



Jeff Farmer,
President of Open
Bible Churches

Jeff's JOURNAL

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

Missional Accountability

Open Bible Tracking Report Results

Rather than listening to music or talk radio in my car, I normally prefer CDs of scripture. Not sermons, but one of those resonant baritone voices reading nothing but the Bible. I have found a relentless diet of the Word quickens my spirit, shapes my character, purifies my mind, and keeps revelation fresh and flowing.

But on this particular morning in the mid 1990s I had a Christian radio station on; they were interviewing C. Peter Wagner. The context was clear: The "church growth" movement was dying after twenty years at center stage, in spite of books, conferences, seminars on breaking numerical barriers, and an array of expert speakers.

Wagner, who was invested heavily in the church growth movement, was direct. He said something like this: "The church growth movement has failed. After pouring myself into the principles of church growth for two decades, there is no reliable research to show we have made a difference. The USA church is in decline."

Then Wagner made a statement I have never forgotten, and one which I have come to deeply embrace. Again, not his exact words, but he said something like this: "We

should have been investing our resources, our energy, and our prayers into the New Testament pattern of church planting."

It was prophetic ... a watershed moment ... as though all of heaven and earth heard. For more than a decade now denominations, church associations, and a few apostolic and mega church leaders have caught the vision for church planting. Open Bible is among them.

I thank God for church planters. I honor their faith and sacrifice! They are a rare breed, and planting churches is a lonely, difficult task. I know; I have done it. And I thank God for local pastors and churches that have the vision and courage to "birth" church plants. May

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Teri Beyer, Secretary/
Treasurer

FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURE

In 2007 the Association business floor approved multiple changes affecting Open Bible's structure and culture. The focus was and continues to be missional effectiveness. One item was tabled until the June 2009 convention – financial restructure.

RESTRUCTURE

The financial restructure proposal(s) that will come from the national board to the convention floor in June 2009 will be designed with missional effectiveness in mind, recognizing mission is achieved primarily in the local church.

While financial restructure is on the table, the board

desires to communicate how tithe dollars from credentialed ministers are expended once they arrive at the national office in Des Moines. The assumption they are retained and consumed for solely administrative functions is erroneous.

Over an extended period of time a special task force and the national board seriously considered multiple proposals to rearrange OBC funding ...none of which resulted in a strong, harmonious consensus...something for which we had prayed and worked.

Health Hints

Six Things You Can Do to Protect Your Heart

Getting at least 30 minutes of brisk activity every day fits any lifestyle. It can also help lower your blood pressure, reduce bad cholesterol (LDL), raise good cholesterol (HDL), control your weight and blood sugar levels, and reduce stress.

1. **Avoid secondhand smoke.**
2. **Control your blood pressure.** Normal is below 120/80.
3. **Keep total cholesterol below 200;** LDL below 130 (below 100 is optimal); HDL- 40 or above for men and 50 or above for women.
4. **Measure your waist.** A high-risk waistline is 35" or larger for women and 40" or larger for men.
5. **Maintain a healthy weight.**
6. **Control diabetes.**

Source:
American Heart Association

TOTAL 2007 TITHE REVENUE:	\$1,589,765
TOTAL GIVEN TO OPEN BIBLE MINISTRIES:	\$ 935,143*
TOTAL REMAINING FOR ADMINISTRATION:	\$ 654,622**

Non-Administration		Administration	
To Regions	\$515,079	Wages & Housing	\$393,000
Board Policy / Tithe Return	\$168,014	Insurance / Retirement	\$145,000
To Departments	\$131,651	Travel / Board / Office	\$ 94,600
Grants / Add'l. Dept. Support	<u>\$120,399</u>	Bldg. / Equip. / Computers	<u>\$121,000</u>
	<u>\$935,143*</u>		<u>\$753,600**</u>

(Deficit covered with reserves, fees, interest, etc.)

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their tribe increase. The future of America as a "nation under God" may depend on it. Missiologists generally agree church planting is the most effective evangelistic strategy in the church today.

During the past seven years Open Bible has planted 85 churches. Sixty-three percent have survived. That's the good news. But the bad news is we have still closed or lost to attrition more churches than we have opened. With most other denominations reporting similar statistics, it should drive us all to our knees ... to a desperate cry for revival in us personally, and in the church corporately.

In this issue of the *Journal* I want to share with you the 2007 statistics provided by Open Bible churches on their annual tracking reports. I have been on a

pilgrimage for several years to gather meaningful, annual data by which Open Bible leadership can evaluate and measure mission effectiveness, i.e., "making and releasing disciples, planting churches, and sending missionaries." Over the years our culture, while enjoying a wonderful family spirit, has been one of independence and autonomy. But by the grace of God and the press of the Holy Spirit we are moving toward missional accountability.

We are not moving to control, as some might mistakenly perceive it, but to mutual accountability. You see, it is right, it is ethical, and it is biblical to ask ourselves the questions, "Are we achieving our mission?" "Are we doing what we say we are doing?" "Are we fulfilling the Great Commission?"

I want to sincerely thank our USA pastors who are "Teaming Together to Touch our

Prayer & Evangelism

God shapes the world by prayer. The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon the earth.

E.M. Bounds

Whatever keeps me from prayer, solitude, and the Bible, however good it appears, is my enemy if I am to be God's devoted friend and follower.

Tommy Barnett

It is of course possible to dance a prayer.

Glade Byron Addams

No one is a firmer believer in the power of prayer than the devil; not that he practices it, but he suffers from it.

Guy H. King

The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is to pray.

S.D. Gordon

As long as there are millions destitute of the Word of God and knowledge of Jesus Christ, it will be impossible for me to devote time and energy to those who have both.

J. L. Ewen

People who don't believe in missions have not read the New Testament. Right from the beginning Jesus said the field is the world.

J. Howard Edington

"Not called!" did you say? "Not heard the call," I think you should say. Put your ear down and hear Him bid you pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you not to come there.

William Booth

Grab & Go Checklist

If you leave your home in a hurry due to a flood, fire, tornado, hurricane, or earthquake take these emergency evacuation essentials:

Prescription medications.

Insurance policies – originals or copies of homeowners or renter's policies and policies for vehicles, life and other coverage. Make sure you have your insurance agent contact information.

Photos of all family members and pets, in case you become separated.

Medical records detailing health conditions and immunizations.

Legal documents, including copies or originals of passports, birth certificates, wills, powers of attorney, and medical directives.

Financial information, including account numbers and contact information for investment and banking accounts.

The key to your safe-deposit box, plus proof of ownership.

You can create an emergency evacuation kit by compiling necessary items and storing them in a self-sealing plastic bag. Keep the bag in a fireproof box that is readily accessible and easy to carry in an emergency.

Source:
Goodneighbor magazine Summer '08

World" (name of the annual tracking report). This simple, one-page report, was designed by pastors, and is to be sent to regions one time each year. After the regions review them, the reports are forwarded to the national office where they are collated and meaningful data is extracted. The national board reviews only the compiled data, not that of individual churches. (Reminder: The annual report is now required of senior pastors for credential renewal.)

Two-hundred five reports were received this year from a possible 293 affiliated churches. Average church attendance in the month of December was 105, with the highest being 1,460 and the lowest under 10. There were 4,771 reported decisions or rededications to Christ – that's an average

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Book Brief

Perhaps

By Earl K. Dukes
187 pages

In his new book, *Perhaps*, former Open Bible pastor and leader Earl Dukes provides guidance and comfort to believers searching for answers to the lingering question, "Why?"

"Perhaps" is a word that suggests there are answers. It is a harbinger of possibility, faith, and answered prayer – so why do so many prayers go unanswered, so many promises unfulfilled?

In Earl's own words, "*Perhaps* is a very simple uncomplicated endeavor to give a few possible answers to what seems to be powerless Christian believing. It will lift your faith and help you trust God for a miracle. At the same time it will fine tune your life to be in harmony with the will and ways of God."

WORLD EVANGELISM & TRACKING REPORTS

Merry Makers

A blind man walks into a barber shop and says, "Wanna hear a blonde joke?" The barber retorts, "Well, I'm blond and I won't appreciate it. The man sitting next to you is 265 pounds, and is also blond. The man behind you is 285 pounds, and he's a blond too. Do you still want to tell that joke?" "No way," says the blind man. "Not if I have to explain it three times."

Joe wanted a boat above anything. His wife refused, but he bought one anyway. "I'll tell you what," he said. "In the spirit of compromise, you name the boat." When Joe went to the dock for his maiden voyage, this is the name he saw painted on the side: "For Sale."

It was my first year teaching ninth-grade geometry. I was frustrated with the lack of effort in the class. Trying to make the group more interactive, I asked, "Who can define a polygon?" "A dead parrot," came the reply.

World Evangelism

TOP CONTRIBUTING CHURCHES

Church		Amount
First Church of the Open Bible	Spokane, WA	\$83,746.91
Open Bible Christian Center	Rapid City, SD	61,721.60
First Church of the Open Bible	Des Moines, IA	61,248.09
Creekside Open Bible Church	Martinez, CA	45,659.50

TOP CHURCHES GIVING 10% OR MORE OF ANNUAL TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Church		W.E. Total	W.E. % of Tithes & Offerings	Average Attendance
Gentle Heart Ministry	Midland, SD	\$ 300.00	72.67%	12
Bread of Life Open Bible	Jacksonville, FL	11,061.00	45.70%	22
Acme Open Bible Church	Acme, PA	23,285.00	29.85%	100
Open Bible Church	Sherwood, OH	4,089.67	26.93%	18

TOP CHURCHES RANKED BY ANNUAL PER CAPITA

Church		W.E. Total	Yearly Per Capita	Weekly Per Capita
Bread of Life Open Bible	Jacksonville, FL	\$11,061.00	\$502.77	\$9.67
Open Bible Tabernacle	Bradenton, FL	5,617.18	432.09	8.31
Open Heart Open Bible Community Church	Woodbridge, VA	6,536.10	408.51	7.86
New Hope Open Bible	Brookville, OH	10,999.00	333.30	6.41

Tracking Reports

Attendance	# of Churches	Attendance	# of Churches	Attendance	# of Churches
0 - 49	89	200 - 250	5	501 - 600	4
50 - 99	50	251 - 300	7	601 - 700	1
100 - 149	37	301 - 400	5	701 - 1,000	1
150 - 199	8	401 - 500	1	1,000 and above	1

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of 13 every single day! (Imagine – today about 13 in the USA will say “yes” to Jesus and begin their journey to discipleship. The number soars to over 70 per day when our 44 national fields are included, but these are USA figures.) There were 1,440 water baptisms, 609 baptized in the Holy Spirit, and 1,591 new members. Missions giving by Open Bible churches to non-Open Bible ministries was over \$1.35 million. Open Bible gave \$1.54 million to our

own World Evangelism ministries.

Thank you Open Bible! Now let us arise and double the harvest! People need the Lord.

Additional information from the reports can be reviewed above.

