



2019 Ministry Inquiries

Cooperative Program:

1. **With an understanding that SBC entities which receive Cooperative Program funding share an equal responsibility to promote and advance the Cooperative Program, please give a description of efforts to promote the Cooperative Program both internally and externally as Southern engages Southern Baptists.**

Since the time of the Cooperative Program's founding, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has sought to instill students with an understanding of, and appreciation for, all its functions and benefits. Our first point of connection between the Cooperative Program and our students occurs in seeking to assist students' understanding of the invaluable role the Cooperative Program plays in funding their education. Every Master's level student is required to take a course entitled "Southern Baptist Heritage and Mission," which heightens the students' awareness of the Cooperative Program's part in undergirding the financial viability of our program offerings here at Southern. Another goal of such a course is to impress upon the students a love for the Southern Baptist Convention and its cooperating entities that work together to fulfill the Great Commission. Students are also introduced to SBC sending agencies, programs, and other initiatives during their time on campus. One way we accomplish this is through weekly chapel speakers, from predominantly SBC churches, who remind students of the connection between Southern Seminary and the SBC at large. At each commencement ceremony, students are reminded that their education was in part provided by people they'll never meet, through their giving to the Cooperative Program. Additionally, donors and friends are advised regularly about the Cooperative Program's role as a primary avenue of institutional support. Finally, numerous faculty and students attend and participate in state convention meetings as well as the SBC Annual Meeting each June. Annually, Southern Seminary offers a course in conjunction with the annual meeting in order to further instill knowledge of and appreciation for the SBC and the Cooperative Program.

2. **How effective is Southern in creating an awareness and appreciation for the Southern Baptist Convention and its model for cooperative missions and cooperative funding among the student body? What level of confidence does Southern have that its graduates will continue to engage in SBC missions and ministries and support funding these ministries through the Cooperative Program?**

Southern Seminary is confident in the current investment we are making in the next generation of SBC pastors, missionaries, and other denominational leaders at both the local and national

level. Our current strategy engages students upon initial display of interest in Southern Seminary all the way through graduation. We have great confidence that these efforts will result in a majority of our students maintaining their commitment to the mission of the Southern Baptist Convention throughout the span of their life in ministry. We have been, and continue to be, proud to see Southern Seminary graduates take pastorates, join missionary agencies, serve at the associational level, lead state agencies, and even head entities in the Southern Baptist Convention. We believe that our efforts will ensure the vital placement of SBTS graduates throughout all different types of roles in the SBC for years to come.

3. **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.**

The Institutional Advancement office of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary does not solicit contributions from any Southern Baptist congregation. That is our longstanding policy, consistent with the Cooperative Program and the SBC Business and Financial Plan. This policy is consistently maintained and applied.

The following is a compendium of quotes from students at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary reflecting on their discovery that the Cooperative Program methodology is amazing and a gift from the Lord.

"I came to train for ministry at Southern Seminary from an independent Baptist background with very little knowledge of the Southern Baptist Convention, and no knowledge of the Cooperative Program. One of the first classes in which I enrolled upon beginning my studies was the course on the Cooperative Program. Since that time, my knowledge of and appreciation for the giving structure within the SBC has grown leaps and bounds. During my time at Southern Seminary, I have come to realize that every giving member of any church in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention has played a part in my opportunity to pursue an affordable education at Southern Seminary. I am, and will remain, indebted to the Cooperative Program and its supporters for the remainder of my ministry. I am grateful for the ways in which the culture at SBTS - classes, administrators, and resources - consistently remind me of the radical generosity of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program."

"I became a Christian at a nondenominational church in Los Angeles; then, in college, I attended a church that eschewed relationships with other churches, except for those that agreed with us on a long list of doctrinal distinctives. Even then, the relationships with those churches were more unofficial, and we did not engage in any joint ministry. Our small, 100-person church, then, was not only inwardly-focused, but could not support long-term workers of any kind. If we had been part of the Cooperative Program, however, we could have had an impact far beyond

our size. We couldn't have supported a missionary by ourselves, but at least we could have helped out! I have seen the fruitful ministry that the Lord has given to one particular IMB worker in Brazil; I'm glad that I'm now part of a Southern Baptist church that is willing to partner with other like-minded churches for the sake of the gospel."

"As a teenager, I came to faith in Christ in a Baptist church but really had no idea how the offering we gave each week "worked". It wasn't until I took a class on Baptist history that I learned about the Cooperative Program, its rich history, and the ways that it supports the work of the denomination and the advance of the gospel. Learning how the Cooperative Program funded my own education made me take my ministry studies more seriously. I realized that thousands of faithful churches and tens of thousands of faithful givers were investing in my future, and even if nearly all those givers would never know me personally, I felt a new responsibility to prepare diligently because of their sacrifice. The support that this program provides is truly a blessing."

"As a current student at Southern Seminary, my appreciation for the Cooperative Program has grown immensely. Though I was raised in a Southern Baptist Church, I did not fully grasp the wide-reaching impact of the CP until coming to seminary. Because of the generous giving of Southern Baptists, my tuition costs were cut in half. If it were not for this, I am certain that attending seminary would have been much more difficult as I would have graduated with a significant amount of debt. In addition to this, my knowledge of all the ministries impacted by the CP has grown. It is incredible how the CP supports our Southern Baptist missionaries around the world. I have heard stories from people on the field on how they are generously supported in a variety of ways. Much of their mission work would not be possible without the CP.

The Cooperative Program makes me glad to be a Southern Baptist. I am constantly encouraged by the amount Southern Baptists give to the CP, and we can all be assured that our money goes directly to ministries that advance the Kingdom of Christ. I am personally indebted to this program and to Southern Baptists for enabling me to graduate from seminary."

"Over my time at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, my appreciation for the support of Southern Baptist churches through their giving to the Cooperative program has grown tremendously. On a practical level, the money given to Southern by the Cooperative Program has allowed my family to attend seminary without accruing debt as a result of the half tuition benefit for Southern Baptist students. This gift has allowed me to afford my studies now in addition to preparing me financially for the future, since I will not be burdened by substantial student loans.

Another reason for my thankfulness regarding the Cooperative Program is the feeling of support I have enjoyed knowing that the churches of the SBC are invested in this seminary and the men and women being trained here. Unlike many other institutions that are closing their doors due to declining enrollment or higher costs, the gifts from the Cooperative Program have allowed Southern not only to survive, but to thrive even in this time of turmoil for many other institutions.

A third reason that my appreciation for the Cooperative Program has grown over my time at Southern has been my increased understanding of the unity within the SBC. Certainly, many congregations disagree on any number of issues, but the common giving toward the SBC gives me hope that this denomination still values the education of its pastors, teachers, and leaders to such an extent that it still gives money toward this worthy cause.”

“I attended a Southern Baptist church as a child and continued to attend one through college. Naturally, my primary choice for ministry training was a Southern Baptist seminary. I knew of the tuition discount but did not realize everything it entailed. Early in my studies at Southern I took a required course on the Cooperative Program. It was through this course that I first began to learn about and appreciate the Cooperative Program. Additionally, through chapel messages and other student gatherings I was consistently reminded of the gift of the Cooperative Program. My education would not be possible without the generous sacrificial giving of Southern Baptist churches.”

“The Cooperative Program is one of the main ways the Lord has opened the door for me to be able to go to Southern Seminary. Leaving undergrad, I knew that seminary was where the Lord was leading me next; however, the idea of financing another degree was a daunting reality. I was already a member of a Southern Baptist Church and I didn’t realize that it was the way it worked and through that the Lord really opened the door for me to be able to be more financially wise in my obedience in following the Lord’s leading to seminary. With this program, not only do I find sweet community in the people I am surrounded by at Southern in my classes but also in my church and it is such a sweet thing to know that those two core communities in my life are centered on the same thing with the same aim of living out and proclaiming the gospel to all nations. It is also very encouraging to know that the people in those communities are supportive of the seminaries and sobering and humbling to know that their hard work and genericity is a big reason why I am able to get the education I am right now. I am so grateful for the opportunity I have to study under professors at Southern and it is without a doubt a blessing to be able to do that without financing through loans because of the cooperative program through generosity of the Southern Baptist Members and churches.”

“Without the Cooperative Program (CP), theological education would be out of reach for most people, including myself. Before enrolling at SBTS, I had no knowledge of the Cooperative Program and its purpose. But after joining a contributing SBC church and benefiting from the CP on an individual level, I came to appreciate the truly unique nature of the Southern Baptists’ unified plan of giving. Not only does it subsidize the costs of training the next generation of pastors, missionaries, and theologians, it also supports and equips the men and women on the front lines of gospel service, both at home (NAMB) and abroad (IMB). For these reasons, I’m genuinely thankful for the collective generosity of Southern Baptists.”

“As a doctoral student and head of a single income family, working full time for the entirety of my degree program is simply a reality. Affording such a program and relocating my family to pursue the best residential theological training available, however, was made possible only because of the cooperative program. When considering numerous Ph.D. programs during the application process, cost and family environment were two primary factors of our decision. Certainly, Cooperative Program funding allowed me to pay a fraction of the tuition compared to other institutions. Just as important, though, are the amenities and facilities that Southern Seminary is able to provide on account of the cooperative program. Our family has been thankful for everyday we’ve experienced here at Southern as a result of a growing CP fund over the years. We can only hope that increasingly more families from around the world are able to receive the same blessing we have throughout the years to come.”

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

Since Southern Seminary was begun in 1859, the Cooperative Program has influenced every part of our operations, playing a major role in each endeavor upon which we have embarked. Southern Seminary exists to serve the Southern Baptist Convention through the training of pastors, missionaries, and other ministry leaders for the denomination. This mission would be impossible without the support and generosity of Southern Baptists giving through the Cooperative Program.

5. How does Southern benefit from and utilize CP funds to help fulfill its ministry assignments?

The Cooperative Program functions as a core identity marker for Southern Seminary. The sacrificial generosity of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention comprises more than 20% of our budget. This substantial gift to Southern Seminary provides a much-needed discount for Southern Baptist students who devote years of their lives to train for ministry and most of them will turn around and invest back into the Southern Baptist convention. Cooperative Program giving allows Southern Seminary to train people from all demographics found in the Southern Baptist Convention, which leads to the fulfillment of our mission to train ministers of the Gospel for service in and through the entire denomination.

Ethnic Participation

5. Over the past 12 months, (2017 – 2018) has Southern seen changes (increase or decrease) in the number of ethnic leaders among the faculty and within the student body? Please provide an update.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is committed to ethnic diversity in every aspect of institutional life. The admissions strategy at Southern includes recruiting from ethnically diverse schools and conferences. The ethnic diversity of Southern Seminary's student population grew by 6.8% in 2017-2018. Our Director of Hispanic Initiatives, Felipe Castro, continues to recruit and promote Southern Seminary in the Spanish speaking world both in the United States and South America.

Additionally, Southern Seminary hired Dr. Dominick Hernandez this past year as Director of Online Hispanic Programs and Assistant Professor of Old Testament, while Joel Rosario serves as the Assistant Director of Online Hispanic Programs. Over the past year, the Online Hispanic Program developed 10 courses in native Spanish for the program. This includes courses taught and spoken in Spanish from Southern Seminary's own faculty, Dr. John Klaassen, Dr. Miguel Nunez, Dr. Dominick Hernandez, and Dr. Juan Sanchez. In addition to courses developed natively in Spanish, the Online Hispanic Program is also dubbing courses with our own in-house translation team. Enrollment for the Hispanic Online Program has increased from 202 students to 324 students for a total of 1,101 credit hours sold.

Southern Seminary embraces ethnic diversity through its curriculum by offering doctoral and master's degrees with concentrations in Black Church Leadership and Urban Ministry. The Master of Divinity in Missions and Evangelism (Great Commission Ministries) is offered entirely in Spanish. Other individual courses are taught in Spanish to provide students with additional curricular options to prepare for engagement in ethnic ministries throughout the SBC. The leadership of Southern Seminary remains committed to expanding its efforts and is constantly evaluating the possibility of needed and viable program expansions to serve the needs of a growing number of ethnically diverse Southern Baptist churches.

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 Southern Baptist 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 your seminary has implemented to assist Southern Baptist churches with training and equipping people with mental health challenges and how will your seminary continue to seek ways to work in cooperation with SBC entities and others to address the severe challenges imposed by mental illness?

For the 2019 Ministry Report please provide the following:

If Southern 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 Southern Baptist churches in the area of mental health ministry, please provide a detailed progress report.

In keeping with the overall mission of Southern, the curriculum contains our most important efforts at training and equipping students to address mental health challenges. An Introduction to Biblical Counseling course is in the core curriculum for all M.Div. students except those concentrating in Worldview and Apologetics. Additional courses such as Typical Problems in Biblical Counseling at the M.Div. level and Theological Hermeneutics in the Care of People at the Ph.D. level are available for students wishing to go deeper into the pastoral care of persons facing these challenges.

7. What specific efforts is Southern making to protect against sexual abuse?

Southern Seminary is committed to protect against all forms of sexual abuse. In an effort to better equip students and employees against and detecting sexual abuse, we require everyone to go through MinistrySafe Sexual Abuse training. Students who did not complete this training by the end of December 2017 were not able to register for any upcoming courses. Additionally, employees that did not complete this training were not able to continue their employment until doing so.

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

The Master of Divinity program represents the core mission of Southern Seminary, and thus the percentage of total enrollment comprised by our Master of Divinity program forms our most reliable metric for evaluating the status of our academic programs. The M.Div. is our central degree program for preparing pastors, church planters, and missionaries to serve the Lord Jesus in local churches, denominational entities, and the mission field. Currently, Southern Seminary is home to more M.Div. students than any Master of Divinity program in the history of the Southern Baptist seminaries.