



Jeff Farmer,
President of Open
Bible Churches

Jeff's JOURNAL

Insider Notes, News, Trends, and Resources from the President's Office

Find What You've Lost!

The first winter Ramona and I spent in Des Moines, Iowa, we found a 35 mm camera valued over \$400. Following the O.T. biblical law of retuning what is lost, we tried every way possible to find the owner, including posting signs on the street and developing the film in hopes of recognizing people or places. We never found the owner though I am confident he searched diligently for what he lost.

The \$400 gold class ring I found was easy to return – the school was clearly marked, and the initials on the underneath side of the ring made the student easy to identify. He was ecstatic with joy, as was his mom who paid for it. The student had spent several hours trying to find the lost ring.

Since Ramona and I have walked outside many miles through the years, we have found practically every denomination of coin and currency there is, and much more. People are people, and they just lose stuff ... worthless stuff and valuable stuff.

Sometimes what is lost, however, is not "stuff." In fact, sometimes it is so valuable it is priceless ... like losing family members ... or losing our sense of mission.

I grew up believing I never had an uncle or cousin. In fact, I grew up never having any relatives other than my immediate family. My four grandparents were deceased, and Dad was an only child. Mom was orphaned at the age of three. Then about five years ago mom happened to mention she had two brothers, one older and one younger, who were sent to the orphanage like she was. What? How did I miss that? What a shock! I was ready to hunt for them immediately, but mom was not interested ... until this year.

In September my sister-in-law, Lynne, found mom's younger brother, Joseph, in El Paso, Texas. Mom's older brother died five years ago. Try to get this picture: Mom and Joseph are both in their eighties. Now in their sunset years, they have lived life without one another. They were separated when mom was three and

(Continued on page 2)

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

- Church Law
- Online Giving
- Prayer & Evangelism
- Book Briefs
- Health Hints
- Open Bible Convention
- Merry Makers

P *rayer & Intimacy with God*

L *eadership Development*

A *ffiliated Churches*

N *ations*

T *ogether*





Teri Beyer, Secretary/
Treasurer

NECESSITY OF INDEPENDENT CHURCH GOVERNING BOARDS

The importance of properly elected or appointed independent church boards cannot be exaggerated. In 2007 the Internal Revenue Service revised its 990 forms, requiring a massive amount of new information to be reported. Among those new areas of concern was information on governing boards. Apparently even the new information was insufficient to quench the IRS's thirst for information

about governing boards, for in 2008 the 990 was

CHURCH LAW

amended again to add 17 more questions regarding governing boards. Since most of the new questions had sub-parts, the real increase was 27 questions. Why should this matter to churches since they don't have to file 990 forms? It matters because in the event of an IRS audit those questions are the ones likely to be asked. They represent the concerns the IRS has about all not-for-profit

corporations, not just those required to file 990's. What does the IRS want to know about your governing board? Here are some examples: 1. The number of voting members and how many of those are "independent;" 2. Whether contemporaneous minutes are kept; 3. Whether organization members elect board members; 4. Whether board decisions are subject to approval by members.

In the end the IRS wants to know who is in charge of the organization.

Here is the final answer the IRS is seeking: Independent boards are in charge of the organization. The IRS sees this as a main way of protecting the assets of an exempt organization and making sure those assets are used for carrying out the organization's mission. Make sure your church can honestly say the affairs of the church are governed by an independent board.

This article is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is presented with the understanding that neither the author nor the publisher is engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. (From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a Committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers and Associations.)

5 Reasons to Give Online

It is:

Accurate

You make the selection on how your contribution is directed. No human error.

Convenient

You can make a contribution when it fits your schedule - 24/7.

Quick

Contributions are credited to your Open Bible account daily.

Easy

Just go to www.openbible.org and click on "Online Services."

Cost Efficient

You will save money on postage!

You may renew your ministerial credential, *Message* magazine subscription, or donate to your favorite Open Bible ministry online, without the bother of writing a check, finding postage, or wondering if your designation request is legible.

Try it!

(Continued from page 1)

"Jo Jo" was two. But as of this moment they've talked twice on the phone and exchanged Thanksgiving Day cards. After the holidays they will try to meet in Texas.

There's more! I have my first relative. I have an uncle! But wait ... Joseph and his older brother, Carl, had children. Lynne found them too. Now I have a bunch of first cousins. And with the finding of family comes joy. It is an expanding joy with ever widening circles ... like the Luke 15 shepherd who found his lost lamb. First **he** rejoiced; then he gathered neighbors and friends and **they** rejoiced; then all of **heaven** overflowed with joy. Finding what is lost ignites a spreading, infectious joy.

Don't miss this: When the lost is found,

there is joy. The reverse is also true: When something valuable is lost, there is sadness and pain ... and a clear absence of joy. Try as we might to mask the sense of loss with shallow smiles or choreographed songs, nothing will hide the truth. Walk into any church, and before you leave you will know if they have lost their sense of mission. How? Because joy is the song of harvest, and you cannot fake joy.

When babies are born there is joy! That is true in both natural and spiritual families. When babies are not born, families die and eventually cease to exist, just like churches. Check the spiritual nursery of any church and you will know if they have lost their call

(Continued on page 4)

Prayer & Evangelism

Where was the Church born? Not in a preaching or teaching session, but in a prayer meeting.

Jim Cymbala

Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth, but from falling in love.

Richard Foster

I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.

J. H. Jowett

No man is greater than his prayer life.

Leonard Ravenhil

Every man or woman whose life has counted for the church and the Kingdom of God has been a person of prayer. You cannot afford to be too busy to pray. Jesus spent many hours in prayer. If He felt He had to pray, how much more do we need to pray?

Billy Graham

The highest form of selfishness is that of a man who is content to go to heaven alone.

J. C. Ryle

While we can choose to be Christians, we cannot choose to be soul-winners. Jesus made that choice for us. We simply obey, or disobey.

John Dawson

The task of evangelism cannot be delegated to the few. Worship and witness go hand in hand. We are all called to worship, and we are all called to witness in some way.

John R. W. Stott

There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament that evangelism is the special prerogative or responsibility of office bearers. We are to be burdened for men's souls not because any office requires it of us but because we are Christians.

Ian H. Murray

Book Briefs

You Were Made for More

By Jim Cymbala

Zondervan Publishing

217 Pages

Jim Cymbala believes that anyone who wonders whether there is something more to life is on the right track. God does have more.

As pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, Cymbala knows what it's like to depend on God – for everything. He's seen God's provision time and again for a church with no money, for children who've been abused, for people living on the margins.

Whether you come from the bottom, the top, or the middle rungs of society, Jim Cymbala knows that God can transform your life. You can become remarkable for the peace and joy you display. Equip yourself to pursue the "more" God has for you.

The Shack

By William P. Young

Hachette Book Group USA

248 Pages

Mackenzie Allen Philips's youngest daughter has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his immense sorrow, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.

Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant *The Shack* wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The answers Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him. You'll want everyone you know to read this book! But remember, it's a story ... it's fiction.

Health Hints

Stretching

Time for a stretch.

If you stay hunched in front of a computer or over the wheel of a car for hours, give yourself regular breaks to relax your upper back.

Roll your shoulders forward, bringing them up toward your ears. Then pinch your shoulder blades together and drop them down to the resting position. Repeat a few times.

Stretching tense muscles can help prevent shoulder pain and headaches.

Source:

Peter Righy, Dir. of Therapy Services, Northwest Hospital Seattle

Stair Climbing

Take a flight for fitness.

Take the stairs instead of an escalator or elevator whenever you can. In addition to giving your heart a workout, it can increase leg strength and improve your balance.

Studies found that stair climbing is twice as taxing as brisk walking on level ground and 50% harder than walking up a steep incline or lifting weights.

Unless you're already in top shape, start stair climbing at a slow, steady pace with only a flight or two. Increase the number of flights when it gets easier.

If you have a long way to go, take the stairs part way and then switch to the elevator. Use the rail for balance and security, especially going down, and avoid stair climbing after a heavy meal or if you're not feeling well.

Source:

The No Sweat Exercise Plan: Lose Weight, Get Healthy, and Live Longer by Harvey B. Simon, MD

Merry Makers

All About Marriage

How do you decide who to marry?

You find somebody who likes the same stuff. If you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the chips and dip coming.

Alan, age 10

How would the world be different if people didn't get married?

There sure would be a lot of kids to explain, wouldn't there?

Kelvin, age 8

How would you make a marriage work?

Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a dump truck.

Ricky, age 10

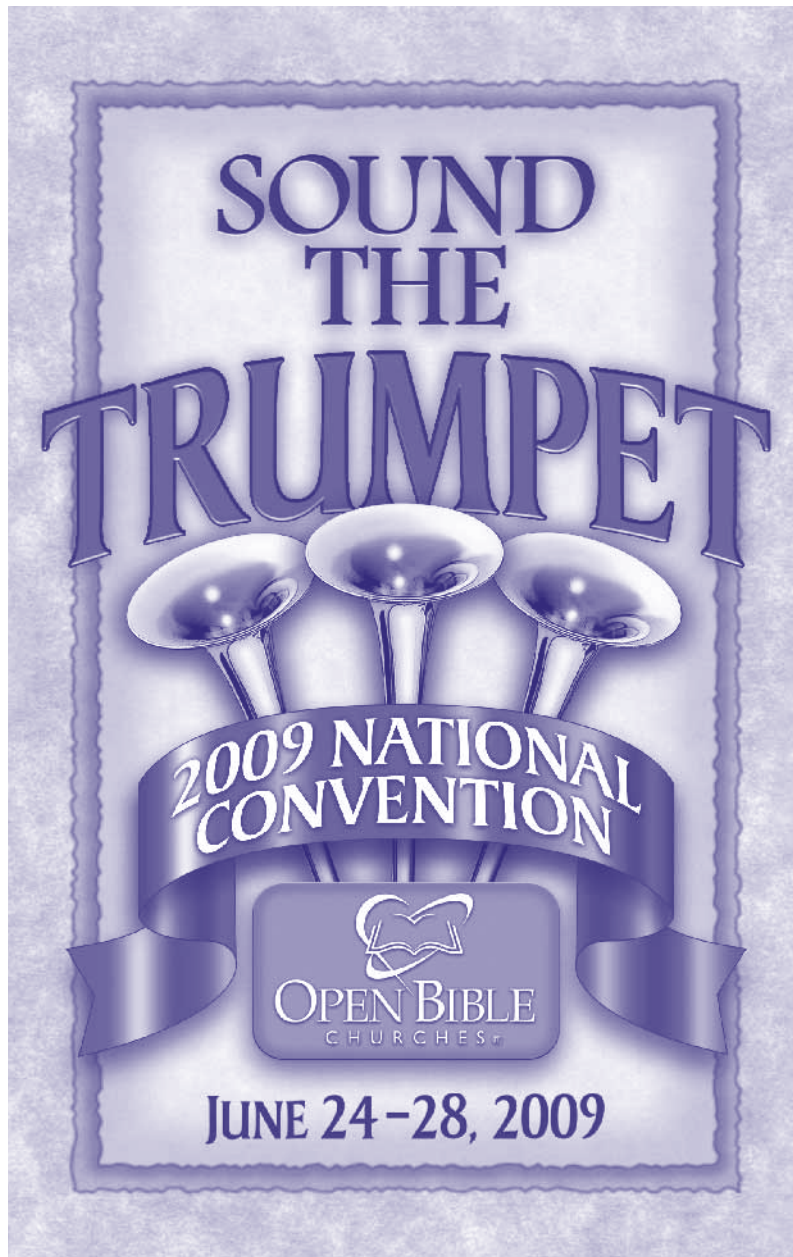
Church Bulletin Bloopers

Palm Sunday: Our regular service will be gin at 11:00 a.m.

Worshippers are asked to wail until all have been served to partake of the Body and the Blood of Christ.

Pray for continual growth in the lives of many of our teens – that a food foundation will be laid in their lives.

Hymn: I am Thin, O Lord.



DOUBLETREE HOTEL, BENTONVILLE, ARKANSAS

Doubletree Guest Suites
301 Southeast Walton Blvd.
Bentonville, AR 72712

Wednesday, June 24 –
Sunday, June 28, 2009

Visit nearby historic Branson, Missouri, have fun at Silver Dollar City, swim at water sports parks or pristine lakes, play a round of golf, hike or bike the many scenic mountain trails. Or just relax and refresh in this first-class American city, located minutes from NW Arkansas Regional Airport.

Register online (*mid-February*) at www.openible.org/online services, and don't forget to call the Doubletree Hotel to book your room at 1.800.222.TREE (8733) or 479.845.7770.

BENTONVILLE
ARKANSAS

(Continued from page 3)

to mission ... to new births ... to bringing people to Jesus.

Only one thing is worse than losing your sense of mission. That is not finding it again. Joy can return ... mission can be restored. As the year 2009 dawns on Open Bible Churches, certain regions in our movement have determined to call their churches to accountability ... to missional effectiveness. I applaud that courageous leadership, both in the regions and in the churches that are willing to embrace intrusion and change.

Please hold me to the same level of

accountability. Our approved organizational vision statement says we are committed to creating and maintaining an outreach culture in Open Bible. To whatever degree that may have been lost, I am deeply and profoundly committed to helping every national and regional leader, and every minister, pastor and church find it again. I am committed to harvest joy in Open Bible Churches. Let's party (Luke 15)! Have a fruitful and joyous New Year.