

# BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

## OVERCOMING WRITER'S/PREACHER'S BLOCK

A prominent evangelist, well-known for his television appearances and his willingness to speak in small churches as well as large ones, told me he had been trying for years to write a book on a particular controversial subject. But every time he set aside the time to write, the words simply would not come. He was able to preach them—eloquently. But he simply could not transfer them to paper. Is it possible, he asked, for a man who had never written a book to have “writer’s block”?

If you said yes, you are in agreement with pastoral counselor Leanne Payne who pinpoints this and other “blockage” problems—including “preacher’s block”—in her latest book, **Crisis in Masculinity** (Crossway Books, 1985). I am interested in anything Mrs. Payne has to say and have found this to be her finest book yet—especially the chapter on “Crises in Masculinity Without Sexual Neuroses.” Here she indicates that the reason for writer’s block often stems from problems in the “deep heart.”

### Heart Blockage

Blockage, not only in writing but often in sermon preparation, may result from deep and hidden fears. In the case of the evangelist, he knows that to speak out on the subject of his concern will mean crossing pens with men who are highly popular in Christian circles today. These respected writers hold a differing position from the one he would take IF he could put his opinions on paper. It’s one thing to preach these opinions and move on to another church or another subject—or even to voice them on a television interview show which is here today and gone with the flick of the channel. But to put his opinions on paper, opening himself to sure criticism on the part of others known as recognized authorities, is another matter.

Mrs. Payne tells of a theologian who faced a similar problem. When he went for counsel, he realized that “fear of authority” was at the root of his problem. In that case, his own father had been a rigid authoritarian. The young son never could win his dad’s approbation. He ached for approval of himself as a person. Later, as a man, he needed the same kind of affirmation from his male superiors—but never really expected to win it. He had a pronounced crisis in masculinity which left his true self stymied, unable to effectively collaborate with the Holy Spirit in putting the words on paper, which just might cause even more rejection to his manhood.

### Fear of Criticism

This same problem often affects ministers who are unable to preach the gospel forcefully because they are inhibited by the fear of criticism. Or, the minister may find

himself unable to spend time in solitude, in deep prayer and meditation. Silence just might mean having to face the child of his past who was constantly rejected by a strong-willed, cruel or absentee father. So while the problem may manifest itself as writer's block, powerless preaching or hyperactivity, the roots are probably entwined around a childhood crisis which gave him a twisted concept of manhood.

Mrs. Payne concludes that in her counseling she has helped a number of ministers find healing of the severest emotional problems and neuroses—including the fear of being forceful in their preaching—by coming into the presence of God and finding there, in healing prayer, the affirmation of themselves as men. "There God found the unaffirmed little boy within each one of them and pronounced him a man."

### **NEW RULES FOR AUTO EXPENSES**

Something good is coming out of Washington. The Senate has passed legislation that would repeal those impossible-to-keep federal regulations requiring pastors (and others) who use their personal cars for business to keep detailed daily records. **The Washington Post** reported on April 15 (appropriately) that the Internal Revenue Service rules—which were implemented as part of the Finance Committee's deficit-reduction package of last year—prompted loads of mail from angry farmers and small businesses. On April 3 the House passed a slightly different version of the bill (HR1869), and a House-Senate conference committee will now work out the differences. My CPA assures me the regulations will be dropped, but you still need to justify all your car expenses in case you're audited. A small log book in the glove compartment where you can jot down all expenses and note the mileage on January 1 and December 31 will be sufficient.

### **EARNING TRUST FROM YOUR STAFF**

Obtaining trust does not come easy. Your staff may respect you— even love you—but trust must be earned. It has to be built up over a period of time through behavior that shows the pastor cares about his staff and does all he can to take care of them. First impressions are most important in establishing trust. They also go a long way in planting the seeds of mistrust. In today's super-churches—which may have more than 100 staff members (even more if the church has a school)—the pastor should bear in mind that he is always making a first impression on somebody.

If a time comes when a pastor needs to depend—really depend— on his staff, it's too late to start trying to create trust. For example, when the pastor of a large Pentecostal church was recently accused by a dissident staff member of immoral conduct, he turned to his top aides to vouch for him. Even though they respected him, because he had remained personally aloof and inconsistent in his management techniques, his top staff felt they could not trust him. They passed along their mistrust to the board, who eventually asked the pastor to resign. (Note: No staff member actually accused the pastor of anything. They just expressed their feelings of general mistrust to the board which interpreted this to mean "guilty as charged.")

### **Psychological Contract**

Trust in the pastor means that basic expectations are regularly met. You're aware of some of these expectations: pay, benefits, promises, affirmation, support, etc.

Others may be more elusive. They include the unwritten rules, your management style, the staff member's job security, advancement, pay raises, and your own ethical behavior. Dr. Harry Levinson, formerly on the staff of Menninger Clinic and now publisher of **The Levinson Letter** to top corporate managers, calls these expectations the "psychological contract" which exists between the head man and his staff members. Break it and you're in trouble when the crisis comes.

How do you discover the terms of the psychological contract?

1. In private interviews ask each key staff member what he expects of you. Each response will give you a key to the psychological contract that exists in the staff member's mind.

2. When a staff member is dissatisfied, call him aside and probe until you know what he wants from you. What does he EXPECT you to do to clear up the problem? Justified or not, this will reveal the psychological contract.

3. What are your regular habits in your relationship with the staff? What message do you send with bonuses, promotions, granting time off, giving public affirmation from the pulpit and elsewhere, sending notes and gifts to the staff member and his family? What would be the effect if you stopped doing any of those things?

4. Is behavior rewarded, punished, overlooked? Are staff members expected to obey, to experiment, to march in lock step, to be informal (or even sometimes rowdy)?

5. Examine your management style through the eyes of an objective friend. Let him be brutally honest—pointing out your inconsistencies, personality flaws, strengths and weaknesses. Recently the pastor of a large church asked me to follow him around for a day, sit in on a staff meeting, and talk freely with any staff member. I then reported back to him what I sensed was going on. (I was careful to protect some of his staff who roundly criticized their boss to me.) The result has been a massive change in this man's ministry style.

Dr. Levinson points out that not all elements of the existing psychological contract have to be honored. Some may be unreasonable—or no longer feasible. Also, the contract needs to be renegotiated from time to time, but only if the pastor has first recognized and honored it in the past.

### **Take the Risk**

Trust works both ways. Like love, it begets itself. The finest way to build trust is to trust. The pastor who won't take a risk on the competence of his staff will find them operating at his level of expectation. Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you applies just as much to a senior pastor's relationship with his staff as to those to whom he preaches on Sunday.

## **SOUTHERN BAPTISTS TURN UP THE HEAT**

Baptists watchers are expecting fireworks when the world's largest non-Catholic denomination (14.3 million members) meets for their annual convention in Dallas this June. Over the last six years there has been a growing battle between a group of inerrantists—led by Houston judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas—and a less well-defined group of moderates who believe in the inspiration of the Bible but take exception to the "every-word-inerrant" position of the fundamentalists.

As with most Baptist controversies, this one has been mostly smoke with little fire. Recently, however, there has arisen the possibility of fire—a big fire. Two Baptist seminary presidents have spoken out, giving the moderates, for the first time, a solid basis of leadership. Roy Honeycutt, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, charged Judge Pressler with taping telephone conversations and planting a “spy” on the Southern campus. In a chapel address at the beginning of the school year, he declared a “holy war” on the fundamentalists, whom he says are attempting a takeover of denominational leadership.

More recently Russell Dilday, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the world’s largest seminary with more than 5,000 full-time students, joined the fray. This time the fundamentalist faction struck back. When Dilday and his academic affairs committee (in an incident unrelated to the controversy) recommended the firing of a seminary professor on grounds of poor performance, insubordination, distortion of the truth and profane and vulgar language, the fundamentalists on the seminary’s board of trustees rejected the recommendation. Two days later the seminary faculty voted 100 to one to support President Dilday in his action. The lone dissenting vote was cast by the man Dilday wanted to fire.

This action by the fundamentalist faction has angered a large number of moderates who are threatening to oust Southern Baptist Convention president Charles Stanley (pastor of the First Baptist Church, Atlanta) at the June meeting and install a moderate president. If this happens, former SBC president James T. Draper warns that “thousands of churches” will withdraw financial support from the Baptist missionary fund called the Cooperative Program. In fact, Draper says the entire Cooperative Program could collapse if Stanley is defeated in Dallas.

Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist in Memphis, a former president of the SBC and spokesman for the fundamentalists, said he has some “deep theological convictions, and I will not crucify those convictions on the altar of cooperation.”

“I know of nobody who can bring us together because the issues are so deep and strong,” said Bailey E. Smith, president of the SBC, 1980-81, and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Oklahoma. “We have two denominations now; we should admit it and move on.”

Cecil Sherman, pastor of Broadway Church, Ft. Worth, and an outspoken anti-fundamentalist, said he has “given up hope” of a reconciliation. He called the threat to withhold or withdraw funds “intimidation, bullying and putting a gun to the head of the denomination.”

“These fundamentalists have a medieval frame of mind,” Sherman added, “They are right and everyone else is wrong....I would give up my Baptist birthright if I listened to that kind of pious bullying.”

Stay tuned for the next issue—and see how God manages to take a group of bickering politicians and use them to further His kingdom.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

### **THE PASTOR AND LIFE INSURANCE**

This was the year I dropped all my life insurance. The reason: I no longer need it.

Three years ago, on the day before I turned 50, God promised me another 50 years of “productive and creative” life. All I needed to do was cooperate with Him. I have attempted to do that—in diet, exercise and frame of mind. As a result I am now

in FAR BETTER physical condition than I was when I received that promise. (I will cover the "hows" of that in a subsequent issue.) But the fact I believe I am going to live to be 100—and will keep on producing all those years—is NOT the reason I've cancelled my life insurance. I know how easy it is to misunderstand God—and work toward an end when He is calling us to a means. For that reason I have, up until this year, kept my life insurance in force. In fact, I firmly believe every Christian should have an adequate insurance plan.

### **Faith vs. Presumption**

In this issue I am not arguing the rightness or wrongness of life insurance per se. I believe prudent planning is godly and requires real faith, while the "God-will-take-care-of-my-family" mentality is not only presumption, it classifies you as "worse than an infidel" who has "denied the faith" (1 Tim. 5:8). It is simply good stewardship to plan, to invest, and to provide for your family in case of sudden death.

But there are wise ways to purchase insurance and unwise ways. For years I was an unwise steward. Then several years ago I wised up. At that time I cancelled all my ordinary (or whole) life policies and bought term insurance. For about one-third of what I was paying out in annual life insurance premiums for \$100,000 worth of protection, I was able to purchase \$400,000 worth of term protection. The policy I purchased was an "annual renewable term" policy with lower rates because I am a nonsmoker.

The amount I saved on premiums I deposited in various savings plans, drawing between five and six times as much interest as my ordinary life was paying. The result: I had four times as much protection in case I dropped dead, I was saving considerably more than I had been, and my savings were earning much more interest than they were when my money was invested in ordinary life policies.

### **No Longer Needed**

This year my savings exceeded the amount of money I owe on my house, which is my only outstanding debt. I have not attempted to pay it off since the mortgage is coasting along at 7½ percent and some of my savings are drawing up to 20 percent. My basic reason for carrying life insurance was to protect my wife and dependent children in case of sudden death. Now my children are grown—and give the impression they are able to care for themselves. I have arranged a few income producers which will continue to produce for my wife if I'm not here. I have been enrolled in Social Security for a long time, meaning my wife would have some income from that (as long as it lasts, that is). And, of course, my house is "paid off." That's the reason I dropped all my life insurance this year.

Term insurance purchases protection only. That's the reason it is so much cheaper. This year, when my rates increased on my term policy because of my age, I simply did not renew.

### **Travel and "Key Men"**

Since I do considerable traveling, I do carry a substantial amount of accident travel insurance. I do not pay the premiums on this but charge it off to "travel expenses" since it is relatively inexpensive. For instance, I charge most of my airline tickets on Diner's Club. They automatically add \$5.50 to each charge which covers me (and my wife if she is traveling with me) with \$650,000 worth of accidental life insurance. Many of the "gold credit cards" have similar accident policies if you use

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their card to pay for your ticket.

For several years **Charisma** magazine carried a "key-man policy" on me. This is a common practice in business. The company pays the premiums on the term policy and is, in turn, named the beneficiary. I frankly think the money can be spent in better ways, however, such as providing additional secretarial help (to ease stress which is a common cause of death), or by purchasing a membership in a health and racquet club to help the key employee live a longer and more productive life—rather than trying to replace him after he's been worked to death.

## **Whole Life a Poor Investment**

Financial counselor James McKeever (**Omega's Financial Guidance**, March 15, 1985) points out that whole life, especially in an inflationary environment, is an exceptionally poor investment. "After examining all of the variations that are being offered, we see that all insurance boils down to term insurance, with or without some form of glamorization."

McKeever says that each individual should insure himself with low premium term insurance and invest the balance at a much higher interest rate than he would have been earning on his life insurance policy. I agree, and add that the time will probably come when you won't even need the protection offered by term insurance, just as it has for me.

Ronald Kessler, in his new book, **The Life Insurance Game** (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), points out that for every dollar you pay to the life insurance company, you'll get 41 cents back in benefits. Whole (or ordinary) life is more investment than it is insurance, yet it is an investment that is virtually impossible to evaluate. He says life insurance companies deliberately write their policies to confuse clients. He concludes, at least in respect to whole life, "If you understand it, the chances are good that you will never buy it."

You need to remember, in listening to life insurance agents, that they make a much higher commission if they sell you whole life than term insurance. An honest agent will tell you that. Perhaps the best evaluation is one given by a retired agent for Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, as quoted in Kessler's book: "Whole life is just a lousy savings plan."

