

LifeWay Christian Resources 2019 Ministry Inquiries

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM:

1. While LifeWay Christian Resources does not receive Cooperative Program dollars, please describe how LifeWay's work with SBC churches support cooperative missions and cooperative funding. Are there ways in which LifeWay can help promote and advocate for the Cooperative Program?

Since its founding in 1891, LifeWay Christian Resources has worked with SBC churches and entities to support cooperative missions and cooperative funding. LifeWay receives no funds from the denomination, including no allocation from the Cooperative Program, and never has. Instead, LifeWay provides its SBC-assigned ministries through a business model of creating trustworthy Christian resources that grow His Church and Kingdom. In fact, LifeWay invests nearly \$3 million a year back into the denomination and its ministries.

LifeWay also collects an offering from summer participants in World Changers, Student Life, CentriKids, and FUGE resulting in donated funds to the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board totaling more than \$637,000.

LifeWay supports SBC missions and the Cooperative Program in a variety of ways including:

- Orientation of new trustees and employees covering the SBC's ownership of LifeWay, election of our board of trustees, and the importance of the Cooperative Program to sustain other SBC ministries;
- Inclusion of missionary stories as illustrations in Bible study lessons, VBS materials, and other resources as appropriate;
- We use source material from IMB and NAMB for mission stories in Kids ongoing curriculum and VBS. We reference both entities as appropriate in videos.
- B&H Academic frequently publishes books from missionaries and former missionaries (IMB and NAMB) that educate about and support the work of cooperative missions. More than a dozen such books are in print at the current time. Educating leaders and future leaders about missions and cooperative funding is a significant part of our strategy for supporting the Cooperative Program and cooperative mission efforts.
- B&H Academic provides free for all Southern Baptist seminary students a copy of the book *One Sacred Effort* that explains and supports the Cooperative Program.

ETHNIC PARTICIPATION:

2. Please give a progress report of ethnic participation within LifeWay Christian Resources, including active involvement of ethnic churches and church leaders, across all levels and aspects of the LifeWay Christian Resources ministry—such things as board of trustees composition, senior administrative staff, other professional staff, support staff, and ethnic church and church leader composition of any external advisory groups— demonstrating progress, if any, in ethnic participation over the past two decades, giving special attention to progress over the past five years (2014-2018).

LifeWay Christian Resources is committed to making progress in ethnic participation at all levels of our work and ministry. LifeWay creates products that help spiritually transform people from all cultures and backgrounds and encourages predominantly ethnic churches to utilize those products to help their members know Jesus Christ and seek His kingdom. We serve an increasing number of non-English-speaking individuals and non-English-speaking churches through the resources we provide.

LifeWay distributed Christian content to more than 160 countries last year. Resources were licensed in more than 60 languages. LifeWay Global and its trade publishing division B&H Español were named Publisher of the Year by the Spanish Evangelical Publishers Association (SEPA) in 2018. This was the third time LifeWay was named Publisher of the Year. B&H Español is the largest commercial publisher of Spanish Bibles in the world.

In 2018 LifeWay launched a new Spanish-language website, www.bibliasholman.com. The website features new resources, articles, and products designed to promote daily spiritual growth. In addition to the website, Biblias Holman is launching the “Holman Reference Bibles Program” to help Bible readers customize a Spanish Bible that best meets their needs.

A well-identified and carefully selected section for Spanish-language products is found in most LifeWay stores, appropriately sized for the cultural makeup of the community they serve. Stores also carry products by and of particular interest to African American churches and members. In 2018, LifeWay celebrated the 10th anniversary of LifeWay’s “YOU” Sunday School curriculum, produced specifically for urban, multicultural churches.

Bible Studies For Life is now released concurrently in a Spanish version so churches with both Spanish- and English-speaking groups can study the same passages of Scripture together.

LifeWay employs and contracts with minorities and members of various ethnic groups in our corporate offices, warehouse facilities, camps, conference center, and retail locations.

LifeWay has employees who work specifically with predominantly Hispanic and African American churches. LifeWay continues to expand pastor training and leadership resources, anchored by the recent launch of LifeWay Liderazgo—a Spanish leadership destination on LifeWay.com—along with various regional training events in the U.S. and in Latin America. In October 2018 more than 1,500 pastors and church leaders gathered in Mérida, México, for Crece—a LifeWay Global training event hosted by LifeWay Mexico.

LifeWay provides age-graded Spanish curriculum along with discipleship, VBS, and leadership resources. In 2018 LifeWay expanded its VBS into four Indian languages (Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam).

A strategic priority for LifeWay Global is the contextualization of our work. To that end, we have offices and indigenous staff in Beijing, Delhi, Mexico City, Rio De Janeiro, Cali, Guatemala City, and San Jose’ (Costa Rica). Our publishing ministry is increasingly focused on indigenous authors, including key Hispanic communicators.

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 in the 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 the Office of the President, Executive Committee SBC, 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 LifeWay has implemented to assist Southern Baptist churches with training and equipping people with mental health challenges and how will LifeWay 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 LifeWay feels that reporting on this subject is within its purview, 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.

LifeWay continues to provide a variety of resources to assist individuals and churches in ministering to persons in our churches and communities who suffer mental health challenges. An extensive list of resources is available at LifeWay.com and a sample list of those materials is available upon request.

4. What specific effort is LifeWay making to protect against sexual abuse?

LifeWay is committed to providing a safe, Christian environment for all employees, customers, and camp participants. In 2018 LifeWay launched a comprehensive Ethics Line and website to enable open and honest conversations about any kind of ethical issue including sexual abuse. LifeWay continues to advance its sexual harassment and sex abuse training for employees across LifeWay, including summer staff who work with kids and student camps. We have strong safety and security procedures in place at our camps and have only increased those over the past few years. We are committed and intentional about the safety of the children and teens who attend our camps.

LifeWay has a zero-tolerance policy against sexual misconduct, and we have comprehensive policies and guidelines in place to respond to any reports of sexual misconduct. We are committed to doing all we can to prevent abuse of any kind.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

5. Within the scope of LifeWay's ministry assignment to, "...assist churches in the development of church ministries," are there identifiable opportunities or challenges related to sustaining or growing average weekly SS (or Life Group) attendance across Southern Baptist churches?

Most SBC churches continue to encourage members not to limit their church involvement to worship attendance, but to take the next step on a path of discipleship by participating in a smaller group for foundational Bible study, ministry, and outreach. Most employ the principles of Sunday School, although some may use a different name. Most gather into classes on Sunday morning at the church facilities, although some offer groups on weekdays away from the church campus. Some offer small groups instead of Sunday School, and many offer small groups alongside Sunday School. Whatever the occasion or location, these groups are typically open and ongoing. Open, ongoing groups can be considered as Sunday School for reporting purposes.

On average, the number of people who participate in these groups/classes is about two-thirds of the number of people who attend worship during any given week. According to LifeWay Research, of those who do not attend a group/class, 78% are open to attending. Sixteen percent said they would consider attending a group or class if someone invited them.

Training is an important area for growing groups. LifeWay has developed a significant training resource to help churches develop and train group leaders called *Sunday School Matters*. This resource contains 12 sessions, 25-30 minutes each, to train Sunday School workers and leaders. Each session is taught by some of the top Christian Educators in the Southern Baptist Convention. Ministry Grid is another valuable tool LifeWay offers for on-going training with hundreds of training videos. LifeWay also provides onsite training and continued learning for Christian Educators (Ministers of Education, Discipleship Pastors, Family Pastors, etc.) through training opportunities held across the country several times each year.

Another opportunity for growth is starting new groups with intentionality. Each new group provides the opportunity for new leaders to get involved in service and for new people to be assimilated. Effective Christian Education ministries continue to grow by "franchising" their small groups. The involvement of people is the key to success, and new groups involve more people.

6. Please provide a brief report on Bible Study curriculum resources/options for Southern Baptist churches in each age group. Which Bible Study curriculum has online delivery options? What is the percentage of "online deliverables" as part of the total array of LifeWay curriculum options?

LifeWay's three main curriculum series are *The Gospel Project*, *Bible Studies for Life*, and *Explore the Bible*. They are available for all age groups. *Disciples Path: The Journey* is a curriculum series for adults and students. *TeamKid: Catching Air* for children was designed to complement *Disciples Path*. *MasterWork*, *YOU!*, Baptist Adults, and smallgroup.com are curriculum resources for adults. All of the main curriculum lines (*Bible Studies for Life*, *The Gospel Project*, *Explore the Bible*) and all the resources within them are available as digital

products, as well as print. The majority of our short-term studies include digital deliverables as well.

7. How has LifeWay used online platform(s) for delivery of church-related materials and services?

LifeWay has developed several proprietary online platforms for delivery of church-related materials and services. Ministry Grid is an online platform paired with a mobile app that delivers customizable training for leaders and volunteers. Smallgroup.com is an online platform that delivers a library of discussion-driven and video-enhanced studies that can be customized for any small group to have consistent and transformational discipleship experiences. DevoHub is an online platform that delivers daily devotionals pushed to mobile devices. LifeWayWorship.com is an online platform through which music charts, tracks, and orchestrations may be quickly and easily downloaded. LifeWay's Wordsearch is designed to aid online Bible reading and Bible study by accessing Bibles, commentaries, study Bibles, reference works, and more anywhere there is an internet connection.

8. Please give a brief report about working relationships with state conventions and other SBC entities. Does LifeWay have stated goals and purposes for these relationships and processes?

LifeWay networks with state convention leaders to provide conferences and training events for pastors. LifeWay Church Partners regularly relate to leaders in state conventions and associations to address the needs of pastors and staff.

LifeWay partners with state conventions, associations, and seminaries to facilitate pastoral health. LifeWay hosts approximately 15 regional Pastor Date Nights and Pastor Roundtables throughout North America each year. LifeWay continues to partner with state conventions to support training for transitional pastors, equipping them to help churches in smooth, troubled, or crisis transitions.

Every year LifeWay hosts the Partners' Summit to provide opportunities for networking, skill development, and encouragement. This annual gathering of state convention and LifeWay leaders is designed to provide opportunities to explore topics of mutual interest that can benefit churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The goals for the Partners' Summit are to enhance LifeWay's partnership with state convention leaders, equip leaders with new insights and skills, and engage other leaders through collaborative learning.

LifeWay partners with state conventions and other SBC entities on collegiate ministries. Collegiate Week continues to be a strong partnership with churches and state conventions every year. LifeWay's partnership with Baptist Collegiate Network is an essential component in continuing to emphasize collegiate ministry in the SBC. LifeWay also partners with the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board along with other networks such as College Metro, BSU Advancement Committee, and SSDA to provide resourcing, training, and connections with the opportunity to reach and equip college students as disciples of Jesus Christ.

LifeWay Women partners with state conventions and seminaries to provide effective tools for women's leaders.

SBC Baptist Global Relief and LifeWay Christian Stores partner to raise awareness of basic human needs and disaster relief causes in the U.S. and throughout the world. Stores provide an opportunity for customers to donate to Global Hunger Relief.

9. Is LifeWay actively/intentionally engaged in any initiatives which orbit around gospel conversations and evangelism across the SBC? Please explain.

Lifeway continues to support and produce a variety of evangelism books and resources to support and train believers in evangelism. The website EvangelismRenewal.com launched in partnership with NAMB helps pastors lead their churches to be evangelistic and give those in their congregations resources and ideas on how they can be evangelistic. The website contains testimonies, resources, and research, with an emphasis on encouraging Christians to share their faith with others.

Other evangelism resources include:

Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations (B&H) co-authored by SBC pastor Jimmy Scroggins and author Steve Wright, which continues to be a practical guide to help believers understand the 3 Circles method of sharing their faith.

Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News by pastor Greg Laurie is a video-enhanced resource that encourages believers to share the gospel by sharing Jesus' story and their own story of how Jesus changed their lives.

Life On Mission: A Simple Way to Share the Gospel is a 5-session Bible study that invites believers to connect with God's mission and equips them to leverage their influence to bring unbelievers to faith in Christ. Find out more at www.LifeWay.com/lifeonmission.

My 8: Embrace and Engage the Wonder of Evangelism is an 8-session Bible study that challenges and equips students to share their faith.

More to Life, authored by Dennis Pethers, is an evangelism resource that is being used across the United States and the world. State conventions, associations, and churches are embracing this resource as well as the strategy behind it to strengthen evangelism training and practices. *More to Life* not only trains believers, but also offers a discovery tool designed to engage nonbelievers in discovering who Jesus is, as revealed in four stories from the Gospel of John.

Share Jesus Without Fear, revised edition, presents a simple and relational approach to witnessing that underscores dependence on God's power for the results. LifeWay released additional *Share Jesus* tools to equip believers to share their faith: the *Share Jesus Without Fear* app and *Share Jesus Without Fear Scripture and Question Cards*.

Leading a Child to Christ Training Pack continues to be a strong evangelism tool that is well designed to assist parents, teachers, pastors, and older children in sharing their faith. This training pack includes two video segments, “Leading a Child to Christ” and “Leading a Friend to Christ,” as well as conference plans for training.

What is a Christian? Answers for Kids is an eight-week activity book for kids which helps them answer questions about becoming a Christian. An included parent section equips parents to have conversations with children who are asking questions about the gospel. *What is a Christian?* can be used in a class setting at church or in a home environment to help kids work through their questions related to what it means to be a Christian and how to receive God’s gift of salvation.

One of the greatest evangelism opportunities for churches is Vacation Bible School. Multiplied tens of thousands of people will come to faith in Christ as a result of VBS. And, there are additional untold numbers of families within communities who will be impacted. Vacation Bible School opens a multitude of doors of evangelistic opportunity.

10. Please give a brief report about the marketplace. How much or what percentage of LifeWay’s revenue stream comes from Southern Baptist churches? Are LifeWay Bookstores a viable strategy within the next 5 – 10 years?

LifeWay serves churches within and beyond the Southern Baptist Convention, with a significant portion of our revenue coming from our ministry to SBC churches. LifeWay interacts with customers in a variety of channels—our own proprietary channels of LifeWay.com and our stores, and external channels that help customers interact with our resources. The market continues to change, primarily through shifts in brick-and-mortar retail environments. We continually make adjustments as the market changes to better serve our customers.

11. In LifeWay’s quest to be the largest provider of Christian resources, how does your team navigate the massive amount of terminology that is even provided to other denominational groups to bring high value to the Cooperative Program and the whole idea of cooperative missions? Please give examples of Southern Baptist mission methodology taking precedence over direct solicitation and independent mission stories.

We often discuss/teach about missions in general and sending missionaries in our curriculum lines. In addition, we include individual missionary stories as illustrations in Bible study lessons, VBS materials, and other resources as appropriate. When missions is discussed and taught in LifeWay material, the foundation for those discussions is a Southern Baptist missions methodology.

B&H Academic frequently publishes books from missionaries and former missionaries (IMB and NAMB) that educate about and support the work of cooperative missions. More than a dozen such books are in print at the current time. Educating leaders and future leaders about missions and cooperative funding is a significant part of our strategy for supporting the Cooperative Program and cooperative mission efforts.