

An Open Letter from Wall Watchers Founder Rusty Leonard

Founder and CEO addresses the issues of compensation and board governance at Wall Watchers

October 1, 2004

Dear Visitor,

For several years now, we have been collecting data and information about Christian ministries, now totaling more than 500. As we have analyzed and evaluated this data, some trends and information have demanded further study and comment by Wall Watchers, primarily through our www.MinistryWatch.com web site. Through a series of News Releases, MinistryWatch Reflection articles, the MinistryWatch Direct newsletter, and our new feature, Donor Alerts, we have occasionally called into question the financial and other practices of some ministries, including so-called “Word of Faith” ministries.

Not surprisingly, some supporters of these ministries have been disturbed by our reporting on the questionable practices at these ministries, including the high level of compensation many “Word of Faith” ministry leaders seem to receive. As a result, some have written Wall Watchers to question our “right” to publish this information and asking us about compensation of the leaders and board members of Wall Watchers.

At Wall Watchers, we firmly believe that a well-informed donor has the best chance of being the best possible steward of his/her giving. Accordingly, we always support and have practiced full disclosure of relevant information regarding a ministry’s finances. Unusually high compensation of a ministry leadership team certainly is relevant information for donors. Typically, we only report on compensation issues when our analysts believe it to worthy of interest to donors. Thankfully, in almost all the ministries we follow, compensation of ministry leadership appears to be fair. The “Word of Faith” ministries seem to be a significant aberration in this regard. Most ministries are to be congratulated for their faithfulness in compensation issues and donors should be encouraged that most ministry leadership does not appear to abuse their position of power.

Regarding Wall Watchers specifically, neither I as founder and CEO, nor any members of my family, nor any of the board members of Wall Watchers or any of their families currently receive or have ever received any compensation from Wall Watchers, either directly or indirectly. Indeed, rather than taking compensation from the ministry, my wife and I along with many board members have made significant donations to the ministry of Wall Watchers. I, and they, volunteer our time and donate funds because we believe that what we give to Wall Watchers, will in the long term, be leveraged into significantly greater, as well as higher quality, giving to the cause of Christ. Additionally, our ministry’s tax forms, which contain information about executive and board compensation, can always be found on our website ([Wall Watchers' Tax forms](#)).

Wall Watchers' board members have a wide variety of experience and expertise. Many of our board members, however, have specific experience in the financial markets, which is highly relevant to our desire to see the practices utilized in the financial markets applied in the Christian Ministry Marketplace. Some board members Carol and I have known for many years and two are relatives of ours. While we consider all board members to be our friends, a majority of the board are "independent" directors in that they have no family relationship to my wife or me. To encourage unity in marriage, we typically offer board positions to husbands and wives together but some choose not to accept this arrangement. Board members who are unable to consistently participate in meetings are asked to resign. No Wall Watcher board member sits on the board of any of the ministries that we review and Wall Watchers refuses to accept any donation from ministries that we review in order to avoid any conflicts of interests. Moreover, donors to and other supporters of Wall Watchers' ministry are encouraged to recommend possible new board members for consideration.

We hope that the information above will instill readers with confidence in the ministry and governance of Wall Watchers. If you have additional questions about governance or financial aspects of our ministry, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Audited Financial Statements, Form 990 and Schedule A, Form 1023 and Advanced Ruling Letter can be read by clicking on the following link:

[Disclosures](#)

Respectfully,

Rusty Leonard, CFA
Founder and CEO
Wall Watchers