

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 EVANGELISM

At a recent meeting in Chicago of the 30-person steering committee for the North American Congress, Vinson Synan was elected full-time chairman. Synan will be responsible for overseeing the planning of the 1986 North American Leaders Conference to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 8-11, 1986, and the 1987 North American General Congress to be held July 22-26, 1987—also in New Orleans.

The 1987 meeting will be held on the 10th anniversary of the huge 1977 meeting in Kansas City. Estimates are that 75,000 Christians will attend. The leadership meeting is expected to draw up to 10,000 pastors and leaders.

The steering committee is composed of all the heads of the major Charismatic bodies (i.e., Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Catholics, etc.) in the United States. Also on the committee are representatives from the major Pentecostal denominations as well as representatives from various "movements," the Christian media, and parachurch organizations.

In my next issue I'll give full details on these two major conferences, which will be the significant events of the final years of this century. Mark the dates on your calendar. It is imperative that Christian leaders across the nation throw full support behind these two monumental events.

DIGITAL DATA MAP COMING

If your church is computerized, or if you plan to computerize over the next five years, look forward to an extraordinary service which will be offered by the government following the 1990 census. A computer digital data "map" of each community—indeed, of the entire nation—is in the works. This will amount to an electronic representation of the entire USA and will include every street and major intersection, rivers and streams, political boundaries, railroads, power lines, gas pipelines and zip code boundaries in each city. Soon after the census is complete your church computer will be able to access details on each neighborhood in your city showing individual households, ages, incomes, and all other information shown on the census list. This will be an invaluable evangelism tool and churches should be getting ready. Marketing agencies are already licking their lips.

SMALL ITEMS = BIG IMPACT

Child Support Concerns

Are you counseling with divorced mothers whose husbands are behind on child support payments? There are tough new laws which now apply. You can help some of these women by telling them their rights—and where to get help. Write for a free booklet: Child Support Enforcement Reference Center, 6110 Executive Blvd., Rockville, MD 20852.

Church School Buses

If you've been told you'll have to go to added expense to install seat belts in your church school bus—breathe easier. Congress is going to axe the bill which would have required mandatory safety belts. It seems new evidence shows that kids may be safer without them.

College Pay-off

Despite rising tuition costs, estimates on lifetime earnings are:

The average elementary school graduate will earn	\$ 720,000
The average high school graduate will earn	\$1,030,000
The average college graduate will earn	\$1,500,000

Contrast this against the cost of a college education which is \$20,000 at a state school and \$40,000 at a private school.

IRS Waives Penalty

If your church filed to be exempt from paying employer Social Security taxes in 1984, your church employees may have been unaware of their estimated tax liability for 1984. In these cases the Internal Revenue Service has agreed to waive the penalty assessed for nonpayment of estimated taxes. Some of your folks might be charged a penalty initially, but the IRS says they will determine which church employees are affected and adjust their tax liability.

Automobile Deductions

Even though the auto-log rule was dropped by the IRS, you still need to keep track of personal and business driving this year. Your 1985 tax return will ask you to prove business vs. personal miles driven. So, even though the auto-log rule was dropped, it's still in effect to some degree. You need to save expense reports, receipts, and note the mileage used for personal trips.

The best deal: Let the church buy and own an automobile(s) and install its own fuel tank for staff use only. So far the IRS has not cracked down and required staff members to declare this perk as compensation—although that day will surely come.

THE BAD BOSS

"People who are a joy to follow are rare." That's what Chuck Swindoll in **Insight for Living** says about being a good boss. He categorizes bad bosses into two extremes. The first is the Incompetent Superior—which is a personification of the Peter Principle. This fellow is really not qualified to do his job, yet he has the ability to

make his failure look like someone else's fault. Incompetent bosses are usually negative and discouraging, insecure, and spend much time covering up their failures.

The second extreme is the Intolerant Superior. While this fellow is qualified, he is also a workaholic, a perfectionist, and unreasonably demanding. His life centers around his work. Charging, high-achieving, tough-minded and often overly qualified, he makes it difficult on his staff by letting it be known no one else can do the job as well as he. Impossible to satisfy, he may command respect—but never love on the part of his followers.

TRAVEL TIP

By far the best travel incentive is the one offered by Eastern Airlines. If you belong to Eastern's Frequent Traveler program (anyone can join) and fly 48,000 miles a year on Eastern, you qualify for their EXECUTIVE TRAVELER service. After applying (contact an Eastern agent if you think you qualify) and being approved, Eastern will send you a fancy ticket holder and a card which identifies you as an Executive Traveler. When you check in for your flight, you present your ticket in the folder. If there is an empty seat in the first class section, the agent will upgrade you for no extra charge. The difference, for those of you accustomed to riding in steerage, is astounding. Even if you don't swill the free alcohol, meals are much better and the wide seats—especially on the long flights—mean you arrive refreshed. You may have to check in early to qualify, but it's really worthwhile. If you don't fly enough to qualify for the ET program, every 10,000 miles you accumulate as a Frequent Traveler qualifies you for a first class upgrade certificate. It's easy to get spoiled, riding first class, and sometimes I have to explain to my friends in the rear who don't know it's free and think I'm wasting the Lord's money like one of those gold-braceleted evangelists, but when I have a choice, I choose Eastern.

THAWING THE CREDIT CARD FREEZE

Keep this in mind if you use a major credit card when making hotel reservations in advance. It can result in a temporary—but possibly embarrassing—credit freeze on your account. When you use a credit card to guarantee payment for rooms, the hotel often asks the bank which issues your card to set aside enough credit to cover the estimated cost of your entire stay. (For instance: If you're staying in a hotel for five days and secure your reservation on your Visa card, the hotel may estimate you'll spend \$150.00 a day—and ask Visa to "freeze" \$750.00 of your account.) This can tie up your credit limit for as long as 60 days without your knowledge. That means you might use your card at a restaurant during that time span, only to be told you're "out of credit." To avoid this, consider securing your hotel bill with another credit card. For instance: I use my Diner's Club card for business travel expenses only: airline tickets, hotel payments, and road expenses. I also keep a MasterCard which my wife and I use for incidental expenses at home: restaurant, clothing purchases, etc. NOTE: We **never** violate our cardinal rule for the use of credit cards: Never purchase anything you cannot pay for at the end of the month. We always pay each month's bill in full, never allowing the credit card company to charge us interest. That way we use the credit card; it does not use us.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

THE SUCCESSFUL SALESMAN

There are direct similarities between evangelism and salesmanship. To some degree every Christian leader is a salesman. As such, he should master basic sales techniques. Of course this does not rule out the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, but it does mean we should study the time-proven methods of the world and apply them as appropriate to our lives.

In June **Ambassador** magazine interviewed 10 of the nation's top salespeople. Here I have discovered three common points: (1) All had a deep love for their work; (2) Success in selling comes from hard work, a positive attitude, and a spirit that laughs at rejection; and (3) All had a deep sensitivity to the customer's needs. The philosophies and methods of these top salespeople—and their consistent results—put most Christians to shame.

The Three Cs of Sales

Jim Turk, 68, who does not play the piano, is recognized as the nation's top piano salesman. Until his retirement in 1982 from Critchett Music Company in Indianapolis, Turk sold 400 to 500 pianos a year. His insight into sales techniques are valuable to all pastors who are committed to personal and pulpit evangelism. (Keep in mind the difference between teaching and preaching. Teaching is the objective communication of truth. Preaching is the communication of truth for the purpose of persuasion—and as such demands a response. That's what sales is all about.)

Turk implies sales is like good preaching. "I get the customer **involved** by having them play it (the piano)...I try to politely educate the customer on what the piano is, regarding tone, touch and durability. Sometimes I even explain the history of the piano." But while Turk is educating, he is also listening. He says the average customer wants something used and inexpensive because their child might start taking lessons and not like it. "I listen to what the prospect is **not** telling me," Turk says. "What the customer is really saying," Turk continues, "is they themselves took lessons as a child and ended up quitting. It's the job of the salesman to convince the parent that the **real** reason they dropped music was they had an old klunker and not the real thing."

Interesting...for the **real** reason many people reject Christ stems from a poor or wrong representation of Him in their early years—a factor the wise pastor/salesman must not overlook.

Turk follows what he calls the "Three Cs of Selling." The Creation, the Climax, and the Close. When he first talks to a prospect, he tries to discover his needs. This creates a personal atmosphere and lets the customer know the salesman is not trying to sell him something he doesn't need. Instead, the salesman has something which will meet the customer's needs and it's so worthwhile the customer will want to pay for it.

The second "C"—the Climax—involves convincing the customer that **this** is the piano which will meet his needs. In short, the salesman focuses in on the area of the customer's need with his source of supply. In other words, don't try to sell a man eternal life when the man views his need as loneliness or deliverance from addiction in the here and now.

The third "C"—the Close—is getting the customer to make a commitment.

Turk says he never lets the thought that a prospect might not buy a piano enter his mind. He always assumes the person is going to buy. The "Well, this might

not meet your need” mentality is constantly rebuked. If you come to the close and the customer doesn’t want to buy, you begin again—starting with the first “C.”

Never Give Up

The poor salesman (evangelist) gives up too easily. He justifies his failure by saying the prospect “wasn’t ready,” or that he needed “more time for the Holy Spirit to convict him.” He is more interested in his own time schedule than the other man’s needs. The successful evangelist meets the prospect at any time on his own turf. Turk says the top salespeople keep repeating all three Cs until they get their customer to sign on the dotted line—or until he buys elsewhere.

I’m reminded of a classic story concerning Dr. Cameron (Uncle Cam) Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, who was one of the world’s great salesmen. He “sold” Bible translation to everyone he met—to presidents of nations and to kids on college campuses. When he was being wheeled into the operating room shortly before he died, he looked up at the nurse and said, “I just heard you’re a Christian. You know, Wycliffe needs a nurse right now in Papua New Guinea. Why don’t you pray about joining us in this wonderful task of translating the Bible into every language?”

When Uncle Cam was 80 years old, he said the Lord told him to learn the Russian language. He had discovered there were tribes of people living in the Caucasus who had no Bible in their tribal languages. After he learned Russian, Townsend began traveling to Russia, seeking to sell the idea of Bible translation to the Russian authorities. Final approval was needed by a high ranking minister who consistently told Townsend “nyet.” Townsend, always the super salesman who knew nothing of rejection, kept returning. He made eight trips to Russia to see this man. On his final trip, the minister’s secretary told Townsend the man was not in his office. Townsend smiled, said he’d wait, and settled in a chair. When the minister came in and saw the old man patiently sitting in his outer office, he slammed the door and rushed down the hall. Townsend followed him and saw the man disappear through a door which opened on the hall. Walking down the hall, he opened the door and found this high-ranking Russian minister hiding in a broom closet. Townsend entered, told him once more how wonderful it would be for the tribal people of the Caucasus to have the Bible in their own language, and got the minister’s approval. That work is now going on even after Townsend’s death.

Pushing Without Being Pushy

That’s the philosophy of Larry Somera of Portland, Oregon, who has sold 88 Winnebago recreational vehicles in the last 10 months. He says, “I treat my customers as if they are relatives. I take them to lunch. I follow up year after year on the same prospect. Successful people,” Somera concludes, “do things unsuccessful people won’t do.” He **believes** someone will buy a motor home the next day whether they do or not.

I am impressed when I watch a “counter salesperson” use this attitude. Stop by Wendy’s or Burger King someday and order a hamburger. The counter person will invariably say, “Wouldn’t you like some fries with that?” She seems honestly surprised if you refuse. She expects you to order fries. She can’t imagine anyone eating a hamburger without fries. That’s good selling. The waitress in a restaurant always assumes you want more than you ordered. That’s the reason she returns to offer you dessert, or at least coffee, at the end of your meal. She’s doing more than taking your order. She’s selling.

Have you ever, ever, ever taken your car to have the front-end aligned and not

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had the mechanic call to say you need new tires, your shocks are weak, or your tie rods are about to come untied? He's selling as well as fixing.

Find a Need and Meet It

Most of this is done under the guise of service—although common sense tells you the bottom line is the salesman wants your money. However, most people are delighted to pay for service. They appreciate the man who anticipates their needs and tries to meet them.

Charles Green tells the story of a friend who was, when he went into a business, an average working man with an average income. One day he heard a businessman complain that he was having a hard time finding someone to adequately clean his building. The fellow checked around and discovered many businessmen were having the same problem. So the fellow had cards printed and sent them to many businesses, offering "his company" to clean buildings at a good price. He then went to the labor pool and hired some men to work for him as custodians—in a company that so far did not have any business. The response from his clients was small at first. Then larger. Five years later he and his partner sold out for over one million dollars. His secret: He sold himself by meeting the needs of others.

Sales and Faith

A wise pastor/salesman will adopt the attitude of Kathy Monthei who has sold \$9 million worth of group dental insurance in the last nine years. "Sales," she says, "is nothing but the transference of a belief. The prospect must be willing to trust in what I say, and once that trust has been established and a bond has been formed, the selling is a natural outgrowth of that bond. People buy me first—then the product."

This is the same principle Dr. C. E. Autrey, my professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, called "cultivation evangelism." In other words, you are the only Jesus people will see. As you get involved with them, and they learn you are genuine and can be trusted, they will want to submit to the same Lord who has given you freedom, security, and joy. Since evangelism becomes the natural outgrowth of relationships, the wise pastor/salesman spends much time developing relationships with non-Christians—for they are his "prospects."

Jesus said we should be "wise as serpents," that we should "study the ways of the world." If you've ever bought a new or used car from a car lot, you know what that means. Every Christian should have the same enthusiasm, drive, and positiveness evidenced in the car salesman (hopefully without deceit, of course). Every Christian should be a salesperson and every pastor a sales manager—as well as the company's top salesman. With the Holy Spirit conducting our advertising campaign—how can we be anything but successful?

