

# BUCKINGHAM

## REPORT

AN IN-DEPTH CRITIQUE OF THE ISSUES, PEOPLE &  
EVENTS AFFECTING TODAY'S CHRISTIAN LEADERS

### THE NEW MOVE OF GOD

Each year, and for the last 15 years, a group of men with national or international ministries meets for four days of informal retreat at a Catholic retreat center near St. Louis. This year's group of 58 was the largest yet, with a number of new faces joining those who have been involved all these years. The men are from all denominational backgrounds. Most are familiar names because of their high public exposure.

This year Derek Prince spoke informally the opening night. Sharing from his heart he spoke of a "new" move of God which had brought a total change of his life-style. Prince, now in his 70s and busier than ever in his life with international travel and ministry, said, "I've been a Christian 45 years and have never experienced anything like this."

### Sovereign Move of God

He then told what had just taken place in his small (about 450 members) Good News Fellowship in Ft. Lauderdale where he is an elder. While he was away in April the leadership called the church into a 21-day "Joel fast" for the purpose of humbling and personal repentance. No one fasted all 21 days, but everyone declared certain days so all days were covered. This was accompanied by a 5 a.m. prayer meeting at the church building.

Derek said the prayer time was "commanded by God" who said, "I will be at the church building from 5 a.m. until 7 a.m. If you want to meet Me, I'll be there."

The first morning 13 turned up. The next day seven. The third morning only four were present. But those who attended prayed desperately. One man literally wept for three days as he interceded for his church.

On the fifth morning 40 people attended. The next morning there were 70. Derek and Ruth arrived back in town about this time and began attending. Before the three weeks were out more than 250—including entire families with small children—were at the church building every

morning at 5 a.m. to pray.

The meetings were simple and informal. There was little singing. Someone might stand and give a short talk. Most spent the time on their faces on the floor.

The emphasis was on personal repentance. "We realized we had been treating the Lord as if He were our butler," Derek confessed. People repented of arrogance toward God, self-centeredness and self-indulgence.

As they approached the 21st day there was a growing awareness God wanted to "birth" something in the body. Derek described it as a "last chance" for that church. All seemed to understand the church had been "infiltrated by the spirit of the world" as warned against in 1 Corinthians 2. "We had been dictated to by our appetites," Derek said. "But we didn't have the power to change ourselves. Only God could do that through repentance. All realized this was our church's last chance to mean anything significant to the kingdom of God."

The 21st morning was awesome. Derek described it as a "birthing process." He said people were on the floor writhing, groaning and travailing. It sounded like a labor room in a hospital. "On that day God birthed something in our congregation."

The early morning prayer meeting, designed to last for only 21 days, has continued—gaining in intensity. Derek confessed: "A year ago as I was leaving my apartment the Lord told me, 'You can be completely well if you follow the right life-style.' " Since then God has been changing his life-style. The most radical change has been to waken him every morning at 4 a.m. so he can be ready at 5 a.m. to pray for two hours.

"It is difficult for me to conceive," Derek chuckled, "but it seems that I am called to pray every morning at 5 a.m. for the rest of my life."

### Reports From the Nation

Powerful voices around the nation—Dick Simmons, Ray Bringham and Dick Eastman, for instance—are calling the church to prayer.

Larry Lea of Dallas is blanketing the nation with his simple but life-transforming seminars on the Lord's Prayer. Yonggi Cho says his top priority is to train pastors and laymen to pray. "Many of you have never prayed for one hour," he told a group of pastors. "Now is the time to learn."

Karl Strader, of the Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida, said he heard Charles Green (Word of Faith Temple in New Orleans) tell of the powerful impact an early morning prayer meeting is having on his church. Strader, who fasted 21 days in February, is now meeting with a large group of people who gather EVERY MORNING at 6 a.m. in the church building to pray. Hobart Vann, St. Louis pastor, says a large group has been gathering before dawn each day for two years to pray. A group called "The Intercessors" in Lincoln, Virginia, started by Catherine Marshall before her death and continued by her husband, Len LeSourd, engages thousands in daily intercession.

My pastor, Curry Vaughan, recently returned from a 28-day solitary and fasting retreat in the mountains. His life was changed. He has resolved to spend three hours each day for the rest of his life in prayer—and is challenging our church to join him.

**Significant:** the opening theme for the July 1987 conference in New Orleans—where more than 100,000 Spirit-baptized Christians will gather in the Superdome—is "prayer and personal holiness."

Derek's summation: "THE DEVIL DOESN'T CARE WHAT WE DO AS LONG AS WE DON'T DO THE THINGS THAT MATTER."

### INTERESTING TWIST ON TERRORISM

The purpose of Libya's and Syria's terrorist attacks—even though directed toward Americans and Europeans—has been to hurt Israel. Attacks against European and American airlines have been to discourage travel to Israel. The **Jerusalem Post** reports that while there has been a 35 percent drop in tourism from the United States, business on El Al, Israel's nationally owned airline, has actually increased. Security-conscious Americans, determined to visit Israel, have simply shifted from flying European airlines, which stop in Europe, and opted to fly El Al which flies non-stop from the USA to Tel Aviv. An El Al spokesman said that "every terrorist incident involving airlines brings transfers to El Al." This is due partly to El Al's stringent security and high safety record, but even more so as a fulfillment of the promised blessings of Deuteronomy 28:7-8 and Isaiah 54:17. God's

enemies think they can defeat God's people, but every act of terrorism works to benefit instead of harm.

### EAR PLUGS

Most leaders consider themselves to be good listeners. Very few really are, however. They are too busy giving advice, are unable to concentrate on problems they feel are either trivial or impossible to solve, or they let their minds race ahead to something they feel is more important than the person they are supposed to be listening to. The pastor/counselor who is able to sit (or stand) and give full attention to the person who is talking is rare. More in evidence are the finger-tapper, the letter-opener, the eye-roller and the throat-clearer—all evidence of impatience or preoccupation.

Recently a team of management experts, headed by psychiatrists and psychologists, listed seven reasons pastors don't listen to those who come to them with problems. As you read them, check them against your own mental attitude.

### Why Pastors Don't Listen

1. A reward/punishment conception of motivation which tells pastors they must manipulate staff members or volunteer workers to get them to perform;
2. Self-centered preoccupation;
3. Insensitivity to people's feelings and unawareness of your impact on others—resulting from a need to suppress your own emotions;
4. The need to overcontrol others to prove your own superiority or authority;
5. The need to attack and subdue others—either of the same sex to prove your positional superiority or of the opposite sex to prove your sexual superiority;
6. Intense rivalry;
7. Plain, ordinary contempt for others.

How can a pastor judge whether he is a good listener or not? If you are too insecure to ask your staff members, ask a close friend to solicit feedback from them—providing the friend can overcome guilt feelings in order to report any bad news back to you. If you belong to a home group (and I hope you do), use them as a sounding board to reflect your personality flaws. I have found my wife and children are a good source of judgment.

Most of us are completely oblivious of our own faults. One pastor I know is so positive in his approach to life he simply refuses to hear any kind of negative report—including those which might benefit him. As a result his staff

members are afraid to approach him with any kind of complaint for they never know when he will snap back. Yet the man tells others he is a good listener.

Pastors can learn listening techniques. One pastor I know conducts his staff meetings by asking open-ended questions—and not interrupting when the answer is contrary to what he wanted to hear. Another pastor, realizing—upon the advice of an honest, loving friend—that he was governed by the psychological need to control, to attack or to repress emotions, submitted himself to professional counseling to overcome these handicaps. (Brave, wise man!) Is it worth it—all this self-evaluation? It depends on how much you want to help your people.

### **ATLANTA CHURCH WINS FEDERAL CASE**

When a deacon at the Chapel Hill Harvester Church in Atlanta suffered financial setbacks in his business and was forced to file for bankruptcy, one of the creditors, Richard Ellenburg, sued the church to collect the \$4,000 that the deacon had contributed the year before his business failed. Ellenburg argues that the contributions to the church were "fraudulent conveyances" and that the "debtor received less than a reasonably equivalent value in exchange for such transfer." The case went to federal court in November 1985 and was settled on April 9 of this year when U.S. bankruptcy judge A.D. Kahn issued an unprecedented judgment in favor of the church.

Bishop Earl Paulk, senior pastor, was called to testify in federal court as to whether the deacon had actually received \$4,000 worth of benefit for the money he had contributed.

After hearing all the testimony the judge determined the deacon had received full value for his money. Although the judge was interested in the deacon's pro rata share of air conditioning, building maintenance and other tangibles, he was also interested in spiritual support given by the church. Judge Kahn noted that the deacon and his family had received between 80 and 100 hours of counseling services. He also pointed out that the church's services helped the deacon and his family "get through an extremely difficult period" in their lives prior to bankruptcy.

The court ruling upheld three major policies underlying religious freedom: voluntarism of religious thought and conduct, government neutrality toward religion and the separation of church and state.

Paulk commented: "Due to the rippling ef-

fects of court rulings, it is increasingly incumbent upon the church to take action if necessary to prevent compromise imposed by the secular perspective. I recommend that churches exhaust all legal channels to insure that the rights of the church are protected. Many rights are lost merely due to neglect or because of an unwillingness to confront opposition through the legal process."

The entire matter raises another interesting question. How many of us could stand in court and prove to a judge that those who tithe to our church actually receive that much in return benefit? Hmmm!

### **EXCELLENT MISSIONARY TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

Thirteen years ago a young Bolivian student, studying in Los Angeles, attended a Kathryn Kuhlman service at the Shrine Auditorium. Unable to get in, he felt the Lord was telling him to stand up in a chair and preach on the sidewalk. He had never done this before, but to his amazement a number of people were healed.

Julio Ruibal, 20 years old, returned to South America and began preaching. People came by the hundreds of thousands to hear him. Tens of thousands were saved, healed and baptized in the Holy Spirit. He drew 70,000 in a soccer stadium in Medellin, Colombia, and 60,000 in the city square in Cochabamba, Bolivia. His ministry exceeded that of any evangelist in the world except Billy Graham.

Concerned that, unless he disciplined these multitudes who were attending his meetings, his evangelism was virtually meaningless, he withdrew to complete his education. He then spent several years working with the poor and pastoring a local church. Now he is back in international prominence in Cali, Colombia. He has opened a training center for local pastors in a poor section of the city—and is holding crusades in the United States as well. I believe God has His hand on this young man as one of the outstanding healing evangelists of the day.

September 15-27 he is sponsoring a two-week "labor and learning" symposium in Cali—ideal for those interested in Spanish-American ministry and missions. Cali, a city of 1.5 million, is the key city of international communists. Ruibal is asking a few American Christians to pay their way to attend a specially designed training program consisting of classes in evangelism, cultural adaptation, prayer and intercession, and related subjects. You will participate in a 24-hour fasting and prayer chain, visit house-to-house and in hospitals, jails and

orphanages, and participate in one of Ruibal's local crusades as part of his ministry team. It will be an outstanding learning and ministry opportunity.

Cost is \$1,398 which includes air fare, 5-star hotel accommodations, meals, etc. Contact Margaret Van Camp, 1298 Folsom Ave., Hayward, CA 94544; (415) 783-2880. ASAP.

### PERSONAL

You can't help but notice the change. We've gone from six pages to four, from large type to slightly smaller, from one column to two. Yet you are still receiving almost as much material. The new format just makes it much easier for you to read and file.

There were other reasons, of course. Earlier this year we cut the price of the **Buckingham Report** from \$99 a year to \$49.50. That dropped us back into the red. That's okay. We're not publishing for money—but for ministry. The reports I'm getting make it worthwhile. Some of the nation's most influential Christian leaders tell me they rely on this newsletter to inform

them and fill the gaps in their ministry. Hundreds of lay leaders and pastors of smaller churches have written, saying this is their major (for some their only) source of information and ministry instruction. Steve Strang, my publisher, and I are committed not only to keep the letter coming—but to improve its quality.

A number have asked, "How can I help?" For one, you can recommend the **Buckingham Report** to your friends. In fact, I wish you would sign them up, using the enclosed subscription card. If you order a gift subscription for them, we will send it in your name. You can help by getting others to sign up.

Unlike a magazine which depends on advertising, subscriptions are our only source of income. If you sponsor or sign up just one other person, we can break into the black and get on with the needed research to make the **Buckingham Report** even more valuable to your ministry.

I am grateful for the family of subscribers which has formed around me. I look forward to many years of serving you.

