

Cooperative Program:

1. With an understanding that SBC entities who receive Cooperative Program funding share an equal responsibility to promote and advance the Cooperative Program, please give a description of MBTS's efforts to promote the Cooperative Program both internally and externally as MBTS' personnel engage Southern Baptist.

Approaching nearly 90 years of existence, the Cooperative Program has advanced kingdom causes unlike any human instrument in the history of the Christian church. For decades, Southern Baptists have been the envy of the evangelical world with our unified funding program that provides affordable theological education, deploys the largest missionary force in the church today, and supports numerous other ministries. The Cooperative Program is without peer as a proven tool for gospel work.

Biblically, we see merit for our denomination's support of the CP. In Paul's correspondence, we repeatedly see churches praying for, financially supporting, and ministering to other churches, individuals, and missionary endeavors. This is exactly what the Cooperative Program does: it facilitates believers with similar convictions to accomplish more together than they could alone, all under a New Testament template.

We are witnessing the Cooperative Program's impact on a scale as never before. In addition to the work being carried out at the state level, at the national level Southern Baptists are experiencing record enrollment in their six seminaries, all of which are training pastors, ministers, and missionaries for the church in the context of confessional integrity and denominational accountability.

At Midwestern Seminary, promotion and advancement of the Cooperative Program sits firmly atop our priority list. This institution possesses a campus-wide atmosphere which fosters an awareness of the Cooperative Program and support for its continued vitality. Our students, from undergraduates to doctoral-level, are regularly taught the benefits of the CP in the classroom and at various seminary events. In the process, they become deeply committed to the Cooperative Program and to the ministries funded by it, especially with the knowledge of the extent to which the CP funded their studies. To that end, the faculty and staff make much of the Cooperative Program in contexts such as lectures, preaching engagements, and other venues.

Formally, in the classroom Midwestern requires a core course in Baptist History, one-third of which is devoted to the Southern Baptist Convention, and thus, by natural extension, the Cooperative Program. Requirements for students along these lines include: reading [One Sacred Effort](#), working through the [One Sacred Effort Workbook](#), writing a paper on the Cooperative Program, and watching the DVD on this topic produced by the Executive Committee.

Additionally, Midwestern will only hire full-time faculty members and members of its core administrative staff, who demonstrate an awareness of the Cooperative Program and have a commitment to the missions and entity efforts funded by it. In fact, recently two professors

collaborated to author, *Better Together: You, Your Church, and the Cooperative Program*, which is a simple introduction to the CP designed for pastors, lay people within the church and students in the classroom. Courses offered at all levels emphasize the privilege that Southern Baptist students have to experience a clear sense of partnership between local, autonomous churches and the larger goals that they can accomplish through cooperation.

Further, Midwestern's President, Jason K. Allen, consistently writes about and speaks to the importance of and Midwestern's appreciation of the Cooperative Program in settings such as the SBC Annual Meeting, For the Church Conference and regional FTC conferences, as well as when he preaches in various settings around the country.

Externally, Midwestern Seminary's admissions and recruiting teams regularly explain the impact of the CP to potential students at events both locally and nationwide. In particular, when non-SBC students enroll at Midwestern Seminary and discover the difference in tuition costs versus SBC students, a perfect opportunity is presented for Admissions advisors to educate these students on the benefits of the CP. Such benefits are also presented on the institution's website for SBC and non-SBC students alike to read and understand. By providing an understanding of the benefits that the CP affords Southern Baptist students, scores of potential and matriculating enrollees more fully understand and value the CP.

Midwestern trusts that these measures will cause each class of graduates, as well as onlookers throughout the evangelical world and beyond, to see the decisive advantages of Baptist identity, cooperation, and mission.

2. a. How effective is MBTS in creating an awareness and appreciation for the Southern Baptist Convention and its model for cooperative missions and cooperative funding? What level of confidence does MBTS have that its graduates will continue to engage and invest in SBC missions and ministries?

We at Midwestern Seminary understand and adhere to the statement: The Southern Baptist Convention agencies and our state convention partners serve the churches, not the other way around. As we serve them, they will support us. Southern Baptists' persistent generosity through the Cooperative Program is one sign of God's continued hand on our work. In denominational circles, it is a modern miracle. Through the missions and ministries of the SBC, we have together impacted the world. We would do well to continue celebrating and strengthening our collective work.

This reason is why Midwestern regularly creates an awareness and expresses appreciation – to the seminary community, to local and regional churches, and to the greater evangelical world – of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Program through many avenues. This can occur through faculty interaction with students in the classroom; it does so during messages and interactions in numerous chapel services, major lectureships, and campus events – which reach both students, local ministry leaders, and seminary friends alike; it does so through its branding, recruiting and community relations; and it does so through its writing in mediums such as books, blogs, websites, and articles in Baptist Press and other media outlets. Through such regular emphasis and exposure to the value of

cooperative missions and cooperative funding, we are very confident that MBTS graduates will hold even more to their deeply-held convictions for and support of churches working together through the CP. Midwestern sees itself playing a vital role in ensuring the next generation of pastors, ministry leaders, and missionaries embrace and understand the opportunity for Great Commission advance available through the Cooperative Program.

- b. Please describe in detail the terminology you and your team use to help students and personnel to understand the value of the SBC Business and Financial Plan VI, section D. “In no case shall any convention entity approach a church for inclusion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions.” Please provide anecdotal examples of students making the discovery that the Cooperative Program methodology is amazing and a gift from the Lord.

In assisting Midwestern Seminary students and personnel to understand the value of the SBC Business and Financial Plan VI, section D’s statement, “In no case shall any convention entity approach a church for inclusion in its church budget or appeal for financial contributions,” Midwestern Seminary & Spurgeon College faculty follow a similar pattern:

In our required Baptist History classes, students are taught, in detail, how the Cooperative Program works to the degree that students are equipped to answer many answers including: What is an SBC church? How does an SBC church relate to the entities of the SBC? How do the entities of the SBC relate to the churches through the CP and the two special offerings (LMCO, AAEO)? These questions help students realize that the headquarters of the SBC are the local churches; the SBC authority structure is a “bottom up” convention of cooperating churches; and the entities, as beneficiaries of the CP, are assigned the task of championing the CP and encouraging local churches to support their work through the CP.

Anecdotal Examples:

Ken Tombley (D.Coun. Graduate from 2017): “The Cooperative Program is a premier structure to fund large and international ministries. It extends the reach of any one Christian or church. The Cooperative Program affords a consistent expression of ministry that is not encumbered by repeated fundraising efforts.”

MBTS Student from 2017: “I think the CP is a marvelous way for otherwise independent Southern Baptist churches to work together and combine their resources for the common goal of spreading the gospel and expanding the kingdom of God.”

Anecdote from Dr. Rodney Harrison’s Principles of Leadership course: “My students this semester went through ‘Discovery Tools (NAMB)’ and were amazed at the ways the Cooperative Program helped start churches, support disaster relief, reduce seminary costs, and engage unreached people groups.”

3. Please articulate for Southern Baptists how MBTS perceives the role of the Cooperative Program to fund theological education in the Midwest. What value does MBTS place upon its partnership with SBC churches through the Cooperative Program?

There is no question that Midwestern Seminary benefits daily from the Cooperative Program. Without it, we would be forced to double tuition on our students. Such a move would decimate the seminary, plunge the enrollment, and bring immediate and long-term financial hardship on our students. In the world of theological education, the six SBC seminaries stand as grand anomalies in size, support, and overall strength. The Cooperative Program is essential to this vitality.

Though the Cooperative Program has been proving itself since 1925, we cannot take it for granted. We neglect it or minimize it to our own peril. Without a robust CP, our work as a whole will suffer. With a robust CP, our collective ministry and mission can more flourish. That is why we must work in our generation to strengthen the Cooperative Program.

4. How does MBTS benefit from and utilize CP funds to help fulfill MBTS' ministry assignments?

Midwestern Seminary's most notable benefit from the Cooperative Program is that approximately half of the institution's operating budget is funded by the CP. This generous support from Southern Baptists enables our institution to, in return, serve them by educating and training the next generation of pastors, ministers, and missionaries to accomplish the Great Commission. Perhaps the most significant example of the CP at work at Midwestern Seminary is that our students can obtain their theological education at a fraction of the cost of most other state or private universities while receiving top-notch training that is in line with our denomination's doctrinal and confessional statements. This means that, in many cases, students can graduate and enter the pastorate, ministry, or mission field more quickly with little or no debt.

Ethnic Participation

5. Please give a descriptive report of participation of ethnic churches and other ethnic leaders in the life and ministry of your entity. Over the past 12 months, (2017 – 2018) has your seminary seen changes (increase or decrease) in the number of ethnic leaders among the faculty and within the student body?

Midwestern Seminary understands that cross-cultural and multiethnic fellowship and ministry is at the core of our Savior's call to unity within the body of Christ. Partnering with and educating believers from multiple cultures and contexts only strengthens the unity of the body of Christ and, thus, the pursuit of the Great Commission. Additionally, offering degree programs in the heart languages of many of our students, strengthens their ministry of the gospel altogether.

Our institution seeks to create programs of study, as well as informal learning experiences, that address the educational needs of multiethnic Christian communities. Some of our degrees and programs, particularly the Fusion and missions programs, are specifically tailored to students who anticipate overseas, and thus cross-cultural, missionary service. Others, such as our Asian Studies, Hispanic Studies, and Romanian Studies Departments all teach students to minister in their heart languages. These programs range from the Bachelors level to Professional Doctoral practice and research—with the intent of reaching a broader range of ethnicities.

Likely the area that most visibly displays our commitment to cross-cultural and multiethnic fellowship is the array of guest speakers—which in recent years has included African-Americans, as well as speakers from countries like South Korea, Great Britain, Romania, Cuba, Sudan, Indonesia, and Poland—who have preached/lectured in our chapel services and at various campus events. Midwestern also regularly partners with churches in the urban core of Kansas City and in the local region that minister to differing ethnicities for evangelism emphases, ongoing training, and conferences. Additionally, campus events, such as our annual Ready Conference for students and For the Church National Conference, feature multicultural and multiethnic speakers and worship leaders.

Further, Midwestern’s trustee board, staff, and faculty comprise people who represent several different ethnicities. Increases in hiring faculty and staff from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds have taken place in the past few years, but there is still room and need for growth. Along these lines, while we are not where we would like to be in our student population at Midwestern, over the past two decades, the institution has seen steady growth in this regard. With continued emphases on recruitment in multicultural areas, we look forward to continued increases in our student population.

Mental Health Resource

6. In response to a Ronnie Floyd motion, June 2013, Houston, TX, requesting that the Executive Committee and SBC Entities assist churches with mental health ministries, the Executive Committee appointed an advisory group, 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.

In the 2015 and 2016 Ministry Report(s) the following question was asked of each SBC entity:

Please give a progress report on what MBTS has implemented to assist SBC churches with training and equipping people with mental health challenges and how will MBTS continue to seek ways to work in cooperation with SBC entities and others to address the severe challenges imposed by mental illness?

If MBTS 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.

The primary way Midwestern Seminary serves the local church in assisting the local church with training and equipping people to serve those with mental challenges is to educate the next generation of pastors, ministers, ministry leaders and biblical counselors. In all Midwestern seeks to equip God-called men and women to serve the local church is through overall soul care – including dealing with mental health challenges.

This is accomplished by offering courses, training and ministry preparation in various ways. For example, in October 2018, Midwestern Seminary's trustees voted to shift focus on its counseling programs. Where once the school focused on an integrationist model, Midwestern will now offer training in a biblical counseling model. This more aptly fits the mission of our institution and provides training that will most benefit the local church. Having hired the future director of the program, much of the curriculum will be in the process of development with the goal of implementation being in Fall 2019.

Midwestern Seminary desires to have graduates with an acute awareness of the severe challenges facing local churches in regard to mental illness, and we further desire to appropriately partner with the entities of the Southern Baptist Convention in addressing these issues whenever and wherever possible.

MBTS Specific Ministry Inquiries

7. What has proven to be MBTS's most reliable metric indicating future accomplishments of, or challenges to MBTS across all of its ministry assignments? Why is that metric the one MBTS believes is most important to watch relative to MBTS ministry assignments?

Midwestern Seminary finds that the most reliable metric for indicating the future institutional accomplishments or challenges is the state and health of the Cooperative Program. Throughout its history, Midwestern has strived to be and still is an institution of and for the churches and people of the Southern Baptist Convention. With an unbending stance toward the confessional and doctrinal statements that define the Southern Baptist Convention, such as the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, the *Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, and the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, Midwestern Seminary serves its constituency. Regardless of total financial amount given, healthy support of the Cooperative Program across the denomination puts on display, for the rest of the evangelical world, churches working together, bound by a common confessional agreement, seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. This is the shared purpose and desire of Midwestern Seminary and, thus, the Cooperative Program is the most important metric to watch. This is the methodology we understand best that places Midwestern Seminary in a position to exist For the Church.