

# BUCKINGHAM REPORT

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

## **REAGAN'S NON-CHURCH ATTENDANCE EXPLAINED**

Donn D. Moomaw, Reagan's California pastor, has recently defended the president's non-church attendance in **The Moral Majority Report**.

"Reagan has been a regular attender at Bel Air Presbyterian Church since 1963. Even while governor, he attended our church whenever he was at his home in Los Angeles. He was accompanied by Mrs. Reagan and often by two of their children. More often than not they would drive their own car, mingle with other worshippers and leave with little inconvenience to anyone.

"When Reagan became an announced candidate for president, everything at church began to change. For security purposes, federal, state and local law enforcement people began accompanying him to church.

"Suddenly everything escalated. Now more than 20 Secret Service cars, 25 motorcycle policemen, 10 to 12 SWAT squads and scores of press people swarmed through and over the church premises. More than a dozen Secret Service men and women stood quietly at all the doors checking people as they entered the sanctuary. While we proceeded to worship God in the sanctuary, the SWAT squad stood guard on the roof with their rifles in hand and helicopters soared overhead....

"Since the attempt on Reagan's life and the daily threats of violence to him and his wife, he has chosen, rather than increase security measures at any given church, to take the advice of many, including his good friend Billy Graham, and limit his attendance at church. They do not want to subject any congregation to this kind of hassle....

"Mr. and Mrs. Reagan are committed Christians. Prayer and Bible reading are an indispensable part of their lives. Even though we and they wish their faith could be nurtured more regularly in church, under the circumstances it seems the Reagans are doing the wisest thing by worshipping God in alternative ways at this time."

## **MORMON LEADERS ADMIT ROOTS IN OCCULT**

The **Los Angeles Times** reported in May that the Mormon Church has released photographic copies of an 1825 letter written by church founder Joseph Smith Jr. in which he says the origins of Mormonism were interwoven with magical lore. The presence of the letter has been rumored for more than a year, but its contents were only acknowledged the first week of May. At about the same time, the Mormon History Association confirmed an 1830 letter written by Martin Harris, Mormonism's



first follower. Harris had been told by Smith that a "white salamander," a mythical figure long familiar to occultists, was guarding the golden plates (the basis for the Book of Mormon) in 1823 and turned into an old spirit who fended off Smith, striking him three times. This contradicts the official Mormon line that Smith was denied immediate possession of the plates by an angel named Moroni. Mormon historians now admit Smith was involved in popular folk magic and "money digging" during the 1820s when he later said he was receiving heavenly revelations.

### MOONIES COURTING MINISTERS

Last month I received an invitation from Phillip Sanchez, president of CAUSA USA, telling me that the CAUSA Ministerial Alliance had awarded me a full scholarship to attend a four-day conference at the Atlanta Airport Marriott Hotel. All travel expenses, hotel expenses and meals would be financed by the conference. The conference program included topics such as "Confusion in Western Values," "Communist Expansionism in the West," and other anti-Marxist subjects. There were also several sessions devoted to the "CAUSA Worldview." No speakers' names were listed.

Sounds good. However, CAUSA is a front for the Unification Church run by Sun Myung Moon, self-proclaimed Messiah from Korea who recently served time in an American prison for tax evasion. Moon teaches that while Jesus was the "spiritual" savior of mankind, physical salvation had to await the coming of a "Third Adam" or the "Lord of the Second Advent," to be born in Korea after 1918. Moon was born in Korea in 1920.

Last fall I received a similar invitation for an all-expense-paid trip to Jamaica to attend another conference sponsored by another Moonie front.

Almost 300,000 American ministers have recently received "a gift for you from some folks who care"—a packet of three video tapes and two books from the Unification Church explaining their theology. Pastors who are foolish enough to respond also receive a personal follow-up from Moonies. The Unification Church spokesman says they have budgeted in excess of \$10 million.

### SUPREME COURT RULES ON CHURCH EMPLOYEES

All church employees, whether members of the church staff or merely employed by the church, are covered by federal labor law. So ruled the U.S. Supreme Court recently. In a case involving the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation, the Court ruled that the observance of **minimum-wage and overtime guidelines** was no more intrusive into religious affairs than other secular requirements that churches must submit to in fire inspections and zoning regulations. The justices did state that the decision is not a threat to ordinary volunteerism or the mail project.

### DEAD SEA SCROLLS

It has been more than 30 years since an international committee assigned a group of scholars the task of translating and publishing the material discovered in the



Dead Sea Scrolls. As the months and years drag on and there is no word from the translation committee, rumors have grown that the scholars are withholding publication because the scrolls contain material which would contradict the Genesis account of creation—and thus cause a tremendous conflict in Christian and Jewish circles.

**Biblical Archaeology Review** (March/April 1985) responded to this rumor saying: "There is absolutely no truth to the suggestion that publication of Dead Sea Scroll material is being withheld for doctrinal, religious or theological reasons. In the January 1983 issue of **Revue Biblique** (pp. 97 ff.), Father Pierre Benoit, current chairman of the international committee for the publication of the scrolls, answered this unfounded charge that nevertheless apparently continues to circulate. 'Nothing could be more false,' Father Benoit asserts. We agree. The people who are editing the unpublished scroll materials are men of impeccable integrity and scholarship. It is absurd to suggest that their delays are occasioned by theological considerations. The reasons for the delays are simply stated: the difficulty of the task (especially of fitting together thousands of tiny scroll fragments in their proper order) and the press of other work—in short, procrastination."

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

July 17, 1985

### **EXPLOSION IN THE NORTHWEST**

Mount St. Helens is not the only thing exploding in the Pacific Northwest; so is the ministry conducted by the Foursquare churches.

Virtually unknown east of the Mississippi, the Foursquare church was founded by the controversial Aimee Semple McPherson at Angelus Temple in Los Angeles back in the '30s. However, in latter days it has matured beyond the antics of its founder, primarily because of the credibility of its most famous modern day pastor, Jack Hayford of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California.

Now, while the Foursquare churches in the East remain mostly bound in tradition, there is a new move of the Spirit among these churches in northern California, in Oregon and in Washington. In Seattle, for instance, where less than 8 percent of the population attend church, the field is wide open—ready for harvest. All that is needed is hard-working men and women who are willing to do pioneer work—that is, move into an area and start from scratch, evangelizing people and planting churches.

### **CASE STUDY #1**

In the Santa Cruz area of California, Daniel Brown, a brilliant young Ph.D.—a poet and a philosopher—was on staff with Hayford for a number of years. His desire, though, was to begin his own church. Finally, with Hayford's blessing, Brown pulled away from the comforts of the huge and prosperous Church on the Way and moved into the small community of Aptos, north of Monterey. When he announced he was leaving Van Nuys to step out on faith, 18 people from the mother church volunteered to go with him. They resigned their jobs, sold their homes and moved to Aptos to form a church.

The Foursquare denomination helped finance Brown's first year with \$23,000. That was used for salary, church rent and utilities, publicity and any other needs. When the time comes to build a meetinghouse, the denomination will help again—with counsel and finances. And, if there



are financial problems down the line, Brown can count on his denomination to be there to help.

In less than a year the Aptos church has grown to more than 100 solid attendees. In another two years this exciting but solid ministry doubtless will be one of the largest works in the area.

### **Roy Hicks Jr. Leads Way**

But it's the Oregon-Washington area where the spectacular growth is taking place. Everyone up there credits the spirit and growth of the movement to the apostolic leadership of District Superintendent Roy Hicks Jr. and his predecessor, Roy Hicks Sr., his father.

Hicks is innovative, free from dead Pentecostal traditionalism. In addition to his apostolic work as the DS, Hicks has been the pastor of Faith Center in Eugene, Oregon, for 14 years. Eugene, a city of 100,000, is an economically depressed area (as are most lumbering communities in Oregon) and is an unlikely place for church growth to take place. Even so, Hicks pioneered his tiny church into a body of more than 5,000. Then several years ago the church sent out more than 3,000 of its members to begin new churches in the Eugene area. Since then, Faith Center has experienced new growth and is now back up to 3,000-plus in its services.

(By the way, all figures I use are ATTENDANCE figures. The Foursquare churches do not place much emphasis on membership. In fact, the membership for the entire denomination is less than 180,000—but runs many times that number in attendance.)

As DS for a five-state area making up the northwest district, Hicks gives oversight to more than 280 pastors. He does not have authority over churches. That is entrusted to the pastors themselves. But he does appoint pastors to their churches, acts as their personal pastor, oversees their finances and distributes money for expansion or to help a church through an emergency.

### **CASE STUDY #2**

When the huge East Hill Church (6,000 plus people) in Gresham, Oregon, a suburb of Portland, experienced an emergency last year, Hicks stepped in and quickly instigated a plan which has literally saved the church from total destruction. East Hill was the product of Jerry Cook, who birthed it from nothing 20 years ago. Portland, in the words of the present pastor, Dr. Ted Roberts, is the seat of Northwest fundamentalism. It has been characterized by a negative gospel and bitter church fights. When Cook moved into the area and said, "Hey, let's love one another," they flocked to him by the thousands. Cook's book, **Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness**, was a fresh breath of air in church circles around the nation. (I made it mandatory reading for all our leaders at the Tabernacle Church in Melbourne, Florida, because it characterized the church as I felt it should be—not a field but a force.)

East Hill expanded. Too fast. They bought unnecessary property. They made plans for a 10,000 seat auditorium. Cook, a personable, loving individual, lacked administrative skills and support while continuing a full speaking itinerary. The stress of the ministry worked against his health and affected his family. Almost a year before he resigned he was



forced to withdraw from the active pastorate to recuperate from a heart attack followed by open heart surgery. When he finally left Gresham, the church, which was millions of dollars in debt, floundered. The people had been loved, accepted and forgiven—but not structured. Attendance fell from a high of 6,000 to less than 600. The bill-collecting vultures lined up in the rigging, waiting to snatch what they could from the slanting deck before the once beautiful ship slipped beneath the waves of bankruptcy.

When the distress signals began to fly, Roy Hicks Jr. stepped in at Cook's request. He turned to an ex-Marine fighter pilot, Ted Roberts, and asked him to take the helm of the sinking East Hill Church. Roberts, who had been gearing toward the astronaut program before God got hold of his life, is an academician. He had been the administrative dean at the once-flourishing Bible college sponsored by the independent Bethesda Christian Center in Wenatchee, Washington, before it went belly-up following a financial scandal. Leaving Wenatchee, he had joined the Foursquare movement and moved to Eugene to work at Faith Center with Hicks. When East Hill struck the reef and began to list, Hicks appointed Roberts as captain of the sinking ship. In less than a year, Roberts has patched the holes. He now has the East Hill Church not only floating but under sail.

When I spoke there on a Sunday night in June, the huge gymnasium-shaped auditorium was filled—approximately 1,800. The 50-voice youth choir was singing with life and planning a European tour. Offerings have climbed back to about \$60,000 a month, and although they are still on the brink, the church is once again alive, paying its own bills and on its way back to its original place as the Northwest's largest church.

Hicks also had a vital input into the Wenatchee situation. When the then independent Bethesda Christian Center collapsed, following a discovery that the business manager had mishandled millions of the church's dollars, the church sent out an SOS to the Foursquare denomination. They took over, appointed a new pastor and assisted in payment on the property. The Wenatchee church was too far gone, however. Last month it closed its doors. The building is up for sale. What had been a Christian Camelot turned out to be Ichabod.

### **Out of the Ashes**

But out of the ashes at Wenatchee emerged some strong leaders who have benefited by their experiences—and are now prospering. Roberts was one. Another was Doug Murren, former president of the Bible college.

Murren, then 28 years old, moved to Seattle and started from scratch. He began by submitting to Hicks and joining the Foursquare denomination. Hicks guided the young pastor into the opening phases of his work at Eastside Foursquare Church in Kirkland, a suburb of Seattle. Eastside Foursquare began in June 1981 when Murren's pioneer church merged with another pioneer Foursquare work at their present site. The merged attendance equaled about 200 people. Despite a devastating fire a year ago which nearly destroyed the little auditorium, the Eastside Church keeps on growing. I was there recently for a communications conference attended by almost 100 area pastors. I stayed over and spoke at all four morning services to a combined total of about 1,300. The services were an hour in length with only a 10-minute turn-around time to allow the 500-seat building to empty and refill. The offerings run about \$55,000 a month and scores are being saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit.



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The denomination limits debt repayment on building programs to 25 percent of the church's undesignated offerings. This means Eastside will have controlled growth, but Murren has innovated by buying up all the houses around the church building for parking, offices and Sunday school space—and by using his present building for four services rather than building a huge, expensive auditorium. That's wise planning.

## Cook Goes to Kirkland

When Jerry Cook, recuperating from a heart attack, left Gresham, Murren opened a place to him on staff at Eastside for at least a year. Cook is using his tremendous gifts to help Murren train young men and women for ministry in developing a ministry institute. He is also affecting Eastside Church with love, acceptance and forgiveness. Although his future remains undecided, everyone seems happy for the present.

In the meantime Hicks has appointed Murren, now 33, as one of his divisional superintendents to help oversee about 18 pastors in the Greater Seattle/Alaska areas. Murren assists along with 23 other superintendents in the Northwest, appointing new men to churches (or in pioneer areas) and giving pastoral oversight to each one. Like Hicks, he is not paid for this ministry, but the church sees it as a valid outreach for their pastor and is in hearty support of his supervisory work. This open and loving system has fostered a deep feeling of **relationship** between the pastors and their district office. Secure under authority, the Foursquare churches are the fastest-growing in the Northwest and perhaps in the nation.

Ron Mehl, for instance, has been in the rather wealthy community of Beaverton—a suburb of Portland—for 12 years. Mehl, with his laid-back, informal approach to ministry, has built the church from nothing to more than 4,000.

Cliff Haines started a church several years ago in Olympia, Washington. When it grew large, he turned it over to Ron Long and moved to the little community of Bend, Oregon, to pioneer a new work which has now grown large.

Tom Ferguson is another who started with nothing in Everett, Washington, and his church is exploding in growth, numbering more than 1,500 people.

## Go Northwest, Young Man

Because the Northwest is basically “unchurched,” the field is ripe for those willing to start with nothing and trust God. Men like Murren and Hicks are prepared to disciple—and to help place—those who are willing to struggle and work and believe. I know this: If I wanted to be used by God, and couldn't find a place to serve in my area, I'd head for the Northwest and submit myself to someone in the Foursquare leadership. It is a sound apostolic ministry.

It's time to paraphrase Horace Greeley's advice of the 1850s when he said, “Go west, young man, and grow up with the country.” I say, “Go northwest, young man, and grow up with Jesus.” The fields there are ripe unto harvest.



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