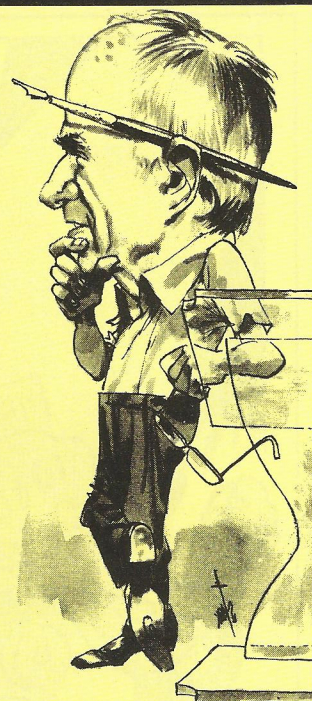


BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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



LOOKING FAR AHEAD

Every pastor wrestles with the challenges—and problems—of growth, your own as well as your church's.

Making the right transitions from one stage of growth to another is far from easy. If you're like many other pastors, you'll fall into almost unavoidable traps. For example, the very traits and management practices that got you through the early days of your ministry in your church can turn against you during later stages.

Survival

Take the survival instinct. When you're just getting started in a new church you need to adopt a siege mentality. You attack every problem in order to spur growth and ward off the enemy.

But the survival instinct can become a liability after you've grown. To keep a mature church moving forward, you have to develop more far-reaching goals than simply riding out the crisis of the week. If you're concentrating all your attention on today's battlefield, you can't give the needed time and prayer to what God wants for you down the road.

Loyalty

The way you choose your associates can backfire in the same way. In the beginning stages of your ministry you need supportive people around you who can share your dream, who think as you do, and who are more willing to carry out what you ask.

Over time, though, you outgrow the usefulness of people whose primary contribution to your ministry is their loyalty. Loyalty is always important. Without it you are in constant danger of mutiny. But your inner circle of advisers can be genuinely harmful if it is reduced to a nest of cronies who only parrot your views and protect you from your own mistakes. You need loyal men who will also

challenge your leadership, add to the store of your knowledge and experience, and take you and your church to new and innovative heights.

Long-term Commitment

Pastors who are constantly looking for some greener pasture will never succeed where they are. The wise shepherd makes a commitment—sometime early in his ministry—"This is where God wants me the rest of my life." Once that decision is made, every other decision is affected by it. Not only that, his church begins to feel the sense of permanency—and to make long-term commitments also.

I made that decision when I founded our church—23 years ago. My wife and I bought a house on rural property. We raised our children expecting them to return home from college, live in our community and be a part of our (their) church. We put our roots down. I made a commitment to my church—a commitment for life. I said, sometimes publicly, "If any of you feel you need a new pastor, go find one. Then join his church. I'm here to stay—regardless of who stays with me."

Hundreds have. And in our once-transient community, they have become the taproots not only of our church, but of our local society. We have become "family."

Successful businessmen learned a long time ago that anyone who wants to be a success has got to think about the end before he gets engaged in the beginning.

In short: You'll never succeed unless you make a lifetime commitment to the longevity of your church and ministry.

How do you avoid these universal pitfalls that pastors fall into? How do you adapt to the changing needs of your responsibilities?

Jamie Buckingham

The answer: Plan now for the future of your church or ministry. In doing so you'll help it succeed today, as well as ensure its long-term health.

ARE YOU A LEADER OR A MANAGER?

A great deal has been written, by teachers of today's corporate leaders, about the difference between leaders and managers. The principles are valid and apply just as much to church leadership as to the business world.

True leaders are rare in churches—and more are found in small churches than in large ones.

Many pastors who were once potential leaders have—as they got involved in larger churches—become absorbed by the managerial mystique. They no longer seek the direction of the Holy Spirit and impart that direction to others by “discipling.” Instead they have been seduced by a false sense of security: the notion that running a church is like tending a plant nursery, where you prepare the soil, sow the seeds, apply fertilizer and water, and—bingo!—church growth results.

Nurseries are run by managers. They are dedicated to process, structures, roles and indirect forms of communication. They discourage ideas, people, emotions and direct talk—the stuff of leadership.

The main credo of the managerial mystique: Act on form and hope that substantive solutions will follow. The pastor/manager deflects attention from the realities of people problems. He believes the ends justify the means. In a large church he calls on his staff members to relinquish their ability to think and to adopt slogans and formulas—instead of developing the art of self-examination that stimulates the imagination as well as tough, analytical thinking.

Leading a church is vastly different from managing a church.

Broken Boys—Strong Men

Leaders grow through mastering painful conflict during their early years, confronting experiences that cause them to turn inward and examine themselves and their motives. Managers, by contrast, see life as a steady progression of positive events, resulting in a secure job.

Leaders are men and women who have been, literally, “born again.” I’m not talking as much of the spiritual process as I am of the

breaking and crushing that happens in life, allowing a new person to emerge from the rubble. Leaders endure major events and crises that lead to a sense of separateness—estrangement—from their environment. They are not, in the words of Gordon McDonald, “driven.” They are “called.”

Having been broken, either by their own mistakes or the persecution of the world, they turn inward in order to re-emerge with a created, rather than an inherited, sense of identity. They are no longer in the ministry because they didn’t have any other choice. They are in the ministry because they could have done anything else in the world but chose instead this course of action. A “choosing” based on an outward call—not some kind of sick, inner driving. That introspective capacity, which reinforces that sense of separateness, encourages deep thought about problems and methods for their solution.

The Leader's Power

The power of the church leader is based on a compact that binds him with those who follow into the same intellectual, emotional and spiritual commitment. That compact expresses the leader’s expectations of his subordinates—dedication, support, hard work and loyalty.

But the critical factor is the willingness of the leader to use his power in the best interest of his followers—and his church—rather than in his own best interest.

Management motivates others with rewards, bonuses and fear of being fired. Leaders lead by persuasion—and transference of call.

The crucial difference between the pastor/leader and the pastor/manager is his respective commitment. A manager is concerned with style: how decisions get made and communication flow. A leader is concerned with substance: what decisions get made and how that is communicated.

A manager focuses on process. A leader focuses on imaginative ideas, causing people through their covenant with him to create reality out of dreams.

The pastor/leader is more dramatic in style and unpredictable in behavior. He overcomes the conflict between order and chaos with an authority legitimized by personal magnetism and a commitment to his own destiny.

Using Aggression

While the pastor/manager often fears aggression as a force leading to chaos, the pastor/leader realizes he can’t get real work

BUCKINGHAM REPORT

done without it. He isn't reluctant to risk bruising egos if he directs his aggression toward ideas instead of people. Aggressiveness often creates ferment that intensifies motivation, leading to high performance and innovation.

Because he is concerned with ideas, the pastor/leader relates to people in intuitive and empathetic ways. For him empathy is the capacity to take in emotional signals and make them mean something in relationship with an individual. One of his jobs is to overcome church politics and encourage the expression of talent and the performance of useful work. He calls on people to make commitments that override the immediacy of personal interests.

The Leader's Excitement

The pastor/leader is excited about his work. He, in turn, excites those working with him. That excitement builds strong relationships and high morale throughout the church.

Followers follow if the leader has the ability to originate ideas, suggest solutions to problems and, above all, translate visions into far-reaching goals. The force a leader exerts has both direction and magnitude. Direction comes from his command of the substance of the ministry, reflected in his decisions that move the church forward. Magnitude grows in direct proportion to his emotional commitment to the ideas.

But real leadership goes beyond guiding other people to seek solutions to problems. The pastor/leader must contribute to the substantive thinking necessary to move a business beyond problems into opportunities. He does that by applying **their** imaginations.

Imagination in church leadership is the ability to think creatively and grab opportunities. The real pastor/leader carries imagination one step further by being an opportunist, giving his vision practical shape. He does more than dream; he makes things happen. He changes situations to create an opportunity.

The Leader's Influence

The pastor/manager denies personal influence. At every level of the hierarchy, power is impersonal. He often manages by memo. His thought and action is directed by some preconceived structure or system—not

through the power of his personal influence. As a result, he seldom feels accountable for the success or failure of decisions—because it's the process that produces them.

A pastor/leader, however, relies primarily on his influence to get the job done—not the system. In fact, while he may have a system, he often circumnavigates the system to win his followers by influence and persuasion—rather than dictate and order. He deliberately arouses potent and positive emotions in his followers and influences their beliefs and behavior.

The leader understands that his personal influence comes from simple guidelines about how to deal with people. Here are several worth remembering:

- **Show people how to be successful in their own ministries, and they will be indebted to you.** Set up roadblocks to their successes, and they will retaliate with hatred.
- **Govern by rules of equity.** Those who live by them earn respect. Violating them brings hostility.
- **Avoid absurd directives that cannot be carried out**—or have no long-range purpose.
- **Listen with a "third ear."** Be attentive to what another person wants to say, what he doesn't want to say, and what he can't say without help.
- **Support your followers in the task of getting the job done.** But don't try to ingratiate yourself to gain their regard or love. That kind of manipulation often backfires.
- **Never make promises you can't fulfill.** The leader's reputation rests in part on delivering what he has promised.

Above all, do not complain when God puts you in the crucible and turns up the heat. This kind of purging is for a purpose. The finest pastor/leaders are those who have gone through deep grief, personal breaking, humiliation of family, and career despair.

Transformation occurs most frequently as a result of trauma. Consequently, true leaders often feel they are being tested. Their willingness to tolerate stress—without becoming paranoid—can lead to new strength, courage, determination and optimism.

PASTORAL MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

John Williams, president of the International Institute of Church Management in Johnston, Rhode Island, has prepared an evaluation questionnaire to determine if you

are "managing your church well."

- | | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 1. Do you have a comprehensive statement of mission? | — | — |
| 2. Have you clearly identified and studied your mission field? | — | — |
| 3. Have you derived a set of objectives from your statement of mission? | — | — |
| 4. Have you established adequate number of measurable goals in respect to every objective in all key areas? | — | — |
| 5. Do you have adequate programs to attain all goals? | — | — |
| 6. Is your organization goal-oriented rather than program-oriented? | — | — |
| 7. Do you evaluate your programs to ensure they are effective in fulfilling their purpose? | — | — |
| 8. Do you have long-range plans for a period of five or more years? | — | — |
| 9. Do you develop appropriate strategies consistent with the environmental changes? | — | — |
| 10. Do you develop a budget by receiving inputs from the heads of departments? | — | — |
| 11. Does your budget reflect accurately your objectives and priorities? | — | — |
| 12. Do you involve every person who is likely to be affected in the decision-making process? | — | — |
| 13. Do you have a good system of two-way communication that facilitates upward and downward communication at a reasonable speed? | — | — |
| 14. Have you developed adequate number of leaders to fill all positions, and to replace incumbents in case of need? | — | — |
| 15. Do you evaluate the performance of every person at least once a year, using some evaluation form? | — | — |
| 16. Are you able to motivate people to participate in the programs of the church as much as they should? | — | — |
| 17. Do you have job descriptions for every position in the church? | — | — |
| 18. Have you formulated written | | |

policies to guide those in leadership positions in making decisions? — —

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 19. Are you able to get the expected results every time you attempt to do something? | — | — |
| 20. Are your programs and activities well-coordinated to avoid all possible conflicts and duplications? | — | — |
| 21. Do you have adequate mechanisms to quickly identify and solve problems? | — | — |
| 22. Is your church growing at the rate it should? | — | — |
| 23. Does everyone make necessary adjustments to the changes introduced in your church? | — | — |
| 24. When you measure outputs do you relate them to the inputs? | — | — |
| 25. Are you utilizing all available resources, skills and talents to a reasonable degree? | — | — |
| 26. Have you delegated authority to those leaders at the lower levels, commensurate with their responsibility? | — | — |

KEY: Number of "yes" answers

21-25 Managed very well

16-20 Managed fairly well

11-15 Managed poorly

6-10 Mismanaged

1-5 Grossly mismanaged

Summary

These kinds of surveys have value only because they make us ask questions we might not ask. But they invariably disallow for the active ministry of the Holy Spirit and are often frustrating in that they do not reflect reality. For instance, I answered "no" to #16 and #22. By what standard should I judge? And what about #23? Show me the church where everyone adjusts to change: "Necessary adjustment" may mean they got angry and left. I left #24 blank since I didn't understand it. For what it's worth, I scored 10. Despite being "mismanaged," our church is growing and deepening in most areas. Bottom line: It's hard to evaluate the Holy Spirit by M.B.A. standards.

Janie B. Bingham