

## Principles in Maintaining a Godly Organization

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“Where there is no vision, the people perish . . .” Proverbs 29:18, KJV

When we look back at the history of church movements and Christian organizations, we often find they began with great dreams and ambitions. The leadership was strong and on fire for God—and then somehow, something went wrong. The life went out of them. They became “just another organization.” Study the beginning years of some of the major denominations and see how red-hot they were. Look at them now and see where they are! You are in for a shock!

I have seen this trend too often in Christian ministry, where things go well for so long, tremendous progress is made, the Lord’s kingdom is going forward—but then, over time, things start heading downhill.

This is a great concern to me as I think about the movement of which I am a part. It is my prayer that the Lord will help us continue on course, that we will stay focused and not lose the original vision He gave us, and that we will maintain our vibrancy and joy over the great possibilities He is laying before us.

That is why I believe it is good for us to continually go back to the Scriptures, rather than to the philosophies and structures created by human experts on building great organizations. From Scripture we can see how God called people and empowered them, how they succeeded, how they failed and how they returned to the Lord after their failures. We can learn valuable and vital lessons from their lives. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition.”

One powerful example we have is the early church in the book of Acts. You see a fresh beginning, leading and newness. You see excitement and unity and togetherness. You see a cause to live and die for. If we can understand the hearts of these believers more deeply, grasp the principles that worked in their everyday lives and made them what they were, and then adjust ourselves accordingly, I believe this will help us more than we can ever realize.

Because each one of us is an individual, it is not always easy to think of our part in the organization in terms of this bigger picture. By default we think about the immediate—the experience we are going through right now. It takes a good deal of maturity, understanding from the Lord and deliberate thinking to put ourselves in the context of the world in which we live today, realizing that our lives are short and what we do now can truly impact eternity. Jesus told us that the road to eternal life was narrow, and few would find it (Matthew 7:14); and unless we make it a point to think about ourselves as the Lord does, we can easily miss the significance of our call.