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President of Open
Bible Churches

Jeff's JOURNAL

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

RESTRUCTURE UPDATE

In a meeting three days ago the subject of "Open Bible restructure" emerged. Again I was disappointed to hear, "We don't know what is going on!"

"How can that be?" I asked myself. "I have been so deliberate and intentional about communicating all of the National Board restructure recommendations."

Let me rehearse again for everyone's benefit what has been done to make the Open Bible family aware of this "assumed-to-be-secret, but-it-is-not-at-all-secret" process. (I hope you got that. It is my goal to keep this process and the resultant recommendations for change totally in the light – where everyone knows in advance what is going on.)

I have authorized the National Board to speak openly about restructure – even encouraged them to do so. That authorization includes every regional superintendent and regional board, so that every district and every church has access to current information. The only exception is when "first drafts" are rolled out and the National Board is still revising and amending content. Obviously there is no value in distributing information that will be revised – it only causes confusion.

I have written about restructure in *Jeff's Journal*, providing important information on the subject. And I have traveled endlessly speaking to districts and regions about it. While my memory has been known to fail, I do not recall a single invitation or opportunity I have turned down to address the subject of restructure in Open Bible... unless my calendar was already booked.

Here are ten official recommendations agreed upon by the National Board for presentation to the convention floor...as of late October 2006. These may be viewed on our Web site at www.openbible.org. Click on "Restructure Update" on the front page (lower left corner). It is entirely possible other recommendations will be added as time progresses.

P *rayer & Intimacy with God*
L *eadership Development*
A *dvancement Funding*
N *etwork: Communication & Technology*
T *he Great Commission*
E *thnic Ministries*
R *esource Churches & Leaders*
S *ingleness of Purpose*

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Teri Beyer, Secretary/
Treasurer

PAYMENT OF SCHOOL TUITION AND CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Nothing seems to raise the ire of the IRS these days more than churches giving people charitable contribution recognition for the payment of tuition to a Christian school, no matter what level of education (nursery / pre-school, elementary, secondary, or post-secondary). Such a contribution is IMPOSSIBLE to make. Do not attempt to disguise the payment of tuition as a charitable contribution. The IRS reasons tangible benefits are obtained by the student in the receipt of an education, therefore no one can contribute to anyone's education and receive a

CHURCH LAW

charitable contribution for that payment – even if they run the payment through the church. Churches attempt to disguise tuition payments by having people pay the church the tuition amount for Christian schools sponsored by the church or those outside the church. The church then pays the institution the tuition amounts. The church in turn gives people who have paid these amounts a charitable

contribution stating no goods or services were received in exchange for the contribution. This is tantamount to money laundering. If a person could not get a charitable contribution for giving funds to a person or institution directly, it is rarely, perhaps never, possible for them to gain that charitable contribution by funneling the funds through the church.

The penalties to the church for being part of any scheme to count payment of tuition as a charitable contribution include the following:

1. \$1,000 penalty per year for each person receiving a contribution statement.
2. A quid pro quo penalty of \$10.00 for every person whose contribution was really a disguised payment of tuition, not to exceed \$5,000.00

Please, don't get caught in such a scheme!

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Number 1 - Recognizing mission and vision originate with the local church, the President, elected by the convention floor, is empowered to influence, inspire, encourage, and partner with regions to accomplish the mission and vision.

Number 2 - The "How to" question of accomplishing mission should be left to local churches, under the supervision of the Regional Superintendent and the Regional Board.

Number 3 - The National Board shall be composed of up to 17 members, but no less than 13. The 13 are as currently configured, with the five at-large members still being selected by the Regional Boards. The four

additional positions (not required to be seated but as needed) would be selected by the members of the National Board. The National Board shall ensure and make provision for ethnic, gender, and emerging leader representation.

Number 4 - Regional Superintendents shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the regional and national boards and ratified by the regional, credentialed ministers.

Number 5 - Regional Board members shall be appointed by the Regional Superintendent, approved by the National Board and ratified by the regional, credentialed ministers.

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ATTENTION! A search is underway for Open Bible authors and musicians!

We are assembling a list of all Open Bible authors and musicians to be published on the Open Bible Web site.

If you have written a book(s) or produced a CD(s), please send the information to

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Prayer & Evangelism

Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.

The Kneeling Christian

Prayer “is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.”

Chrysostom

Prayer is the supreme way to be workers together with God.

Wesley L. Duewel

Prayer is not given us as a burden to be borne or an irksome duty to fulfill, but to be a joy and power for which there is no limit.

The Kneeling Christian

All that true prayer seeks is God Himself, for with Him we receive all we need.

The Kneeling Christian

We Christians are ... so smug to the lostness of men. We've been living in Laodicea, lax, loose, lustful, and lazy. Why is there this criminal indifference to the lostness of men? Our condemnation is that we know how to live better than we are living.

Leonard Ravenhill

Someone asked, “Will the heathen who have never heard the Gospel be saved?” It is more a question with whether we – who have the Gospel and fail to give it – can be saved.

Charles Spurgeon

No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once.

Oswald J. Smith

Book Briefs

Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens

By Neil Cole
Jossey-Bass
272 Pages

A veteran church planter, Neil Cole puts the way we do church under the microscope and asks: If we remove the culture, tradition, and consumerism, what is the irreducible substance of “church”? Once we allow the church to exist in its simplest form (“two or three gathered in my name ...”), Cole contends churches will multiply at an uncontrollable rate.

Cole recommends “lowering the standard” of what it means to do church and “raising the standard” of what it means to be a disciple. He offers a solution to the statistics that pollster George Barna and others have held out to the church in recent years, suggesting committed followers of Christ are leaving in droves ... to preserve their faith.

Churches have tried all kinds of ways to attract new and younger members – revised vision statements, hipper worship, contemporary music, livelier sermons, bigger and better auditoriums. But there are still so many people who aren't being reached. Leaders and laypeople everywhere are realizing that they need new and more powerful ways to help them spread God's Word. According to Cole, if we want to connect with young people and those who are not coming to church, we must go where people congregate.

Cole encourages readers to launch churches wherever there are spiritually hungry people. He has seen churches start in bars, parking lots, lunch rooms, and living rooms. The author argues for a lean, mean, quickly-multiplying version of church – two or three people who gather for intense prayer and Bible study.

Reviewed in part by Matthew Green in *Ministries Today*.

Health Hints

Get Moving and Lose Weight

Walk This Way

Walking for just 30 minutes a day can ease joint pain, improve joint mobility, and reduce fatigue.

What else can walking do for you?

- *Reduce stress*
- *Build bones*
- *Boost energy*
- *Burn calories*
- *Strengthen the heart and lungs*
- *Help prevent osteoporosis*
- *Help control weight*
- *Nourish joints*

If you are just beginning a walking program, start by walking 10 minutes three times a day, or you can do 30 minutes three days a week. Work up to walking 30 minutes on most days.

From the Arthritis Foundation

Merry Makers

One day a man called the church office. He said, "Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?"

The secretary thought she heard what he said, but said, "I'm sorry, who?" The caller repeated, "Can I speak to the head hog at the trough?"

"Well, if you mean the preacher, then you may refer to him as 'Pastor,' or 'Brother,' but I prefer you not refer to him as the 'head hog at the trough!'"

To this the man replied, "Well, I was planning on giving \$100,000 to the building fund...."

To this the secretary quickly responded, "Hang on, I think the big fat pig just walked in!"

Two old guys are pushing their carts around Wal-Mart when they collide.

The first old guy says, "Sorry about that. I'm looking for my wife."

The second old guy says, "That's OK, I'm looking for my wife, too. I can't find her and I'm getting a little desperate."

The first old guy says, "Well, maybe I can help you find her. What does she look like?"

The second old guy says: "Well, she is 27 years old, tall, with red hair, blue eyes, long legs, and is wearing shorts. What does your wife look like?"

To which the first old guy says, "Doesn't matter, let's look for yours."

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Number 6 - The national office will be downsized to insure missional effectiveness and focus, one goal of which is to generate additional funding for local church health.

Number 7 - In keeping with the Open Bible commitment to missional effectiveness, at every level of the Association accountability to mission will be measured. At the local level, that will be accomplished through tracking reports; at the regional level, through reporting to the national President and National Board; at the level of the national President to the National Board and through election by the convention floor.

Number 8 - Streamline the governing documents, i.e., separate policy and procedure from the constitution and bylaws. A constitution and bylaws task force is working on the revisions.

Number 9 - The Administrative Committee was commissioned to consider new definitions of credential categories and funding related to each.

Number 10 - The Executive Director of International Ministries shall be appointed by the President in consultation with the Board of International Ministries and ratified by the National Board.

Regarding number eight, instead of a separate constitution and bylaws, the two will become one (the standard protocol today). We will remove "policies and procedures" from this document, streamlining it to include only what is necessary for governance. The National Board's vision and goal is to create a more flexible, permission-granting culture in Open Bible. The ten recommendations listed above will be included in this new document. A separate manual will be created containing the "policies and procedures" extracted from our current governing documents.

Regarding finances, there are still several proposals on the table. The National Board is taking a hard look at credential categories, tithing policy, five-percent giving, and the World Evangelism program. Recognizing our mission is accomplished at the local church level, the National Board desires to empower pastors and churches to "make and release disciples, plant churches, and send missionaries." Please pray Board members will hear from God regarding financial issues and have the courage to act in alignment with His will, and in the best interest of churches.

Well in advance of the June 2007 National Convention in Spokane, Washington, all credentialed ministers and churches in Open Bible will receive communication directly from the national office outlining proposed changes and recommendations. Something will also be published in the *Message* about 30 to 90 days before the convention.

Two other issues should be mentioned. First, if you plan on attending the convention, make your travel, hotel, and rental car reservations very early - perhaps as much as five or six months out. Other national events scheduled at the same time in Spokane as our convention will make reservations difficult to secure.

Finally, for obvious reasons it is impossible for absentee ballots to be made available to Open Bible voting constituents who are unable to be in Spokane. Because "on-the-spot" changes are made through the convention floor debate process, absentee ballots would be rendered outdated before they could even be used. We wish everyone could attend but understand that is impossible.

Please keep praying ...

