

BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

PLANNING YOUR ESTATE

My legal and judicial friends around the nation tell me ministers are among the worst when it comes to having their estates "in order" when they die. Some speculate it is because ministers don't want to be bothered with earthly affairs. Others say it stems from a mentality that possessions are wrong. I disagree with both points. I think today's minister is interested in earthly things (as well as heavenly things) and most have a pretty good grasp on the stewardship concept of belongings. I think the reason we ministers are notoriously dilatory in having our estates in order is (1) we're too busy with Kingdom affairs to get around to it, and (2) no one has ever shown us how to do it.

For instance, my wife and I hold all our "worth" items—real estate, automobiles, investments, etc.—in joint ownership. The advantage of joint ownership is that if one co-owner dies, the survivor becomes sole owner of the entire property. It is neither subject to the deceased person's will nor part of his or her probate estate. However, joint ownership is no substitute for a will. If both partners die simultaneously, a will becomes mandatory for proper settlement among the heirs.

Recently, I've had to rethink my position concerning joint ownership. In fact, on my attorney's advice, we have shifted some of our belongings into my name—and some into Jackie's.

The reason?

Most ministers are worth more than they think. The result is that joint ownership can, in many instances, incur unnecessary estate taxes on your survivor. Under the terms of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, a married person can leave an **unlimited** estate to his or her spouse free from federal estate taxes. In addition, the act increased exemptions for estates left to heirs other than a spouse, such as children. That increased to \$400,000 in 1985.

But the problem is this: If you leave everything to your spouse, there may be a bunching in your spouse's estate, which, because of appreciation, could cause a portion to be taxable when your spouse dies. Thus joint ownership could be a trap down the road which could cause your spouse's heirs—maybe your children or grandchildren—real problems. That can be avoided by a will and possibly one or more trusts.

ADVICE: Sit down with your spouse and take inventory of **all** you own. (I do this once a year and then keep my balance sheet—which contains all my assets and all my liabilities—in my safe deposit box.) Go over this inventory with at least one trusted friend: an attorney, your grown children, or some financially savvy friend in the church who can be trusted to keep his mouth shut. Then sit down with an attorney and draw up a will (or revise your old one). It's just good sense—and good stewardship.

CHRISTMAS SERMON STARTER

During the Christmas rush a woman purchased 50 greeting cards without looking at the message inside. She signed and addressed all but one, then dropped them in a mailbox—still not taking time to see what they said. Imagine the expression on her face when she finally, the day before Christmas, glanced at the one unmailed card and read these words:

“This card is just to say, my special gift to you is on its way.”

The prophets, for more than 1,500 years, had been sending cards to God’s people saying, “A special gift is on the way....” You take it from there.

PLANNING YOUR FAMILY

From a biological position, the 20s and early 30s are the best time to have children. But these are also the years when most young couples are laying the foundations of a career. Many continue to go to school until they are almost 30 years old. Childbearing can be postponed more easily than an education or career advancement and is still safe in the early 30s. But there are other considerations. Couples who are in their mid-30s when they start families will be in their 50s when they have to deal with teenagers. This is not always bad, for it takes the wisdom and patience of years to do an adequate job of childraising. On the other hand, adolescence in American society is lasting longer, and many children continue to live at home far into their 20s for economic reasons. The couple who waits until mid-30s to start having children needs to realize they may have children still under their roof when they approach the normal age for retirement.

Then there is the problem of how many children should a couple have? What about the spacing? In counseling my own five married children (two boys and three girls who have produced a total of seven grandchildren), I advised them early in their marriages to ask God to show them the number of children he wants them to bear. They should take normal precautions in their sexual relationship but not feel anxious about the spacing of the children. Then, after the agreed-on number of children arrive—either through planning or happenstance—I advise one of the parents, probably the husband, to surgically remove the possibility of more children. This way the couple’s sex life for the remainder of their childbearing years can be for pleasure and love, free from the anxiety of an unplanned (and often unwanted) pregnancy.

WITCH HUNTING REVIVED

The tragedy is not that Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, authors of **The Seduction of Christianity**, equate Yonggi Cho, Dennis Bennett, Richard Foster, John Wimber, Francis MacNutt and a host of others with Jim Jones. The tragedy is that Harvest House, a publishing house in Eugene, Oregon, has sold its concept of responsible publishing for a mess of pottage. Not only that, a number of Christian TV talk shows have featured the articulate Hunt as a special guest. The time is spent tearing down the ministries of some of God’s finest men primarily for the sake of book sales. I do not want to give the book any publicity; however, since it is being used by the enemies of the Charismatic movement as I-told-you-so evidence, and since pastors need to know what the enemy is saying about the things most of us believe, a brief word is needed.

I have learned that all criticism, even that which is twisted and false, contains nuggets of truth. That is true of the Hunt/McMahon book. There have been excesses in deliverance, in the faith camp, in the teachings on success, and in the teachings on inner healing. Those excesses are being corrected by the teachers themselves as they listen to the Holy Spirit, grow wiser with years, and submit themselves to loving brothers who hold slightly different views. That, I am convinced, is God's way to modify a movement and bring it into balance. It takes time, but correction can be obtained without bloodshed if all involved are patient, kind, and in tune with God.

That is not the approach used by Hunt and McMahon. The authors are witch hunters and their approach is, at best, spiritual McCarthyism. Relying on false information, twisted facts, unfounded accusations, inquisitorial investigative methods, and sensationalism, these enemies of the supernatural attack nearly everyone in the Charismatic movement. They buy the line promoted by Constance Cumby and others who see a conspiracy under every rock. This time, however, instead of seeing a 666 on every forehead, they are attacking the faith movement, inner healing, the Charismatic approach, and anyone who uses common sense and believes in signs and wonders.

Additional problems arise when Hunt appears on nationwide TV ripping into these men and their books. For instance, I am a great fan of Richard Foster. I think his book **Celebration of Discipline** is one of the classics of this generation. I not only made it mandatory reading for all our top church leaders, but I have taught it to our church on two separate occasions. Foster's second book, **Freedom of Simplicity**, strikes at the heart of materialism. But when our people turn on the Christian TV channel and hear Hunt call this man a heretic, it causes confusion.

Quoting extensively from published and recorded works, the authors attack James Dobson, C. S. Lovett, Norman Vincent Peale, John and Paula Sandford, Bruce Larson, Bob Schuller, Charles Capps, Ken and Gloria Copeland, Bob Tilton, and John Wimber. Even Frank Laubach and Brother Lawrence (**Practicing the Presence of God**) come under fire. Korean pastor Yonggi Cho is a prime target. They accuse Earl Paulk, E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin, Scott Peck and even the late Gordon Lindsay of promoting the "New Age Movement"—which is described by the authors as the ultimate evil designed to bring in the Antichrist. I am one of the few contemporary writers who escaped being called a cult-leader—and I feel left out since many of my friends (including Herman Riffel, who is on our pastoral staff) were marked as agents of Satan.

Don't waste your money on the book. To do so promotes the inquisition approach of the authors and the publisher. Granted, there are errors which need correcting, but you don't bring balance to a movement by wielding an axe or slinging mud.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

LEADERSHIP: GOOD, BETTER, BEST

According to Bernard Bass, professor of organizational behavior at State University of New York at Binghamton, there are two basic kinds of leadership: **transactional** and **transformational**. In his new book **Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations** (The Free Press), Bass points out that Lee Iacocca has forced business and industry to revise its concepts of leadership. Recognizing that Iacocca's primary contribution to Chrysler was his personal charisma, he goes ahead to say that organizational psychology has, by and large, ignored this aspect of getting the job done. Instead, they have majored on leadership as a method of getting subordinates to meet job requirements by handing out rewards or punishments.

Using Bass's formula, it is easy to see how some church leaders succeed, while others fail. Take Pastor Straight, for instance. He sees himself as a good leader. He meets with his staff to clarify expectations—what is required of them and what they can expect in return. As long as they meet his expectations, he doesn't bother them.

Pastor Challenger, on the other hand, is a different kind of leader. When facing a crisis, he inspires his church's involvement and participation in a mission. He solidifies it with simple words and images and keeps reminding his staff about it. He has frequent one-to-one chats with each employee on the employee's turf—not in the pastor's office. He is a consultant, coach, teacher and patriarch.

Straight, a transactional leader, may inspire a reasonable degree of involvement, loyalty, commitment, and performance from his staff and people. Challenger, using a transformational approach, does much more, however.

The Transactional Leader

The transactional leader, like Pastor Straight, recognizes his subordinates' needs and clarifies how they will be met if the subordinate fulfills certain tasks. While this may inspire efficiency, it does not build loyalty. The transactional leader has an effective organization, but few of his subordinates like him. He usually intervenes only when things go wrong and has little concept of the value of positive reinforcement.

Contrast this with the Japanese experience in the top third of such Japanese firms as Toyota, Sony, and Mitsubishi. Here the employees and the companies feel a mutual sense of lifetime obligation. Being a good "family" member does not bring immediate pay raises and promotions, but overall family success will bring year-end bonuses. Ultimately, opportunities to advance to a higher level and salary will depend on overall meritorious performance. Unfortunately, many church staff members do not feel the family loyalty to the staff and church that Sony employees feel toward their "family." And what is true in many church staff relationships is almost universally true in the organizational structure of large parachurch ministries.

According to Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, people do not like to be programmed. Bass quotes him saying: "You cannot persuade people to act in their own self-interest all of the time. A good leader appreciates contrariness....Some men all of the time and all men some of the time knowingly will do what is clearly to their disadvantage if only because they do not like to be suffocated by carrot-and-stick coercion. I will not be a piano key; I will not bow to the tyranny of reason."

The Transformational Leader

Let's take a look at Pastor Challenger. He has the extraordinary ability (charisma) to motivate us to do more than we originally expected to do. How does he do it? He does it by:

1. Raising our level of consciousness about the importance and value of designated outcomes and ways of reaching these outcomes.
2. Getting us to transcend our own self-interests for the sake of the church or the ministry.
3. Raising our need level from that of "security" to that of "self-actualization."

The transformational leader is able to accomplish more because he increases his followers' confidence by elevating the value of outcomes. He does this by doing what Iacocca did at Chrysler. He rolls up his sleeves and says to the gang, "Let's make this work. We'll all have to sacrifice and I'll make the first sacrifice by reducing my

salary to \$1 a year. Now come on, fellows, let's do it the American way. It's going to be tough, but at least we'll all have jobs when we finish."

It's like Knute Rockne saying to his crippled team at Notre Dame, "Let's go out there and win this one for the Gipper."

Motivation Is the Key

Bass surveyed 845 working Americans and found that most felt their managers didn't know how to motivate employees to do their best. Although 70 percent endorsed the work ethic, only 23 percent said they were working as hard as they could in their jobs. Only nine percent said their performance was motivated by transaction. At the alarm level: Most reported there was little connection between how much they earned and the level of effort they put into the job.

Ronald Reagan is a transformational leader. He leads by inspiration. So are most of the really great athletic coaches. They are able to get 110 percent effort out of their teams by a mixture of fairness and inspiration. The transformational leader is able to get his followers to work ridiculous hours and to do more than they ever expected to do. He asks his followers to give him their undivided loyalty and to satisfy his high expectations. He is Moses, Joshua, and King David. He is able to convince his followers to extend themselves and to develop themselves beyond their own vision. Total commitment to and belief in the church or ministry on the part of his followers is the result of his own commitment and belief.

The Leader's Vision

The transformational leader will often be seen as a benevolent father who treats each of his children as an equal despite the leader's greater knowledge and experience. The leader provides a model of integrity and fairness and sets a clear and high standard of performance. He encourages followers with advice, help, support, recognition, and openness. He gives his followers a sense of confidence in his intellect—and his spirituality. He is a good listener. He gives his followers autonomy and encourages their self-development. As General Omar Bradley pointed out, there is no better way to develop leadership than to give an individual a job involving responsibility and let him work it out.

The transformational leader willingly shares his greater knowledge and experience with his followers. He can be formal and firm and, when necessary, will reprimand his followers. His staff and followers nearly always receive his corrections graciously, for they know his spirit and know he can be counted on to stand up for his subordinates. When asked to describe him, his subordinates will use terms that include trust, strong liking, admiration, loyalty, and respect.

After reading Bass's book, I did an informal survey of several staff members and elders who are members of churches and/or ministries led by a transformational leader. I found that many followers described their leader as one who made everyone enthusiastic about assignments, who inspired loyalty to the church, who commanded respect from everyone, who had a special gift of seeing what was really important (wisdom), and who had a sense of mission that excited responses. Followers felt their leader knew where he was going and that he genuinely wanted (and needed) them to come along with him. They emphasized he not only treated them each as individuals, he encouraged individualism. He was not ashamed to be considered as their superior and their example, yet he constantly pointed them to Christ as his own superior and example. They had complete faith in their leader, felt proud to be associated with him, and trusted his capacity to overcome any obstacle. Most important, they described him not only as a man of God—but as God's man for the task.

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The transformational leader may sometimes be accused of making snap judgments and of changing directions in the middle of the stream, thus giving him the image of being capricious. This is just one of the liabilities of leadership, however. When General George Patton was accused of making snap decisions, he commented: "I've been studying the art of war for 40-odd years....A surgeon who decides in the course of an operation to change its objective is not making a snap decision but one based on knowledge, experience, and training. So am I."

The transactional leader will focus on what can clearly work, will pay for itself, and will be the most risk-free. The transformational leader, on the other hand, will be less willing to accept the status quo, more likely to seek new ways of doing things, while taking maximum advantage of opportunities. He will turn every interruption and seeming defeat into a teaching situation, will focus on the long range will of God, and will convince his people—as Jesus did Thomas in John 11:16—"Let us also go, that we may die with him."

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The *Buckingham Report* is published twice monthly (24 times a year) by Strang Communications Company, 190 N. Westmonte Drive, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714, (305) 869-5005. Subscription rates in the U.S. and its possessions \$99 per year. All other countries \$150 per year. All copies sent first-class mail. Copyright © 1985 by Strang Communications Company.