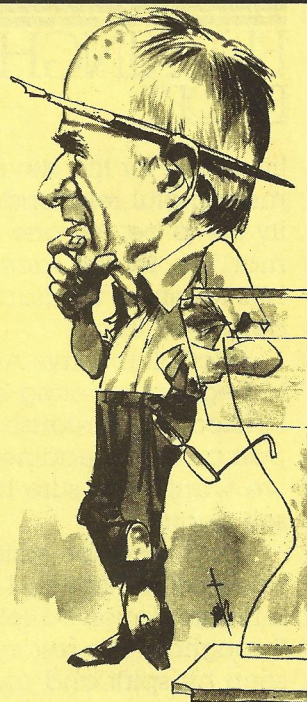


BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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



Jamie Buckingham

WHERE CAN PASTORS GO FOR HELP?

All across the country I'm hearing of pastors falling into psychological and physical traps of sin. Hundreds of good men are leaving the ministry. In the last issue of *Ministries Today*, we wrote about the ministry of the Christian Training Center in Franklin, North Carolina, where Jay Fesperman and Larry Pons are ministering to wounded pastors.

As a result of that story, we're hearing of other ministries around the nation geared to helping restore fallen leaders. If you are involved in such a ministry or know someone who is, please contact us. *Ministries Today* wants to compile a list of all these ministries and make it available to readers.

If you live in the Southwest and need someone to talk to, I recommend Hal Sacks of El Shaddai Ministries in Phoenix, Arizona. This last year Hal and his wife, Cheryl, spent more than 800 hours in personal counsel with ministers, their families and their staffs. Hal is a friend and I recommend his ministry. For the past seven years, Hal has brought the nation's most respected leaders to Phoenix to speak at a monthly leadership luncheon he hosts. He has also been effective in networking a number of Arizona churches. He has won the respect of a large number of pastors in the Southwest who see him as a pastor to pastors. His El Shaddai ministries, which is supported by churches and individuals who are grateful for his unique ministry, is one of the few ministries in America devoted exclusively to ministering to the needs of other ministers. For more information, write to Hal or Cheryl Sacks at P.O. Box 31415, Phoenix, AZ 85046. Or call (602) 971-5555.

TWO WELL-KNOWN MINISTERS BACK IN MINISTRY

In this era of fallen and falling leaders, the good news is that a number of strong leaders have stepped forward to help in restoring those who have fallen.

Gordon MacDonald, well-known author, resigned as pastor of Grace Chapel in Lexington, Massachusetts, three years ago to become president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Shortly after that, it became public knowledge that MacDonald had been involved in an adulterous relationship, which he had voluntarily broken off after confessing to his wife. Pressured into resigning from IVCF, MacDonald submitted himself to a restoration process under the guidance of several evangelical leaders and his former congregation. Although Grace Chapel had called a new pastor, they worked with the MacDonalds and formally recommissioned him to ministry in May 1988.

Now MacDonald has accepted a call from Trinity Church, a Baptist General Conference church in Manhattan. Trinity tried to call MacDonald shortly after he resigned from IVCF, but he refused—stating there were things in his life he needed to settle. Trinity issued the call again later: "If you're a broken person, then we've got a place for you, because we're a congregation of broken people." Reporting on the new relationship, Religious News Service says that MacDonald, 50, and his wife are among the oldest of Trinity's 300 regular worshippers.

David Alsobrook, traveling evangelist and writer, was another Christian leader who had an extramarital problem. In November 1988, David and wife Dianne moved to Nashville to submit themselves to the ministry of Ray McCollum and the elders at Bethel Chapel in Brentwood, Tennessee.

McCollum writes: "We are all learning that restoration is by revelation and has less to do with time than with healing that which brought the hurt in the first place. In this case, the work of the ministry had consumed David, leaving

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little time for the development of the deep, meaningful relationship the Lord intended family life to be. No one in the ministry has a 'normal' life, for the sacrifices are great. But God has reversed the harmful patterns that nearly destroyed them."

McCollum says Alsobrook is "ready and fit to begin ministering again on a limited basis. Limited, not because of any reservation on our part as to his readiness to minister, but because we want to be sure he doesn't 'overload' himself again."

In a separate statement the elders at Bethel released a letter that says: "Each of us has had intimate, involved fellowship with David throughout this restoration period. We have seen his spirit and are greatly encouraged by the work of restoration that has occurred in his life and marriage." Their letter, signed by all five elders, says Alsobrook "is ready to resume ministry under our continued oversight."

Editor's Note: In the January/February issue of Ministries Today, Ray McCollum will outline the full procedure used by Bethel Chapel to restore Alsobrook to the ministry. Ministries Today will also summarize Jack Hayford's new book, Restoring Fallen Leaders, as well as carry an in-depth interview with Hayford on the subject.

GUIDELINES FOR RESTORATION OF FALLEN MINISTERS

Many churches are being led (or being forced) to get involved with the discipline and restoration of fallen leaders. I am aware of 13 churches that are presently working through procedures to restore pastors and evangelists who for reasons of sexual immorality have stepped down—or been forced to step down—from the ministry. (I am sure this is but the tip of the iceberg since I am continually adding new churches to that list.) I know of one church that has made a tough commitment to restore a well-known evangelist who became addicted to drugs and lost his family and his ministry. Each church and each pastor uses a different procedure in the restoration process. The elders at Grace Chapel in Lexington, Massachusetts, used the following guidelines in the restoration of Gordon MacDonald, their former pastor.

The elders of Grace Chapel have estab-

lished these guidelines to assist in the discipline of a fallen member and his/her restoration to fellowship and ministry. In recognition of the candidate's confession of sin and stated desire to be in a discipline and support relationship within the context of a local church, this process will be followed.

1. The overseeing elders will be represented by an oversight committee consisting of three elders appointed by the chairman and approved by the elders with responsibility to implement the process of restoration.

2. An initial interview will be held with the candidate to ascertain his/her current membership relationship or the appropriateness of reinstating him/her as members of Grace Chapel.

3. The meaning of restoration and the evidence to be anticipated will be determined by the elders' representatives and discussed with the overseeing elders following the initial interview with the candidate.

4. The elders' representatives will meet with the candidate on a regular schedule to pray and to discuss progress and growth in spiritual, relational and intellectual dimensions. Any concerns related to the candidate's well-being or future ministry may be raised. Elders are invited to express any concerns to their representatives that ought to be raised with the candidate.

5. Confidentiality will be respected within the elders, but the support group will make a general report of progress periodically to the full board.

6. Only after a general consensus is reached within the overseeing elders will the process be terminated and, if appropriate, the outcome be made public.

7. If after a period of time, perhaps 6 to 12 months, the overseeing elders of Grace Chapel agree that the candidate has indeed been restored and is in right relationship to the Lord, to spouse, to family and to the church, then they will issue a public statement declaring that he/she is restored and able to assume appropriate roles in ministry as called by the Holy Spirit.

CALIFORNIA RUMBLINGS

Do you sometimes help transients and others by giving them odd jobs around your church building? If you do, make sure your church insurance covers them if they are injured. Earlier this year the California Workers' Compensation Appeals Board forced First Southern Baptist Church in Cupertino to pay two years' back

wages plus \$80,000 in disability to a transient who was injured while working at odd jobs at the church in 1986. The transient, Thomas Hoppmann, had asked the church for financial help. The church, believing that it's better to let a man earn his living than take a handout, gave him odd jobs. He kept coming back for more work. One day he fell while helping repair the church roof and broke a heel and an elbow. He refused the church's offer to pay for any liability or medical claims, fearing he would lose his welfare status. Instead he sued. The court ruled Hoppmann was a "church employee"—and forced heavy payment.

IDENTITY

Many pastors find their identity in the clothes they wear: clerical collar, flashy sports jacket, rumpled jeans, turtleneck sweater, coat and tie.

Corrie ten Boom, who knew as much about real identity as any person in this century, once spoke of standing beside a man at a pastors conference "who was wearing enough gold to pay the salary of a missionary for two years." Needless to say, Tante Corrie was impressed with the image of the man. "Since he seemed to be his own greatest treasure, I could not help but wonder where his heart was," she commented sadly.

Others find their identity in the titles they call themselves. One pastor with an honorary degree now signs all his letters "Doctor John Doe." Another has his "Reverend" printed on the stationery in front of his name. Both men project an image. But who are they trying to impress? And why?

Ben Hoekendijk, well-known Dutch evangelist, talks of the freedom he found when he erased the word "Evangelist" from his stationery. "Suddenly I could be me," he said, "rather than having to live up to the 'image' that the title 'evangelist' gave to everyone else."

The wise pastor needs to ask, "What kind of image do I project?"

What models do we use? Young pastors often try to imitate older, more "successful" pastors. Others can hardly wait to get ordained so they can use the title "Reverend."

But is "Reverend" a biblical title? Or is it an adjective that projects one image to its holder and another to the general public?

Perhaps the best model is Jesus—who did not seek security or identity in titles or dress, but in His relationship with God.

PROPHECY

In 1946, just before he died, Charles Price—one of the first American healing evangelists—wrote out a prophecy. John Noble, a leader in the house church movement in England, found it written in one of his old Bibles. Price foretold that a spate of healing ministries would arise in America and almost destroy the faith of the people of God. These "healing evangelists" would advertise and sell their wares, bringing God's work into great disrepute. Only after this would come revival, the like of which the North American continent has never known.

PASTORAL (AND CHURCH) IMAGE

Concerned leaders are as concerned about their personal image as they are about the product they are marketing. The reason: A good personal image is important when impressing customers, and impressing customers means more sales.

Henry Mackay, CEO of Mackay Envelope Corporation and author of *Swim With the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*, points out that people judge you on the image you leave. Letting them know you want to be of service to them can pay dividends in the future. People look to you for:

- Approval: Social time spent with your staff and church leaders builds image. Whether you realize it or not, these people are all seeking your approval. Since much of your success as a pastor depends on their performance, time spent building them up is time spent building the kingdom.

- Respect: Every good leader knows how important it is to be courteous even when you don't feel like it. One of the reasons I am a friend to Catholic Pentecostals and have a deep respect for what God is doing among them is that many years ago Michael Scanlan, now president of the University of Steubenville, had the courtesy to attend a Full Gospel Business Men's meeting where I was speaking and to come up afterward and compliment me on the message. He was the first Catholic leader to reach out to me, and because of that simple gesture, I have become a friend and supporter of Catholics, rather than being their enemy.

- Hospitality: Dan Malachuk, a New Jersey jeweler who became publisher of Logos International, at one time the largest charismatic publishing company in the world, was a model of generosity and hospitality. He endeared himself to authors and book buyers with little

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things like personal gifts, such as pen and pencil sets, travel alarm clocks or jewelry for the women. Every Logos author knew of Dan and Viola's personal generosity. They had a huge house near Plainfield and kept it full of overnight (or overweek) guests, who became part of the Logos "family." Even when Logos was sliding toward bankruptcy and authors' royalties were delayed, very few people got angry at Dan, for they knew his heart and had been recipients of his hospitality.

I have fond memories of those churches that treated me royally when I came to speak by providing "extras" that made me feel special. Churches that insisted I bring my wife at their expense, provided a free car, put gifts in my room or gave extra-large honorariums—and especially those that paid for me to stay over in some quiet mountain cabin or seaside cottage for a time of rest and recreation—will always be my friends. Whenever I speak of them, I support and endorse. Such good will, spread among those you touch as a leader, will pay dividends for many generations.

• Sensitivity: Recently a young couple in our church had a tragedy disrupt their lives. Their 10-year-old son was struck by a car while riding his bicycle. Instantly their lives were radically changed. Even though one of our staff pastors went immediately to orthopedic surgery, I went also. The next day I returned with a check from the church for a generous amount. The couple had not asked, but I knew they had been living from paycheck to paycheck. Although they had insurance, they did not have the reserves to meet the many incidental expenses. When the pastor and church are sensitive to unmentioned needs, the church is fulfilling its mission of ministering—and its image as being the true body of Christ is enhanced.

W.A. CRISWELL CHARGED WITH PLAGIARISM

The battle between conservatives and moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention took a bizarre twist in July. W.A. Criswell, legendary pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, and longtime leader of the conservative cause among strife-torn Southern Baptists, was accused of having plagiarized material in a book he wrote 30 years ago. Title of the book: *Why I Preach That the Bible Is*

Literally True.

In a letter to Criswell's publisher, Broadman Press, Gordon James, a Dallas "moderate," said Criswell's book contained 15 places where he had copied material from R.A. Torrey's *Difficulties and Alleged Errors and Contradictions in the Bible*, written in 1907 and now out of print. James said he discovered the "literary theft" while doing research in 1985. He did not say why he had waited four years to make his accusations.

Criswell's book has sold 62,000 copies. Broadman says they still have 1,000 books left in inventory and would not remove them from distribution as requested by James.

James said, "I found one instance after another where Dr. Criswell literally stole the material from Torrey." He said he found material from 10 of Torrey's chapters reproduced, often word for word, in three chapters of Criswell's book.

The 79-year-old Criswell stated that he could not recall reading Torrey's book. But if he had read it, Criswell said, "Some of those things, I'm sure, could have stayed in my mind."

Plagiarism is hard to prove and even harder to keep from committing. Anyone who reads, then writes, will be guilty to some degree. In college we used to say: Copy one source, it's plagiarism; copy three sources, it's research.

When I first graduated from seminary I found myself as pastor of a large Baptist church in South Carolina. I was supposed to preach three times a week. I quickly ran out of sermon material. Back then I didn't know how to rely on the Holy Spirit, so I bought sermon books by the dozens. I found the stories and messages of Charles Allen, then pastor of Grace Methodist Church in Atlanta, easy to preach.

The following year Allen came to our town to preach a series of messages in the local Methodist church. One of my deacons attended the first night and called me the next morning.

"I'm not going back to hear that fake."

"Why are you calling him a fake?"

"He's stolen all your sermons. He even tells your stories as if they happened to him."

Take heart, Dr. Criswell, and say with the rest: "When better sermons are written, I'll preach them."

