

Dear Word-ites,

Grace and peace be multiplied to you and your families. As I write this report, I'm reminded of how good God continues to be. For those of you new to this report, you are reading my heart in written form—a tradition born from watching presidential addresses and recognizing the power of honest analysis to educate and empower our congregation.

Twenty-five years into my pastoral journey and twenty years into this remarkable ministry, I stand before you not just as your pastor, but as a witness to God's unprecedented faithfulness. We've grown from a handful of dreamers to over 3,000 members strong, baptized over 2,300 souls, and defied every statistic that says churches like ours shouldn't exist, let alone thrive.

But here's the raw truth: success without structure is unsustainable. Growth without governance becomes chaos. Vision without proper vessels leads to missed opportunities. That's why we're restructuring—not because something's broken, but because God's blessings have outgrown our current organizational framework.

THE BIBLICAL IMPERATIVE: ORGANIZING FOR ABUNDANCE

"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1). This restructure isn't administrative housekeeping—it's prophetic preparation for what God has planned next.

Scripture shows us that even Jesus organized strategically. He didn't just wander around hoping for impact; He sent out the Twelve, then the Seventy-Two (Luke 10:1). Paul didn't plant churches haphazardly; he established clear leadership structures in every city (Titus 1:5). When the early church faced growth challenges in Acts 6:1-7, they didn't pray away the problem—they restructured to meet the need.

Like Jethro counseling Moses in Exodus 18:17-23, wise voices around us have said, "What you're doing is not good. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." Good leadership requires systems that can handle the weight of God's provision.

WHERE WE STAND: A FOUNDATION OF FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

Before diving into structural changes, let's acknowledge the spiritual and financial foundation that makes this restructure possible—your faithful giving and sacrificial service. Our strong financial position didn't happen by accident. It happened because Word-ites understand biblical stewardship and the multiplication principle of generous giving.

Record-Breaking Stewardship

In 2024, we achieved record-breaking member and partner giving with total contributions exceeding \$4 million. Our financial position remains exceptionally strong with over \$1.2 million in cash reserves, \$13.1 million in total assets, and net assets of \$7.3 million. We are pacing to exceed this in 2025.

Disciplined Financial Management

Through disciplined expense management, we've maintained positive cash flow while investing in ministry expansion. Our expenses remain below budget projections, creating sustainable growth patterns.

The Service Foundation

Beyond financial gifts, your service commitment makes ministry possible. Every department in our new structure depends on volunteers who serve with excellence, dedication, and spiritual passion. Your willingness to serve in children's ministry, hospitality, worship arts, community outreach, and administrative support creates the human infrastructure that enables professional staff to focus on strategic leadership and not only operational management.

Defying the Statistics

Let me put our current reality in perspective. While 1,400 pastors leave ministry monthly nationwide and only 15% of churches grow, Word Tabernacle has become what I call "a unicorn"—a church our age doing impactful work outside major metropolitan areas. The ten churches I routinely study for best practices average seventy-six years old. Most successful ministries our age are in cities with major universities or military installations to fuel growth.

Yet here we are in eastern North Carolina, not just surviving but thriving—multiple campuses, multiple ministries, comprehensive community impact that addresses economic inequity, food insecurity, health disparities, and systemic injustice. We're not managing decline like 85% of American churches; we're organizing for the abundant harvest God has prepared.

THE NEW STRUCTURE: ORGANIZING FOR GENERATIONAL IMPACT

Council of Elders: Unified Spiritual and Fiduciary Leadership

By merging our former Board of Directors and Board of Elders, we're creating biblical accountability that provides vision, oversight, instruction, and protection. This council will reflect diversity of gifts, generations, genders, and experiences—because effective leadership in 2025 requires multiple perspectives working in unity.

Office of Senior Pastor: Strategic Vision and Community Impact

Beyond pastoral care and preaching, this office now coordinates community impact toolkits, civic engagement, leadership development, and succession planning. We're not just shepherding souls; we're developing comprehensive strategies to address the systemic issues that keep our communities from thriving.

Three Chief Officers: Excellence in Execution

- Chief Ministry Officer: Coordinates Early Education through Personal Development, ensuring every person from birth to one hundred finds their place in kingdom work
- Chief Corporate Officer: Manages facilities, finances, and operations with the excellence our mission deserves
- Director of Community Impact & Strategic Development: Positions us as a premier faith-based community development hub in eastern North Carolina

THE EIGHT SPECIALIZED DEPARTMENTS: STRATEGIC EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

1. Early Education & Formation

Building foundational faith and academic excellence from infancy through elementary years. The Impact Academy serves as our flagship early childhood development center, providing comprehensive care that addresses educational equity while establishing strong spiritual foundations.

2. Personal Development & Discipleship

Creating intentional pathways for spiritual maturity and leadership development across all life stages. This department coordinates small groups, mentoring programs, ministers-in-training initiatives, singles ministry, and our comprehensive Thrive Groups.

3. Community Transformation & Outreach

Positioning Word Tabernacle as the regional hub for faith-based community development. This department drives economic equity initiatives, nonprofit capacity building through our COST Program, prison and nursing home ministries, glocal witness strategies, food security programs, and comprehensive missions work.

4. Membership Care & Wellness

Orchestrating the complete member journey from first visit to mature discipleship through holistic support addressing spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational needs. This department manages guest experience and assimilation, member care through districts and zones, hospitality services, health and wellness initiatives marriage and family support, women's ministry, and specialized fellowship ministries.

5. Performing Arts & Worship

Unifying all creative expression under single leadership to deliver powerful, spirit-led encounters that amplify Christ's message across all generations. This department integrates praise and worship leadership, all choirs (children, youth, adult, men), musicians and band, drama ministry, dance ministry, mime team, and music education.

6. Campus Management & Services

Providing comprehensive facility stewardship and revenue generation that maximizes utilization of our physical assets while creating additional income streams. This department manages office operations, facilities and maintenance across all locations,

security and safety through Stronghold Keepers, transportation services, venue management and rentals, culinary services, WordAlive Bookstore, fitness center operations, cemetery management, and information systems technology.

7. Fiscal Services & Compliance

Serving as the administrative engine managing God's resources with integrity, transparency, and strategic vision. This department oversees fiscal affairs and accounting, human resources and payroll, grant management, donor and member database administration, purchasing and procurement, legal compliance and auditing, and comprehensive budget planning and analysis.

8. Digital Discipleship & Media

Creating a comprehensive digital ministry platform that extends Word Tabernacle's reach through innovative technology and strategic media production. This department manages broadcast services, social media engagement, web design and digital presence, photography and videography, sound engineering, lighting design, and emerging technology integration including artificial intelligence applications for ministry enhancement.

THE BENEFITS: MAXIMIZING KINGDOM IMPACT

Enhanced Stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Our restructure creates unprecedented accountability and resource optimization through systematic stewardship practices that honor God and maximize ministry effectiveness. Clear department boundaries eliminate ministry silos while strategic coordination prevents duplication of efforts. Every dollar and ministry hour now serves measurable outcomes aligned with our "Everyone Thriving" vision.

This structure ensures maximum impact from every resource God provides. The Fiscal Services & Compliance department implements professional-grade financial tracking, grant management, and budget analysis that provides real-time visibility into ministry effectiveness. Each department operates with defined budgets, clear success metrics, and quarterly performance reviews that ensure faithful stewardship of both human and financial resources.

The Campus Management & Services department transforms our facilities from expense centers into revenue-generating assets through venue rentals, co-working space leasing, culinary services, and strategic partnerships. This generates sustainable income streams that reduce dependence on traditional giving while expanding ministry capacity. When you give to Word Tabernacle, your dollars multiply through professional management, strategic partnerships, and innovative revenue generation.

Sustainable Growth (Ephesians 4:11-16)

The development pipeline from Early Education through Personal Development creates seamless pathways for lifelong spiritual formation that builds mature disciples rather than mere attendees. Instead of random programming, we now offer intentional progression routes where a child in our Impact Academy can grow through our youth ministries, participate in leadership training, serve in specialized roles, and eventually lead departments themselves.

Early Education & Formation establishes spiritual foundations from infancy through elementary years, creating generational impact that extends into families and communities. Personal Development & Discipleship provides structured pathways including small group leadership development, mentoring programs, ministers-in-training initiatives, and specialized ministry training that creates multiple entry points for emerging leaders while providing clear advancement opportunities for seasoned servants.

This systematic approach to spiritual formation ensures we're not just gaining members but developing mature disciples who can reproduce themselves. The structure creates sustainability because each generation trains the next, each leader develops additional leaders, and each ministry area builds capacity for expansion.

Community Transformation Excellence (Matthew 5:14-16)

Our dedicated Community Transformation & Outreach department positions us to address systemic issues with laser focus rather than scattered efforts. Economic inequity, food insecurity, health disparities, criminal justice reform, and housing challenges now receive strategic attention through specialized staff and coordinated programming that creates measurable community change.

The REACH Center becomes an in-house ministry community development laboratory where innovative solutions are tested, refined, and scaled for regional impact. Economic Equity Initiatives provide black and minority business development support, and

entrepreneurship mentoring that creates generational wealth in our community. Our COST Program builds nonprofit capacity across eastern North Carolina.

Food Security Programs address hunger through strategic partnerships, community gardens, nutrition education, and policy advocacy. Prison Ministry creates re-entry support systems that reduce recidivism while building bridges between communities and correctional institutions. Mental Health and Counseling Services provide culturally competent care that addresses trauma, addiction, and family dysfunction.

Strategic Ministry Excellence (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Like Paul running to win, we're eliminating redundancy and creating specialized excellence in every ministry area. Each department develops deep expertise in their ministry focus while maintaining coordination with complementary departments.

Digital Discipleship & Media extends our global reach through broadcast services, social media engagement, web design, and emerging technology integration including artificial intelligence applications. Our digital platforms will serve members worldwide, provide online discipleship resources, and create virtual community experiences that complement in-person worship.

Campus Management maximizes our physical assets for ministry and revenue generation through venue management, event coordination, culinary services, fitness center operations, and cemetery management. Our facilities become community assets that serve multiple purposes while generating sustainable income.

The structure eliminates the inefficiency of multiple departments doing similar work, creates centers of excellence that attract talented volunteers and staff, and establishes accountability systems that ensure consistent quality across all ministry areas.

Leadership Development Pipeline (2 Timothy 2:2)

The Personal Development & Discipleship structure creates intentional leadership development pathways ensuring the next generation carries forward both competence and character. This isn't accidental leadership emergence but systematic development that identifies, trains, and deploys leaders at every level of ministry.

Our ministers-in-training program provides theological education, practical ministry experience, and mentorship relationships that prepare emerging pastors and ministry leaders. Small group leadership development creates multiplication systems where every leader train additional leaders. Specialized ministry training equips volunteers for excellence in their service areas while building pathways for increased responsibility.

The structure creates leadership pipelines in every department: Early Education develops future educators and child development specialists; Performing Arts trains musicians, vocalists, and technical specialists; Community Transformation builds community development professionals and social workers; Campus Management develops facility managers and business operators.

Financial Multiplication and Stewardship Excellence

This structure leverages our strong financial position for maximum kingdom impact through strategic resource allocation and revenue diversification. Our disciplined expense management has produced consistent positive cash flow, maintaining over \$1.2 million in liquid assets while supporting rapid ministry expansion.

The Campus Management & Services department will generate additional revenue streams through venue rentals co-working space, culinary services, and strategic partnerships. These income streams create sustainable funding for community transformation initiatives, reducing dependence on traditional giving while expanding ministry capacity.

Fiscal Services & Compliance ensures professional-grade financial management through comprehensive budget planning, grant management (targeting \$500,000+ in grant funding annually), donor database management, and legal compliance that protects our ministry while supporting growth. This department will implement endowment development, capital campaign management, and investment strategies that build generational wealth for ministry sustainability.

Operational Efficiency and Professional Excellence

The restructure eliminates operational inefficiencies while creating professional-level systems that support ministry excellence. Digital systems integration streamlines communication, enhances member experience, and provides data-driven insights for

strategic decision-making. This operational excellence frees ministry leaders to focus on spiritual impact rather than administrative burdens.

Human Resources & Payroll management ensures competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and workplace excellence that attracts and retains talented staff.

The structure creates efficiency through coordination, eliminates redundancy through specialization, and builds excellence through professional systems. This enables us to accomplish more ministry with existing resources while positioning for strategic expansion.

Comprehensive Member Care and Holistic Community Impact

The Membership Care & Wellness department creates a seamless experience from first-time guests to mature disciples, addressing physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational needs throughout all life stages. This comprehensive approach ensures no one falls through cracks while building community connections that strengthen both individuals and families.

Combined with Community Transformation & Outreach's external focus, we become a comprehensive ecosystem where internal spiritual health drives external community transformation. Members experience personal transformation that equips them for community impact, while community engagement creates opportunities for evangelism and discipleship.

This holistic approach addresses the full spectrum of human needs—spiritual, physical, emotional, relational, economic, and social—creating transformation that extends from individuals to families to communities to regions.

FINISHING 2025 STRONG: OUR FOURTH QUARTER FINANCIAL FOCUS

As we implement this restructure, we're also positioning ourselves to finish 2025 in our strongest financial position yet. Within the next few weeks, you'll receive your third quarter giving statements along with a personalized letter from me outlining our fourth quarter opportunities and priorities.

Fourth Quarter Opportunities

The final quarter traditionally represents our highest giving period, and this year presents unique opportunities to exceed previous records. Your end-of-year giving not only supports current ministry operations but also funds the infrastructure needed for our restructure implementation. Every additional dollar given in the fourth quarter directly enables enhanced programming, improved facilities, and expanded community impact.

The Stewardship Challenge

As you review your third quarter giving statement, prayerfully consider your capacity to increase your year-end giving. Whether through increased weekly tithing, Pastoral Support or Project Thrive, your additional stewardship enables us to enter 2026 with maximum momentum for our new organizational structure.

Multiple Giving Opportunities

From thanksgiving offerings to year-end gifts, Christmas, Watchnight, or National Day of Giving offerings, the fourth quarter provides multiple opportunities to participate in God's work through Word Tabernacle. Your generosity during this crucial period ensures that our restructure launches with adequate funding for excellence in every department.

OUR PROPHETIC PREPARATION FOR WHAT'S NEXT

"Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction" (Proverbs 29:18).

This restructure anticipates the Community Development Corporation that will tackle housing, economic development, and educational equity. It creates capacity for Impact Academy expansion, increased civic engagement, and the comprehensive community initiatives God has shown us in prayer and planning.

Like Nehemiah organizing Jerusalem's restoration with strategic precision (Nehemiah 3), we're building infrastructure for the greater works Jesus promised (John 14:12). We're not just adding programs; we're creating a comprehensive community ecosystem where transformation touches every area of life.

ADDRESSING THE GENERATIONAL CHALLENGE

As we serve multiple generations simultaneously—from digital members to seasoned saints—this structure creates space for everyone. Our older members who remember "how things used to be" provide wisdom and stability. Our younger members who see "what could be" bring innovation and energy. The restructure honors both perspectives while creating pathways for sustainable growth.

Some folks prefer traditional ministry models, others want cutting-edge innovation. The truth is, effective ministry in 2025 requires both/and thinking, not either/or limitations. Our new structure creates space for small groups and social media, traditional choirs and contemporary worship, in-person fellowship and digital discipleship.

THE COST OF TRANSFORMATION

Real talk: restructuring requires sacrifice. Some beloved programs may be eliminated. Certain roles will shift and some staff may change. Comfortable patterns will be disrupted. But the cost of not changing is higher—missed opportunities, decreased effectiveness, and potential decline.

We're investing in professional excellence that matches our spiritual passion. We're hiring expertise that complements our heart for ministry. We're building systems that can handle the complexity of multiple campuses, multiple age groups, diverse economic backgrounds, and comprehensive community impact.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

The transition won't be perfect. There will be bumps, adjustments, and learning curves. But remember, we've navigated challenges before—including a global pandemic that shut down most ministries while we grew stronger. We've proven that with God's guidance and unified commitment, obstacles become opportunities.

This restructure transforms us from a church with programs to a comprehensive community ecosystem. It prepares us for the next twenty years of ministry with the same innovation and excellence that brought us this far.

THE BOTTOM LINE

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Twenty years of God's faithfulness becomes the foundation for generational impact. This restructure isn't about getting bigger; it's about getting better. It's not about adding complexity; it's about creating clarity. We're not changing our mission; we're maximizing our effectiveness.

The same God who brought us from a handful to over 3,000 is preparing us for whatever comes next. Trust the process. Embrace the changes. Stay committed to the vision.

After all, the best is indeed in front of us.

Until All Thrive,

Pastor G