

**LifeWay Christian Resources
2020 Ministry Inquiries**

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM:

1. SBC entities share an equal responsibility in promoting and advancing the Cooperative Program in compliance with the Business and Financial Plan Section VI, Part C (Cooperative Program Promotion – Each Convention entity shall report on its efforts during the year in promoting Cooperative Program missions giving). How does LifeWay promote and advocate for the Cooperative Program through its curriculum and other resources and products? Please explain.

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 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.

2. Please explain how LifeWay Christian Resources operates within the guideline of the SBC Business and Financial Plan, Section VI, Part D (No Financial Appeals to churches - In no case shall any Convention entity approach a church for inclusion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions).

LifeWay provides its SBC-assigned ministries through a business model of creating trustworthy Christian resources that grow His Church and Kingdom. LifeWay makes no financial appeals to churches for inclusion in its church budget or appeals for contributions to the entity.

LifeWay collects an offering from summer participants in World Changers, StudentLife, CentriKid, and FUGE resulting in donated funds to the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board, totaling more than \$550,000 in 2019.

ETHNIC PARTICIPATION:

3. This past year a motion was made by Leroy Fountain asking the Executive Committee to give a progress update to ten recommendations adopted by the SBC in 2011 with respect to ethnic church and ethnic church leader participation in Southern Baptist life. The 2011 recommendation that specifically refers to our SBC entities is as follows:

“The Executive Committee to request from the Southern Baptist Convention entities to submit as part of its annual ‘data call’ [as described in Bylaw 18. E [12] a descriptive report of participation of ethnic churches and church leaders in the life and ministry of the respective SBC entity.”

Given this context, and using previous years’ submissions to this question as a model, please give a robust descriptive report of ethnic participation, including active involvement of ethnic churches and church leaders, across all levels and aspects of LifeWay’s ministry—such things as senior administrative staff, other professional staff, support staff, customer facing representatives, and written and spoken language resources—demonstrating progress, if any, in ethnic participation over the past eight years, 2011–2019.

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 164 countries last year. Resources were licensed in more than 60 languages. Also in 2019, LifeWay Global launched LifeWayEquipa.com, an online, video-driven training platform designed specifically for Spanish-speaking Christians. LifeWay hosted more than 3,000 pastors and church leaders at its Equipa event in Mexico in November 2019. LifeWay Global also reached more than 1,300 pastors and church leaders during a special training event in Cuba.

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.

B&H Español is the largest commercial publisher of Spanish Bibles in the world. LifeWay provides age-graded Spanish curriculum along with discipleship, VBS, and leadership resources. Bibliasholman.com features Spanish-language resources, articles, and products designed to

promote daily spiritual growth. LifeWay VBS is available in Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam and will expand to Kannada next year.

LifeWay has employees who work specifically with predominantly Hispanic and African American churches. LifeWay continues to host the annual Black Church Leadership and Family Conference in Ridgecrest. Nearly 1,000 adults, youth, and children attended the 2019 conference from churches spanning 26 states. The 2020 black church conference is scheduled July 20-24 at Ridgecrest. LifeWay's YOU curriculum is designed for urban and multi-ethnic congregations and is used by a number of churches.

Caring Well Response

4. How is LifeWay making an effort to protect against sexual abuse? How will LifeWay integrate aspects of Caring Well in its policies and practices throughout its entire organization?

In 2019 LifeWay, in partnership with the ERLC and the SBC Sexual Abuse Advisory Study, released "Becoming a Church that Cares Well for the Abused," a free multimedia resource geared toward church staff members, lay leaders and volunteers. Available at ChurchCares.com, the new resource is a comprehensive training curriculum that combines a handbook with 12 video lessons from experts in the areas of social work, law enforcement, trauma counseling, abuse counseling, legal services and pastoral care.

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," list any identifiable opportunities or challenges related to average weekly SS (or Life Group) attendance growth 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. Other resources for training leaders include *Saddle Up: Leading with Purpose, Posture, and Preparedness* and *Breathing Life Into Sunday School*, which was released in April 2019.

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.

LifeWay also provides an online platform to assist churches in managing ongoing orders of curriculum, periodicals, and church supplies such as Bibles, tithe and offering envelopes, bulletins, and communion resources.

This platform makes it easy for churches to browse curriculum for the current cycle, store information for automatic, reoccurring orders, and receive discounts up to 5% on early orders of physical, ongoing Bible study curriculum. Churches interested in learning more about this program can call LifeWay's Customer Service Center at (800) 458-2772 or visit LifeWay.com/ChurchOrdering.

8. Please give a brief report, including stated goals and purposes, regarding LifeWay's working relationships with state conventions and other SBC entities.

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 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.

9. Is LifeWay knowingly engaged in any initiatives centered 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. By keeping existing evangelism resources in front of churches through consistent messaging and developing new concepts and titles, LifeWay is taking measures to ensure that evangelism and evangelism strategies maintain in their rightful place as a core discipline.

One of our newest resources, *Three Circles* by Jimmy Scoggins, walks through the three circles evangelism strategy to help believers discover just how simple sharing the gospel can be.

Something Needs to Change by David Platt is a powerful message that focuses on reaching unreached people groups with the gospel. This small-group Bible study experience points out the need to take the gospel message of Jesus into unreached regions.

Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News by 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.

Sharing the gospel with kids is one of the most important elements of kids ministry. With *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* curriculum, kids will be encouraged and challenged as they explore what God has revealed about His plan for salvation through Jesus in the Bible. This study presents the gospel story in kid-friendly language with applicable Scripture verses. It includes information about how to respond to the gospel, pages to guide parents in at-home conversations, and downloadable leader content.

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.

Go & Tell Kids Mission Trip VBS is an easy-to-use, transportable VBS designed to help mission trip teams host a Vacation Bible School anywhere in the world. Simple visuals, 100+ recreation games, and five sessions of gospel-centered content equip volunteers to explain the good news to kids in any context.

Vacation Bible School is the largest outreach to unchurched kids in a given year for 78% of churches hosting VBS, according to LifeWay Research. In fact, 69% of American parents will encourage their child to participate in a VBS event at a church they don't attend if they are

invited by a friend. Since the opportunities for evangelism, discipleship, and relationship-building that can take place in one week of VBS might take half a year for a Sunday School teacher, LifeWay provides churches with evangelistic VBS and Backyard Kids Club curriculum materials.

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.

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.

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*.

Many churches continue to experience great success with *FAITH Evangelism*. The resources for *FAITH Evangelism*, highlighted at LifeWay.com/Faith, include:

FAITH Evangelism 1 is designed to equip believers to grow in their personal faith while, at the same time, taking the gospel and needed ministry into their communities.

FAITH Evangelism 2 continues the evangelism journey while focusing on building strong, committed leaders who will pour and multiply their lives into the lives of learners.

10. Please give a brief report about the marketplace. How much or what percentage of LifeWay's revenue stream comes from Southern Baptist churches? What is the "value add" for individuals and churches in obtaining resources and services through LifeWay Christian Resources as opposed to other book and curriculum retail providers? Please explain.

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 Customer Service Center, and external channels that help customers interact with our resources.

LifeWay is expanding access to its materials through channels such as the Amazon Marketplace and a new network of independent Christian bookstores serving as authorized dealers of LifeWay resources.

Since the beginning of June 2019, more than 400 independent bookstores across 46 states have signed up to have a dedicated section of their store containing LifeWay branded content. We're finding new shelf space to allow customers to touch and feel our products before they buy them. In addition to retail stores, we're also partnering with local churches who wish to carry an assortment of LifeWay resources. LifeWay has extended its ministry reach into more than 90 new markets—regions where LifeWay never had a brick and mortar store. LifeWay also has strong partnerships with retailers like Walmart, Mardel, Books-a-Million, and Christianbook.com.

LifeWay develops our resources out of our knowledge of church practice and the relationships we maintain through our church partners who consult regularly with churches, associations, and state conventions. LifeWay's content creators not only understand theological concepts as well as educational theory, they also are active in the ministries of their churches. LifeWay is often the most affordable option for churches seeking trustworthy resources.

11. The closing of LifeWay stores has impacted our communities and churches. Many of our churches are smaller and rural, having limited access to internet and technology. What is the plan to provide resources and assistance for churches in this type of setting?

LifeWay will continue to serve and provide resources to churches in this type of setting through the Quarterly Order Packet and through our Customer Service team. The Quarterly Order Packet includes our Quarterly Order Form for ordering ongoing curriculum and a Planning Guide designed to highlight our ongoing curriculum options and new short-term Bible study releases for all age groups. The order form can be mailed or faxed to LifeWay. Customers can also place their orders by calling the LifeWay Customer Service Center at 1-800-458-2772. Trained representatives can assist churches with selecting and ordering their Bible study materials, bulletins and church supplies. They can even help churches establish and maintain their recurring orders.

LifeWay is continuing to find ways of selling Bibles, books, and Bible studies to people who want to touch and feel them first. To bridge the gap of physical storefronts where customers can shop for LifeWay products, the organization announced in 2019 an Authorized Dealership program that allows independent Christian bookstores to sell LifeWay-branded Bible studies. Already, more than 400 independent Christian retailers in 45 states have become authorized LifeWay dealers. This move provides customers more touch points for LifeWay products than were previously available through LifeWay Stores alone.

LifeWay also sells select resources through independent bookstores who serve as authorized dealers, as well as established chains such as Walmart, Books-a-Million, and Mardel Stores owned by Hobby Lobby.