

Consultation of YOUNG EMERGING LEADERS

By Paul Leavenworth and Aaron Friesen



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From Tuesday, September 1, through Thursday, September 3, 2009, more than 60 leaders under the age of 45 from each of Open Bible's five regions met with regional and national leaders at Desperation Church (DC) in Liberty, Missouri, for the Consultation of Young Emerging Leaders (CYEL). Hosted by DC's lead pastor, Michael Craft; DC's worship arts pastor, Bil Brown; and the rest of the DC team, the younger leaders attended as participants while regional and national leaders attended as observers. This first-of-a-kind event for Open Bible Churches provided younger emerging leaders an opportunity to fellowship, network, and offer their input regarding the movement's strengths, areas that need improvement, and challenges/opportunities related

to church revitalization, church planting, marketplace ministry, and new models for missions.

The format included group discussion, breakout groups, and question and answer sessions. This led to the establishment of task forces, based on the group's findings, that will develop recommendations for the national board at their February 2010 meeting. All discussion and breakout sessions were facilitated by younger leaders. The task forces will also be led by younger leaders.

Paul said, "The enthusiasm, energy, and creative ideas exhibited at CYEL bode well for the future of Open Bible. We are blessed with exceptional younger leaders, leaders of today and leaders of tomorrow."

Participants' Conclusions

STRENGTHS:

- (1) Leadership Development (INSTE Bible College, GOU, EBC, Master's Commission, and the willingness of current leaders to invest in younger leaders)
- (2) Relational as opposed to corporate feel
- (3) Diversity (ability to be who we are, flexibility, permission giving)
- (4) Missions/Harvest focus
- (5) Visionary leadership not content with the status quo – pursuing the future

AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT:

- (1) Lack of accountability
- (2) Lack of relevant training and resources
- (3) Lack of clarity as it relates to vision and strategy
- (4) World Evangelism – as it relates to International Ministries
- (5) Leaders positioned based on relationship vs. effectiveness – choices sometimes based on longevity or "being part of the club"
- (6) Movement in decline

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES:

CHURCH REVITALIZATION

- (1) Relationship-building
- (2) Training and equipping (resources) for "next level"
- (3) Necessity for a compelling vision
- (4) Resourcing and networking
- (5) Tools for evaluating
- (6) Need to be free to go beyond regional/district borders

MARKETPLACE MINISTRY:

- (1) Creation of a communication network of young leaders including people who are in business
- (2) Business tracks at EBC with a ministry focus
- (3) Update of the Open Bible brand to be relative to younger people
- (4) Diversity in local, regional, and national leadership to include business people in positions of authority
- (5) Creation of bi-vocational tracks for ministers

CHURCH PLANTING:

- (1) Information bottleneck concerning church planting
- (2) Available resources for training and vetting future planters
- (3) Reproducible systems
- (4) A paradigm shift from adoption to birthing
- (5) Practical needs and clear call of God
- (6) Issues with definition
- (7) Process of implementing vision

NEW MODELS OF MISSIONS:

- (1) Flow of ideas from bottom up instead of top down
- (2) Monies to flow to local churches
- (3) Recognition
- (4) Partnership with other organizations
- (5) Celebration
- (6) Redefinition of missions
- (7) Missions as a core value that makes up an Open Bible church

Task force leaders are Mike Nortune (Church Revitalization), Chuck Loftis (Church Planting), Shannon Arne (Marketplace Ministry), and Rob Leitheiser (New Models of Missions).

