyramid style of writing with the important elements at the top since editors cut from the bottom. Remember your basic journalism and include the "who-what-when-where-why-how" in each article.

5. If you want people to contact you, make certain your city or town is mentioned near the top of the article. Don't clutter your release by putting your phone number in the text. No editor will print it. You should put it at the top of the article, however, in case the editor needs to contact you.

6. Allow for plenty of lead time. Remember, your stuff is never as important to them as it is to you so there's no guarantee your story will be released when you want it to be.

7. Write a BRIEF cover letter for each press release. Let the editor know why you believe they'll be interested in your stuff. Again, BE BRIEF.

8. Don't be afraid to write a letter to your editor and let him know you're interested in being an "expert witness," providing comments on various subjects when a minister's comments are needed.

9. Send reporters and editors your regular newsletter. Position yourself to them as someone available.

10. Follow up a mailed press release with a telephone call. "Did you get the material I sent you four days ago?" is a good question. Keep the call brief, and do not try to convince the reporter to run your story if he's already decided against it. A polite "thank you" is a rare courtesy and will not be forgotten.

11. Stop by and meet the editor face to face, thank him for something he's written and make your exit.

12. Follow up a printed article with a thank-you note. Don't combine it with a request for another article, however.

13. Send copies of other articles which have appeared about you to your hometown editor. Also send copies along with articles you may want published in other papers. It makes the editor feel safer knowing others have published information about you before.

14. Make your releases attractive and informative. Don't force them to call you for more information.

15. Give an editor or reporter a way to remember you. I suggest an occasional gift—a unique gift—to thank them for something well done. Consider a small desk-top reference Bible (hardback so it can stand alongside a dictionary), an autographed copy of your book, or perhaps a small piece of statuary. (Nothing weird, however, like a cross inside a star of David.) I once brought our religion editor a small necklace from Israel designed with her first name in Hebrew letters. She still comments on it, years later. These little reminders go a long way in touching a newswriter's heart, and in keeping you in the front of his or her mind.

CHRISTIAN WRITERS' WORKSHOP

For the last two years I have conducted a Christian Writers' Workshop at the Community of Living Water in Cornville, Arizona. The workshops have proved to be extremely successful. Last year 50 writers from all over the United States attended. The dates this year are October 10-13. Since we are limiting the size of the workshop, I want to give *Ministries Today* readers the first shot at registering.

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The beautiful but isolated retreat center is located two hours north of Phoenix in the desert foothills, just an hour south of the Grand Canyon. The workshop will begin at dinner on Tuesday, October 10, and close out with lunch on Friday, October 13. It is open to any serious Christian writer, published or unpublished.

Joining me again on the faculty is my longtime friend David Manuel, best known as the co-author of *The Light and the Glory* and former *Logos* editor. David has written 15 other books and is completing *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* for Fleming Revell. A former editor at Doubleday, he is currently editor of Paraclete Press on Cape Cod. David will handle the critique workshops during the conference.

I will lead the general sessions on subjects that will cover: 1) fiction techniques; 2) how to get published; 3) editing and rewriting; 4) writing humor; 5) conducting interviews; 6) magazine and book publishing; 7) writing to

space; and 8) radio and video scripts, etc.

Each applicant must submit a 750-word manuscript written to strict specification. You will receive complete instruction on this assignment when you register.

Cost is \$295 which includes tuition, board and room. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required in order to register. You will be responsible for your own transportation.

Registration is limited. First preference goes to attendees from past conferences and readers of *Ministries Today* magazine. Register NOW before all beds are taken. Contact Kathy Fetveit, Community of Living Water, Box 443, Cornville, AZ 86325. Telephone: (602) 634-4421.

