

BUCKINGHAM

REPORT

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

TAKING CHANCES WITH PEOPLE

Very few decisions cause as much nail-biting for a pastor as placing a man in an important position and delegating authority. It's risky. This kind of risk is not unique in churches. It is also well known to those in the business world. Walter Wriston, ex-chairman of Citicorp and known as the "dean of banking," recently commented on what he felt was the biggest risk of his career.

"The riskiest thing any manager does is select people for important jobs," he said in an interview with *Success* magazine (June 1986). Ninety percent of all business decisions are people decisions. If you've got the right person in the right place, you can almost never make a mistake. If you've got the wrong person, no management strategy can save you. In our world, talent is everywhere. Recognizing it early and then giving someone a job before he's 'ready to take it' is a risk, but it's a necessary one. Of course, if that person bombs, it reflects badly on you. Therefore, many managers play it safe and choose a more senior bureaucrat over a potential young star."

Commenting on the policy Citicorp had on hiring, Wriston said: "We had a rule: Hire the very best people, wherever they were and regardless of their age and title. Interestingly, the young people who were put into positions of heavy responsibility almost never failed us. Some of the more seasoned people we took on fared less well. Whenever someone is in a position to hire, I remind him that at some point someone once took a chance with him."

When the elders at the huge Calvary Assembly in Winter Park, Florida, called Alex Clattenburg as pastor to replace the legendary Roy Harthorn, they took a risk. Although Clattenburg was a successful real estate businessman and had put together the nation's largest "Jesus Festivals" in Orlando, his primary experience on the church staff at Calvary had been as youth director. From youth director to pastor of one of the nation's largest churches—that's quite a risk. The elders knew a number of people would disapprove of their decisions—

and some would leave. That was the risk they took.

The decision proved to be right. The unhappy people (and there were many) left the church. However, these people have strengthened a number of churches in Orlando, including the interdenominational church now pastored by the Harthorns and the growing congregation pastored by his son-in-law, Benny Hinn. Others have gone into various congregations around the area, bringing new life to a number of struggling churches. Those who remained at Calvary have not only been loyal to Clattenburg, they have worked hard and given generously, and now the church is much larger and stronger than it ever was in the Harthorn heydays. They are in the process of completing an \$18 million building program. Clattenburg, although different in personality from his predecessor, is an expert manager with the warm heart of a pastor. He has stayed at home, worked hard and stuck to his vision. The risk has paid off in big dividends for the church.

DEALING WITH OBSESSIONS

Dick Wheeler has been associate pastor at a 2,200-member church in Illinois for five years. Six months ago he began showing symptoms of problem behavior. In short, he was obsessed with neatness. Trash on the church lawn, clutter in the auditorium sound booth, dirty coffee cups in the sink of the office kitchenette—all were constantly mentioned at the weekly staff meetings. Sometimes Wheeler lost his temper when other staff members did not share his obsession. He became the subject of office discussions—and jokes. When the youth director "rolled" his office with toilet paper, Wheeler exploded in an uncontrolled burst of irrational anger. At that time the senior pastor decided it was time to act. What should he do?

"Wheeler," the pastor told me as we discussed the problem, "acts as if he graduated from the Captain Ahab Charm School."

The pastor's reference to Ahab's legendary obsession with Moby Dick was apt. When a staff member or lay leader develops an

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obsession, he may neglect other responsibilities and pressure those around him—including subordinates—to share the preoccupation or to cover for him as his primary duties go lacking.

The first thing the pastor should do is try to determine what purpose the obsession serves for the associate. After an unsuccessful project, does he become obsessed with another—to redeem himself? Does he go overboard with other issues? Is he going through a family crisis? Does his obsession make him feel more in control, in demand, heroic? Has someone put him under extra pressure?

Understanding the meaning of the obsession may suggest compensatory steps. The senior pastor may need to help the subordinate master a skill that makes him feel inadequate—such as helping a church secretary fill in the daily phone log.

In the case of Wheeler the pastor realized the man's obsession with neatness appeared shortly after he assigned him the task of welcoming the visitors at the two Sunday morning services. The associate finally admitted he felt entirely inadequate for this task, that he was stiff and bumbling, and had actually lost sleep worrying about it. In this case the pastor eased the pressure and wisely backed off. However, he did not devastate the associate by snatching the job from him. Instead, he took time not only to explain the techniques, but to show him how he could express genuine warmth and make the people feel welcome.

When the cause of an obsession is external—such as a family problem—or is indecipherable, the pastor may want to suggest professional help. Even one session with a trained psychotherapist often gives the person a better grip on his behavior.

In any case, the pastor or whoever the person's manager is has the responsibility of: helping the person face his obsessive behavior; insisting that primary functions not go undone; setting up a program which allows the person to check himself on a regular basis. When the person succeeds in tempering his actions, he should be praised. At the same time, remember there are hundreds of white whales in the ocean, and you need to keep a close eye that the person with a tendency to obsessive behavior does not switch and go after another.

IMAGE COUNTS

A fundamental function of leadership is to encourage and inspire—to lead others to master

what they are up against. One of the ways of doing this is to instill in people a sense of "company pride"—giving them a joy of being part of a family of which they can be proud and enthusiastic.

When Eastern Airlines came on hard times recently I noticed a distinct, measurable drop in the "service attitude" of the flight attendants. They were hurting, threatening a strike, and wanted to send a message that Eastern was "unfair." They did this by being grumpy and terse with passengers. "Company pride" was down. In this case Chairman of the Board Frank Borman, who was perceived by Eastern employees as the Enemy, had disqualified himself from performing one of the basic functions of leadership—to inspire and encourage. As a result the image of the entire organization suffered. Borman eventually had to resign.

The pastor/leader who is unable to inspire and encourage his workers will see this flow reflected at all levels of the church in a poor image. The physical plant will look sloppy. Workers will perform their tasks without joy. The receptionist answering the phone will give the impression the caller is disrupting her day—rather than projecting the image she is sitting there hoping and praying that persons will call so that she can help them. Staff members will dress sloppily, be late for work and mope through their assigned duties. You'll seldom hear anyone whistling while they work—to borrow a line from Snow White.

One of my goals with this newsletter is to help leaders understand that leadership should stand for the continuity of organizational values. Especially is this true if your church or ministry is going through some kind of crisis. When IBM was going through a massive change, Thomas Watson Jr., CEO, made certain he personified IBM's squeaky-clean image. One of his ways of doing this was always to wear a white shirt and tie with his suit. "I don't give a d— about a white shirt," he admitted. "But if I wear a nice looking blue shirt, the next fellow down is going to wear a purple shirt, and then...we're going to have an aloha shirt down at the salesman level."

The pastor (or ministry head), regardless of how he feels, has an obligation to present a positive, inspirational image to those under him. That's not to say you grin when you have a headache. It is saying you need to be strong but not overcontrolling. It means presenting an image of strength and security.

I have discovered, in times of crisis in our church, my personal appearance at all meetings brought a calming effect to the church. Even if I was not speaking on a Sunday

I made it a priority to be present at all services, dressed up—not down. In easy times I may miss some of the services and dress informally, but in times of crisis I dress as the captain of the ship—coat and tie—and occupy a highly visible seat in the congregation. In a gale the passengers always feel better if they can see the captain on the bridge—even if the first mate is at the helm.

We may scoff at image, but God works through human resources and expects us to utilize all our understanding of human nature. At the top of this list is the leader's image—which will affect the church at all levels.

CHECKING YOURSELF ON TIME MANAGEMENT

How are you doing when it comes to organizing your day, setting priorities, accomplishing day-by-day goals? Do you finish your regular work day with a feeling of satisfaction—or a feeling of frustration? Do you look forward to going to your desk in the morning?

Here's a little test I've developed to help you grade yourself on degrees of efficiency. Grade yourself by number: (1) Rarely, (2) Sometimes, (3) Usually...

1. Before I leave my desk for the day I jot down things I must do tomorrow.
2. I hold a planning session with myself every morning to draft the day's "to do" list.
3. I tackle the biggest, most important jobs first.
4. I refuse to let "urgent" calls deter me from the "important" things I have determined must be done that day.
5. I habitually finish all the items on my daily "to do" list.
6. I seldom miss deadlines.
7. I am seldom late for scheduled meetings.
8. My desk is well organized.
9. I can quickly and easily find items I filed long ago.
10. I make maximum use of my secretary.
11. I know when and how to cut short unexpected interruptions—such as drop-in visitors.
12. Following interruptions I resume work right away.
13. I spend a minimum amount of time with "small talk" during my work day.
14. I delegate authority well and know how to call for reports from delegates. If I have an office manager or church administrator, I let him run the office and do not get involved in details.
15. I regularly critique my time-management techniques.

16. I am able to say "no" to well-meaning but time-wasting friends who would draw me away from my planned day's activities.

17. I am an early-riser who enjoys getting a head start on others.

18. I do not mind closing the door of my office and ordering "hold my calls" when deadlines beckon.

19. I realize the value of prayer, leisure and recreation to keep my mind clear and to stimulate new ideas.

20. I do not get involved with small details in such items as building maintenance, sound systems and transportation. In other words, I don't re-fill the coffee maker or load the copy machine.

Add your score.

56-60 You're doing a great job.

50-54 You're better than most, but need to be more consistent.

38-48 There's room for improvement. You need to analyze your weaknesses and work to eliminate them one by one.

32-36 You are in danger of overcommitment. You may have a "controlling spirit." Discipline is needed.

30 and under You're in trouble. Your desk and filing system represent your life. Get back to basics and learn to plan ahead with discipline.

Remember: simply because you run your life by the clock and calendar does not mean you are good at time management. Many pastors and leaders who are sticklers for starting on time have not learned the lesson of separating the urgent from the important, of uninvolved involvement in details, of true delegation without overriding the authority given to others. Check yourself on all points and seek the help of trusted, competent businessmen or professional people in your church to help you overcome your weaknesses.

HOW'S BUSINESS

Periodic re-evaluation is mandatory if a church is to fulfill its function in ministry. Joe Johnson, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Show Low, Arizona, recalls something one of his professors at Fuller Seminary told his class. The professor always asks two questions at every weekly staff meeting:

1. What business are we in?
2. How's business?

Joe says his church is in the business of making disciples. He lists five areas of "business" which need re-evaluation on a regular basis: worship; fellowship; training;

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ministry to the lost, the poor, the sick; giving away leaders to plant other churches.

IF YOU'RE AUDITED BY IRS

High on the list of those the IRS will audit this year are senior pastors and heads of ministries. Probably one out of five in this category will be called in and asked to show proof. I've been audited twice and can testify it is not a pleasant experience. My auditor stated point blank that as far as he was concerned I was guilty and the burden of proving myself innocent rested on my shoulders.

IRS computers are now capable of matching various forms. If you have not declared EVERYTHING, then your chances of being audited are high. For instance, let's say you spoke at a three-day conference and received a \$900 honorarium, plus travel expenses. In the past many ministers justified their honorarium as a "gift" and did not declare it. Now the conference administrator is required—if you are paid more than \$600—to obtain your social security number and file a Form 1099 with the IRS stating the amount paid you. The IRS views that as salary. If you do not declare it, their computers will pick it up, flag your return, and you'll be audited.

Don't be lulled by those reports saying an IRS audit is a snap. It's a snap, all right—like a bear trap. If you are careful, you'll not be injured. But a slip could mean a great deal of pain.

Here are some tips that will help you if you face a similar problem.

Red Flags

To start with, you need to know what triggers most audits. These are the things the IRS calls "red flags," alerting agents to pull your file for further examination. My sources for this are Matthew Bender, publisher of *Bender's Tax Return Manual for 1986*, and Jane Bryant Quinn of *Newsweek*.

- Total gross income of \$100,000 or more on Form 1040 taken from Schedules C and F.
- Total positive income of \$50,000 or more on Form 1040 non-business returns. This includes wages, interest, dividends and Schedules C and F profits.
- Tax shelter activity. (High write-off tax shelters are under the gun.)
- Excessive travel and entertainment expense. (Keep records of all expenses.)
- Excessive charitable contributions. (Make certain you are giving to an approved organi-

zation if you want to count it as a tax deduction.)

- Business automobile expenses. (Be sure to document your mileage.)
- Casualty losses. (A casualty loss is required to be "sudden, unexpected and unusual in nature.")
- Barter income. (This involves swapping goods or services as income.)
- Home office deductions. (If you have your office in your home you may have a hard time proving it's tax-deductible. Rules for counting off a home computer are particularly strict.)
- Returns prepared by a preparer on the "problem preparers list." (The IRS has a black list of preparers who have violated the law in the past. Be careful in choosing your helper.)
- If your church generated a wrong 1099 report on your income, then corrected it by generating a duplicate, the IRS computers often mistakenly add them both together and assess you twice the tax. Be sure to check with your church treasurer before trying to convince the auditor of an IRS mistake, however.

You're OK if you have reported all your income accurately, if you can verify all your deductions, and if you are willing to give in to IRS demands if audited. But if you omitted income you should have reported, or if you've listed deductions the IRS questions, or if you've gotten involved in some kind of tax dodge which is on the IRS hit list—you may be in for rough water.

The Awful Audit

There are ways, however, to go through the rapids without drowning.

If you are flagged for an audit you will receive a letter from the IRS with specific information, demanding more tax or seeking further information about items in your return. (These "mail audits" are scheduled to jump 75 percent this year.)

You may be asked to participate in an office audit. That means you might get by with mailing to the IRS office proofs of your claims, such as copies of canceled checks, etc. Or you may be asked to come in for an office interview.

IRS agents say the thing they look for first of all is evidence of dishonesty. They do this by judging character. Your attitude, therefore, may speak louder than your figures.

Warning: do not answer questions which are not asked. Don't volunteer any information unless it will help your case.

After suffering through two audits I did a very wise thing: I turned my tax return over to a Christian CPA. My CPA, Howard Reed, lives in Boca Raton, Florida, and has not only saved

me money by proper tax preparation, but has eliminated my audits. He simply attaches a letter to my tax return, explaining that I have unusually heavy contributions and travel expenses. He points out this is true every year, that I have been audited on these things in the past and cleared, that he has checked my return and is satisfied I can verify all my contributions and expenses. This letter keeps my return from being flagged. I retained Reed six years ago. I was audited the first year (before he had a chance to file my return) and he represented me at the second audit. I didn't even have to appear. Next to having an advocate at the Judgment Seat, having an advocate at an IRS audit is the greatest of securities. If it is at all possible, retain an expert to handle your tax return.

IN THIS ISSUE I AM SPOTLIGHTING...

PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS

What is it that separates some men from others—the men from the boys, so to speak?

Why do men like Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, Kenneth Hagin and a handful of others rise above the crowd and accomplish things most men only dream of?

It's been 15 years since I wrote *Shout It From the Housetops* with Pat Robertson. Now Pat is re-issuing the book to his "partners." It will be enlarged in size and filled with pictures. Recently I returned to CBN and spent time with Pat and his staff collecting research material for an update chapter. As I was writing, that question kept running through my mind: Why do some men (like Robertson) achieve, while others only dream?

Across the years I've studied the lives of a number of successful contemporary leaders. From my perspective, either as their biographer or close friend, I've looked for "secrets" in their lives—things that enabled them to achieve while others only wished.

All have two things in common: they spend much time in prayer and much time in Bible study.

Oh, they do other things also. They act with boldness. They dare and risk. They have a spirit of adventure. They are highly disciplined. They do not shirk from the hard decisions. And the truly great ones go one step further. They are determined that their personal lives—especially in the areas of family and finances—match the integrity of Jesus.

Nancy K. Austin, who co-authored *A Passion for Excellence*, says, "The drive one needs to rise from mediocrity to excellence requires commitment. Delve into the life of any truly commit-

ted person, and you will find a series of trade-offs and painful decisions."

Trade-offs

Time. Achieving excellence, that is, making your dream come true, will never be done by a 40-hour-a-week person. I have some talented friends who will never achieve beyond their present status because they love to play too much. They have risen to a level where they can now take off two or three days a week and allow their associates to do their job. They spend their leisure time on the golf course, sailing or on cruise ships. The books they could write, the videos they could produce, the institutions they could build rest forever in the backsides of their minds. They are not willing to trade leisure for achievement.

Over the past 16 years I've written almost 40 books and hundreds of magazine articles, pastored an exciting and growing church, traveled extensively, raised five outstanding children...but then, I've never had a 40-hour-a-week mentality. There are other men I know, some in my own circle of close friends, who are experts in their fields and whose books would sell far better than mine—but they've never had anything published. The reason: they don't write. Why don't they write? They never take the time. They'd rather do other things.

I've never known a highly successful pastor or ministry head who worked less than 70 hours a week. You say, "It's not worth it." And to you, it's not. But they achieve, while you only dream.

Tenacity

This is the drive to succeed that keeps you going after everyone else has quit. William Feather once said, "Success seems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."

Fred Smith is a good example. Smith had a dream, while still in college, of starting an overnight delivery service. When he got out of the Marines he put up his own inheritance to launch a small company. His plan was to serve as a courier for the Federal Reserve System. He called it Federal Express. It failed. From 1973 to 1977 the company was rocked by crisis after crisis. Smith lost everything.

Scott DeGarmo, editor of *Success* magazine (August 1986), tells the story of what happened then. "In January 1973, with near-certain collapse only a few days away, Smith obtained a \$2 million loan by presenting a bank with a fictitious document. He later got a \$1 million short-term loan in the same manner. The loans pulled the company through, but Smith had to stand trial for his actions.

"Creditors, meanwhile, swarmed over the

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company. When loan officers from banks visited the Memphis headquarters, Smith instructed his planes not to land. Had the planes been grounded and chained up, the company would have quickly folded. In Detroit, airport officials blocked a Federal Express plane with a fire truck because the company had not paid its landing fees."

With the company's checks bouncing, one employee pointed a gun at his supervisor's head and demanded to be paid. Then money was found. Loyal employees pawned their watches to help the company through.

Things got worse. Gasoline prices quadrupled. The stock market plunged. Smith's sisters sued him saying he was squandering their inheritance as well as his own. Yet he hung on. He finally won his legal battles, retained control of his company and kept the intense loyalty of his employees and senior officers. Later he raised \$96 million, took the company public and turned it into a billion-dollar corporation faster than any other company in history.

I do not recommend Smith's methods. But I admire his tenacity.

Comfort is a difficult thing to risk. But only those who risk it have a shot at succeeding in a big way. True men of faith often mortgage their houses and sell their cars to finance their projects. Karl Strader gave up most of his personal perks at the church—things he had earned over the years such as his travel allowance—to build his Carpenter's Home Church. Pat and Dede Robertson ate soybeans because he believed in his dream. Oral Roberts risked everything he had, including his ministry, to build ORU. Bishop Earl Paulk risked his life because he believed God had told him to have a totally integrated church in a segregated city. All are successful.

Risk

Security is another trade-off. Achieving excellence requires a willingness to go out on a limb. This means far more than jeopardizing your car or home; it means jeopardizing your reputation and your future. When Oral Roberts had a dream for a university it meant running the risk of losing everything if it failed to materialize. It meant calling in all his chips from a lifetime of ministry. There would be no second chance if he failed. But he believed God had told him to build ORU. So as Noah built an ark on dry ground, Oral Roberts built a university in Oklahoma, Pat Robertson built a TV network in Virginia, Robert Schuller built a Crystal Cathedral in California, Gerald Derstine

built a retreat center in Florida and Jim Bakker built a family center in North Carolina.

Final Factor

While these men risked all, they all said they were merely fulfilling God's call. None did it simply because they wanted to succeed. They succeeded because they obeyed God.

Back in 1968, a friend sent me some information on Pat Robertson. I looked at the little brochure she enclosed. There was a picture of Pat. On the back was a list of the impossible goals he had set up for CBN—starting with carrying the gospel to all the world via broadcasting.

Impossible goals? There are those who accomplish the impossible. It starts with faith—seeing beyond this world into the kingdom of God. Once a man taps into that, nothing is impossible.

Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Billy Graham, Robert Schuller...these are the men J.B. Phillips wrote about in his preface to his translation of the New Testament. He told of the impression those early followers of Christ made on his life as he translated their writings into modern English. He called them "pioneers of a new humanity, founders of a new Kingdom." Then he concluded: **"Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved."**

The men I have mentioned—and there are others, as well—are numbered among those rare ones who "believe as they believed." In fact, I am convinced their faith has gone beyond many of those early Bible characters—enabling them to do even greater things than they have done. It is this faith, accompanied by the traits I've listed—excellence, tenacity, sacrifice and integrity—which have caused them to achieve where others only dream.

I remember, halfway through that first manuscript of *Shout It From the Housetops*, sitting at my typewriter and comparing my own lack of faith with Pat's willingness to risk all for Jesus. I picked up a felt-tipped pen and wrote down what I felt was the theme of his life: **"ATTEMPT SOMETHING SO BIG, THAT UNLESS GOD INTERVENES, IT IS BOUND TO FAIL."**

Someone later framed that slogan for me and it now hangs on the wall of my writing studio. It reminds me of the risk and the results of utter dependence on God.

Excellence, integrity, faith...these are the ingredients which characterize the great men and women of the kingdom. With God all things are possible.

