

BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

No boss can do it all. That's why he has associates, staff members and department heads. The larger a church (or organization) grows, the more imperative it is that the head man delegate responsibility. That means he must spend more personal time with his staff and less time with his constituents, church members, et al. Delegation, though, is an art. It does not come naturally for most leaders who want to keep their hands on all the knobs. However, it must be done if an organization is to run efficiently and effectively.

Often, however, a staff member is assigned to handle a critical problem, yet no authority comes with the responsibility. This puts the staff member in a difficult and delicate position. For instance, an associate pastor is assigned to settle a feud between two volunteer workers who come in twice a week to duplicate tapes. The two workers, knowing the associate does not have the authority to remove them, ignore his ministry. If he makes demands in the pastor's name, he exceeds the power of his position. He knows that to take disciplinary action could mean alienating other people on the staff as well as in the church.

Industrial psychologist Harry Levinson suggests three steps to help you stay out of this trap in case you are assigned to act on behalf of your boss.

1. Make a diagnosis. What's the substance of the problem? How did it evolve? Have other issues been mixed in? What's the relationship between those involved?
2. Make a prognosis. Given the nature of the problem, how much can you do to solve it? What leverage do you have due to your good reputation or expertise, or simply because you represent the boss? Is your position non-threatening enough that you can bridge the gaps between conflicting leaders? What are the risks to your position?
3. Explain to your boss the problems and the risks as you see them. If you believe you cannot fulfill his or her expectations, say so and try to agree on goals. Even if you can't solve the problem, you may improve things by listening and being viewed as a helper.

Besides this, a staff member should always ask and determine—when the assignment is given—the exact limits of his authority. How far does it go? What powers does he have? At what point should he report back to his boss—before or after action is taken? Make certain that every assignment is spelled out explicitly and assessed realistically, and that limits of authority are understood by all.

TEAM VS. FAMILY

Georgia Tech football coach Bill Curry is an outspoken Christian and active member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Four days before the Yellow Jackets were to play Michigan State in the All American Bowl, Curry suspended four starters—including his first-string quarterback—for violation of curfew rules. In a year marked by player scandals on other teams, it was a shocking display of discipline and courage. It meant Tech had to go on the field with Todd Rampley as starting quarterback—a youngster who had played only a few plays all season and had thrown only one pass from scrimmage.

How did the players respond to Coach Curry's bold move? Out-weighed and certainly out-experienced, the team suddenly became more than a team. It became a family. The day before the New Year's Eve game, a junior tackle, John Davis, told his coach: "Something funny's happening on our team this week that's never happened before. It just feels different. Everybody loves each other."

If you watched the game, that love was evident. The end result was a Tech win over favored MSU of 17-14, giving the Yellow Jackets their best season since 1966.

After the game no player was admitted to the locker room until he had been hugged by the head coach. Discipline and love—that's the stuff families (and churches) are made of.

TEACHING VIDEO ON INTERPRETIVE DANCE

Ever since Moses' sister, Miriam, took up her tambourine and danced along the shore of the Red Sea, God's people have used dance to celebrate His glory. Over the last several years dance has once again found its place in the worship service. This incorporates everything from the Pentecostal Be-Bop to trained groups who rehearse and perform in high church settings.

Randall Bane, a mime and pantomime artist, is one of the world's great dancers. Since being filled with the Holy Spirit he has traveled the world introducing the art of dancing to churches. Crossover Productions has now produced a complete three-videocassette course featuring Bane called "Devotion Through Motion." The tapes are for church leaders who want to know more about the use of the body in worship. Tape One demonstrates body movement with step-by-step instructions. Tape Two deals with theatrical productions and includes lighting, sound, costuming and makeup. Tape Three is a workshop featuring instruction in mime and interpretive dance. All are ideal for those talented people in your church who want to teach others to express themselves gracefully through body motion. Tapes are \$49.95 each and may be ordered from Crossover Productions, 1520 W. Mineral Road, Suite 2, Tempe, AZ 85283. Or call toll-free 1-800-528-4130.

UPDATE

Democrats Attack Pat Robertson

In an effort to raise funds, Paul G. Kirk, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has issued a letter warning Democrats that Pat Robertson is the "leading" candidate for president. He says Robertson is "one of the most powerful public figures in America today" and that the Democrats are taking this very seriously. He then launches a series of untrue attacks, accusing Robertson of wanting to "abolish public

education," saying that he wants to require that "at least 25 percent of all government civil service employees be born-again Christians" and that he plans to "launch a massive military buildup far larger than the Reagan administration's." He says Robertson's view about women is "appalling." To prove this, he quotes the apostle Paul, attributing the quote to Robertson.

While Robertson is not running for president, he is seriously considering it. He will hold off from making any announcement for at least a year. In the meantime, extremists like Kirk are portraying him as a radical in their attempt to raise money—saying when "President Pat Robertson finishes his Scripture reading and begins his televised State of the Union address, it will be too late" for America.

Oral Roberts Forming Ministerial Fellowship

January 20 I met in Dallas with 26 other national charismatic leaders to found the Charismatic Bible Ministries—a fraternal organization put together by Oral Roberts to provide various services to charismatic pastors and churches. This includes a retirement fund seeded by Oral Roberts Ministries to the tune of \$1 million. With only a few weeks notice, Roberts asked 27 men—all with national ministries—to meet and become the original trustees for the not-for-profit organization. All 27 responded positively. Additional trustees are being appointed to bring the group to a total of (what else?) 77. An executive board has been appointed to manage the affairs of the ministry.

Questions asked: Is this the beginning of the long-feared charismatic denomination? Will participating churches have to subscribe to a doctrinal position? What is the role of denominational churches who want to be aligned? Are the Catholics to be included? What about Swaggart's men? And Hagin's? Is Oral building a power base to help fund his sometimes financially troubled institutions? How will this affect other leadership organizations such as the National Leadership Conference and the Network of Christian Ministries? Are there plans to help provide group hospital and medical insurance for independent pastors? Is Oral planning on ordaining men to the ministry—and setting up qualifications for ordination? Are the trustees true representatives of the body of Christ, or will they knuckle under to the steamroller tactics Roberts has been accused of using?

I will answer these and other questions in the forthcoming issues and will give more information on this organization which Roberts says "will send waves across the body of Christ and may well signal a new day for unity among the Holy Ghost-filled ones."

Fuller Seminary Drops Wimber's Course on Miracles

In my September 4, 1985 issue, I spotlighted the rumblings at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, in regards to John Wimber's controversial course, MC510, known as "The Miraculous and Church Growth." At that time I predicted the theology faculty at Fuller—which is committed to academic honesty and scriptural integrity—would recognize Wimber as a man God had singled out as a leading voice. I was wrong. Because of a few extremely vocal anti-charismatics in the School of Theology (spokesmen for the seminary say it is no more than six), the course has been discontinued. Ironically, the entire faculty of the School of World Mission, in which the course is taught, is strongly behind the teaching of the course, which included practical applications of the ministry gifts of the Spirit both in classroom experience and in field ministry.

The School of World Mission made numerous concessions trying to keep the course. One of these included non-participation by Wimber—the primary target of the

critics. It would have been taught by Dr. C. Peter Wagner and Dr. Charles H. Kraft, both tenured professors. The opposition, however, insisted that while it was all right to discuss the theory of healing, they would not allow actual laying on of hands or prayer for the sick in class. This was unacceptable to Wagner and Kraft, though, since it is basic to the course.

The opposition admits that none of them had ever attended the course. They based all their accusations on hearsay and "theological differences."

This raises a huge problem at Fuller, where about one-third of the students are charismatic or Pentecostal, many having enrolled because of Wimber's course. There is talk of holding the course off-campus in a nearby location—not for credit.

Letters of concern should be addressed to Dr. David Hubbard, President, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA 91182-0001. Send copies to Dr. Lawrence DenBesten, Provost; Dean Paul Pierson, School of World Mission; Dean Robert Meye, School of Theology.

Bible Teacher John Garlington and Wife Tragically Killed

One of the nation's top Bible teachers, John Garlington from Portland, Oregon, was killed instantly, along with his wife, Yvonne, in an automobile accident in Auburndale, Florida, on January 16. Garlington had just finished preaching for Pastor Billy Melton at the Life and Praise Temple and was returning to his room. He was the brother of Paul and Joseph Garlington, all known as outstanding black Bible teachers in America.

New Orleans Leaders Conference

As a prelude to the huge (more than 90,000 expected to attend) North American Congress to be held in the Superdome in New Orleans in July 1987, up to 15,000 leaders are expected to come to the leaders conference October 8-11 of this year. Main speakers are Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, Dr. Everett (Terry) Fullam, Oral Roberts, Fr. Tom Forrest and John Wimber.

Numerous denominational workshops are scheduled, including those for non-denominational pastors and leaders. Registration is \$59 and early payment, I am now told, will not allow you a seat in the private boxes which are owned by individuals. That's immaterial, anyway, since the entire Superdome is air conditioned. Special airline and hotel fares are available. Call 1-800-348-2227 for information.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

GUIDELINES FOR COMMITMENT

Each new year I revise and then recommit myself to a series of "guidelines for commitment" that I drew up several years ago. Recently, as I read them once again in spiritual preparation for the new year, it occurred to me I should share them with you. They are merely a loose set of personal guidelines I wrote out about four years ago to give definition to what I believe and my relationship with my local church. Each year, as my understanding of God grows and changes, I revise the guidelines. This year, for instance, thanks to some new illumination I picked up from listening to Oral Roberts (there is no new revelation, just illumination on old revelation), I revised the section on stewardship and private ownership. Other revisions and new commitments have been made in the past—and will be made in the future.

Stated Guidelines

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God, having surrendered my life and possessions to His Lordship, having sealed this by water baptism, I now submit myself to the visible Body as expressed through the Tabernacle Church of Melbourne.

I commit myself to an irrevocable relationship with God as my Lord and promise to seek Him with all my heart. I shall never be satisfied in my spiritual growth until I have been conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

I recognize I belong to the kingdom of God as opposed to the systems of this world, and I vow that kingdom shall always have preference in my decisions, my behavior and my lifestyle.

I shall love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. I shall view worship as my principal activity and vocation.

Believing it is the desire of the Risen Christ to equip His disciples and give them supernatural gifts that each one might perform God's designed ministry, I have opened my life to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and will never cease to allow the Holy Spirit to fill me and use me in every circumstance of life.

I recognize God as the source of all my material needs. He has given me ownership of all I possess to use as I please. I have chosen to use all my material possessions for His glory. I will follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and give unselfishly as He directs. I believe God wants me to give at least one-tenth of my total income back into kingdom activities through the local family of God at the Tabernacle Church—undesigned. I have also chosen to plant my financial seeds generously (above the tithe) in other kingdom causes—believing that God will supply all my needs through His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.

As the temple of the Holy Spirit, I will treat my body with care, honor and purity. I will exercise regularly, plan constructive times of leisure, and eat and drink only that which will strengthen my body and glorify God. As an example to others, I will keep my "temple" in such a way that others may see the glory of God reflected in me.

I will deepen my understanding of God by expanding my knowledge of His creation and studying His works in all areas of history, arts and science. I will allow the Holy Spirit to create through me in my gifted areas. I will freely share my knowledge, gifts and skills with the body of Christ.

I will learn of God and His ways by practicing the spiritual disciplines on a regular basis. These include meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance and celebration.

My commitment to the Tabernacle Church shall be exemplified by submitting to the elders of this church as my spiritual authority. I will seek their mediation in all matters of disagreement between myself and other Christian brothers, in all matters of family conflict, and in areas involving the good name and the ministry of this church.

I will do all in my power to make my home a place where Christ is honored, exemplifying the Spirit of Christ in all my relationships.

I accept my leadership responsibility as the spiritual overseer of the Tabernacle Church. In doing so, I make available to this, my spiritual family, all my material resources, my home, my job, my skills and abilities, my reputation, my friendships, my family, my time. I will also seek God's ministry for my life beyond the limits of the local church as an apostle to the church-at-large and, with the elders' blessing, give myself to that task.

I will walk in a spirit of forgiveness toward my brothers and sisters. I refuse to harbor malice, anger, resentment or bitterness toward others. I will not let a day

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end before I have permitted God to correct any wrong attitude toward another. When I feel I have been wronged, I will take the initiative and seek restoration.

I will faithfully assemble with the believers as I am able, entering into corporate worship with joy. I recognize the value of committing myself to a small group where I may receive and give personal ministry. I will seek God's place for me in such a group and joyfully become a part as the Holy Spirit directs.

Believing that every follower of Jesus is called to share his faith, I will—in all situations and in all relationships—be a faithful witness of the grace of God in my life as and when the Holy Spirit directs.

Regardless of circumstances, I will separate myself from this Body only as the Lord directs and with the blessing of my spiritual authorities, the elders.

I will love and obey Christ through my behavior, my influence, my example, and my decisions in every relationship in the world: personal, social, business, political, academic, cultural. I will love my neighbor as myself and look upon each one as better than myself. I will constantly seek God's guidance for my life, and when that guidance seems to evoke a change, I will submit that to my spiritual authorities (elders, pastor, or home group) for confirmation, denial or modification.

I will seek first His kingdom, avoid being ensnared by the standards and values of this world, accept the joyful privilege of witnessing to others, and refrain from anything which would mar the witness of my life and lips.

I will seek not so much to be ministered unto, but to minister; not to receive, but to give; not to be helped, but to help; not to be loved, but to love; not to be served, but to be a servant to all.

Realizing my own inadequacy, I will earnestly seek the help of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of the church in accomplishment of these purposes, to the glory of God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.



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