

LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES 2018 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 solicits donations from summer participants in World Changers, Student Life, CentriKids, and Fuge resulting in a check to the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board totaling more than \$778,000.

LifeWay also supports SBC missions and the Cooperative Program in a myriad 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 education and promotion material about CP and SBC's mission agencies in periodic shipments to SBC churches;
- Inclusion of missionary stories as illustrations in Bible study lessons, VBS materials, and other resources as appropriate;
- LifeWay Stores partners with SBC Global Hunger Relief to raise awareness of basic human needs and disaster relief causes in the United States and throughout the world. Stores provide an opportunity for customers to donate to Global Hunger Relief, and many have responded, helping to raise more than \$42,000 in fiscal year 2017.

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 (1998-2017), giving special attention to progress over the past five years (2013-2017).**

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's B&H Publishing imprint publishes or licenses products in over 35 languages with nearly 1,000 resources in languages other than English. B&H is the largest commercial publisher of Spanish Bibles in the world. 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. For example, many of our stores carry LifeWay's urban Sunday School curriculum called "YOU".

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

LifeWay has employees who work specifically with predominantly Hispanic and African-American churches. LifeWay offers a series of webinars to train Hispanic leaders online at its Español site on www.lifeway.com along with various regional training events in the U.S. and in Latin America. LifeWay provides age-graded Spanish curriculum along with discipleship, VBS, and leadership resources.

This past year, LifeWay Global expanded its commitment to Hispanic churches with the release of the entire line of *Disciples Path*, *Armor of God*, *Fisher of Men*, and *Explore the Bible* in short term. We also experienced significant growth in our Spanish kids program with domestic and international distribution and training around *Galactios*—our VSB program. Our two biggest Spanish Bible releases in 2017 were *The Study Bible for Women* and *The Big Picture Interactive Bible*. We continue to expand pastor training and leadership resources, anchored by *Hearts, Heads, and Hands* by Dr. David Sills. This resource is currently available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese with Mandarin, Arabic, and several other majority languages in development.

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, and Cali. And our publishing ministry is increasingly focused on indigenous authors, including key Hispanic communicators. 2017 was also a breakthrough year with author development in India.

Also in 2017, LifeWay leadership met with the SBC Convention Advancement Advisory Council to report on ethnic diversity in the workforce and in the products we provide.

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 SBC 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.**

For the 2018 Ministry Report please provide the following:

If LifeWay 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 SBC 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.

LifeWay also continues to provide research on mental health issues. In 2017, LifeWay Research completed a comprehensive survey of Protestant pastors and churches on the topic of suicide. The study found suicide often affects churches and revealed ways churches are responding to suicide in their communities. The study was sponsored by the American Association of Christian Counselors, Liberty University Graduate Counseling program, the Liberty University School of Medicine, and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO LIFEWAY CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

- 4. 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 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.

- 5. Please provide a brief report on Bible Study curriculum resources/options for Southern Baptist churches in each age group. Which Bible Study curriculum options are at the “top of the list?”**

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 new curriculum series for adults and students. *TeamKid: Catching Air* for children was designed to complement *Disciples Path*.

LifeWay’s newest series, *The Gospel Project*, continued to gain in popularity, especially with children, surpassing *Bible Studies for Life* (BSFL) as the number one series for kids. BSFL remains the top choice for student classes. Ninety percent of adult classes using LifeWay materials order one of the three main series. A strong 10 percent use one of the other adult offerings: *MasterWork*, *YOU!*, Baptist Adults, smallgroup.com, or customized curriculum.

- 6. What impact is social media having upon sales of Bible Study curriculum/resources among Southern Baptists and Southern Baptist churches? How has LifeWay used online platform(s) for delivery of church related materials and services?**

Social media including platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have helped LifeWay in our mission of serving the Church in her mission of making disciples by providing additional outlets for educating churches and individuals about available Bible study options. It has been a great help to LifeWay as we serve the Convention.

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. MyWSB.com 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.

7. 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 Pastors partners with state conventions, associations, and seminaries to facilitate pastoral health. LifeWay Pastors 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.

LifeWay partners with state convention leaders to provide opportunities for networking, skill development, and encouragement at the annual Partners' Summit. This is held each year at Ridgecrest Conference Center the first week in December. 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 is to enhance LifeWay's partnership with state convention leaders, equip leaders with new insights and skills, and engage other leaders through collaborative learning.

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 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, and many have responded, helping to raise more than \$42,000 in fiscal year 2017.

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

In 2017, LifeWay partnered with the North American Mission Board to launch EvangelismRenewal.com to help 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. Also in 2017, LifeWay partnered with NAMB and the SBC Executive Committee on the “GC Challenge” aimed at seeing more pastors commit to urge church members to share their faith. Lifeway continues to support and produce a variety of evangelism books and resources to support and train believers in evangelism. *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It* by Alvin Reid was a significant release for B&H Academic in 2017. B&H Publishing worked with author and SBC pastor Jimmy Scroggins and author Steve Wright to publish *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations*.

LifeWay continues to partner with the North American Mission Board to provide and distribute *Life On Mission: A Simple Way to Share the Gospel*, a 5-session Bible study that invites believers to bring unbelievers to faith in Christ. Also, *My 8: Embrace and Engage the Wonder of Evangelism*, is an 8-session Bible study for students that deals with evangelism, and many churches continue to experience great success with FAITH Evangelism.

More to Life, authored by Dennis Pethers, is being utilized 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.

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 has 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.

9. Please give a brief report about the marketplace. How much or what percentage of LifeWay’s revenue stream comes from Southern Baptist churches?

LifeWay serves churches within and beyond the Southern Baptist Convention, with a significant portion of our revenue coming from our ministry to SBC churches. The market continues to change, primarily through shifts in brick-and-mortar retail environments. 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.

10. What is the process for determining which materials, books, programs, services, and publishers are made available through LifeWay’s retail outlets?

LifeWay's mission is to provide biblical solutions for life and trustworthy is our chief value. This mission is the lens through which we look at all we do and the resources we provide. We love people and believe the best way to help them navigate their faith journey is to point them to the truth of Scripture. Our staff does this by making sure the resources we carry are biblically faithful and trustworthy.