

BUCKINGHAM

REPORT

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

PRIME TIME RIPPLES STILL BEING FELT

Reaction to the November showing of the ABC-TV program *PrimeTime Live*, which attacked the ministries of Robert Tilton, W.V. Grant and Larry Lea, is still taking place. Lea, in particular, after a couple of false starts, has responded commendably.

Lea first issued a short, innocuous press release, charging ABC with misrepresenting the facts. Later he sent out a letter, also distributed by Oral Roberts, in which he took the three primary charges leveled at him by ABC and offered explanations. I found the letter confusing. Although to some degree Lea rebutted each of ABC's allegations, he also asked his followers to forgive him for "any harm or offense."

Rather than editorialize on the inconsistencies, I decided to simply pray, trusting God to remind Lea of his humble beginnings, save him from the deception and the destruction that invariably accompanies wealth and success, and use this shaking to wash out any spirits of exaggeration and misrepresentation of truth that may have crept into his ministry.

Then, in December, Lea issued another statement. He announced his television ministry was going off the air for at least 90 days beginning December 31. During that time, he and his wife, Melva, would pray for God's direction for their ministry. He asked a group of pastors to review all the accusations brought against him by *PrimeTime* and "recommend any changes they feel would be appropriate" in his life and ministry.

I commend Larry and believe this is appropriate action for any of us under attack. I hope others will see it as a model to be used by all parachurch ministry leaders.

ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY (ORU) NEEDS OUR HELP

Several years ago, I wrote a column for *Charisma* magazine in which I played on the

letters O-R-U, calling ORU University "OUR" university. I got some flak from some of the other fine Pentecostal/charismatic colleges and universities across the nation who felt I had singled out ORU and failed to mention them.

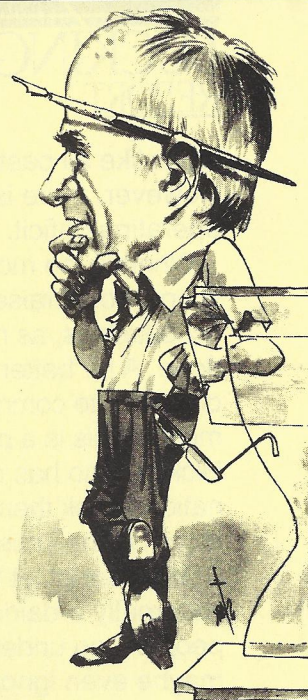
It is true there are a number of excellent Christian colleges and universities in the United States—some evangelical, others Pentecostal. Most are sponsored by denominations or, as in the case of Regent University (formerly CBN University), have a massive organization behind them.

Oral Roberts University, however, is the only independent charismatic university in the nation that does not have some huge organization backing it financially.

Starting on a shoestring, Roberts felt he should build the university with cash rather than by collecting massive debt. That was an extremely wise move. However, after the university was up and running, other Roberts' projects pulled the Christian community's attention—and money—away from the university. Most notorious was the City of Faith, Roberts' dream for a Spirit-filled hospital. The huge buildings went up in a hurry, just across the street from the ORU campus. But the dream never did fully materialize, and, for the most part, the three skyscrapers sat unfurnished and unoccupied. Roberts wisely closed the hospital and put the buildings up for sale.

The trustees were in agreement, feeling the money from the sale would form a large base for an endowment to help fund the constant deficit under which ORU (like all universities) operates.

The economic downturn crushed the planned sale, however. Roberts sent out a letter that was badly misinterpreted by the press. The university is not in danger of closing, and it



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looks like all past-due bills will soon be paid. However, there is still a \$200,000 monthly operating deficit.

Where's the money going to come from? The school could raise tuition and cut out scholarships, as many private schools have done. A far better proposal, however, is for 1,000 churches to commit to giving the school \$200 a month. This is a plan worked out by Marilyn Hickey, who has been calling pastors all over the nation to ask them to pledge at least \$200 per month in their missions budgets to ORU.

"We cannot let this beautiful university—which was really ordained of God for our young people—go under, just because of neglect or maybe even ignorance," Hickey says. I agree.

A number of churches have already gotten behind the project. But many, many more are still needed.

PAYING PEANUTS, HIRING MONKEYS

Albert Kang is the founding pastor of the Church of Praise in Singapore. Here is one of his thought-provoking articles on how to employ the right staff person:

"A friend of mine pastors a church of 200 people. Recently, he employed a receptionist who jeopardized his ministry. Within two weeks, most of the people who called his church office were offended by the cold reception and careless remarks. My friend had no choice but to dismiss the receptionist. He should have assessed her abilities before hiring her, and thus saved all the embarrassment of having to dismiss her.

"Here are a few pointers that will help you avoid making mistakes in hiring pastoral and administrative staff.

- **Reasonable Demands.** If you pastor a small church, you may want to employ someone who can cover many duties. However, be reasonable with your demands. A church worker resigned from her position because she was asked to be an office cleaner, receptionist, typist, photocopy clerk, odd-job worker and coffee maker, among many other miscellaneous roles. Few people can cover so many duties and be happy. Before you begin searching for staff, be sure your demands are within the framework of reason.

- **Unnecessary Haste.** Most pastors realize that without staff, they will not be able to accomplish their goals for church growth. For the sake of filling the vacancy, they hire people who may not qualify. In the long run, they lose out because the staff's performance cannot meet acceptable standards.

- **Job Descriptions.** Most pastors are too busy to write job descriptions, and the staff are left to decide what they should do. Your staff will function better when they know exactly what they are expected to do. Let them set their own acceptable *standard of performance* and help them achieve it. Be sure that their standard is also acceptable to you.

- **Performance Evaluation.** Annual reviews should be avoided because the pastor will be making a general evaluation of the previous 12 months of work. The staff will not have the benefit of hands-on training and adjusting. Evaluation should be done either monthly or bimonthly. Monthly work reviews should be based upon an agreed measurable performance standard. Create a mutual learning experience during the work review sessions. The pastor does not only evaluate the subordinate's performance, but also shows that his own performance is in line with the agreed standard of performance. Staff will come out of an evaluation session feeling great because the pastor also uses that time to meet their needs.

- **Mirror Image.** Pastors often hire people who behave and even sound like them. One pastor hired a Bible school graduate because he identified with this young man. He felt that the graduate resembled himself when he was a struggling young preacher. However, after one year, he discovered that this young man had questionable integrity. Hiring one's mirror image does not guarantee a problem-free relationship. Another pastor hired a former drug addict who turned out to be one of the most effective people on his staff. Although this former addict did not excel in Bible school, he led more people to Christ than the other pastors.

- **Hiring Aids.** Pastors should avail themselves of the wide range of hiring tools on the market. There are psychological tests and spiritual gifts analyzers that may be used to assess those being interviewed. However, pastors should not depend solely upon the

results of the tests. They should use their experience and insight to size up the candidate.

• **Peanut Payment.** Good staff know they are worth top salaries—but not all pastors do. Someone said, 'If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys.' Think of your staff not as financial burdens, but as assets. Pay them well, and they will pay you back in countless precious ways. If you want your church to grow, you have to hire excellent staff."

LO, THE METACHURCH

C. Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and one of our contributing editors, says the advent of the *metachurch* is the most important church growth innovation in the last two decades.

What is a metachurch? It can best be described as a church going through a change of thought and structure. All metachurches have

A DISTURBING STUDY OF CONTRASTS

Dale Brooks, pastor of Calvary Temple in Temple Terrace, Florida, gave me a copy of a leadership contrast prepared by some unknown person. The painfully revealing study contrasts pastors of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea (Yonggi Cho's megachurch) with the typical American church pastor. Here it is. Keep in mind that the Korean church operates in a different culture.

	AMERICAN CHURCH	YOIDO CHURCH
ACTIVITIES	Administration Weekly teaching/ preaching Counseling in office Presiding at weddings and funerals on occasion	Home visitation Daily teaching/preaching Counseling in homes/ businesses Daily presiding at funerals birthday parties, weddings, and business dedications
PRIMARY THRUST	To teach and inspire	To motivate the layperson to do the work of the ministry
LOCATION OF MAIN FUNCTION	Office/church	Homes/businesses
PRIMARY GOAL	Proficient pulpiteers	Ministering models
SECONDARY GOAL	Able administrator in the office	Servants with solutions to daily difficulties
PRAYER LIFE	Individual decision— usually meager	Three hours daily—fervent and intense
OVERALL STRATEGY	Passive—"Come to church events"	Aggressive—go out daily to minister in the marketplace
RESULTS	Sporadic growth/ maintenance	Continual growth by thousands

two things in common: small group ministry and celebrative corporate worship.

When Wagner first described the metachurch, he used a simple formula:

Cells + Congregation = Celebration.

That has evolved, says Carl George, director of church growth at Fuller Seminary, into the idea that no single pastor—or even a pastoral staff—can provide the proper pastoral care needed by the modern church member.

Thus, in the metachurch, pastors are no longer the “primary care-givers,” says George. Their primary emphasis is on other staff members and a group of key lay leaders. Pastors see these lay leaders much as football-team owners would see their coaches. The “coaches,” rather than the pastors, are the ones who actually do the hands-on work of the ministry. “Virtually all ministry is decentralized to these groups,” George explains.

The key factor in the metachurch is the small group. Large groups are for celebration, not ministry. Ministry comes at the hands of the small group leaders, who are trained and equipped to “do the work of the ministry.”

The church that builds on this kind of foundation has an unlimited growth potential because it is able to provide quality spiritual, emotional and often physical care for each member of the flock.

STRATEGY

Leaders must think on their feet. In most critical situations, you won't find your answers coming from a textbook. They must come as divine inspiration.

William A. Cohen's book *The Art of the Leader* is filled with real-life examples of leadership during times of crisis. One of Cohen's stories tells how democracy in America was saved as God gave George Washington a stroke of divine inspiration.

Shortly after the American Revolution, senior officers of the Continental Army conspired to overthrow Congress. They were angry over stalled payments to their troops and other indignities.

George Washington dropped in uninvited at their planning session. The conspirators listened stone-faced to his pleas and refused to

budge. Finally, Washington reached into his pocket and pulled out a pair of spectacles. Out of vanity, Washington had never allowed anyone to see him wearing them in public.

As he slowly put them on, Washington said, “Gentlemen, I have grown old in your service and now am growing blind.” There wasn't a dry eye in the room. By dramatizing his helplessness, Washington stirred these officers' consciences. They suddenly remembered how much they owed him. Stricken by guilt, they immediately voted against the rebellion. Democracy was saved.

LOOKING FOR THE PARADIGM SHIFT

All businesses are based on *paradigms*. These are defined as patterns or models that tell you how to solve problems.

In 1967, a researcher for the Swiss watchmakers' trade association invented the quartz movement. The watchmakers laughed at the idea. After all, as producers of the mainspring watch, they owned 65 percent of the world market.

One year later, only 15,000 of the 65,000 Swiss watchmakers still had their jobs. Almost overnight, the quartz movement shifted the watch industry to Japan.

This kind of earthshaking event is called a *paradigm shift*.

Most churches in America are going through (or getting ready to go through) a paradigm shift. Our culture has already gone through it—it's just taking churches a while to catch on.

Churches are built on paradigms. Wise leaders realize they need the paradigm's boundaries to keep out of the superfluous and to help them see opportunities for growth and ministry.

Don't get stuck thinking your current paradigm will never shift, or you could end up selling windup watches on the corner—along with gospel quartet records, overstuffed pulpit chairs, filmstrip projectors and pack-the-pew kits for week-long revival meetings.

