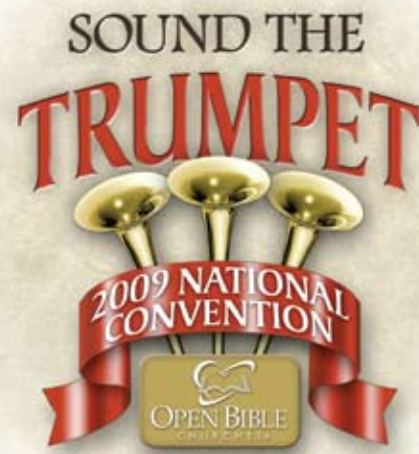


2009 NATIONAL



CONVENTION

By Andrea Johnson

America is in trouble. The Church is losing the battle for the supremacy of sound." With that announcement, President Jeff Farmer opened the 2009 National Convention, held June 24-29 in Bentonville, Arkansas.

"The nation's moral and spiritual roots are eroding," Jeff stated. "The foundation of her godly underpinnings is dangerously near dissolution. The Church must sound the trumpet, sound an alarm, give clarity in the midst of confusion - instead of languishing in apathy."

Drawing on the physics of sound, the president called on Open Bible ministers and delegates to "create a disturbance...to cause a vibration...to displace the equilibrium" for Jesus in every neighborhood and city. "Roar!" he shouted. "Let the lion of the tribe of Judah be heard!"

Friday evening William (Billy) Wilson, Executive Director of the International Center for Spiritual Renewal, continued the theme with a "Call to Awake," challenging attendees to unite in persevering prayer and seek the Holy Spirit's help for authentic, spiritual awakening. On Saturday evening, George Otis, Jr., President of the Sentinel Group, continued with a "Call to Arms." Citing statistics that prove our nation and our families are at risk, he too cried out for true, spiritual revival, beginning with the Church. Sunday evening, Steve Moore, President and CEO of The Mission Exchange, gave the "Call to Advance." He reminded audience members that true joy

comes from living a God-first, others-focused life, warning that even though a God-first life is fulfilling, it is always unpredictable.

Desperate, united prayer and prophetic proclamation are historic signs of coming revival, the speakers agreed. Jeff added, "Revival will not come from the board room. It will begin in the throne room."

Karen Clemons, who, with Bill, her husband, pastors Edmonds Open Bible Church in Edmonds, Washington, gave a word of prophecy after President Farmer's message Thursday evening:

Each of us received a serving utensil in our convention registration packet. I believe that was prophetic. At this convention, the Lord is opening the drawer and pulling out the utensil that says Open Bible Churches on it. The divine destiny of reaching souls for Christ belongs to all of the Body of Christ, but the unique destiny of Open Bible Churches is that we and the children God has given us are appointed for "signs and wonders" in the Body of Christ (Isaiah 8:18, NASB). We are to now fulfill the words of Christ: "You will do the works that I do, and greater works shall you do because I go to the Father."

Honor and Awards Celebration

One highlight of convention is always the Honor and Awards Celebration, when OBC honors those completing

50 years of uninterrupted ministry and those who have reached the 25-year milestone.

Randall Bach, former Open Bible College president, and Barbara, his wife and the school's former bookkeeper, fought tears as they witnessed several OBC grads from their tenure receive 25-year awards. Randall remarked, "The impact of Open Bible College upon Open Bible Churches and upon God's Kingdom is indisputable. What an exemplary group of men and women servants!"

Frank W. Smith Excellence in Ministry Award

Another convention highlight is the awarding of the Frank W. Smith Excellence in Ministry Award. This year's worthy recipient is Dr. Leona K. Venditti, founder, executive vice president, and academic dean of INSTE Bible College. The award described Leona as a "scholar, missionary, teacher, educator, administrator, author, theologian, publisher, discipler of nations demonstrating the power of the pen, and a devoted servant with single focus, overcoming challenges to women in ministry."

Plenary Sessions

Plenary sessions emphasized the need for the Church in America to "sound the trumpet" and reclaim our Judeo-Christian values. Steve Henderson, Christian Consulting for Colleges and Ministries, discussed why students of Christian parents abandon the Church. Rick Schatz, National Coalition

for the Protection of Children and Families, presented the need to preserve the truth of biblical sexuality. Louis Sheldon, Traditional Values Coalition, spoke on pro-family legislation and policy.

Participants also heard from some of Open Bible's finest serving on the front lines of the battle for our nation, including church planters, missionaries, women's leaders, and prayer intercessors.

Association Ministry Leaders Reappointed

The National Board reappointed several association ministry leaders. Rev. Kris Beard, National Women's Ministries Director; Lt. Col. John Simmons (Ret), Director of Chaplains Ministries; Rev. Joaquin Ramos, Director of Hispanic Ministries; and Don Tietz, National Director of MOVE (Men of Vision Evangelize), were reappointed for two-year terms.

Rev. Randall Bach, Vice President; Rev. Teresa (Teri) Beyer, Secretary/Treasurer; and Rev. Vince McCarty, Executive Director of International Ministries, were reappointed for four-year terms. Dr. Jeff Farmer, President, was reelected to a four-year term.

Challenge

In evaluating the convention's success, Jeff surmised, "The true impact of the convention is yet unknown. The results are up to Open Bible churches across our nation. Will we sound the trumpet?"



Photos by
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