



Cooperative Program

- 1.a. With an understanding that SBC entities which receive Cooperative Program funding share an equal responsibility to advance and grow the Cooperative Program, please give a description of the ERLC's efforts to promote the Cooperative Program and the expected outcome of these efforts.**

In all our organizational outlets, the ERLC promotes the tremendous Great Commission impact that gifts to the Cooperative Program make possible, particularly in the work of the ERLC. As the entity that is the most dependent on Cooperative Program funds, as an organization we are critically aware of the importance of the Cooperative Program. The ERLC takes every opportunity to promote the Cooperative Program and give thanks for the sacrificial giving and prayerful support of Southern Baptists.

As one example, over the last year we have had the privilege of placing several ultrasound machines at crisis pregnancy centers around the country through our Psalm 139 Project. As an organization, we take the stewardship of issues we have been entrusted to advance seriously, and we want to do everything we can to serve the cause of pro-life ministries around the country. In the midst of these placements, however, we were able to tell the organizations—along with those interested in giving so as to place additional machines—that 100% of any donations to Psalm 139 would go toward the ultrasound machines because all administrative and promotional costs were covered by Southern Baptist churches around the country through the Cooperative Program.

Additionally, in coordinating the work of Southern Baptists' Global Hunger Relief initiative, we are uniquely suited to show how our cooperative partnership with IMB, NAMB, the Executive Committee, Lifeway, Baptist Global Response, and the WMU, partner together to feed hungry people around the world and carrying the gospel with it. More still, one of the very purposes of our Leadership Network is to promote broader participation in SBC life, most notably through giving to the Cooperative Program. Here, we highlight the work the ERLC and other entities are doing and strive to be an ambassador for our denomination, highlighting how much Kingdom good we as Southern Baptists can do when we partner together. Beyond this, at every ERLC conference we hold private gatherings of key leaders and next generation pastors with the express purpose of promoting the Cooperative Program, both encouraging SBC churches to expand giving and seeking to identify and encourage like-minded non-SBC churches to become SBC churches and participate in Cooperative Program giving.

- 1. b. Please describe in detail the terminology the ERLC uses to train personnel to avoid direct solicitation of operating funds and navigate the SBC Business and Financial Plan, VI, section D, "In no case shall any Convention entity approach a church for inclusion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions." Please provide anecdotal examples of maximizing the promotion of CP at ERLC events and initiatives.**

ERLC employees are informed clearly that we operate under the Business & Financial Plan of the Convention which clearly states that we are not to direct financial appeals directly to churches. This message is reinforced regularly with the staff. The ERLC receives less than 5% of our operating income from individual donors and the vast majority of those funds are from individuals (not pastors or churches) who believe passionately in our work and want to give in that way. We are deeply appreciative of the Cooperative program with over 75% of our operating income from that source. The ERLC takes every opportunity to promote the Cooperative Program. Dr. Moore makes it very clear that we are able to speak clearly on a wide variety of issues because of the strength of the Cooperative Program. The ERLC maintains a prophetic voice in our culture, among our churches, and in the political arena specifically due to the nature of the Cooperative Program funding.

As an example, in November 2018, we had a donor partner with us to place an ultrasound machine in a medical clinic in New Orleans. We were able to let this donor know that the reason 100% of his donation could be used to purchase the machine and training because all administrative and promotional costs were covered by the Cooperative Program. The same is true for the funds of Global Hunger Relief where that message is repeated often through our promotion of that human needs partnership.

Ethnic Participation

- 2. Please give a descriptive report of participation of ethnic churches and church leaders in the life and ministry of your entity. Please provide an update of success or advancement in this area of ministry over the past year.**

As the SBC entity specifically assigned with the responsibility of making Southern Baptists and others aware of the Bible's positions on racial reconciliation, among other issues, the ERLC has made this issue a focal point among the items we consistently address. Over the last five years, the ERLC has hosted a national conference on racial reconciliation (which was attended or viewed by thousands of people in person and online and attracted national media attention), consistently published materials on the biblical mandate for racial reconciliation and commentaries on flashpoints in society where we can bring a uniquely Christian and Baptist perspective to an item in the news concerning racial issues. Beyond that, the ERLC has included racial reconciliation in several of its hallmark resources designed to equip churches—video and printed church curriculum, the *Gospel for Life* book series, Sunday emphasis bulletin inserts, and several other areas. Over the last ministry year, the ERLC hosted an event called MLK50, a conference on the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. On this day, in which men and women were already thinking about racial tensions in the context of our country by virtue of the historic day, we were able to welcome five thousand people (along with a half-million viewers online) to an event in

Memphis designed to talk about the gospel and how it calls us to racial unity. In terms of external groups, the ERLC has continued to welcome new leaders into the ERLC Leadership Council, a small network of leaders, pastors, and influencers within the denomination that ERLC leadership regularly meet with. Within this Council, over the last year we have added nine African-American pastors, two Hispanic pastors, one Filipino pastor, and one Iranian pastor. When it comes to personnel, we have filled two director-level positions within the ERLC over the last several years, with Trillia Newbell serving as Director of Community Outreach, and Steven Harris serving as Director of Advocacy (making him the first African-American representing Southern Baptists in our Washington office in Commission history). Our board presently has two African-American and one Asian-American serving as trustees. In terms of emphasis, Dr. Moore regularly addresses the issue of racial reconciliation in television, radio, and print interviews, and writes on the topic frequently.

Mental Health Resource

- 3. In response to a Ronnie Floyd motion, June 2013, Houston, TX, requesting the Executive Committee and SBC Entities to assist churches with mental health ministries, the Executive Committee appointed an advisory group, Fall 2013, to determine ways in which Southern Baptist entities and Southern Baptist churches can best help those who are in need of mental health assistance. The final report of this advisory group was presented to Dr. Frank S. Page, Fall 2014.**

In the 2015 & 2016 Ministry Report(s) the following question was asked of each SBC entity:

Please give a progress report on what the ERLC has implemented to assist Southern Baptist churches with training and equipping people with mental health challenges and how will the ERLC continue to seek ways to work in cooperation with SBC entities and others to address the severe challenges imposed by mental illness?

For the 2019 Ministry Report please provide the following:

If the ERLC feels that reporting on this subject is within its purview, or falls within the scope of its ministry assignment(s), or has made any progress in the area of assisting churches with training and equipping people with mental health challenges, or has developed or identified resources to assist Southern Baptist churches in the area of mental health ministry, please provide a detailed progress report.

In 2018, the ERLC continued to equip pastors and church leaders to address the wide range of mental illness issues within the church. We featured articles from professionals on issues like anxiety, depression, and other mental illnesses. We also featured leading pastors discussing helpful ways for the church to adequately serve those within their congregations who suffer from mental illness. And we featured reporting, storytelling, and testimonials of people who have been afflicted with mental illness. The ERLC continues to serve pastors and ministry leaders, both to serve those who suffer and for those leaders who suffer themselves, often in silence. Some of the content the ERLC has published on this issue includes:

- [10 types of thinking that undergird depression-anxiety](#) by Brad Hambrick
- [What do grandmothers have to do with depression?](#) by Brad Hambrick
- [How the church can make mental illness a topic of conversation](#) by Stephen Grcevich
- [Seven reasons why church is difficult for those touched by mental illness](#) by Stephen Grcevich
- [11 ways we can all nurture our mental health](#) by Amy Simpson
- [How to help a friend with mental illness](#) by Amy Simpson
- [One of the best things churches can do for people with mental illness](#) by Amy Simpson
- [“When Darkness Seems my Closest Friend”: A look at the struggle with depression](#) by Sean DeMars
- [Depression, anxiety, and the church: A pastor’s wife tells her story of hope](#) by Tiffany and Leigh Ann Marshall
- [5 ways to help our loved ones with addiction and mental illness](#) by Lindsay Nicolet
- [Four guidelines for mental health issues and the church](#) by Daryl Crouch

4. What specific efforts is the ERLC making to protect against sexual abuse at the ERLC?

Given the nature of the work we do at the ERLC, we are highly sensitive to any hint of sexual impropriety or any distortion of a biblical, God-glorifying sexual ethic. We have created a culture from the top down that protects against sexual abuse through biblical teaching on the subject, open communication, and practical deterrents. Understanding, teaching, and applying God’s Word regarding this important topic is one way we protect against sexual abuse. Because it is the policy of the ERLC that all employees represent the entity to the public and perform roles central to its spiritual objectives, the ERLC expects all staff to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the beliefs and convictions of the ERLC in both their professional and personal lives. We have also created a culture where employees are heard and where leadership is approachable. Our open-door policy allows male and female employees at every level to feel comfortable raising a concern or complaint. Practically, as other means of protection, we have glass doors throughout providing literal transparency into every office.

ERLC Specific Questions

- 5. In your opinion, what is the most reliable metric indicating future accomplishments of or challenges to ERLC’s ministry assignments? Why is that metric the one you think is most important to watch? Using this metric as a backdrop, please give a progress report showing measurable progress in this, as well as other areas of ministry and work.**

From year to year, the most reliable metric we have found is in discerning the impact of future accomplishments or challenges on SBC churches. When the ERLC evaluates initiatives, goals, responses, or strategy of any kind, our priority is to focus on how they will affect actual congregations including the pastors, leaders, and lay people in them. As an organization, we want to shape the culture and influence the public square, but all of this happens with a primary

commitment to the local church. To measure this metric, we evaluate quantitative indicators that reveal the level of church impact of a potential initiative or challenge. Some of these quantitative indicators include web traffic, resource downloads, conference attendance, social media reach, and churches served. While any of these indicators cannot give a clear picture of our impact individually, they can provide a window into our effectiveness when looked at collectively.

6. How does the ERLC measure its effectiveness, and what does the ERLC look for in determining its accomplishments across all of its ministry assignments?

As mentioned above, as an organization we want to shape the culture and influence the public square, but all of this happens with a primary commitment to the local church. To measure our effectiveness as an organization, we evaluate quantitative indicators that reveal the level of church impact of a potential initiative or challenge. Some of these quantitative indicators include web traffic, resource downloads, conference attendance, social media reach, and churches served. While any of these indicators cannot give a clear picture of our impact individually, they can provide a window into our effectiveness when looked at collectively.

7. How does the ERLC come alongside and support Southern Baptist pastors and church leaders in finding their position, as well as having a voice, on moral and ethical issues? Please give examples. What resources does the ERLC provide to Southern Baptists, especially pastors, to help position them for cultural preparedness and in some cases, social action? Please give examples.

See following pages.

8. Of all the moral, ethical and cultural issues which are confronting Southern Baptist pastors and churches, which of these does the ERLC deem to be of highest importance, or represent the highest leverage issues for our churches for the years 2018–2020? How is the ERLC presenting biblical teachings and interpretation for these issues?

As long as there have been Baptists, conviction regarding the issue of religious liberty has long been a hallmark of our theological consensus, and contending for this religious liberty has quite often been one of the most pressing needs for which we must advocate in order to ensure the free spread of the gospel. As we head into an increasingly secular society, one in which religious liberty has too often been recast either as a partisan wedge issue or more perilously stigmatized as bigotry, Southern Baptists must redouble their efforts to show why our First Freedom is of critical importance for all Americans, particularly as the debate itself touches on so many areas of life—from the freedom of churches to carry out their mission faithfully, to the rights of individuals to live out their lives consistent with their faith, to the protection of vulnerable children and unborn children, and many other places in between.

One of the main ways the ERLC has served Southern Baptist churches in this area is at the level of education and explication. To the former, for years Americans had the luxury of not having religious

liberty questioned; that day no longer exists, so we must remind both the world and ourselves of its importance. To the latter, the fight for religious liberty exists on many fronts, so we must be able to present and to persuade others on the issue in a myriad of contexts and situations. Over the last year, the ERLC has continued to develop resources designed to address religious liberty specifically, both its biblical warrant, common misunderstandings of it, and its relevance for all Christians and churches. Religious liberty is too important for the freedom of our churches and the free spread of the gospel, and the ERLC will remain diligent to assist Southern Baptists in promoting religious liberty. Beyond that, there are all sorts of questions related to technology—whether it be pornography, artificial intelligence, the effect of social media on families, mental health, or family stability—that previous generations of Southern Baptists never had to confront. In those areas the ERLC is providing resources and trying to ask questions and provoke conversations about issues in families. Oftentimes, it is difficult to know what kind of technology will even exist in the future that will have radical implications for family.

That being the case, the ERLC is working along two fronts at any given time: equipping churches to think about principles applicable to any situation about how to prioritize family and the gospel's implications for our lives, and on the other hand, staying as current and informed as possible on all sorts of issues, technologies, and upcoming challenges that families will soon have to contend with but do not yet realize they will have to do so.

9. **How does the ERLC assist churches and other Southern Baptist entities by promoting religious liberty? Please explain.**

The ERLC assists churches by advocating on their behalf for the religious liberty that all Southern Baptist churches enjoy. We believe that religious freedom is not a gift bestowed on us by the government but rather a gift given to us by God. As such, and especially as there are mounting threats to religious liberty, the ERLC serves Southern Baptist churches by acting as guardians on their behalf—ever surveying the legislative and cultural landscape, sounding alarm to churches when there are genuine threats that should call them to action, and acting on their behalf advocating for the freedom of conscience for all people.

10. **What unique challenges does the ERLC face, in the near future, representing Southern Baptists in the public square, and offering guidelines to Southern Baptists re: moral advocacy, public awareness, social action and religious liberties?**

Perhaps the largest challenge the ERLC faces in the near future is dealing with the increasingly secular public square and the increasingly fragmented and tribal instincts of Americans generally. For many years, one could see a clear example of secularization in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services contraceptive mandate, paving over the consciences of a great number of Christian hospitals, universities, and organizations. With this particular encroachment on religious liberty and others like it, the ERLC must be all the more strategic and vigilant in seeking to persuade those in the public square on the public good of religious liberty and a free marketplace of ideas.

More broadly, one challenge exists on the issue of religious liberty even as a social good. As society continues to secularize, on both the left and the right, too often religious liberty has been recast as just another battlefield for partisan warfare. In terms of fragmentation, a number of influences not the least of which has been the nature of social media, has led many to become increasingly tribal in ways that make it difficult not only to advance legislation but even to seek to persuade others of questions of common good. In all, the ERLC must be vigilant in reminding our elected officials of why Baptists fought so hard for religious liberty in the first place and what we expect of them in terms of defending our First Freedom in law. We also must continue to try and be a force for persuasion and kindness as we seek to persuade people of the interests we care about and, even more importantly, of the Gospel in which we trust.

- 11. Please give an update on the impact of the ERLC Leadership Network strategy across the SBC, and what is next for this initiative? What outcomes have been achieved through the National Leadership initiatives?**

The ERLC Leadership Network has catalyzed pastors and churches around the country to think deeply about the ways the gospel informs the Christian life. The Network itself is open to anyone who would like to be involved with the work of the ERLC, and provides them with access to helpful resources, priority access to events, and exclusive content. It has allowed us to connect closely with thousands of Southern Baptists around the country—hearing from them, helping equip them, and being able to encourage them to action when it is necessary for elected officials to hear from their constituents en masse on issues important to Southern Baptists. As we continue to grow this network, the opportunities only increase in each of those areas and others still. At the foundation of this Network is a Leadership Council, which serves as an advisory council for the Network and receives intentional investment from the ERLC team. During their annual term, members of the Leadership Council enjoy equipping on key issues relevant to their lives and ministries through conference calls and events. With a new group of pastors serving in this role each year, it provides the ERLC a unique opportunity to invest in church pastors in a significant and concentrated way. All told, few initiatives have allowed pastors around the country to feel more connected to the work of the ERLC than has the Leadership Network strategy. At the same time, few ERLC initiatives have been more successful at encouraging participation in both the Cooperative Program and in SBC life broadly than has the Leadership Network.

- 12. As the ERLC facilitates the SBC President’s initiative to study sexual abuse within the church, what will the initial “rollout” of this study involve? What are the key components of this study, and what are the expected outcomes?**

The Presidential Study on Sexual Abuse in Church and Ministry seeks to “consider how Southern Baptists at every level can take discernable action to respond swiftly and compassionately to incidents of abuse, as well as to foster safe environments within churches and institutions.” To this end, and because of the complexity of sexual abuse and related topics, this study includes a variety of work groups specializing in various areas including resources, church-based strategies, seminary

and higher education, state convention and association initiatives, and more.

The study will proceed through three important phases: assessment, development, and implementation. The study is already actively involved in the assessment phase. The purpose of this phase is to review existing organizations, strategies, experts, and resources in order to better understand the landscape of needs and opportunities when it comes to sexual abuse. Key components in this phase include reviewing relevant literature and resources, forming work groups around areas of expertise, receiving wider input through conversations with survivors, pastors, leaders, and relevant organizations. Second, the study group will launch into the development phase. Expected outcomes include resources, strategies, and partnerships that will address the needs and opportunities that have been identified in the assessment phase. Last, rollout will be done in the implementation phase which will launch a wide-scale, comprehensive effort to educate, saturate, and motivate Southern Baptist churches, entities, and leaders to embrace and incorporate the recommendations and findings of the study group. This three-phase approach will ensure that the study receives ample input, provides useful strategies and resources, and makes every effort to help churches be aware of resources from the study and to adopt best practices to prevent abuse and to care for those in their pews impacted by abuse.