

BUCKINGHAM REPORT

AN IN-DEPTH CRITIQUE BY AMERICA'S FOREMOST
CHRISTIAN ANALYZER OF THE ISSUES, PEOPLE, &
EVENTS AFFECTING TODAY'S SPIRIT-LED LEADERS

SHIFTING GEARS FOR 1986

A Maryland pastor, Jean Coleman, has an interesting insight into the scope and purpose of the **Buckingham Report**. In a recent letter she states: "It is my understanding that 90 percent of all the churches in the United States have fewer than 200 in attendance. Only one percent have over 1,000. I wonder if the **Buckingham Report** is not geared to the one percent more often than the 99 percent, dealing with matters far removed from the scope of the average pastor whose great need is to hear what God is doing in the church and saying to the church."

I am grateful for Pastor Coleman's analysis. This first year of publication has been an exciting time. There are numerous Christian newsletters, but they all promote local churches or various ministries, or they espouse some kind of political, economic or theological cause. The idea of a fellow like myself coming to you every other week, audaciously saying he is going to analyze what is happening in the kingdom, is awesome.

On the other hand, I have felt a growing calling to the task. When Steve Strang came to me two years ago and suggested the idea of a newsletter to senior pastors, I balked. But gradually I came to the position of feeling I should at least try it—even though I knew it would be a massive undertaking. It has been massive. My work load has almost doubled—and my life was already filled to the brim with activity. But the rewards have been satisfying. Men and women from all over the nation are contacting me, saying they not only appreciate the **Buckingham Report** but rely on it. I take that solemn charge most seriously.

Pastor Coleman's letter confirms something I had already set in motion. I need to gear my writing not just for pastors of large churches but for LEADERS—regardless of the size of their congregation or whether they have a congregation. This does not mean I shall lower my standard or even attempt to popularize. Nor does it mean I won't continue to write about staff problems and management techniques. But beginning with this issue we're making a concerted effort to broaden our base. Although I am writing an insider's letter to insiders, I want to avoid elitism.

Strang Communications, which publishes the newsletter, has agreed that we've been charging too much. A lot of leaders simply won't (or can't) plunk out \$99 for a newsletter. With this issue we're dropping the subscription fee to \$49.50 per year. Subscriptions have been increasing about 200 per month, even at the higher fee, but I know we cannot reach that huge core of leaders who make up the mainstream of Christian activity if we continue charging an elite price.

I am grateful for your support over this first year. Now I want to reach the others—men and women who are doing a good job with the tools they have. Rather

than limiting myself to the few, I also want to equip those who need these tools of ministry. I am eager to serve you and look forward to this coming year with great excitement.

BIBLE CLASSES DISALLOWED IN UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

A ruling by the Texas state attorney general has resulted in the cancellation of all Bible classes in the University of Texas system.

Hardest hit are Texas Baptists who have 32 Bible chairs at state institutions and a number of other shared or part-time chairs which teach the Bible for college credit. Some of the chairs have been operating since the 1930s. Teachers are chosen by the denominations.

The attorney general's opinion centered on the fact that the universities had no control over selection of the Bible chair faculty. Baptists have fought this, however, since it opens the possibility of having a nonbeliever teaching the Bible.

Jerry Dawson, executive director of the Christian Education Coordinating Board for Texas Baptists, says the heart of the problem is "the money lost to the universities through credit hours earned at the Bible chairs." The ruling will be effective at the end of the current semester when all Bible classes will be cancelled.

VIDEO TEACHING SERIES ON SPIRITUAL MATURITY READY

Despite my appearances on television I do not believe it is an adequate medium for teaching. The strength of television is its ability to entertain, promote, inspire and inform. However, without the presence of a live teacher to answer questions, television remains an impersonal medium. I have now combined those two in a video teaching package.

On my last research trip to the Sinai desert I took along a camera crew. We were following the footsteps of Moses. During that two-week camping trip (I've made five other such trips) we stopped at 12 different places along the route of the children of Israel. At each location I taught the small group which had accompanied me—using the Exodus journey to outline the Journey to Spiritual Maturity. These 12-minute teachings were recorded on videotape.

I have now prepared a 90-page, full-size workbook to be used with these 13 video teachings. It is ideal for use by a Sunday school class, home group or even a family. The course, called **The Journey to Spiritual Maturity**, runs for 13 weeks. Each session begins with my video presentation. The teacher then cuts off the VCR and, using the workbook, directs the class. The first session has a 40-minute video presentation of the Sinai itself. The remaining 12 sessions cover topics such as repentance, being filled with the Spirit, obedience, authority, spiritual dominion, etc.

The workbooks are \$5.95 each. If you order 25 or more there is a 40 percent discount. There are three videotapes which contain the 13 video lessons. The cost of the tapes is \$119.85 for the set of three—VHS or Beta.

Crossover Productions is willing to send you a sample workbook—and full information on the series—for \$1.00. Drop your \$1.00 in an envelope, along with your name and address, and order from: Crossover Productions, Inc., 1520 W. Mineral Road, Suite #2, Tempe, AZ 85283. Or, if you want the package now, you can call toll-free 1-800-528-4130 and use your Visa or MasterCard for a quantity order.

REPORTING HONORARIUMS TO IRS

In the last issue I mentioned that churches giving honorariums are required to report these to the IRS. I have consulted with my CPA, Howard Reed of Reed and Company in Boca Raton, Florida, who is an expert on ministerial tax matters, and he has given me a full explanation of that ruling. His information comes from the **Federal Tax Coordinator** in section H-1043, "Compensation of Clergymen."

1. The IRS expects all ministers and missionaries to report all money received in the form of salary, marriage fees and "other contributions." The same is true for missionaries. The IRS assumes any contributions received by missionaries are "for services rendered" and are therefore taxable to them. The regulation specifically states that "amounts received aren't gifts."
2. Churches or organizations which give honorariums are required to obtain the Social Security number of the person receiving the honorarium. It is to be listed on Form 1099 as monies paid to non-employees. This is true only if the amount of the honorarium is more than \$600 and if the money is given to an individual and not to a tax-exempt organization. Of course, expenses are not counted as honorarium and therefore are not reported.
3. Any honorarium given to a church or to a tax-exempt organization is not taxable—and is not reported to the IRS on Form 1099. If that organization then passes the money on to the individual, however, it must be declared as income unless it can be justified as being received for expenses.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

CHRISTIAN EMBASSY IN JERUSALEM SUFFERS SPLIT

The growing tensions which have pestered the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem (ICEJ) have finally exploded into the open. The result is a tragic, but unavoidable, split between the Jerusalem leadership and several Christian embassies—including the one in the United States.

The ICEJ was founded in 1980 following the withdrawal of all political embassies from Jerusalem in protest of the Israeli insistence that Jerusalem was the rightful capital of Israel. At that time Jan Willem van der Hoeven, a Dutch prophet and former warden of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, helped in founding the ICEJ to show the Jews that many of the Christians of the world believed in the nation of Israel and wished to support her right to exist.

Six objectives were established:

1. To show concern for the Jewish people and to "comfort Jerusalem."
2. To remind and encourage Christians to pray for Jerusalem and Israel.
3. To be a center where Christians from all countries can learn what is taking place in Israel.
4. To stimulate Christian leaders, churches and organizations to influence their countries on behalf of the Jewish people.
5. To begin or assist projects in Israel, including economic ventures, for the well-being of all who live in Israel.

6. To be a reconciling influence between Arabs and Jews.

The ICEJ took over the old Chilean embassy building at 10 Brenner Street in Jerusalem. A number of people volunteered their services. Van der Hoeven was looked upon as the embassy spokesman and Johann Luckhoff from South Africa was called as the full-time director.

A number of branch embassies were formed around the world with the strongest ones being Holland, South Africa, England and the United States—with the United States bringing in the heaviest financial support. Jim Jackson, director of Christian Believers United (a conference ministry in Montreat, North Carolina) and conference coordinator for the National Leadership Conference, took over as full-time director of the United States branch. I served on the original board of directors as did Gerald Derstine, Morris Sheats, John French (businessman from Arizona), John Heard (Texas attorney), Tim Ruthven and others.

Merv and Merla Watson, Canadian musicians who live in Jerusalem, founded the Christian Celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles—working in conjunction with the ICEJ. It was an immediate success and, at its prime, as many as 4,500 people from all over the world flocked to Jerusalem to attend the gala festival and march the streets of Jerusalem waving national banners to proclaim support for the nation of Israel.

Problems

Problems developed, however.

A number of the evangelical pastors (including charismatics) in Jerusalem had trouble supporting the goals and the methods of the ICEJ. Much of the dissent arose over Van der Hoeven's strong insistence that Jewish Israel is a sign of the approaching end times. The heavy emphasis on "comforting Jews" as opposed to ministry to the huge Arab population also caused problems—especially with the Israeli churches who do not distinguish between Jew and Arab in preaching the gospel.

Both the Jerusalem Christians and many of the Christian leaders around the world grew increasingly uncomfortable with the ICEJ's insistence that they should not offend the Jews by talking about Jesus. On the other hand, the Jewish press as well as orthodox leaders criticized the ICEJ for being a "front" for subversive Christian activity.

"You say you are here to simply love Jews," a reporter from the **Jerusalem Post** asked me two years ago when I was there to speak at the Feast of Tabernacles celebration, "but don't you hope, in your heart, that by loving us we'll turn to Christ?" I had to confess he was right. "Then why do you walk on egg shells? Why not openly proclaim you believe Jews need to accept Jesus in order to get to heaven?"

The question stung me deeply. I determined, from that time on, I would not hedge on my Christian witness.

However, that put me at odds with Jerusalem leadership of ICEJ who felt differently. Those who openly proclaimed Jesus as Lord and as the **only way to salvation** would not be allowed to minister for the ICEJ in Jerusalem because of the offense it brings on Jews to proclaim Jesus as Messiah.

There were additional problems. Merv and Merla Watson were dismissed—in a move by the board of directors—as members of the board and as leaders of the Feast of Tabernacles. No explanation was given, although those privy to fact knew it had to do with more than management differences. They felt the Watsons were treated unfairly since the other person involved in the situation was exonerated.

Political Involvement

Luckhoff and Van der Hoeven, both dedicated men of God who live simply and believe deeply in their cause, put pressure on the U.S. branch to get involved in political lobbying. Both called for the opening of an office of the ICEJ in Washington in order to put pressure on Congress and the administration in behalf of Israel. Of particular concern was the issue of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and military aid to Arab nations. This clashed with the direction of the U.S. board, which felt it should educate Christians concerning Israel rather than try to force political issues through demonstrations. There were additional problems with financial accounting, and eventually most of us on the U.S. board resigned. Jim Jackson resigned as director but remained on the board to assist Barry Perez of Tampa who was called as the new director.

Despite personnel changes in the U.S., the problems did not go away. In Jerusalem a number of people resigned or were fired from their positions at the embassy. One of the last to go was Orde Dobbie, former colonel in the British army and, like Van der Hoeven, a former warden at the Garden Tomb. The British embassy insisted that the heavy-handed management style of Van der Hoeven and Luckhoff change. On October 2 **The Jerusalem Post** reported that a letter had been sent by the British embassy to their supporters in England naming six causes of concern: staff resignations, loss of credibility in the eyes of the evangelical church throughout Israel, waning credibility among Israeli leaders, excessive emphasis on some political matters, loss of confidence in the use of finance, and departure from the objective of helping to reconcile Arabs and Jews. The **Post** also pointed out that, despite warnings from branches around the world concerning involvement in internal Israeli politics, the ICEJ had strongly aligned with the minority Likud Party in Israel and opposed much of what was proposed by the Labor Party. Also mentioned in the article was the "almost unquestioned leadership of Luckhoff and spokesman Jan Willem van der Hoeven who seem to be running the operation almost entirely on their own."

Luckhoff and Van der Hoeven, accusing the British embassy of mutiny, broke off all relations with the British board. A number of strong Jerusalem supporters of the ICEJ, including Derek Prince and Lance Lambert, broke relations with ICEJ. The U.S. embassy, the New Zealand embassy, and several others then withdrew from ICEJ saying they could no longer support the leadership in Jerusalem and their unwillingness to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ to Jews and Arabs alike.

Countering the Charges

In a letter to ICEJ supporters in the U.S., Luckhoff countered all charges saying the ICEJ still holds to its original purposes. He blamed the problems on a "few of-fended people whose main disagreement has been the leadership, not issues basic to the work being done which has been successful."

Gerald Derstine, a former board member, outlined reasons other than those listed by Luckhoff, however. In an open letter he stated, "This change became necessary due to the practices regarding the handling of funds and strong political overtures by the Jerusalem officials in the ICEJ." Another former board member said the primary reason for the split was the "high-handed methods used by Luckhoff and Van der Hoeven."

Churches United for Israel

The U.S. branch immediately announced it was re-forming under a new name: Churches United for Israel. Barry Perez, formerly U.S. embassy director, says the purpose of Churches United for Israel is to "link churches, individual Christians, and

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various ministries together in a united effort to stand with Israel by prayerfully, practically and financially supporting the church in Israel as God continues His work of restoration there....Within this stand, we firmly believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world and that He alone is the key to Israel's national destiny. However, our support for the state of Israel and our friendship is in no way dependent on their agreement to this truth."

Those wishing more information on Churches United for Israel should contact Barry Perez, Box 18005, Tampa, FL 33679.

The address of the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem is Box 1192, Jerusalem 91010, Israel.

My Assessment

I believe the split will work for good. There is a place for the ICEJ as it now exists under Luckhoff and Van der Hoeven. It is both a prophetic and a political voice in Israel. Although their methodology is not the kind appreciated by most Americans and their theological stance concerning Israel is based on Old Testament revelation rather than on the theology of Paul, extremists do have a way of getting things in motion.

On the other hand, Christians cannot operate in power and deny the name of Jesus. Where the ICEJ exists to support the nation of Israel, the new organization will do what ICEJ cannot do—support the work of Christ in Israel. There is a need for both. There is a place for both.

Derek Prince pointed out another interesting point. **Jerusalem Post** reporter Haim Shapiro said, in a conversation with Derek, that he was amazed that Christians can disagree so pleasantly. When Jews disagree they often get violent. But in this major disagreement between Christians, friendships and mutual respect seem to remain. As Luckhoff pointed out in his letter to U.S. supporters, "We realize that to divide may be in the interests of God's kingdom. As, like Paul and Barnabas, we go separate ways for a time, we bless the efforts of all who seek to be a blessing to Israel."

