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January 2019

Southern Baptist Convention,

This past year was a remarkable one for LifeWay Christian Resources. We are thankful for how God provided for us and worked through LifeWay in 2018.

The year began with employees settling in to our new, 277,000-square-foot campus. The relocation from our former campus has brought more energy, excitement, enthusiasm, and collaboration to LifeWay. Our new headquarters building has enhanced beyond my imagination what I thought a facility could do. For that I am grateful to God.

Over the last decade, Lifeway has felt the effects of major changes that have occurred in culture, the marketplace, and our denomination. LifeWay will need to stay agile and responsive to continuous changes to stay on pace with a world where disruption is happening more rapidly than ever before. I am confident that no matter the disruptions that come our way, LifeWay will remain dedicated to the mission of creating resources to serve Christ's Church and providing biblical solutions for life.

As I prepare to retire this year, I often reflect on my time at LifeWay. The past 13 years have been some of the most blessed years of my life. I love LifeWay and the incredible men and women who serve the Lord with joy and hard work, while equipping the Church for her mission of making disciples.

It's been amazing to see how God has blessed the widespread ministries of this organization. God is allowing us to serve churches in many places around the world and make a difference in His kingdom.

Last year LifeWay assisted tens of thousands of churches and millions of individuals with biblically faithful, trustworthy, relevant, and high-quality Christian resources. For example:

- *The Gospel Project* launched new discipleship tools, including *Gospel Foundations*, to make it easier for small groups and families to engage in discussion about Scripture with a clear understanding of how each text fits into the storyline of Scripture.

- LifeWay released Daily Discipleship Guides in all of its major ongoing curriculum plans, providing individuals with five daily Bible readings that support group Bible study. Churches have reported a greater engagement in not only Bible reading from their members using this resource, but also a higher degree of interaction in their group discussions.

- LifeWay Global expanded its commitment to Hispanic churches with the launch of a new Spanish-language website, *BibliasHolman.com*, and the "Holman Reference Bibles Program" to help Bible readers customize a Spanish Bible that best meets their needs. 2018 was also a breakthrough year with expansion of LifeWay VBS into four Indian languages (Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam). LifeWay distributed life-changing resources to 164 countries through print and digital content.

- B&H Publishing released several significant trade books including Case Keenum's *Playing for More*, Annie F. Downs' *Remember God*, and Russell Moore's *The Storm-Tossed Family*, which

received *Christianity Today's* "Beautiful Orthodoxy" Book of the Year award. Additionally, B&H Español was named Spanish Publisher of the Year by the Spanish Evangelical Publishers Association.

- LifeWay Christian Stores partnered with Proverbs 31 Ministries and Passion to provide store-within-a-store experiences for customers. The mini-stores feature books, CDs, Bible studies, gifts, and apparel tied to the ministries. LifeWay served millions of individuals and tens of thousands of churches, through more than 170 stores in 30 states and through LifeWay.com.

-LifeWay Research released a number of significant studies in 2018, including an extensive survey on the state of theology in America.

- Providing resources to pastors and church staff remains an emphasis for LifeWay. The "Rainer on Leadership" podcast is reaching 1.3 million listeners a year, and ThomRainer.com receives more than 7 million views per year. Combined, these resources are reaching an estimated two of three Protestant churches in America, ranging in geographic region, denomination, and size.

- Lifeway continues to support and produce a variety of evangelism books and resources to support and train believers in evangelism. In 2018, LifeWay Kids Ministry released *What is a Christian?* to help parents and kids ministry leaders walk children through questions about faith and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

- Ridgecrest Conference Center and camps hosted more than 70,000 guests in 2018—the second-highest attendance in 25 years, resulting in many decisions for Christ.

In addition to these accomplishments, 2018 brought several significant milestones for LifeWay. LifeWay Worship celebrated the 10th anniversary of the 2008 Baptist Hymnal and the launch of the corresponding website, [lifewayworship.com](http://lifewayworship.com). LifeWay Women marked 20 years of Living Proof Live events with Beth Moore. Our Black Church Leadership and Family Conference celebrated its 25th anniversary. LifeWay's FUGE camps marked its 40th summer of ministry to students.

LifeWay was also recognized by *Forbes* magazine as one of the top 500 midsize employers in the U.S. and as one of the best employers for women. In November, *Newsweek* magazine named LifeWay one of the best companies in the nation for customer service.

As we celebrate this past year, I am looking forward to the new era of LifeWay and what God will do with new leadership. LifeWay will continue to be "Biblical Solutions for Life" and to be based upon the Word of God with solutions that impact lives and churches around the world.

I want to thank the Southern Baptist Convention for allowing me to serve you. As LifeWay moves forward into this new era, let us be thankful to God for the great things He has done and will continue to do through LifeWay Christian Resources.

In His service,

Thom S. Rainer  
President and CEO