

# BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

## PLAY IT AGAIN SAM

Every success is a combination of individual strengths, the historical moment, and the anointing of God. When a church or a leader scores a success, the elders should assess that combination and present the analysis to all concerned. This will help people understand that, while success may come again, it can never be the same success. The church or organization may retain its values and strengths, but the historical circumstances will keep changing, and the anointing of God will always be different.

When I look back on my life, I invariably categorize certain periods of success as "the best time of my life." Those were the times when my own abilities combined with circumstances in a particularly fruitful way. Occasionally this had to do with a prophetic word which came to pass immediately. Some occasions concerned my leadership in the church, when through a combination of circumstances I did the right thing in the right way and success eventuated. Then there were those times when I just "happened" to be in the right place at the right time and was able to use my talents to produce something splendid.

All of us have moments like these upon which we like to reflect. It may be that you have declined since then. Instead of lamenting that you can no longer do exactly what you did then, see what characteristics of yours allowed you to do it. What use can you make of those characteristics today, given today's circumstances and challenges?

It's no surprise that some of yesterday's finest evangelists are now using their abilities to produce other pastors and evangelists. Oral Roberts, for example, confesses he is too old to carry out the great tent crusades he conducted in the '50s and '60s. Besides, times have changed and new technology has taken over. But his basic traits remain the same. The call that sent him across the nation 30 years ago is now forcing him to impart that same spirit into thousands of youngsters and pastors who are multiplying that dream in their own way. Now, instead of going out, he is building a great gathering place in Tulsa where ministers can come to him. In combination with the university already built, this helps satisfy his yearning to reach people. Although he is no longer able to go out and lay on hands, by training others his hands are multiplied by thousands.

The wise man is constantly reassessing. Instead of trying to duplicate the combination of factors which gave him earlier success, he re-evaluates his present gifts and looks to see how he can meet the needs of today. Although the times change, the original call and the accompanying gifts never change.



## UNCHANGING CHARACTER TRAITS

A single woman in her mid-40s has been a member of a church staff for four years. Before joining the staff she had worked as a computer technician and later as an assistant to a public accountant. She joined the church staff to help set up the new computerized bookkeeping system. She excelled at her job but was abrasive to the point of rudeness when it came to her relations with other staff members. In an effort to temper her abrasive behavior, the pastor transferred her to the job of receptionist when an opening occurred. He thought that by putting her in a position where she would have to be polite to people, she would change her behavior. He was wrong. Within a month he had to fire her for treating people who came into the church office with the same rudeness she had used in her previous staff relations. You would think the pastor should have known better, but many church leaders are far more interested in trying to change a staff member's character traits than in fitting the right people into the right slots.

Those who study human personality traits know that character behavior is a person's established way of combining ego ideal, affection, aggression, and dependency into an adaptive package. Yet many managers continue to ignore character traits, following instead the Peter Principle of promoting (or transferring) people to a position where there is little chance of success. Others mistakenly believe that training will help the individual change his or her behavior or, as in the case of the woman staff member transferred to a receptionist position, believe that a transfer will compel change. Often the persons themselves will believe this as well.

Remember: Character traits are basically there to stay. No transfer, promotion, management technique or training will change them. The wise manager knows that instead of trying to change people he should find the slot into which they fit—with their character traits—and use them there.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

In the delightful but fanciful movie "Back to the Future," the story unfolds of a teenager who is catapulted via a time machine 30 years into the past. There he meets his parents, not yet married, and gets involved in their lives—all the while knowing what the outcome is going to be. It is a fascinating plot and is filled with spiritual implications.

Here is a truth to build on: Every experience will soon be in the past.

Try this one, for instance. You're running late to a wedding. Rushing out of the house you stumble and fall, ripping the sleeve out of your rented tuxedo coat. You have no choice but to appear at the wedding with your coat sleeve held on by diaper pins you found in the church nursery. You are mortified. The bride's mother calls you a bumbling fool. What can you do? A year from now it won't make any difference and, remembering, you'll get a good laugh out of it. Why not jump ahead in time and imagine yourself already looking back and laughing. That will enable you to stand in the pulpit next Sunday, hold up the ripped coat as show-and-tell, and get a humdinger of a sermon illustration out of the incident. People love a man who can laugh at himself.

Pastors who are consistently able to survive bad breaks (and ripped coat sleeves) know the difference between disappointment and defeat. Disappointments never last. In fact, we can outlast them. No man is ever defeated as long as he can laugh at himself. That is simply an indication he has the ability to take a step into the future, look back, and say, "This too shall pass." Faced with a seeming failure? Step



into the future and see how things look from that vantage point. When you see things with God's eyes, there is never any defeat.

### **WRITE IT DOWN**

Last spring a 4-year-old girl in our church preschool program told her mother a strange man had accosted her in the school restroom. He had, she said, pulled his pants down in front of her, then warned her not to tell anyone. When her mother heard the story she came to the school principal, who in turn brought the girl and her mother to the pastor. Upon investigation, it was determined that the child had not used the restroom on the day the incident supposedly took place; that there was no way any man could have been in the restroom; and that the child probably had confused the incident with a similar incident that had traumatized her at home. The matter was settled to the satisfaction of everyone involved. I then requested the school principal to make a detailed written report of everything that was said and done, and to put it on permanent file in the school office, just in case the matter did resurface. The letter remains on file today even though there have been no other ripples.

Good records are important. They might save you a lot of trouble down the road. Any significant incident in your organization which might have repercussions at a later date should be written up at the time it occurs. The report should be approved by superiors and placed on file. Then, if there is a subsequent occurrence, or the need to reopen the investigation, the material will be on hand and leaders will not have to rely on sometimes-faulty memory to get an accurate picture of what took place.

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TODAY?**

Last year Larry Tomczak outlined what he felt God was saying to the church today. Although I do not want to limit God's voice to five points, Larry's perspective needs to be heard.

1. He is emphasizing a fresh wave of evangelism to reach the lost.
2. He is calling for the necessity of faith, a faith to live by, an overcoming faith. There is an incredible response on the part of people when positive faith is preached.
3. He is calling us to extraordinary prayer. We need to know what is next on God's agenda, but we will not know unless we spend time in prayer.
4. He is speaking of the necessity of the miraculous and the supernatural. We need to **see** the gifts of the Spirit in action.
5. He wants a fresh declaration of Jesus as Lord—with a new emphasis on the grace of God.

### **WHAT'S IN A NAME**

In a bold move, Faith Apostolic Church in Scarborough, Ontario, changed its name last year to Dayspring Christian Center. Pastor Stephen Whyte instigated the name change. The former name had been given the church by his father, Maxwell Whyte, who has not retired from active ministry. Stephen Whyte explained that the term "apostolic" had confusing connotations. Besides, the term "Christian Center" more accurately characterizes the present church, which has gone through massive



changes under the younger Whyte's ministry and is now emerging as one of the most influential churches in the Toronto area.

George Barna of the Barna Research Group points out that first impressions count—in a big way. At the top of the list of first impressions is the name of the church or organization. Image consultants realize this in industry. Since 1980 the number of firms that have changed their names has more than doubled. Nissan has replaced Datsun. Tampax is now Tambrands. Barna points out that Christian organizations have a low understanding of marketing, however. His opinion is based primarily on the lack of a corporate personality, which in this case is reflected in the church's name. The name must be capable of sustaining recall, establishing trust, and reinforcing support. How does the name of your church or organization stack up? Could a name change be in order?

Barna says all communications and products emanating from the organization should be consistent and unified in style, tone, method, and appearance. This includes elements like corporate name, logo, corporate symbols and theme lines, advertising vehicles, ad copy and graphics, and other direct communications. All of these should be tied to the personality that characterizes the organization.

The new street sign at Dayspring Christian Center does this. It not only contains the name of the church but has a logo profile of a family—strong father, mother with her arm around her husband, and two children touching hands. It speaks of warmth, family ties, strong fatherhood, and affectionate motherhood—all of which make up the idea of a Christian center.

## OVERCROWDED VOCATIONS

In counseling your youth, they need to know the following fields are considered "overcrowded."

**Physicians:** The exception to this is those willing to serve in small towns or on the mission field.

**Attorneys:** By the end of the century there will be one attorney for every 10 adults. However, those with law degrees who go into business have a head start.

**High school teachers:** There is still room for math, science, vocational ed, bilingual and special ed teachers.

**Veterinary doctors:** The decline of the small farm means less work for vets specializing in large animals.

**Journalists:** Although there is a great need for competent Christian writers, newspapers are folding and the full-time journalist is looking for work.

**Auto-mechanics:** Look for the new automobiles to be far more complex. Things like distributors, brake cylinders, and carburetors will disappear. Unless a mechanic has high-tech training, he'll not make it.

Encourage your young people to learn how to type (it's a must for the computer), to take as many computer courses as possible, to get a good base in math and science, and to not neglect things like English, history, and basic communication. Many of today's students are majoring in high-tech fields but do not know how to communicate or how to orient themselves in a world which is still based on history and political science. The wise student should be well-balanced in the fundamentals and then go on to specialize, perhaps in graduate school. Remember, there will always



be a need for people willing to serve. If your young person is not gifted in high-tech areas, he can always do well if he learns a trade and is willing use his skills in serving others. Christian schools and colleges need to recognize this and beef up (or add) vocational ed departments.

### MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

The Peace Corps is still alive and looking for applicants. Primary needs for the next several years center around retired business people who will work for two years in poor nations. Also needed are farming specialists and teachers. The government pays living costs, travel, medical expenses and \$175 per month. It is an ideal way for Christians with skills who are looking for a ministry to share their faith in quiet ways. Write: Peace Corps Recruiting, 806 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20526. Or call toll free: 1-800-424-8580.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

### TURMOIL IN ISRAEL

Last year, when the Mormons announced their intention to build a university on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, there was an immediate outcry on the part of the Orthodox Jews in Israel. The matter has remained a point of hot contention and, at one time, even threatened to bring down the fragile government of Shimon Peres. However, as some of the dust settles, it is becoming rather obvious that it is not the Mormons the Orthodox Jews are after. Rather, the row is part of a growing campaign inside Israel between the minority "religious" Jews and the "secular" Jews, most of whom do not believe in God at all.

A January 2 article in the **Jerusalem Post** correctly focuses the current attack against the Mormons as a red herring. "The ultra-Orthodox want to maintain a perpetual state of war with the Jewish unbelievers, in order to keep them at a distance...in order to make sure there is no intermingling." Writer David Krivine accurately points out how the Orthodox Jewish leaders continually manufacture causes of dispute. Two years ago it was a bloody battle to close an archaeological dig near the Western Wall. At that time Orthodox Jews, dressed in their quaint clothing and side curls, picked up clubs and moved in on Jewish archaeologists who, they said, were "desecrating a one-time Jewish graveyard." The charge is ridiculous, of course, since simple arithmetic proves that after thousands of years all Israel is one gigantic graveyard.

Then it was a campaign against bus shelters which the Orthodox said offended them because of pictures of fashion ads. Young Jewish zealots went about the nation setting bus shelters on fire to rid the country of evil.

Last year it was a protest against a movie theater in the town of Petah Tikva. The Jewish rabbis entered the theater, which was showing films on Saturday, bashed heads with clubs and finally set it on fire.

Those who have visited Jerusalem know the danger of walking through the Orthodox section—the **Mea Shearim**—with "improper clothes," or of driving through on the Sabbath. You might possibly be spat on, stoned, or have your car overturned. Violence, to the Orthodox Jew, is a rational way to preserve their way of life.

Thus the current fight against the Mormon University is not born out of fear



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that the Mormons will try to convert Jews, any more than the burning of the Narkis Street Church four years ago was occasioned by a fear that the Baptists would convert Jews. The goal of the Orthodox Jews is to turn all Israel into a true Jewish ghetto. The traditional ghetto in the Diaspora (the Jewish society in non-Jewish nations of the world) had one merit: It fenced the Jews off from the **goyim** (gentiles). The religious Jews now want to protect themselves not only from the Christians, but even more from the growing majority of secular Jews in Israel.

## **Project Kibbutz Closing Shop**

Of course, the Orthodox Jews remain violently anti-Christian at the same time. In early February, Project Kibbutz director Art Carlson announced he was having to close his formerly successful operation which placed Christian young people on various Israeli kibbutzim in a year-long discipleship program. One of the reasons behind the decision to shut down the operation of this organization—which was committed to teaching young people to love Jews, without encouraging them to overtly witness—was the persecution instigated by the extremist Jews who have constantly demanded the removal of all Christians from the kibbutz system. The mere presence of Christians in a Jewish state—even when the Christians express that their only purpose is to love Jews and support the nation of Israel—is a constant threat to the Orthodox mentality. In the case of Project Kibbutz, extremist groups finally forced the Israeli Supreme Court to rule against Carlson's continued leadership of Project Kibbutz. The end result was to shut down what had been one of the strongest programs in recent history designed to bring Christians to Israel for the sake of loving and serving the Jewish people. The message to Christians was clear: Send money but stay away if you intend to bring your Jesus with you.

Like most free-world countries, Israel has no law banning missionary activities. However, a 1977 law makes it a punishable offense to offer or to receive "material benefits" as an inducement to conversion. Material benefits, in this case, could mean the giving of a New Testament or even the presentation of a small gift to someone you are attempting to win to Christ. Dr. Charles Farah, former Jerusalem resident and now professor in the the graduate school at ORU, says it is impossible to please or placate the Jews. Even Zionists—those with no intention of converting—suspect organizations such as the International Christian Embassy, knowing the very presence of Christians in the land brings a hope on the part of the believers that Jews will recognize Jesus as their Messiah. Farah believes the only way Jews will come to know Jesus as Messiah is through supernatural manifestations of signs and wonders.

American Christians, who often maintain a naive, idealistic romanticism when it comes to the nation of Israel, need to keep these facts in mind when they consider their relationship with the Israeli Jews.



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