

# BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

## **NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION**

Ever since the gathering of 50,000 Charismatics in Kansas City in 1977, the leaders of that conference have discussed the possibility of another such meeting. Each time the subject has been brought up, the Charismatic Concerns Committee has felt the timing was not right. Last year the committee, which is composed of the heads of the Charismatic branches of various denominational groups plus some independent Charismatic leaders, felt the Lord was calling for another great meeting—to be held on the 10th anniversary of the Kansas City meeting in 1987. This would be preceded by a leadership conference to be held in the fall of 1986.

Several high-level planning meetings have taken place. Vinson Synan, a renowned church historian and statistician—and until recently the secretary of the Pentecostal Holiness Church—has been elected full-time chairman. His primary duties are to plan the two conferences, both of which will be held in New Orleans. The North American Leaders' Congress on the Holy Spirit and World Evangelization will be October 8-11, 1986. Up to 10,000 pastors, priests and leaders are expected to attend. The General Congress, with up to 75,000 attending, will be held July 22-26, 1987.

### **Site Selection**

A number of cities were considered for the conference. In a recent meeting in Chicago, representatives of the six cities under final consideration met with the 30-member steering committee. Each city was eager for the conference to be held in their town. They expect it to be the largest gathering of Christians in the history of the world. New Orleans was chosen for a number of reasons—not the least being the fact that the Superdome is enclosed, is fully air-conditioned, and is located downtown within walking distance of the major hotels. The various denominational groups will meet in separate meeting halls during the day. At night the entire body will gather in the Superdome for praise, worship, exhortation, and a show of unity for all the world to see. Charles Green and a local committee are making plans for significant local financial and attendance support.

### **Changes Since 1977**

There have been a number of significant changes in the structure of the "Charismatic movement" over the last eight years. For one thing, it has grown. Synan estimates there are 168 million Charismatics in the world today, the majority of these overseas. Huge revivals are taking place in Africa, South America, Korea, and Southeast Asia. There is renewed interest in Australia, England, and Europe. In North



America, Charismatics are no longer looked upon as "odd" or "weird" by mainline Christians. The fastest-growing churches in America are, indeed, Charismatic and/or Pentecostal churches.

Other changes have occurred in the Catholic ranks. In 1977 the National Catholic Service Committee pretty well represented all the Catholic Pentecostals in the United States. Since then there have been some major divisions in leadership, separating the work at South Bend, Indiana, from the work at Ann Arbor, Michigan. At the same time, according to Kevin Ranaghan of Notre Dame, many other Catholic groups have formed and are working independently. Today, instead of one group representing all Catholic Pentecostals, there are hundreds of groups across the nation. While this gives desired diversity to the Catholic Pentecostal movement, it also means it is more difficult to mobilize them to action since they no longer look to one leadership group. Because of this, Ranaghan, who chaired the 1977 Kansas City Conference, has felt it would be better for Synan to chair the new committee called the North American Renewal Service Committee, incorporated in Louisiana and Oklahoma. Ranaghan will continue to serve as part of that committee as well as continuing with the Charismatic Renewal Services organization, which has agreed to handle the logistical work of the two congresses.

### **Where You Can Help**

The most outstanding need is "start-up money." Once registrations begin to come in, there will be enough money to run the conference. The budget for the Kansas City Conference was in excess of \$900,000. The money needed to run the two future conferences will exceed \$1,000,000. However, that money will all be provided by registrations. Extra funds will come in through offerings. The present need is to begin cranking up funds.

Synan, who is no longer on salary from the Pentecostal Holiness Church, has agreed to serve for the same salary he was receiving in his old job. There are needs for office and secretarial help—and for travel expenses. Synan has agreed to travel the nation promoting the two conferences in churches, ministerial meetings, and leadership conventions. As soon as the word gets out, registrations will begin to come in. Until then the steering committee has recommended the following.

**We need 300 people who will LOAN the committee \$500 as seed money to start the conferences. We need an additional 100 churches who will LOAN the committee \$1,000. This will bring in a total of \$250,000 up-front money which will be enough to run the organization until registrations come in. THIS MONEY CAN BE IN THE FORM OF AN INTEREST-FREE LOAN WHICH WILL BE RETURNED TO THE LENDER FOLLOWING THE 1987 CONFERENCE, OR IT CAN COUNT AS PRE-REGISTRATIONS FOR THE TWO CONFERENCES.**

NOTE: The committee has agreed that those registering early will have access to the box seats at the Superdome.

I urge each of my readers to be part of this. Mark your check for "North American Congress," state whether it is a loan or for pre-registrations of those from your group, and send it to: CHARISMATIC RENEWAL SERVICES, 237 N. Michigan Street, South Bend, Indiana 46601.

### **Leadership Groups**

There are a number of leadership groups which have formed since 1977. I am the president of the National Leadership Conference, which is the oldest leadership organization. It meets annually at Ridgecrest, North Carolina, and has regional leadership meetings throughout the east. The Network of Christian Ministries, chaired by



Charles Green of New Orleans, is a relatively new organization bringing together the heads of various Charismatic ministries. Oral Roberts' new "Ministerial Fraternity" is still in the first stages of formation but has had some exciting meetings on the ORU campus. There are also a growing number of separate leadership conferences such as the ones sponsored by Bob Weiner's Maranatha Ministries, John Wimber's Vineyard Ministries, conferences with James Robison, and the World Map Seminars sponsored by Ralph Mahoney on the west coast. These are, of course, all in addition to the leadership conferences sponsored by various denominations.

### **Denominational Renewal**

Other groups have formed since the 1977 conference. The Covenant Churches, once known as the "discipleship movement," have solidified into a para-denomination. Groups such as the Church of the Brethren Renewal (Don Fike), the Wesleyan Holiness Charismatic Fellowship (Wilbur Jackson), the Fellowship of Charismatic Christians in the United Churches of Christ (Vernon Stoop) are functioning strongly. They join others such as the Presbyterian and Reformed Renewal Ministries (Brick Bradford), the American Baptist Charismatic Fellowship (Gary Clark), the Episcopal Renewal Ministries (Chuck Irish), the Mennonite Renewal Services (Nelson Litwiller), the Methodist Renewal Services (Ross Whetstone), the International Lutheran Renewal (Dennis Pederson) and others who have been in existence for a number of years.

All of these are in addition to the major Pentecostal denominations—the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Pentecostal Holiness, the Foursquare churches, and others—who have for years carried the banner of the Holy Spirit in American Christendom. Representatives of all these groups—plus a number of others in independent ministries—make up the steering committee for the Leadership Congress and the General Congress.

### **Notes of Interest**

- After 15 years on the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Kevin Ranaghan has resigned to give himself to local ministry in South Bend, Indiana. Bill Beatty succeeded Kevin a year ago as chairman of that group.

- A powerful 16mm sound film of the 1977 Kansas City Conference is available for churches wishing to promote the conference. I have viewed it and found it well-produced, deeply moving, and anointed by the Holy Spirit. It may be obtained for a slight fee from either Merton House Foundation, 4453 McPherson, St. Louis, MO 63108, phone: (314) 533-8423; or from Mass Media Ministries, 2116 North Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218, phone: (301) 727-3270. By now the film should also be available in video cassette. I highly recommend it to be seen by your church and/or church staff.

## **BISHOP GIVES PARTING SHOT**

When the head of America's Episcopal Church condemns divorce among his own clergy—and says divorced priests and bishops should leave the ministry—that's news. Good news.

John Allin, retiring after 12 years as presiding bishop, lashed out at the shoddy standards of today's clergy in his state-of-the-church address at the triennial meeting of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Anaheim, California, on September 7. A record number of 239 bishops and 939 priests and other leaders "looked stunned, then applauded" when Allin deplored easy divorce among Christian leaders. He said clergy who divorce and "attempt to substitute a second spouse"



should relinquish their roles in leadership and become active in lay ministry. "The church must have effective means of dealing with human failure," he said, "but such cannot be provided by assuming that—with clever canonical amendment—we can repeal the law of cause and effect."

Allin's surprising—but refreshing—statement was the strongest to be voiced by a leading Episcopalian in many years. It reflects the concern of many Episcopalians who love their church but are deeply troubled as they see both bishops and priests contributing to the downfall of the Christian home by justifying their own marital failures. The Episcopal Church has been losing ground in membership over the last two decades.

### **New Presiding Bishop Elected**

The new presiding bishop, elected to replace Allin, is Edmond Lee Browning, bishop of Hawaii. Browning is a native of Texas but the majority of his ministry has been overseas in mission fields.

### **Charismatic Director Goes Full Time**

Also on the Episcopalian scene, Fr. Charles (Chuck) Irish is in the process of resigning his parish responsibilities in the Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, to take on full-time responsibilities as the National Coordinator for the Episcopal Renewal Ministries. Irish has been serving in this function on a part-time basis for a number of years, succeeding Fr. Bob Hawn who is now serving as a missionary in Mexico. The Episcopal Renewal Ministries represents the Charismatic renewal among Episcopal Churches in North America.

## **QUOTE OF THE TIMES**

This comes from the official publication of the American Academy of Pediatrics which has attacked the sanctity-of-life ethic as "religious mumbo jumbo" and said lower animals often have capacities superior to handicapped children. "Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species **homo sapiens** leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig. Species membership alone, however, is not morally relevant."

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

## **CHURCH STAFF RELATIONSHIPS**

If the church is to become the kind of family God expects it to be, relationships must begin at the church staff level. I am constantly dealing with staff members who hear their senior pastor talk about "relationships"—but he never practices them. An associate pastor, recently fired from a large church because he was not "in tune with the program," told me he had been on staff in that church for six years and had never spent more than 20 minutes alone with his senior minister—until the afternoon he was canned. That afternoon the senior minister spent 30 minutes with him—most of it working out the details of how to present the firing to the congregation so they would not be too upset and ask too many embarrassing questions.

Staff members are persons, too. They have their own dreams, ambitions, and



concepts for the future. Besides this, they have family problems, battles with the specters from the past, fears and insecurities—and often great confusion over how to submit to leadership which never seems consistent. One of the primary responsibilities of the senior pastor is to his staff. In fact, ministry to the staff should have a higher priority than all other ministry except that which he has to his own family. The door to the senior minister's office should always be open to a staff member.

### **Weekly Meetings**

Although group meetings will never substitute for personal time spent together, they are a good place to start. My pastor conducts group staff meetings at three levels. We have a regular Tuesday morning meeting from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. These are primarily business meetings during which each staff member checks in with items which are relevant to the entire staff. Confidential and sensitive items dealing with individuals are not discussed before the entire staff, but only at the pastoral staff level. Any personal counseling situation which might involve the church—such as counseling someone contemplating divorce or dealing with someone who is suicidal—is always brought to the entire pastoral staff for prayer, additional input, and information.

### **Afternoon Retreats**

Once a month the members of the pastoral staff (we have nine men in this capacity) gather for an afternoon retreat in some comfortable setting such as the pastor's home or the home of another staff member. We eat a light lunch together, then spend the afternoon in honest confrontation. During these times we confront one another, express deep feelings, and minister to each other. No subject is taboo and no one is threatened he may lose his job if he attacks the pastor or some other senior member of the staff. The wives usually join us in the evening for a cookout and time of additional fellowship.

### **Out of Town Retreats**

At least once a quarter the pastoral staff goes out of town together for an overnight staff retreat. These retreats are similar to, but always run much deeper than, the monthly afternoon retreats. Last month the nine members of the pastoral staff—including myself in my role as overseer—took the church van and drove two hours to a retreat lodge located in central Florida near the shore of Lake Okeechobee. Since it was a staff retreat, our pastor, Curry Vaughan, was in charge. Curry, former senior U.S. Army chaplain and ordained Presbyterian minister, has been senior pastor for more than two years. (Although I hold the responsibility of the chief overseer, Curry has authority over the staff and is charged with the practical aspects of pastoring the church.) Others attending were: Jim Bauman, church administrator and a licensed building contractor who came out of the business world to join our staff; Gordon Strongitharm, our oldest staff member who is a former New Tribes missionary to Brazil now heading up pastoral visitation; Art Bourgeois, for many years a Catholic priest before marrying and joining our staff as a pastoral counselor; Lewis Likens, our youngest and newest staff member who had just been on the job a few days as ministries coordinator; Bruce Truitt, former Church of God pastor and missionary who had gone into the business world before joining us as youth director; Jimmy Smith, who currently heads up our music program and also serves as a music evangelist with a traveling ministry; and Dr. Harvey Hester, a former Southern Baptist seminary professor who is now a full-time psychotherapist and serves as an adjunct pastor and staff consultant.

We arrived in time for dinner and then withdrew to a comfortable living room



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section of the lodge to meet. The retreat staff provided coffee and hors d'oeuvres later in the evening. We spent the night and left late the following afternoon in order to get home before dark.

The first evening we worshipped together, had a time of prayer, and our pastor related some personal needs in his own life. As he began to weep, the rest of the men were deeply touched. His brokenness before them opened the way for others to begin to talk about their own fears and apprehensions—especially concerning their relationship with God and their relationship with their families. On several occasions, as the men began to weep, others started to step in to prop them up. Each time another pastor would interrupt, saying, "No, let him confess. Let him walk it through. Don't stop the purging of the Holy Spirit." It was tough, but tender, love the men were showing to each other.

Before we went back to our rooms, our pastor presented us with five questions. He asked us to reflect on these during the night and write down our answers before we met the next morning. The questions were:

- (1) What is my dream for this church?
- (2) If I could change one thing in my church, what would it be?
- (3) What is the greatest way I can help this church staff?
- (4) What is the greatest way the staff can help me?
- (5) What is my greatest contribution to this local church?

The following morning, after breakfast together, we gathered back in the living room to pick up the discussion. Each one of us gave our answers to each question. The rest of the morning was spent discussing each man's answers. After lunch we resumed the discussion. During the morning session it had become evident that several of the men had some deep personal needs. Some felt unfulfilled. Others were confused. Some had anger toward other members of the staff. The afternoon session was spent in ministry. Each man confessed his needs and each man received deep prayer ministry. As we went into prayer, the Lord began revealing various facets of our lives. The gifts of the Holy Spirit were manifested over and over as we prayed for one another. We then shared the Eucharist together and I, in my role of overseer, closed the meeting by blessing each pastor and his family with the laying on of hands.

We spent the two hours riding home in the van telling corny jokes and relating ridiculous episodes out of our lives.



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