



February, 2017

Southern Baptist Convention,

This past year was truly historic for LifeWay Christian Resources, and I can confidently say LifeWay's future is brighter than ever.

In November 2015, LifeWay sold our downtown Nashville campus in one of the largest real estate transactions in Nashville's history. Six months later we held a chapel service to commemorate our 125th anniversary then held a groundbreaking and prayer service on the downtown Nashville property that will house our new headquarters in 2017. Construction on the nine-story 250,000-square foot office building – one fourth the size of our former offices - continues according to plans with the goal of moving in by the end of 2017. Our new location is a place where we can truly build community and demonstrate in word and deed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I could not be more proud of LifeWay's employees and those who make up the leadership team as I watch God work through them to provide Biblical Solutions for Life which is our vision statement. Last year LifeWay assisted tens of thousands of churches and literally millions of individuals with Biblically faithful, trustworthy, relevant and high quality Christian resources. For example:

- LifeWay staff and a group of disciple makers defined four core characteristics of what discipleship is: Progressive, Discipled, Relational, and Replicable. The team used these characteristics to create resources that intertwine these traits into every session. In January, *Disciples Path: The Journey* launched in over 600 churches with a simple, one year pathway of discipleship designed to make disciples who make disciples. The number continues to grow.
- All of LifeWay Leadership's key initiatives in 2016 were centered on establishing a new brand as LifeWay Leadership and becoming the thought-leader in church leadership development. The team produced four free online webinars culminating with an inaugural, sold-out event in Nashville called *Pipeline*, which served 1,000 pastors from across the United States, Canada, and Jamaica. In 2017, the team will host its second national event as well as a number of regional Leadership Pipeline coaching opportunities from coast to coast.
- LifeWay's Women's Events team managed 31 events including 12 "Living Proof Live" events with Beth Moore which ministered to more than 68,000 women. The team reached another 200,000 women through the annual simulcasts with Beth Moore and Priscilla Shirer. LifeWay's Conference for Men returned to Kansas City and Nashville and ministered to over 3000 men from 22 states, and partnered with Dr. Johnny Hunt and FBC Woodstock, Georgia to simulcast the Johnny Hunt Men's Conference.
- B&H Publishing Group received 14 Christian Retailing Awards and 4 ECPA awards, all of which is a reflection of God working through our authors, churches, and denominational partners.

Additionally, *Onward* by Russell Moore won Christianity Today's Book of the Year and *Fervent* by Priscilla Shirer won the Evangelical Christian Publishing Association's Book of the Year. In 2016, the CSB Translation Oversight Committee completed its revision of the HCSB, scheduled for release in spring of 2017.

- LifeWay distributes life-changing content to 75 countries via print and more than 150 countries through digital delivery (including Amazon, Apple, and Google). LifeWay Global experienced a record year in 2016 with more than 3 million lives impacted by our trustworthy content.

- LifeWay's Retail division serviced millions of customers and tens of thousands of churches domestically and internationally through over 170 stores in 29 states and online. Ministry remains the division's primary purpose, emphasizing sensitivity to ongoing in-store ministry opportunities.

- Ridgecrest Conference Center hosted 62,000 guests and 437 events in 2016, resulting in many spiritual decisions. Summer 2016 saw 2,736 campers attend Camp Ridgecrest for Boys and Camp Crestridge for Girls.

- LifeWay Research released a variety of significant research studies in 2016 including articles about the views of pastors, Americans and/or churchgoers on religious freedom, refugees, pastors who left the pastorate before retirement, the effect of the economy on churches, end times, divorce among churchgoers, the election, the state of theology in America, and the receptivity of the unchurched. A major study was also completed on church planting in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

- The "Rainer on Leadership" podcast is reaching 1.3 million listeners a year. Launched in 2013, the twice-a-week podcast, which has seen 265 percent growth over the past two years, offers practical solutions for issues facing pastors and church leaders in the 21st century. Combined with my blog, an estimated two of three Protestant churches in America are reached. Also, ThomRainer.com, launched in 2012, receives more than 7 million views per year. We want to be a sounding board for pastors, and are so pleased that, in many ways, both the podcast and blog have become a friend of pastors and church staff.

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6, HCSB)

In His service,

Thom S. Rainer
President and CEO