



2018 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Relative to the listed Ministry Assignment, please describe accomplishments in the past year that creates "value added" to the Cooperative Program dollars that ERLC receives.

I. Assist churches in applying the moral and ethical teachings of the Bible to the Christian life.

Throughout the year, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has provided an array of resources to churches to help them apply the moral and ethical teachings of the Bible to the Christian life. Each day, the ERLC website publishes new content directly related to the issues of human dignity, family stability, civil society, and religious liberty—and these in a variety of formats ranging from popular-level to academic, articles to videos to podcasts. In the 2017 ministry year, the ERLC set record numbers in terms of downloads, reach, and followers, in some areas seeing gains of over 100%.

Additionally, the ERLC strives to respond quickly to events in the news important to Southern Baptists so as to help train churches and assist Southern Baptists in thinking through the issues. Beyond this, the ERLC has been intentional in launching events—ranging from area pastor lunches, leadership summits, and large-scale annual conferences, designed to equip men and women to think through these issues from a kingdom-focused, gospel framework. In partnership with LifeWay, these events are uploaded online after the fact so that all Southern Baptists, not just those who were able to attend our national events, are able to benefit from the conference content. In partnership with the National Religious Broadcasters, much of this same content is broadcast on NRB TV, airing on DirecTV to millions of viewers around the country.

As a few examples of church-minded resources created in the past year, the ERLC has produced bulletin inserts for SBC churches for each of the respective emphasis Sundays as well as downloadable "Issue Analysis Briefs" for pastors and church leaders. These give leaders an in-depth analysis on individual issues. The ERLC has provided numerous resources free of charge to SBC churches and state conventions around the country for various events. Additionally, in partnership with LifeWay, the ERLC has developed and is continuing to develop new print and curriculum resources designed to equip Christians and churches on issues of life, adoption,

religious liberty, parenting, racial reconciliation, marriage, and many other issues. Our president has led the way to in equipping churches through his own writings. At the present, he has just recently completed a book designed to help Christians understand how “family” is designed to be a gospel icon, with implications for how we understand and live out our own lives from beginning to end. His most recent book before this, *Onward: Engaging the Culture without Losing the Gospel*, similarly sought to equip churches, laying out a vision for what gospel-focused cultural engagement ought to look like in the midst of present-day challenges.

The ERLC continued to innovate along several different multi-media initiatives, expanding Signposts, a weekly podcast featuring Dr. Moore addressing pressing issues and difficult ethical questions, interviewing prominent authors and thought leaders, and offering cultural commentary on pressing Christian issues. The ERLC also developed a new, policy-focused podcast, titled Capitol Conversations, in which the DC-based ERLC staff offer insight and analysis from a Christian perspective on developments in our nation’s capital and what we as a Commission are doing to drive conversations there. Additionally, video has received a great deal of attention over the last year; as an organization we have published hundreds of hours of interviews, discussions, and video productions on a variety of issues. This has been a common request from pastors and churches, particularly for use in their weekly services and for small group training. In the same vein, the ERLC has completed and published through partnership with LifeWay two pieces of small group curriculum designed for churches: “Religious Liberty: How the Gospel Shapes our First Freedom” and “Christ-Centered Parenting.” Other resources include (1) *Light* magazine, which takes up a new theme each issue in order to apply the gospel from a variety of perspectives to the important cultural issues of the day; and (2) our *Gospel for Life* series of books on racial reconciliation, same-sex marriage, marriage, pornography, abortion, parenting, work, religious liberty, and adoption, designed with pastors in mind in order to provide them small, accessible resources they can give to people in their congregation in order to think through these crucial issues from a gospel perspective.

II. Assist churches through the communication and advocacy of moral and ethical concerns in the public arena.

As the SBC entity charged not only to serve as a moral and ethical voice to Southern Baptist churches, but also to be a gospel witness in the public square, the ERLC engaged the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government on multiple fronts, from meeting with lawmakers and advocacy partners to issuing public comments to the administration to filing amicus briefs in the Supreme Court.

The ERLC labored in the public square on a range of issues, from religious liberty to the sanctity of human life to marriage to human trafficking to racial reconciliation and many areas in

between, seeking to apply the gospel to public policy for the sake of religious liberty and human flourishing. Among the many specific policies engaged, the ERLC worked to secure religious liberty protections, especially with respect to the Department of Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate, and worked tirelessly to be a voice of reason and persuasiveness on issues of concern to Southern Baptists.

Throughout the last ministry year, the ERLC focused its legislative attention on issues of life, family, and religious liberty, about which Southern Baptists have been insistent and consistent for decades. In addition to extensive work within both the executive and judicial branches of government, here is a list of some of the key pieces of legislation the ERLC advanced—included to highlight the range of issues the Commission engages on behalf of Southern Baptists:

- [Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act](#)

A significant win for the ERLC was the successful passage of the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act in December 2016. This Act strengthens the foreign policy tools in the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and promotes religious freedom globally as a part of U.S. foreign policy. Retired Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia, for whom the act is named, credits the ERLC as a key advocacy leader getting this bill passed into law.

- [Conscience Protection in Health Care](#)

As part of the nationwide debate on healthcare reform, the ERLC continues to support the Conscience Protection Act and other legislative tools that seek to protect pro-life citizens who work in the healthcare industry. The ERLC team regularly communicates to lawmakers and their staff that it is unconscionable when pro-life healthcare workers are forced to participate in abortions and other medical procedures which conflict with their religiously informed conscience.

- [Implications of the sexual revolution in the military](#)

Our nation goes to great lengths to safeguard the free exercise of religion by active duty service members at home and abroad. Those lengths include the provision of chaplains and assorted accommodations. Over the last several years, however, conflicts have developed for those who hold to God's design for human sexuality. The normalization of ideas like same-sex marriage and transgenderism create serious concerns about the violation of conscience for service members, including medical personnel and chaplains. The ERLC is actively engaged in legislation designed to roll back the DOD's "In-service Transition for Transgender Service Members" program which pays for gender reassignment surgeries. We supported Representative Vicky Hartzler's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to end this multi-billion dollar policy.

More broadly, the ERLC has worked to see policies of the Obama administration reversed, arguing that it is unwise to craft military policy that further entrenches the worldview of the sexual revolution throughout the United States armed services.

- Restoration of Russell Amendment protections
Due to an executive order by President Obama, all federal contractors and subcontractors are required to positively affirm “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” (“SOGI”), or else forfeit eligibility for federal contracts. Rep. Steve Russell sought to protect the religious freedom of contractors, chaplains, and service members. Sadly, the Russell Amendment was abandoned for the Fiscal Year 2017 by lawmakers in both parties. Until religious exemptions are restored—either by an act of Congress or the rescinding of the Executive Order 13672—the religious freedom of military personnel and federal contractors is being violated.
- Defund Planned Parenthood
As part of the ERLC’s campaign to see the nation’s largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, deprived of federal funds, we advocated for, and applauded the successful passage of pro-life health care reform that defunded the organization in the House of Representatives. We are engaged in the debate on the other side of congress to ensure the Senate version does the same.
- No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act
In the aftermath of *Roe v. Wade*, the Hyde Amendment was introduced to prevent taxpayer dollars from being spent on abortion. Since its enactment in 1976, Congress has passed the amendment as a temporary rider which expires each year. The ERLC promotes the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act in order to codify the Hyde Amendment by prohibiting federal funds from being expended for abortion or health coverage that includes coverage for elective abortion.
- Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act
Currently, the U.S. is one of only seven nations in the world that allows elective abortions after 20 weeks post-fertilization. The Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act would prohibit the performing (or attempted performance) of abortions on babies at 20 weeks or greater gestation, except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the mother. In the previous Congress, the bill passed the House; the Senate, however, failed to do so. We continue to push for both chambers to reconsider the bill this year.
- The Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act
Federal law does not adequately protect a born child who survives a failed abortion. In

that moment, such children deserve all of the medical care possible. The Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act would amend the federal criminal code to require any health care practitioner who is present when a child is born alive following an abortion or attempted abortion to (1) exercise the same degree of care as reasonably provided to any other child born alive at the same gestational age, and (2) ensure that such a child is immediately admitted to a hospital.

- Physician-Assisted Suicide

The ERLC is monitoring and increasingly raising the profile against the rise of physician-assisted suicide. Proposals to legalize this practice are active at the state level across the country. We work to oppose each of these proposals. We are building momentum on Capitol Hill to educate lawmakers and their staff on the harm of this issue. We published an article, “How to Reject Physician-Assisted Suicide,” and produced multiple podcasts, including one with Senator James Lankford (R–Okla.), on the issue.

- First Amendment Defense Act (FADA)

FADA would prevent the federal government from punishing an individual or faith-based business because they believe that marriage is an institution between a man and a woman. If FADA-like protections are not enacted in the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the ramifications for those who hold to a biblical view of marriage are likely to be dramatic. Likely casualties include a host of businesses, adoption/foster care agencies, government contractors and grant recipients, and religious institutions—including higher education institutions along with students seeking federal aid to attend them. While a full legislative act is politically unlikely, the ERLC is working other multiple channels to ensure FADA-like protections.

- Civil Rights Uniformity Act

One legislative response to unfounded interpretations of the words “sex” and “gender” by federal agencies is the Civil Rights Uniformity Act. The ERLC supports this act as it would require the approval of Congress before “gender identity” is treated as a protected class in Federal Law or Policy, thus preventing such policies from being fabricated by Executive Branch bureaucracies.

- Opposition to women in combat and the draft

The increasing number of female service members put at risk in combat situations is disconcerting. Further, rhetoric during the 2016 election cycle included skirmishes wherein otherwise social conservative policy makers inexplicably affirmed forcing our teenage daughters to be registered in the Selective Service. Such policies are both a logical outworking of the sexual revolution and in direct conflict with biblical manhood

and womanhood. The ERLC continues to discourage such policies.

- Revive obscenity prosecution

The Obama administration's Department of Justice terminated the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force (OPTF). Though DOJ continued to prosecute cases involving children (which is essential), they ignored virtually all other violations of existing federal law which makes production and distribution of hardcore pornography illegal. The ERLC is engaged with new administration officials at DOJ on this issue.

- Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act: The ERLC celebrated the passage of the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act in the House of Representatives. After years of silence and in response to advocacy from the ERLC and other organizations, the Obama Administration in 2016 formally declared that the so-called Islamic State had committed genocide against Christians, Yazidis, Shia Muslims, and other religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.

- Reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)

We celebrate the unanimous bipartisan support of more than a dozen anti-trafficking bills in the House of Representatives in July 2017, most notably the TVPA, now named in honor of Frederick Douglas. TVPA is the cornerstone of U.S. efforts to combat international human trafficking. Other notable bills passed are the Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act, sponsored by Rep. Vicky Hartzler and the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act sponsored by Rep. Tim Walberg. These laws provide a multi-front effort to end this terrible crime in our lifetime.

- Criminal Justice Reform

In a show of bipartisanship, the past Congress both Democrats and Republicans joined together to work on a package to reform the American criminal justice system. The ERLC continues to push for the consideration of the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act, consistent with the charge of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 2013 resolution, "On America's Growing Prison Population." The bill takes a targeted, nuanced approach at reducing certain mandatory minimums while also directing the Department of Justice to expand recidivism reduction programming in partnership with nonprofit and faith-based organizations. In July 2017, ERLC was a lead organization in the Justice Declaration, a gathering of multiple Christian organizations calling for reforms.

- Poverty

Poverty has many causes. Personal choices, however, account for only some of the problem. In other instances, local and federal policies impede access to upward mobility

and reasonable opportunity. The ERLC is engaged with Speaker Paul Ryan's poverty task force which has outlined a number of goals and policy reforms.

- Payday Lending

The continued growth of the payday lending industry has meant a devastatingly endless cycle of debt and despair for millions of Americans across the country—many of whom sit in our pews on any given Sunday. In theory, there is nothing wrong with small, short-term loans. However, when the annual interest rate on such loans approach 400% (as it has in some states), the result is an industry that can only be described as predatory. Congress has already enacted a 36% annual interest rate cap on loans to members of the military. We believe all Americans deserve such protection. In cooperation with the Faith for Just Lending Coalition, and as encouraged by the 2014 SBC Resolution, "On Predatory Payday Lending," the ERLC continues to advocate for federal legislation that will impose lending and interest rate caps on these organizations.

- Fighting global antisemitism

There has been an alarming rise of antisemitic incidents in Europe and antisemitic speech around the world, particularly in the Middle East. Additionally, the UN has a long history of singling out and seeking to isolate the state of Israel. Most recently, this has occurred through passage of UN Security Council Resolution 2334, but there are countless other examples, including the recent UNESCO resolution denying Jewish connection to the Temple Mount. Through collaborative action with like-minded organizations, the ERLC is working against such action at the United Nations and defending victims of both antisemitic incidents in Europe and antisemitic speech around the world, particularly through our work in the Middle East.

One of the other means by which the ERLC engaged the public square was through one-on-one meetings and other communication with elected officials and their staff. Through regular interaction with congressional offices, the ERLC sought to ensure that social and religious liberty issues were neither steamrolled nor relegated to back burner status by lawmakers hostile to a biblical worldview. A second means by which the ERLC engaged the public square was through coalition work. ERLC staff participated in numerous coalitions, both formal and informal, among religious, life, family, and other public policy groups on issues of common agreement in an effort to find unified approaches to advance sound policy in the public square. In every instance, the ERLC brought a decidedly Baptist and gospel-focused perspective to the issue at hand. In many cases, the ERLC helped to reshape thinking and action among coalition partners by consistently voicing its positions through the lens of the gospel, in a winsome manner.

III. Assist churches in their moral witness in local communities.

Over the course of the ministry year, the ERLC has offered an array of resources designed to assist churches in their moral witness in local churches. The ERLC provides new resources daily—from books, to blog posts, articles, essays, podcasts, videos, bulletin inserts, and sermon outlines—for Christians and churches to help think through moral and ethical issues. Additionally, the ERLC has enhanced a rapid response strategy for news-related items that churches may want to address. The ERLC has worked to develop protocols that allow for rapid production of content that are produced quickly following consequential news.

Throughout the year, ERLC staff and leadership traveled the country speaking at churches and church events throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, in addition to our Southern Baptist seminaries. This ranged from state convention gatherings to Sunday morning worship to church-sponsored events and forums designed to address key cultural issues.

In the midst of our Global Hunger relief efforts, from a starving newborn in West Africa to an ex-convicted preacher in New York, projects supported by Global Hunger Relief are transforming and saving lives. Last year, 5.41 million dollars were received through Global Hunger Relief partners to feed the hungry around the world. In North America, those dollars were used to provide over 8.6 million meals, where the Gospel was shared 1.6 million times, resulting in over 20,000 professions of faith and over 4,000 baptisms. Internationally, 175 projects were supported with GHR funds, impacting over 2,300 communities and 600,000 people.

In an effort to further support the work of those on state convention staffs who are assigned the responsibility of addressing moral, ethical, and public policy matters, the ERLC continued to develop gatherings in which experts on selected social and cultural issues speak. Recent years have seen this expanded within the context of the work of the ERLC Research Institute so as to best encourage and support those in leadership positions across Southern Baptist life.

In tandem with our denominational calendar, the ERLC produced bulletin inserts, videos, and content designed to address areas of denominational emphasis within the life of local churches, including sanctity of human life, racial reconciliation, and important social issues. Throughout the year, the ERLC also partnered with individual churches, associations, and state conventions via videoconference to help answer questions and equip churches on the issues alive in their respective congregations.

IV. Assist churches and other Southern Baptist entities by promoting religious liberty.

Beyond the concrete legislative efforts listed in sections above, ERLC staff regularly published articles in Baptist Press and on ERLC website. From the latest developments pertaining to religious liberty and persecution around the world, as well as many other important topics including adoption, marriage, human trafficking, race, and others, the ERLC addressed a wide array of concerns. On our website, entire channels are devoted specifically to these important issues. These pages feature brief explanations of the various topics, informational videos, links to news stories and applicable Scripture references. Additionally, on our “Public Policy” channel includes information designed for legislators, staff, and thought leaders on issues of concern to Southern Baptists. We regularly meet with and attempt to drive the conversation regarding bills important for the sake of religious liberty, and our in-person presence wed with timely and well-supported information are key facets of legislative success.

Beyond this, the ERLC labored to promote religious freedom with like-minded groups and organizations and continued the work of its newly-established international office—designed to promote religious liberty for Southern Baptists around the globe, particularly calling attention to persecution of Christian minorities in the Middle East.

The ERLC also named leaders for their distinguished service awards on the basis of their contribution to the cause of promoting religious liberty—with the Little Sisters of the Poor being awarded the John Leland Religious Liberty Award for their fight on behalf of conscience protections and religious liberty, and Gov. Bill Haslam being named the Distinguished Service Award for his work on behalf of religious liberty and the common good during his years of public service as the Governor of Tennessee.

As mentioned above, one project designed to serve churches for many years to come, the ERLC partnered with LifeWay to publish a state-of-the-art video curriculum on both religious liberty and also parenting. ERLC and LifeWay worked for over a year in creating and commission content for the video curriculum, traveled around the country interviewing the preeminent thought leaders and experts on the issues, and worked tirelessly to create a product that will be compelling for Sunday Schools and small groups to work through together and one that will provide tools to Christians and churches to address religious liberty issues with expertise and confidence.

Beyond these areas, the ERLC continued to participate in a number of regular gatherings with religious leaders and groups on issues of domestic and international religious liberty, along with other issues important to Southern Baptists. The ERLC also worked to continue to cultivate relationships with members of Congress and their staff by speaking at Capitol Hill events and meetings.

Based on the listed Ministry Assignment, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2018 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how you are accomplishing the above Ministry Assignment?

I. Assist churches in applying the moral and ethical teachings of the Bible to the Christian life.

Each new year brings new challenges and questions in our culture that affect the lives of Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist churches. Part of the ERLC's role is being attentive to those questions and applying the gospel to them for the benefit of our churches. One way we are able to be both attentive to and influential within the life of our churches is through the work of our Leadership Network. Through our partnerships with pastors and churches active in the work of the ERLC, and through our active conversation with them about their churches and needs, we are able to think through much more effectively how we can serve the SBC at large. This year, we will welcome a new cohort of pastors into our Leadership Council, which will also bring new voices and churches into intentional and strategic partnership with the ERLC so as to help equip churches to apply the gospel to the Christian life. More than that, we have a number of national events and digital strategies in the planning and production stage that we expect to be helpful and consequential to the mission of the ERLC in the 2017 year. On top of that, we regularly produce resources, ranging from books to magazines to bulletin inserts to Sunday School curriculum designed to serve churches as they seek to understand the issues and live out faithful Christian lives.

II. Assist churches through the communication and advocacy of moral and ethical concerns in the public arena.

Each new year brings new opportunities for the ERLC to continue to make inroads in building coalitions, driving conversations, and being a voice of influence on Capitol Hill to represent Southern Baptists and their concerns well. A sampling of some of the areas and legislation on which the ERLC will focus include:

- Defunding Planned Parenthood
- Promoting pro-life judicial nominees
- No Taxpayer for Abortion Act
- Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act
- Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act
- Conscience Protection Act
- Restoration of Russell Amendment protections
- First Amendment Defense Act
- Opposition to women in combat and in the draft

- Reviving obscenity prosecution

A continued focus in the 2017 year will be Capitol Conversations, regular ERLC meetings with coalition partners, elected officials, and influencers to keep close contact and influence with those crucial to defending America's first freedom of religious liberty. Beyond this, additional work done over the last year along with key strategic partnerships we have developed have poised the ERLC to grow its media presence, and the finalization of our fully equipped television studio in the Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville adds to that potential.

III. Assist churches in their moral witness in local communities.

In the year ahead, we have unique opportunities to use enhanced digital platforms, ERLC events, and other platforms to leverage strategic relationships with churches and invest in local communities. Being the smallest SBC entity, it is an organizational challenge to be as involved in all of our states and associations as we would aspire to be, but through digital platforms, events, podcasting, and video conferencing, the ERLC has the ability to extend its reach in unique and strategic ways even further into the life of local churches.

IV. Assist churches and other Southern Baptist entities by promoting religious liberty.

With new cultural flashpoints around every turn, increased attention to the issue of religious liberty provides the ERLC a unique opportunity to be a prophetic voice in the public square. Additionally, an increased investment in large-scale events provides the ERLC with the ability to speak to a broad audience on issues of concern to Southern Baptists. This year, several of our key events and publications will focus on what faithful Christian families should look like in the midst of an ever-changing, and ever-challenging culture landscape in which religious liberty is increasingly imperilled. As we equip Christian families, at the same time we hope to use the opportunity to model to the watching world a vision of religious freedom and Christian witness—with faithful men and women serving others, loving others, and welcoming them to hear the gospel message. Beyond that, through the work Research Institute, the ERLC has an arsenal of strategically-gifted and committed Southern Baptist thinkers that can help drive the conversation in the public square on issues of importance to Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist churches.

