

# Restoring Fallen Leaders

**B**ooks like Tim LaHaye's *If Ministers Fall Can They Be Restored?* ought to disturb you.

We are summarizing LaHaye's new book in this issue because it presents, for the most part, a positive solution to a tough problem. Also, it's refreshing to hear a fundamentalist say adultery should not disqualify a man from future ministry.

However, LaHaye's book disturbs—and angers—me.

First, he's never been through the experience. His book is similar to those on child-rearing written by Catholic priests.

Second, the book is too neat. It's filled with lists of things to do when a pastor falls—most pharisaical.

Third, it does not go to the root of the problem. LaHaye is more concerned with salvaging sheep than

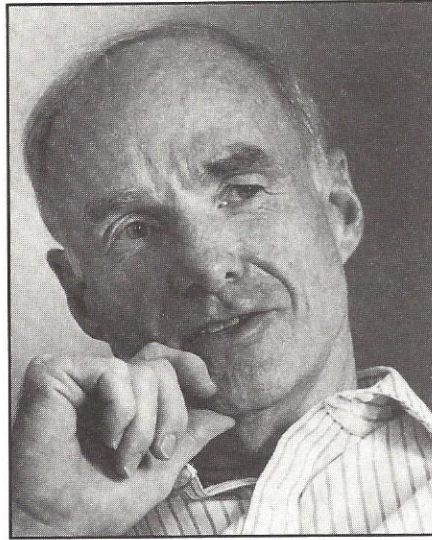
healing the shepherd. And while he does believe—thank God!—that it's possible for a "fallen" pastor

**By  
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Buckingham**

to re-enter the ministry, he feels this is only possible after various acts of evangelical penance. To this degree, the book negates the instantly restoring grace of God—as well as the power of the Holy Spirit, who took Simon Peter (whose fall was far more devastating than that of a man who consorts with a harlot) and made him the world's most famous preacher in less than two months.

(An outstanding root-issue book is a 1989 release by John Sandford, *Why Some Christians Commit Adultery*, published by Victory House.)

Much of what LaHaye has to say is good, but when he comes to pre-



senting solutions his fundamentalist background rises up to curse those of us who have fallen.

He feels, for instance, that a pastor should instantly resign once it is discovered he has committed adultery. This overlooks the powerful redeeming force of a church family who could huddle around their wounded shepherd and heal him into wholeness.

The question remains: Should a pastor "resign" from his spiritual family because he's broken the moral code any more than he should leave his wife and children for the same reason?

LaHaye wants the "fallen" pastor to leave town immediately and be gone for at least three months so the press will leave him alone. That may be necessary if you're the pastor of a 10,000-member church, but the press could care less about the pastor of a 200-member church.

There are no easy answers—which is one of the reasons LaHaye's book needs to be read with a raised eyebrow. It forces a framework on all churches to treat "fallen" pastors the same way. That's why we've run a number of opposing articles in this issue. None are ultimates—only alternates. ■

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