

***A Church for the 21st Century*** by Leith Anderson, Bethany House Publishers, Grand Rapids, 1992. (17 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

## **1. At End of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Conservative Churches Flourishing**

“...it has been a spectacular century for the church of Jesus Christ. The gospel has spread all over the world. Neither unwritten languages nor iron curtains could keep out the message of Jesus Christ. The church has turned Africa south of the Sahara Desert from a heathen continent to a thriving center for new churches, new denominations, and new missions. Korea has become a missionary sending country The Chinese church is mushrooming by the tens of millions. New Protestant churches are beginning in South America at the rate of more than 50,000 per year”

“The American church has experienced an unprecedented growth during this century. It is 375,000 churches strong and a major force in the life of the country. More than 90% of Americans say they believe in God. One fourth say they are born-again Christians. If next Sunday is typical, 43% of the population will worship in a church or synagogue. It has been an especially successful Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy promised to leave liberals the victors and conservatives the vanquished. As we near the end of the twentieth century, it often appears to be the other way around, as many liberal churches and institutions hemorrhage while their conservative counterparts flourish.” [Page 16]

## **2. Failure to React and Respond to Change**

“*In Search for Excellence* by Peters and Waterman analyzed forty-three of America’s best-run companies like IBM and 3M. But, did you know that two years after the publication of that bestseller, fourteen of those businesses were in financial trouble? *BUSINESS WEEK* magazine explained the reason why: ‘failure to react and respond to change.’ One of the realities of the emerging twenty-first century is that yesterday’s successes are no guarantee for tomorrow’s survival.” [Page 16]

## **3. Can’t keep up**

“Jeff Davis, author of an article entitled, ‘*Breathing Space: Living & Working at a Comfortable Pace in a Sped-Up Society*,’ says, ‘My premise is that time management is no longer valid in society as we know it. There is no keeping up. There is more produced (to read, watch, etc.) in one day than you could comfortably take in the rest of your life.’ [Page 17]

#### **4. Atheism is Out**

“Atheism is out. In October 1991, Madalyn Murray O’Hair announced that American atheists were closing down forty-one of their local associations across America. She said, ‘Chapter leaders have become mired in the busywork of serving local members, rather than advancing the atheist movement.’ In 1990 the national organization spent \$200,000 on recruitment, resulting in a net increase of thirty-four names to their 50,000 person mailing list. That’s a cost of \$5882 per new recruit!” [Page 19]

#### **5. More Legal Immigrants**

“The United States accepts more legal immigrants than all of the other nations of the world combined. Moreover, illegal immigrants are estimated to exceed half a million each year. It is comparatively easy to enter the United States and become a citizen, either as a student, a political refugee seeking asylum, or by marrying an American citizen.” [Page 24]

#### **6. Unity in Christ**

“The challenge to the twenty-first century church will be to behave Christlike and justly as persons of color grow in power and number in society. It will be a challenge facing every variety of church and Christian organization. New means must develop to express solidarity and unity in Jesus Christ without requiring dilution of racial identity and ethnic heritage.” [Page 26]

#### **7. Not Enough Funding for New Missionaries**

‘Missions utilizing personalized support will fare better than those who have unified budgets - because donors are slower to cut off individual missionaries whom they personally know. But it may become even harder for new appointees to raise initial support. In 1980, missionary sending agencies worried about having enough new recruits to replace veterans approaching retirement. By 1990 many of those same agencies wondered whether enough money could be raised to send out the new recruits they had’. [Page 28]

#### **8. Appreciation Gifts**

“A veteran missionary to Africa regularly sends small gifts of appreciation along with personal letters to supporters. [Page 29]

## **9. Self-serving, manipulation; Genuine service, meet needs.**

“When such efforts are primarily self-serving, they border on manipulation. However, when the organization and its leaders are genuinely seeking to serve through discovering and meeting needs, they will strike a responsive chord”

“Combined with meeting donor needs is the importance of being ‘missional’ - driven by a positive purpose. Twenty-first century donors are far less interested in giving to institutional perpetuation and to operating budgets. They are motivated by missions they believe in and purposes with which they can identify. When challenged to give to feed starving children, to alleviate the problems of urban teenagers, to evangelize their community, or to prepare leaders for tomorrow’s church - they want to contribute and be a part of something significant.” [Page 29]

## **10. Extremes and Polarization**

“The twenty-first century is opening with a sharp focus to single issues, no compromises, and the blaming of others who disagree. The dangers of such polarization are obvious -making the mission of an organization or government harder to fulfill. The twenty-first century church is caught up in this polarization because people do not leave their convictions and positions outside. Even more significant is the mentality of extremes and polarizations that will increasingly be imported into the church from the culture. Churches will be shaken by a decrease in Christian consensus and an increase in individual competition. [Page 40]

## **11. Mobilized by Purpose and Loyalty**

“Leaders will increasingly be forced to take firm positions on matters they would rather not address. As those positions are taken, they and their organizations will pass the litmus test of acceptability for some and alienate and disenfranchise others. It will be increasingly difficult to keep many churches and Para church organizations mobilized by purpose and loyalty to Jesus Christ.”

“Some estimate that human knowledge doubles every five to eight years. That means that half of the knowledge in the world was not even available when today’s twenty-three year-old finished high school.” [Page 40]

## **12. Today’s learners More Inductive**

“Many, if not most, new career missionaries already have had a previous short-term missionary service experience. It’s hands-on, see-it-for-yourself, be-there, real-life education.”

“Stories will replace a lot of outlines - especially stories that show how Christianity works and how to live. Today’s learners are much more inductive than deductive.”  
[Page 46]

### **13. Expectations are Extraordinary on Pastors**

“It is a tough time to be a pastor. The expectations are extraordinary. Pastors are expected to be strong leaders at a time when all leadership is suspect, expected to communicate with the skill of Jay Leno, be as socially informed as George Gallup, and as effective managers as the best Harvard M.B.A. ‘s. Often the expectations are hopelessly unreasonable. Yet those who do not meet the expectations are at risk for termination.” [Page 51]

### **14. Outreach for Twelve Years.**

“Unfortunately, new churches tend to be outreaching for a maximum of twelve years. When they are young, they are excited and need new people to survive. As churches become older, they quickly show signs of aging and decline. After a dozen years, these churches tend to become so burdened with budgets, buildings, and pastor and people problems that they no longer have the energy for outreach. The once outward churches have turned inward” [Page 60]

### **15. Doubling, Half Leadership Obsolete**

“Peter Drucker says every time an organization doubles in size, half of the leadership becomes obsolete.” [Page 62]

### **16. New Leaders Good Communicators, Risk Takers**

“But I’m not called to be comfortable. I’m not called to a denomination, a Sunday service schedule, or to any particular methodology. I am called to Jesus Christ and have been commissioned by him to reach my generation for him. That means I must change.”

“New leaders must be good communicators. In stable times communication isn’t quite so important. But when society is threatened and the world is experiencing drastic political, social, and economic upheavals, we need people like Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill who can communicate the vision and move the people.”

“New leaders must be risk takers. Those who seek to avoid risk and conserve may end up with nothing. Risk takers are willing to fail in order to succeed” [Page 63]

## **17. Leaders are Risk Takers**

“Along the Main Street sidewalk in Longmont, Colorado, there is a plaque marking the spot where a butcher opened a store and went bankrupt. He moved north to Wyoming after having Longmont, where J. C. Penney tried again with a dry goods store that succeeded”

“Henry Ford went bankrupt three times. Thomas Edison tried 10,000 times before his light bulb worked. Sister Kenny was rejected by the medical community for her unconventional rehabilitation methods before she moved to Minnesota to establish the world-renowned Sister Kenny Institute. They were leaders who were risk takers.” [Page 63]