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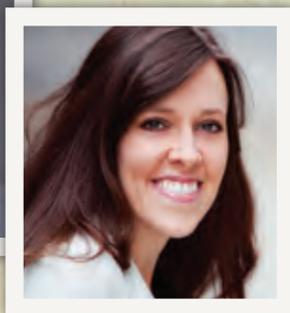
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Facts and Trends is published quarterly by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. Our goal is to help you carry out your ministry more effectively.

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Cover and contents photo: LifeWay's VBS theme for 2012 is Amazing Wonders Aviation. Photos by Kent Harville.

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VBS Preview

# From My Perspective

Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO, LifeWay Christian Resources

## I am a church member

I am a church member.

I will seek to be a source of unity in the church. I know there are no perfect pastors, staff or other church members. But neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel.

---

### MORE

Follow more of Thom Rainer's thoughts on his blog: [ThomRainer.com](http://ThomRainer.com).

I am a church member.

I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to a cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that are just not my preference or style.

I am a church member.

I will pray for my pastor every day. His work is never-ending. His days are filled with constant demands for his time; with the need to prepare sermons; with those who are rejoicing in births; with those who are traveling through the valley of the shadow of death; with critics; with the hurts and hopes of others; and with the need to be a husband and a father. My pastor cannot serve our church in his own power. I will pray for God's strength for him and his family every day.

I am a church member.

I like the metaphor of membership. It's not membership as in a civic organization or a country club. It's the kind of membership given to us in 1 Corinthians 12: "Now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27 HCSB). Because I am a member of the body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an "eye," an "ear" or a "hand." As a functioning member, I will give. I will serve. I will minister. I will

evangelize. I will study. I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will remember that "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26 HCSB).

I am a church member.

I will lead my family to be good members of this church as well. We will pray together for our church. We will worship together in our church. We will serve together in our church. And we will ask Christ to help us fall deeper in love with this church, because He gave His life for her.

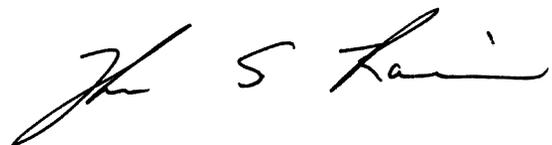
I am a church member.

This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. I soon thereafter identified with a local body and was baptized. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and to love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be a part of something so much greater than any one person or member.

I am a church member.

And I thank God that I am. ■

**In His service,**



# Pastors uphold Christian exclusivity, poll finds

by David Roach

**N**early eight in 10 Protestant pastors strongly disagree that eternal life can be obtained through religions other than Christianity, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

The survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors asked respondents for their reaction to the statement, “If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity.”

A full 77 percent of pastors strongly disagree while 7 percent somewhat disagree. Another 7 percent somewhat agree, 5 percent strongly agree and 3 percent are not sure.

“Rob Bell’s book *Love Wins* kicked off a discussion about the exclusivity of the Christian gospel,” said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. “But most pastors are more in line with historic Christian beliefs than Bell, who suggested that other faiths lead to heaven.”

Pastors’ beliefs regarding the exclusivity of Christianity differ from those of their parishioners, according to new study conducted for the upcoming book *Transformational Discipleship* by Eric Geiger, Michael Kelly and Philip Nation. When presented with the same statement, just 48 percent of adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more disagree strongly and 9 percent disagree somewhat. A total of 26 percent agree, including 13 percent who agree strongly and 13 percent who agree somewhat. The survey of laity did not force a choice, and 16 percent indicate that they neither agree nor disagree.

“One fact is clear: pastors are less universalistic than their church members,” Stetzer said. “A few heads nodding or an occasional ‘Amen’ does not indicate everyone believes Christianity is the only way. Church leaders will never know where their congregation stands unless they ask.”

According to the survey of pastors, those in large cities are more likely to believe that other religions lead to eternal life than their counterparts in other settings. Eleven percent of pastors in large cities strongly agree. In comparison, 4 percent of pastors in small cities, 4 percent in the suburbs and 3 percent in rural areas feel the same.

Pastors identifying themselves as evangelical are less universalistic than those self-identifying as mainline. Compared with mainline pastors, evangelicals are:

– Less likely to strongly agree that other religions can lead to eternal life (2 percent to 11 percent)

– Less likely to somewhat agree (4 percent to 14 percent).

– Less likely to somewhat disagree (6 percent to 13 percent).

– More likely to strongly disagree (85 percent to 57 percent).

Educational level also corresponds with agreement that other faiths can lead to heaven. Pastors with a graduate degree are more likely to strongly agree (7 percent to 3 percent) and less likely to strongly disagree (70 percent to 90 percent) than pastors with a bachelor’s degree at most. ■

---

*The phone survey, conducted in May 2011, sampled randomly selected Protestant churches. Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called and responses were weighted to reflect the geographic distribution of Protestant churches. The completed sample of 1,000 phone interviews provides a 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±3.2 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.*

*LifeWay Research also asked the question as part of an online survey conducted Oct. 14-22, 2011, among a national sample of American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more. The sample size of 2,930 provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed +1.8 percent.*

**“Our own research showed that pastors strongly disagree that other religions lead to eternal life more than twice as often as Protestant churchgoers at large.”**

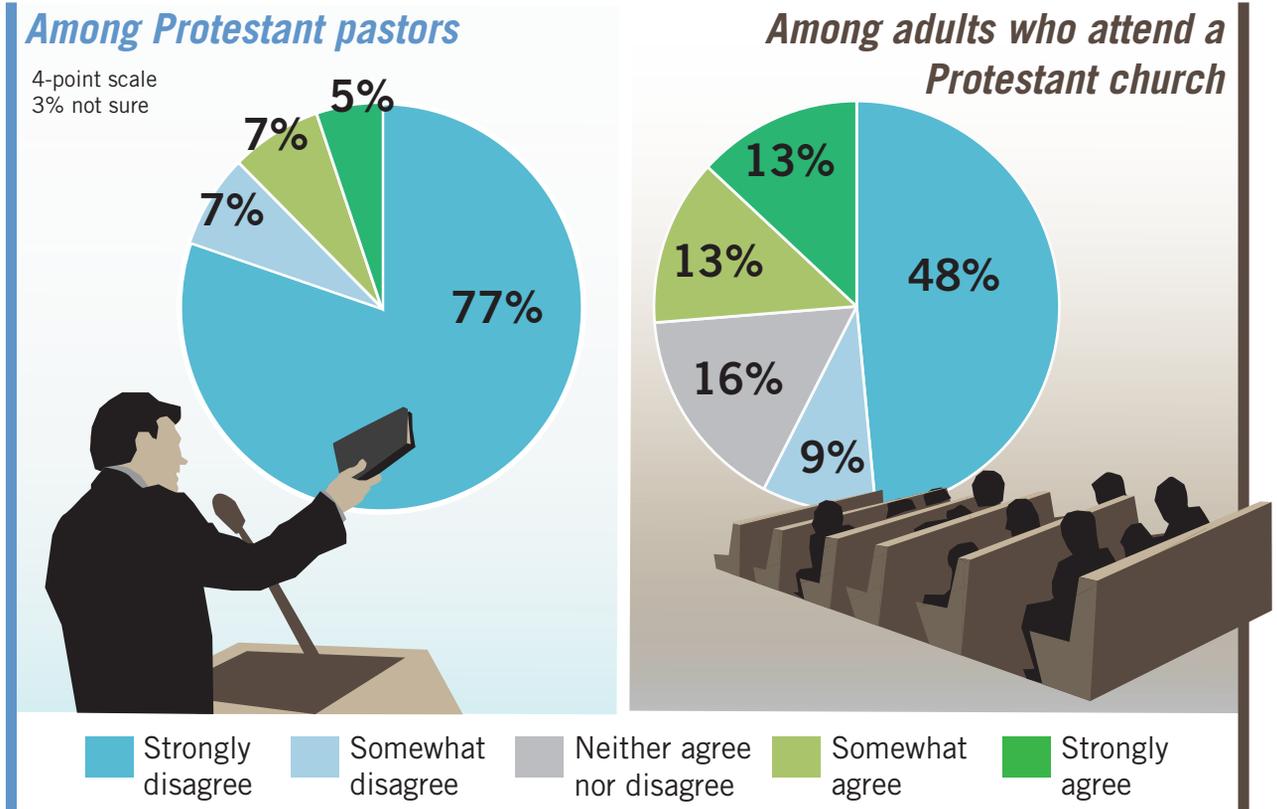
– Ed Stetzer

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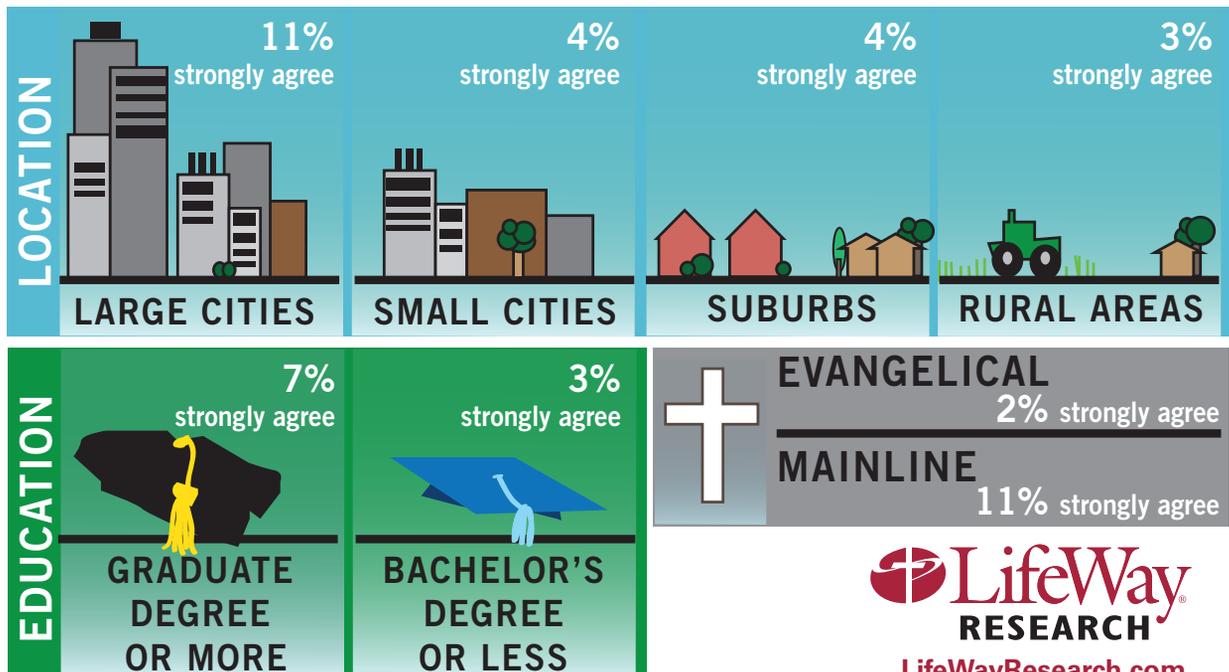
## Related content:

Turn to page 34 for more on the differences in attitudes from the “pulpit” to the “pew” by Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research.

**“If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity.”**



**Demographics of Protestant pastors who strongly agree other religions lead to eternal life.**



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*Mike Hoover, right, and Harley Cannon go over music before the choir arrives for practice.*



# Worship Project helps musical team play on

by Polly House

**H**arley Cannon doesn't read music. He's blind. But that doesn't stop him from playing a crazy clavichord or blowing a mean trumpet.

"That Harley is a piece of work; a talented musician," said Mike Hoover, minister of music at North View Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky. "Not only does he play keyboards and trumpet, but he sings too."

Hoover and Cannon have been the worship-leading team at North View Baptist for almost five years. It's been a match made in digital heaven.

Hoover uses the Worship Project on LifeWayWorship.com to coordinate all the music for the church. LifeWayWorship.com is a set of resources designed to provide worship leaders with the tools they need to create a rich and full worship music experience for the church.

Hoover is quick to admit that unlike most ministers of music, he doesn't read music. "No, not at all," he said with a chuckle. "I've depended on technology to help me do worship planning since the days of the 'Celebrate Jesus' book with split tracks!"

Being bivocational, Hoover doesn't have a lot of time for planning. He spends his mornings and afternoons driving a school bus route. In between he works at the school bus garage.



## Follow @LifeWayWorship on Twitter:

Let us know how you're using The Worship Project at your church by using the hashtag #WorshipProject.

### To learn more:

Go to [LifeWayWorship.com](http://LifeWayWorship.com) to learn more about the Worship Project, the digital hymnal and other resources and to discover the thousands of worship songs available for download.

Hoover and Cannon learned to use [LifeWayWorship.com](http://LifeWayWorship.com) to quickly and seamlessly create an order of worship that both of them can follow.

Hoover prepares the order of worship on Monday and Tuesday nights.

"What I love about having access to the resources on the Worship Project is that I can find out from the pastor what the Scripture passage for the week will be and then go online and find music that will coordinate with it," Hoover said.

"I can download the order of worship and music and put it in DropBox (a Web-based file hosting service that uses cloud storage to enable users to store and share file and folders with other across the Internet) for Harley to download," Hoover said. "Once he gets it, he translates the order of service into Braille and listens to the music two or three times, and he's ready to play. It's so easy!"

Cannon said he usually listens to the music while he's exercising.

"I walk on the treadmill for about 45 minutes every day," he said. "Having the music to listen to helps. By the time we get together, we've heard the same music and we're ready to go."

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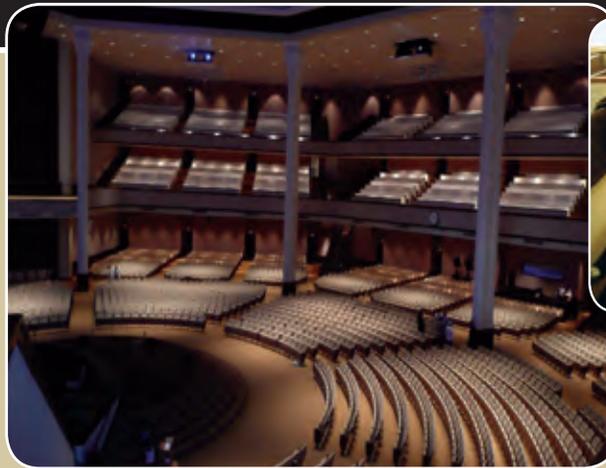
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Hoover said LifeWayWorship.com has revolutionized the musical worship for North View.

“It just makes so many things possible for us,” he said. “I can find the music I want, download it for Harley and send it to him. I can download the song from the digital hymnal portion of the Worship Project so my choir can listen to it. I can get printouts of the music for the choir. It works!”

Cannon agreed that the resource makes things simple, adding, “You don’t have to be blind to appreciate the convenience of it. It’d work for anybody.”

One Wednesday night, for example, Hoover had some cold and allergy issues and couldn’t sing. He needed to introduce a new song to the choir for Sunday morning. So he played the digital hymn, had them sing along with it while Harley played the keyboard and added in a trumpet part.

“Without the technology that LifeWayWorship.com offers, I couldn’t have made all that happen in the time we had,” he said.

Having had time to go over the music in his head for a couple of days, Cannon has the opportunity to experiment with some sound.

“Every once in a while, I’ll throw in something Mike doesn’t expect,” Cannon said with a laugh. “I’ll drop the keyboard and just let the choir sing a chorus or a verse or maybe improvise a variation on the melody, but they are good to just follow along wherever I take them. I just tell them to keep up!”

North View isn’t a large church, running about 100 on Sunday morning. Hoover said as much as LifeWayWorship.com helps them, he imagines it would seem almost like a miracle for smaller churches.

“My brother is the pastor of a tiny church in Viney Fork, Ky.,” he said. “He does everything – preaching, teaching and music. He uses LifeWayWorship.com too. He doesn’t have musicians. He may just have three or four people in the choir, but he’ll have good music.”

According to Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship,



*Top: Hoover and Cannon have prayer before rehearsal begins.  
Bottom: North View’s choir gets ready for Sunday. Pastor Terry Murphy (third man, top row) sings too.  
Photos by Kent Harville.*

“Many of our Southern Baptist churches struggle to find musicians. LifeWayWorship.com could be beneficial to these churches, giving them the means to provide a quality worship experience no matter how many worshippers they have.

“It was our hope and prayer from the inception of LifeWayWorship.com that ministers of music, as well as the single staff member churches, would be able to have a quality worship experience for their members, no matter how many or how few,” he said. ■

# New LifeWay VP champions churches

by Russ Rankin

**E**ric Geiger wants to help pastors become heroes.

**“My dream is that we would bless and serve church leaders so well, they will become heroes within their area of ministry and influence,”** said Geiger, newly appointed vice president of LifeWay’s church resources division.

LifeWay trustees formally approved Geiger during their semiannual meeting held Feb. 13-14 at the LifeWay’s home office in Nashville.

Prior to coming to LifeWay, Geiger, 36, served for eight years as executive pastor of Christ Fellowship Miami, a church that grew from 1,200 to 8,000 in attendance under Geiger’s leadership as an organizational architect.

“Making the transition from church leadership to LifeWay is both difficult and exciting,” Geiger admitted. “Anyone who has served in a healthy church setting knows how difficult it is to leave. It is a special environment.

“But at the same time, it’s exciting to think about serving churches on such a broad level,” he said. “We’re seeing a change at LifeWay as we move from an organization into more of a movement that serves churches really well.”

LifeWay’s church resources division develops strategies, products, programs and services that help churches disciple people of all ages. This comprehensive assignment is addressed by providing resources in Bible study, worship, children and student ministries and total church health and growth.

Since coming to LifeWay, Geiger said he has “been blown away by the incredible level of intelligence, breadth and depth of skill in specialized disciplines among our team. We have content editors who are just geniuses. We have people in publishing who understand theology, the church and business all wrapped up together – that’s a very unique skill-set.”

*Eric Geiger speaks to trustees during their semiannual meeting. Photo by Devin Maddox*

Geiger said his vision for the division hinges on the actual name of the church resources division.

“We are going to more passionately embrace what being the church resources division means,” he said. “We exist for the church. The church does not exist for us. And it is a high honor and privilege to serve and provide resources for the church. And it’s significant that we are a division – a part of the whole of LifeWay. We aren’t the church resources organization.”

Even though LifeWay has a rich history of providing transformational products, Geiger said his desire is to become more of a “church focused” division that “better listens to churches, knows churches and designs products and services for churches.”

“This will mean listening on a macro level – being aware of how the Lord is moving in churches as a whole and hearing their needs,” he said.

“Listening at the micro level would be equipping churches by helping them craft and create what would best help them in their individual context of ministry,” he said. “In the near future I envision CRD coming alongside churches to create things that specifically align with what is going on in the teaching ministry of that church.”

To be successful in this vision, Geiger said organizational adjustments and streamlining must happen to allow space for new initiatives and to allow for better speed and agility in responding to the needs of the church.

“The tension for me is seeing a division that has been in decline, knowing we need to make changes but also knowing we will be unable to fully feel the impact of those changes for a while,” Geiger said.

“Revenue, to me, is an indicator of the number of churches we serve and the degree to which we serve them,” Geiger said. “This is just like revenue in a church representing the number of people we served and the degree to which the Lord was moving in their heart to lead them to be generous.

“When I served at Christ Fellowship, we didn’t simply want more and more people who were just tipping God, but rather who gave out of a deep connection,” he said. “At LifeWay, I don’t want to have more and more unless it is a byproduct of serving the church well.”

Geiger said he is confident in the future, to a large degree because of the focus, talent and ministry conviction found within the division and across LifeWay.

“I want to get to a point where pastors and church leaders see LifeWay not merely as a provider of materials and products they ‘should’ use,” Geiger said. “I want us to reach a point where they are thanking God that LifeWay is meeting this need because it equips them and frees them up to focus on their ministry.

“I want pastors to have the assurance that whatever is before them in their ministry context – whether it be leadership development or more time in sermon prep – we are stepping in and serving them well and adding deep value to their church,” Geiger said.

Geiger earned a doctorate in leadership and church ministry from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and is the author or co-author of several books, including *Simple Church*, a best-selling book on church leadership. He and his wife, Kaye, have two daughters, Eden and Evie. ■

**“We exist for the church. The church does not exist for us. And it is a high honor and privilege to serve and provide resources for the church.”**

*– Eric Geiger*

# The Gospel Project focuses on Jesus

by Jon D. Wilke

**W**riters and editors of LifeWay’s newest Bible study curriculum approached their task with a singular focus – to draw attention to Jesus.

While seemingly stating the obvious, there was much more to consider, said Trevin Wax, managing editor of The Gospel Project, a new gospel-centered multigenerational Bible study.

“The Gospel Project is more than curriculum,” Wax said. “The church is God’s gospel project; we are His project.

“It’s possible to scour and search the Scriptures and miss the point,” he said. “It’s easy to come to Scripture looking for just new information or immediate application. We can even have Bible knowledge and not be focused on Christ.”

Wax explained that The Gospel Project examines the breadth of the Bible and seeks to reveal to participants how every story, every theological concept and missional truth points to Jesus.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, serves as general editor for The Gospel Project.

“Exploring the riches of what God has done for us in Christ takes effort, but the reward is incalculable,” Stetzer said. “In studying the Scriptures, we encounter Jesus Christ.

“The message we all need is the gospel – and that message is for unbelievers and believers alike,” said Stetzer. “The apostle Paul says it’s the message ‘by which we are being saved.’”

*Below: Covers of the adult, student and children leader guides.*

*Facing Page: Trevin Wax, managing editor of The Gospel Project. Photo by Devin Maddox*



According to Wax, “The goal of The Gospel Project is to provide a theologically driven study that points people to Jesus. The Gospel Project shows that the gospel is central to our daily lives. Not that it just saves us, but it also sustains us.

“God uses the gospel to move us along; He uses the gospel in our hearts and lives to move our feet out ‘on mission,’” Wax said.

The Gospel Project for Kids “takes children on a chronological journey through the Bible, showing how these individual stories point ahead to God’s ultimate plan of redemption through Christ,” Wax said.



**“The Gospel Project is more than curriculum. The church is God’s gospel project; we are His project.”**

*— Trevin Wax*



Follow @Gospel\_Project  
on Twitter.

### To learn more:

*The Gospel Project, slated for preorder in June, will feature a three-year study plan with 13-week units, each using an age-appropriate voice, depth and course of study. Bible study resources will be available in multiple formats, such as print, downloadable, as well as e-reader and mobile app formats.*

*Samples of the new LifeWay Bible study are available at [GospelProject.com](http://GospelProject.com).*

“The Gospel Project for Students and for Adults is theologically-driven, and by that, we mean it’s structured theologically,” he said. “The scope and sequence is based loosely on the theological topics covered in A Theology for the Church – a great Baptist systematic theology textbook edited by Danny Akin. So, our goal is to take participants through the basics of systematic and biblical theology, while focusing on the grand narrative of Scripture and our calling to live on mission for the kingdom of Christ.”

Wax said writers for the student and adult components approach each lesson with an objective to answer three questions:

- How does this topic fit into the big story of Scripture? “This helps them connect the dots for learners to see how doctrine relates to the grand narrative,” Wax said.
- What is distinctively Christian about the way I am addressing the topic? “This question always leads us back to the Good News of salvation through Jesus,” he said.
- How does this truth equip God’s church to live on mission? “This question helps us keep doctrine and Bible study connected to missional application,” Wax said. ■

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# Churches find print solutions, savings through LifeWay's OneSource

by Russ Rankin

**W**hen churchgoers at First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn., started receiving higher-quality bulletins on Sunday, what they didn't realize was that the church's bottom line was also looking better as a result.

"When I got here about four years ago, we had a two-color press to print our 3,000 weekly bulletins that went into four-color shells we had printed by LifeWay," said David Hobbs, former communications director for First Baptist, Hendersonville. "We were limited on what we could do with screening photographs and, of course, time limitations."

As a streamlining solution, "We sold our two-color press and started sending our weekly files to a local printer that did four-color printing for our bulletins each week," Hobbs said, adding that while the print quality improved, cost and production time were still issues.

Hobbs discovered the best solution, Océ North America, through a phone conversation with a representative of LifeWay's OneSource program – a service through which churches and religious organizations can receive discounts on LifeWay-endorsed products and services.

LifeWay has endorsed Océ North America, a Canon Group company since 2009 as their exclusive vendor of multifunctional printers that print, copy, scan and fax. In the last two years, nearly 400 churches across the country have saved more than \$2 million in equipment costs from MSRP, said Jennie Taylor of LifeWay's OneSource program.

"Océ called us at the church and after hearing our process, said they thought we could print our bulletins cheaper, faster and at an improved quality," Hobbs said. "I gave them a sample that we printed at the local printer and they turned around printed pieces that were printed, folded and produced all on the Océ machines – and the color and definition is noticeably better."

What also became noticeably better was the savings the



church experienced.

"When we ran the numbers, it looked as though we could save some money," Hobbs said. "Now that we've gone with Océ, not only are we saving significant time (it takes approximately four hours for the Océ system to print and fold 3,000 bulletins), we're saving about 25 percent over what we were paying in ink printing costs."

Hobbs said Océ sent three trainers to the church to train the staff that would be operating the machine. They were able to run through a variety of printing jobs to become familiarized with the process.

"Saving over 25 percent in bulletin costs alone is a great deal for any church that needs to keep the belt tightened. For a church our size, that translated into a lot of money," Hobbs said. "Also, the beauty of this machine is that this is a lease. Technology is constantly changing and a lot of churches and businesses that purchase copiers and printers find that the machines are quickly out of date.

"In our situation with Océ, we get the benefit of their commitment to technology upgrades," he said. "We can trade up to new technology in as little as four years and continue to have the most up-to-date machine to fit the changing technology needs of the church." ■

*Editor's note: At the time of the interview, David Hobbs was communications director for First Baptist, Hendersonville. Since the article was written, he has moved to a new position. His quotes are used with the permission of the church.*

## To learn more:

Go to [LifeWay.com/oce](http://LifeWay.com/oce) for more information on Océ North America and [LifeWay.com/OneSource](http://LifeWay.com/OneSource) for more information about the OneSource group of products and services.



# Big VBS crowds learn about Amazing Wonders Aviation

by Jon D. Wilke

**M**ore than 3,000 people gathered at LifeWay January, to preview Vacation Bible School 2012 – Amazing Wonders Aviation: Encountering God’s Awesome Power.

“VBS previews are great moments of bringing people together from all across the country to get them excited about VBS 2012,” said Jerry Wooley, LifeWay’s VBS specialist. “We host classes on crafts. We sing all the music. We teach high-tech and low-budget decorations, and we look at the Bible content. We do everything in VBS in a compact, 24-hour period.”

This year’s VBS theme uses vintage aviation – 1930s and 40s era – to help children, student and adult VBS participants encounter the one, true and awesome God and His amazing

power by exploring some of the world's greatest natural wonders.

Each day after worship rally participants take off from the Amazing Wonders Aviation airstrip and visit great natural God-made creations: Victoria Falls, the Northern Lights, Paricutin Volcano, the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon and the Matterhorn.

The theme is taken from Psalm 147:5 – “Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite” (HCSB).

VBS participants will learn how God has amazing power over nature, circumstances, sin, death and life by exploring Bible stories with similar themes and lessons.

“We want everyone who attends VBS to know the power of our awesome God,” Wooley said.

### VBS prayer emphasis

Across the LifeWay campus, during the VBS preview, discussion leaders encouraged attendees to pray that their future VBS attendees will experience God's amazing power.

Cindi White, minister of preschoolers at First Baptist Church in Smyrna, Ga., has been a part of VBS at the local church level for 15 years. She attends a VBS preview nearly every year. White said she was pleased with the prayer aspect and believes prayer is the foundational step to VBS success.

“We should be praying first and foremost for the children,” White said. “God already knows who is coming to our Vacation Bible School. We need to bathe them in prayer.”

This VBS preview was Dawn Tucker's first. She said she heard the emphasis on prayer too.

As minister of early childhood at CrossPoint in Trussville, Ala., Tucker said she “especially loved the information about the prayer guides and brochures” which gave prayer helps before, during and after VBS.

“We can give these to the parents, teachers and volunteers to encourage them to participate by praying,” said Tucker. “If we don't emphasize prayer then our volunteers may run the risk of just



Top: Joyce Oliver and Suzette Johnson from St. Mathews Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., build small bi-planes using a clothes pin and wooden tongue depressors and craft sticks.

Directly above: Ann Oliver led a breakout session on decorating for preschool. Photos by Kent Harville

going through their checklist of things to do for that day.”

“I love that LifeWay encourages each church to begin with prayer, not planning. VBS is God working through us, not us working for God,” said Jennifer Burks, CrossPoint's associate minister of preschool.

### Pastoral participation

Mike Smith, LifeWay's leadership and evangelism specialist and a bivocational pastor, highlighted prayer in a breakout session.

In his session, titled “Pastoral Leadership During VBS,” Smith and the audience exchanged creative ideas for increasing prayer.



*The "Amazing Wonders Aviation Musical" was presented by the children's choir from The People's Church in Franklin, Tenn.*



*Jerry Wooley, right, presented Jeff Slaughter with a VBS logo plaque in honor of 16 years of writing the music for LifeWay's Vacation Bible School curriculum.*

## Jeff Slaughter moving on from VBS to other LifeWay creative ministries

**A**fter 17 years, Jeff Slaughter is moving on to other amazing musical adventures.

This year's Amazing Wonders Aviation-themed VBS will be Slaughter's last season writing, traveling, performing and teaching with LifeWay's VBS team.

"For the past 17 years, millions of children and families through VBS have benefited from a talented and enthusiastic music minister whose name is synonymous with VBS," said Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS specialist.

Wooley recognized Slaughter's involvement and presented a large framed plaque to him signed by many who worked closely with him through the years. The plaque had the logos of all the VBS themes Slaughter had worked on.

"Jeff's contribution has helped shape VBS as it is known today. His music has reached into the hearts of kids and the motions he choreographed have helped the lyrics become personal and the message of Christ memorable," said Wooley.

"The VBS team appreciates Jeff. God has not only used Jeff to impact the lives of millions but he has impacted each of us here at LifeWay," said Wooley.

While no longer doing VBS, Slaughter will continue to be a creative team member at LifeWay's CentriKid camps. He will also continue to write for LifeWay's Worship music area. ■

"You haven't started VBS until you've prayed," said Smith. "Prayer is the engine that can really affect VBS. It's also one of the greatest weaknesses by VBS leaders, directors and pastors.

"I heard of a church that brings up all the VBS workers in their worship services to lay hands on them," said a pastor in the back of the room.

Other ideas involved giving prayer lists to home-bound church members, hosting a prayer room each Wednesday night leading up to VBS and writing workers' names on rubber band bracelets to act as prayer reminders.

Attendees of Smith's sessions also exchanged ideas on how pastors can encourage and enhance their churches' VBS event through intentional participation.

"Pastors can be great cheerleaders for VBS," he said. "It's so crucial that pastors be team players. Interact with those kids. You will learn things about the kids, and they will learn things about you and the church.

"Once you've interacted and gotten to know some things about the kids, then you can intercede and pray more specifically for them," Smith said.

### VBS is worth it

"VBS is worth it," Smith said. "Because of VBS, eternity is going to be changed. Kids' lives are going to be changed. Families are going to be changed."

"VBS continues to be the flagship event for many churches across the country," said Rhonda VanCleave, editorial project leader for VBS. [The numbers indicate] about 25 percent of reported baptisms [in Southern Baptist churches] are a direct result of VBS."

For 2009 [latest figures available], more than 25,000 churches hosted VBS. More than 2.8 million children, students and adults were enrolled and more than 88,000 people made professions of faith in Christ. ■

# 'The Gospel Project' draws large crowd, interest at VBS preview events



Bill Emeott, LifeWay's lead childhood ministry specialist, leads the session on The Gospel Project for Kids. Photo by Kent Harville.

## It was standing room only at a recent unveiling of The Gospel Project for Kids.

More than 200 children's ministers, Sunday school teachers, church leaders and volunteers learned about LifeWay's new ongoing Bible study series during two sessions of the Vacation Bible School 2012 preview.

The Gospel Project is an in-depth Bible study designed to help participants see how the Bible tells one overarching story of redemption through Jesus Christ.

"This is a Gospel-centered resource for the entire church," said Bill Emeott, LifeWay's lead childhood ministry specialist.

"The Gospel Project for Kids has a three-year scope and sequence. It covers the Bible chronologically and connects all the Bible content back to Christ," he said.

The Gospel Project for Kids features:

- Three versions: preschool, younger kids and older kids
- Videos to bring Bible stories to life
- Music for all ages
- Coloring pages for preschool and younger kids
- Age-appropriate activity sheets
- Low-preparation lesson plans
- Digital or print resources



Follow @Gospel\_Project on Twitter.

## To learn more:

The Gospel Project is slated for preorder in June and will release in the Fall of 2012.

Samples of the new LifeWay Bible study are available at [GospelProject.com](http://GospelProject.com).

- Discussion starter videos for younger and older kids
- Customizable parent resources

Each lesson has options to help teachers get started when the first child walks into the room and contains all the related materials for teachers such as a Countdown Clock, the Big Picture question, a discussion starter, the Bible story (with video options) and a timeline map.

“There are a lot of parent resources in The Gospel Project for Kids,” Emeott said. “Parents will clearly be able to see what their children have learned in Sunday school or small group.

“As for leading their homes spiritually, I’ve only met a few parents who told me they don’t want to, but I’ve met a lot of parents who told me they don’t know how to,” he said. “This curriculum has several helps for parents.”

An introductory session of The Gospel Project for Kids was

offered at each of the VBS preview events.

“Many people are excited about the chronological study aspect, others the Christ-centered approach,” said Emeott.

Churches were given the opportunity to sign up for a pilot project and test the curriculum’s materials for an entire month.

“We’re going to give it a shot,” said Faye Scott, children’s minister at First Baptist New Orleans. Scott signed up for the pilot project after attending Emeott’s session, which, due to limited seating, she had a difficult time getting into.

“I told them, ‘I’ll sit on the floor, I’ll stand up.’ I’ll do anything to learn more about it,” she said. “I wanted to look into this new study.

“It’s a very attractive curriculum,” she said. “Christ is interwoven into every story.” ■

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# LifeWay releases free WORDsearch iPad app

**LifeWay has made studying the Bible much easier. WORDsearch users will now be able to buy the content once and study anywhere.**

The WORDsearch iPad application is available in the Apple App Store for free. This app allows users to access their WORDsearch content on the go.

“They’ll be able to view, read and study the same content on their desktops, laptops and iPads,” said Randy Beck, WORDsearch president.

WORDsearch iPad users will be able to download and access most of the Bibles, commentaries and book titles in their WORDsearch libraries, while other titles will be available via an Internet connection.

Other features of the WORDsearch iPad App include:

- Parallel Bible
- Searchable library
- “Book Shelf”
- Footnotes
- “Select, copy and paste” options
- Free access to the Holman Christian Standard Bible

New WORDsearch iPad app users will have access to more than 130 free books and Bibles.

One example of the similarities between the Bible study platforms was described by Beck. “When you use the WORDsearch iPad App as a book reader, scripture references will be ‘hot,’ just like in your WORDsearch for PC or Mac. You can tap on a link and the Bible text will appear,” he said.

“WORDsearch customers have been anticipating this app for a long time,” said Beck. “They have made big investments in our Bible study software and content. We want to meet their Bible study needs by providing the latest, most relevant Bible study platforms for on-the-go lifestyles.”

“Many pastors carry iPads with them wherever they go, so now their WORDsearch libraries can go with them for studying or sermon preparation,” said Beck.



The WORDsearch iPad App is available free at <http://goo.gl/Hk2DF>.

WORDsearch will continue to offer free online training and technical support with the rollout of this new Bible study app.

WORDsearch ([WORDsearchBible.com](http://WORDsearchBible.com)) is a leading Bible study software program. Based in Austin, Texas, WORDsearch has been producing software and electronic books for the Christian market for more than 25 years, offering 44 Bible translations and more than 4,200 volumes of electronic books for Christian pastors, teachers and laypeople through its WORDsearch, Bible Explorer, LESSONmaker, WORDsearchToGo and InstaVerse software products.

LifeWay acquired WORDsearch and Bible software company QuickVerse in July 2011. ■

## App Demonstration videos:

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# NEW RESOURCES

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## B&H PUBLISHERS

### *A Heart Like His*

by Beth Moore

*A Heart Like His* looks at this bond of mutual love and admiration between a man and the one true God. Beth Moore walks us through an exploration of David's incredible life, drawing spiritual insights from a man who boldly fulfilled his divine destiny not merely by what he did, but who he loved and served.

Available here for the first time in paperback, this new edition also features an excerpt from Moore's *David: Seeking a Heart Like His* Bible study. Releases May 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7716-8. Paperback. \$14.99

### *A Parliamentary Guide for Church Leaders*

by C. Barry McCarty

*A Parliamentary Guide for Church Leaders* has become a standard reference work in the field of church administration. Barry McCarty draws on more than 30 years of experience as a pastor and a professional parliamentarian to make the essential rules of procedure understandable for people seeking to effectively participate in meetings of their church, denominational convention or other business gatherings.

This silver anniversary edition brings users into the 21st century with additional notes on special considerations for multisite churches and an entire chapter on conflict resolution. Releases June 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7150-0. Paperback. \$18.99

### *Counseling the Hard Cases*

edited by Stuart Scott and Heath Lambert, foreword by John MacArthur

This new release offers real life stories from the counseling and medical field about the sufficiency of God's resources in Scripture to bring help, hope and healing to difficult psychiatric diagnoses from bipolar

and obsessive compulsive disorders to postpartum depression, panic attacks, etc.

Contributors include John Babler, Kevin Carson, Laura Hendrickson, Garrett Higbee, Robert Jones, Martha Peace, Steve Viars and Dan Wickert. Releases June 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7222-4. Hardback. \$32.99

### *Faith and Learning, a Handbook for Christian Higher Education*

edited by David S. Dockery

Two dozen Christian higher education professionals thoroughly explore the question of faith's place on the university campus, whether in administrative matters, the broader academic world or in student life. Releases May 1.

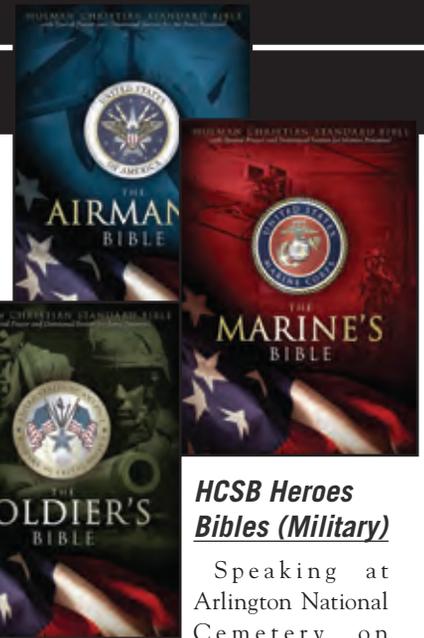
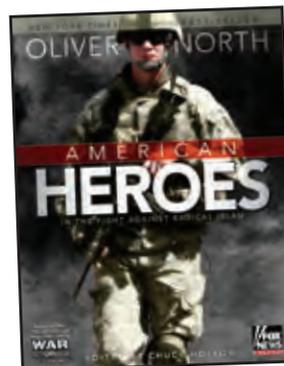
Product #978-1-4336-7311-5. Hardback. \$39.99

### *American Heroes, in the Fight Against Radical Islam*

by Oliver North

In *American Heroes*, New York Times best-selling author Oliver North offers an inspiring first-hand account of the extraordinary young "citizen-soldiers" who have chosen the path of the patriot and gone into harm's way for their countrymen. North's access, his grasp of history and his lucid reports from the crucible of combat make this a stirring chronicle of courage, commitment, compassion and faith. Releases May 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7710-6. Paperback. \$18.99



### *HCSB Heroes Bibles (Military)*

Speaking at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day

in 2009, President Barack Obama called the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen "the best of America." Indeed, these men and women move beyond narrow self-interest, volunteering to put their lives on the line. HCSB Heroes Bibles are uniquely designed for each military branch, with the full text of the popular HCSB translation and an extended section of essays, prayers, patriotic hymns and spiritual guidance. Releases May 1.

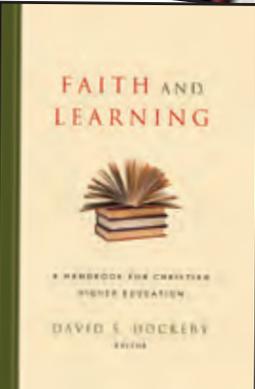
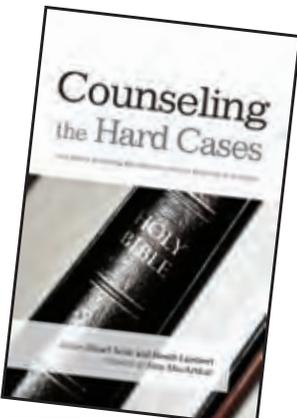
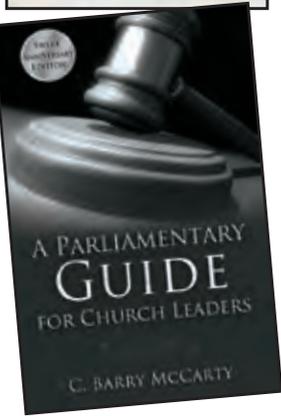
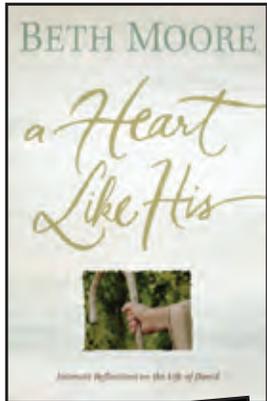
Soldier's green, product #978-1-4336-0244-3; Sailor's black, product #978-1-4336-0245-0; Airman's blue, product #978-1-4336-0243-6; Marine's burgundy, product #978-1-4336-0246-7; Coast Guardsman's blue, product #978-1-4336-0249-8.

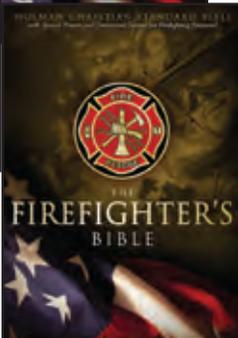
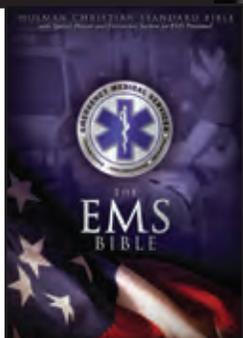
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### *HCSB Heroes Bibles (Rescue)*

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, heightened our great respect for emergency medical services personnel, firefighters and law enforcement officers. Those brave men and women show true courage and faith by risking their lives for someone else in need.

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firefighters and law enforcement officers – pair the complete text of the HCSB translation with an extended devotional section of articles, prayers and spiritual guidance. Releases May 1.

EMS' blue, product #978-1-4336-0248-1; Firefighter's red, product #978-1-4336-0247-4; Law enforcement officer's black, product #978-1-4336-0242-9. Simulated leather packaged in two-piece, four-color gift box. \$24.99

### Heart-Deep Teaching, Engaging Students for Transformed Lives

by Gary C. Newton

*Heart-Deep Teaching* was written for parents, teachers and students of the Word who desire to apply its principles in life-transforming ways.

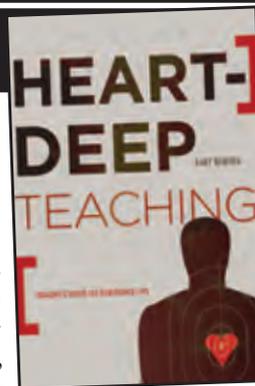
The concept of "heart-deep teaching and learning" is based on a Hebrew understanding of the

"heart" as the innermost essence of a person that involves the mind, emotions and will. When the heart is engaged by the power of the Holy Spirit within the context of God's Word, both character and behavioral changes occur.

By integrating accurate methods of analyzing the biblical text and current research in teaching and

learning, the book attempts to help teachers understand the theoretical and practical skills to create their own lessons, adapt lessons from published curriculums and improve their own strategies. Releases May 1.

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have you ever really examined what that standard is?

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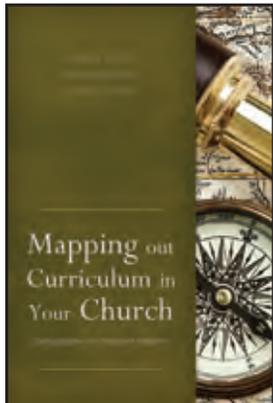
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## **Mapping Out Curriculum in Your Church, Cartography for Christian Pilgrims**

edited by James R. Estep, Karen L. Estep and M. Roger White

This new book from top Christian education professionals integrates biblical foundations, educational theory and practical insights into a new curriculum formation approach for the local church. Uniquely identifying curriculum as a means of ministry through the metaphor of mapmaking, it shows how believers are lost along the spiritual journey without a study plan, having no clear destination or reliable path to follow toward maturity.

Covering areas from children's ministry to adult education, contributors include editors James R. Estep, Karen L. Estep and Roger White as well as Holly Allen, Mark H. Senter III, Michael S. Wilder, Timothy Paul Jones, and Bret Robbe. Releases June 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7238-5. Paperback. \$29.99



## **Subversive Kingdom, Living as Agents of Gospel Transformation**

by Ed Stetzer

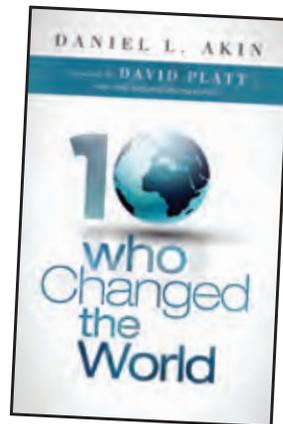
This world is a dark, evil and broken place – more corrosive and corrupting than we even realize. But for those who know that Christ is coming to establish a new and perfect order, ours is not just a world to endure but also a world to invade. Believers have not been stationed here on earth merely to subsist but to actively subvert the enemy's attempts at blinding people in unbelief and burying them under heartbreaking loads of human need.

The Kingdom of God changes all that.

Ed Stetzer's *Subversive Kingdom* is a personal call for Christians to reorient their thinking and lifestyle to match what Jesus described of His people in Scripture. Stetzer uses the parables of Christ to unlock the

“Kingdom secrets.” Christians are urged to turn this knowledge into practical, everyday, ongoing missions designed to set people free. Releases May 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7382-5. Paperback. \$14.99



## **Ten Who Changed the World**

by Daniel L. Akin,  
foreword by David Platt

*Ten Who Changed the World* is seminary president Daniel Akin's powerful tribute to the transformational work done by some truly inspiring Christian missionaries. With each profile, he journeys into the heart of that gospel servant's mission-minded story and makes a compelling connection to a similar account from the Bible. Releases May 1.

Product #978-1-4336-7307-8. Paperback. \$14.99

## **The Mission of God Study Bible**

Ed Stetzer, executive editor,  
and Philip Nation, general editor

The Mission of God Study Bible encourages followers of Jesus Christ to see their everyday life from God's perspective and have His heart for people. It's a reminder that we live around people in desperate need of redemption and reconciliation with God, which can only be found in Jesus. The mission of God is for all believers to live out and share the Good News of what God has done

through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus. Wherever you are, you are on mission.

Readers will have access to more than 150 additional writings from today's top thinkers, theologians and leading voices in the church. Essay contributors include Matt Chandler, Tullian Tchividjian, Ed Stetzer, Matthew Barnett, Andrea Mullins, Dave Ferguson and Christopher J.H. Wright.

Readers will also discover “Letters to the Church” from elder statesmen that speak to the grand narrative of God's mission. These words from Billy Graham, Jack Hayford, R.T. Kendall, Erwin Lutzer, Calvin Miller and R.C. Sproul will inspire you. Releases June 1.

Product #978-1-4336-0155-2. Paperback. \$29.99; Product #978-1-4336-0156-9. Hardback \$39.99

## **CHURCH RESOURCES**

### **Church Essentials: What Is a Healthy Church?**

by Mark Dever

What does it mean to be a healthy church? *Church Essentials* provides a framework and description of the characteristics to be incorporated into the life of a church, bringing it new life and health for God's glory. (6 sessions) Released in March.

Member book, LifeWay product #0-0546-7768, \$9.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0546-7770, \$79.95

### **The Good Judge DVD Tract**

This DVD tract, containing one specific scene from the movie “Courageous,” provides a fresh take on witnessing. In this scene, officer Nathan Hayes seizes an opportunity to share his faith with his rookie partner, David. Hayes shares an allegory that helps the young officer understand Christ's saving grace. Released in March.

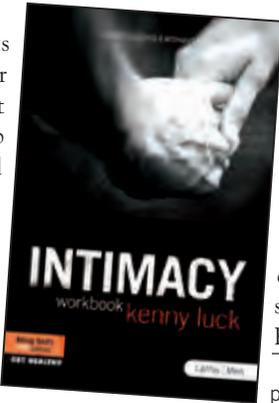
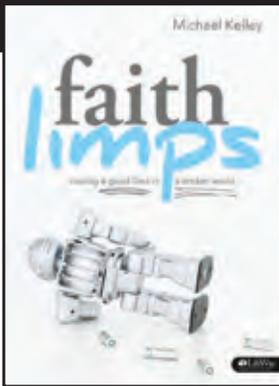
LifeWay product #0-0550-1956, \$2.99

## Faith Limps

by Michael Kelley

Pain is common to every person's experience, and God is very concerned with how we process that pain. This study will help people own up to their pain, confront questions and doubts and process their experiences in light of a faith relationship with a good and loving God. (6 sessions) Released in March.

Member book, LifeWay product #0-0547-1380, \$9.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0547-1379, \$49.95

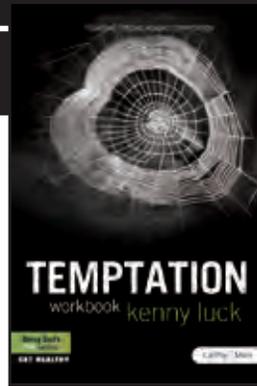


## Intimacy: Understanding a Woman's Heart

by Kenny Luck

This study helps men understand that they must connect with God's purposes before they can truly connect with their wife (or wife-to-be). God uses the marriage relationship to promote growth in men's lives because it shows us our character gaps and drives us to Him for solutions. (8 sessions) Released in March.

Workbook, LifeWay product #0-0546-9697, \$8.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0546-9696, \$19.95



## Temptation: Standing Strong Against Temptation

by Kenny Luck

This study of the book of James will equip men to think clearly and choose wisely when dealing with temptation. It will help them confront this pervasive problem in God's wisdom and strength, so they can begin to live an undivided life. (8 sessions) Released in March.

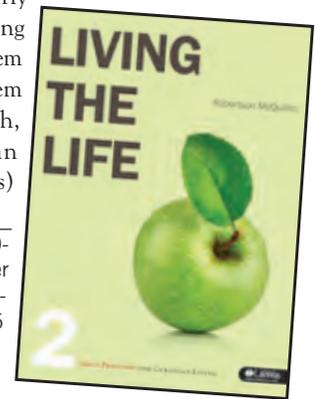
Workbook, LifeWay product #0-0546-9695, \$8.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0546-9694, \$19.95

## Living the Life 2: God's Provision for Christian Living

by Robertson McQuilkin

Living the Life 2 examines God's provision for Christian living, the indwelling Holy Spirit. The author explores the work of the Spirit in transforming believers into Christlikeness and in empowering them to live a victorious Christian life. (6 sessions) Released in April.

LifeWay product #0-0547-0704, \$9.95



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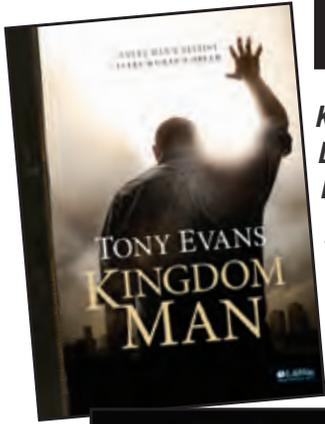
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## **Kingdom Man: Every Man's Destiny, Every Woman's Dream**

by Tony Evans

This study is designed to empower men to exercise the God-given dominion they were created for by giving them a Kingdom understanding, vision, and perspective on their identity and responsibilities, along with practical steps on how to become a man who rules his world well. (6 sessions) Released in February.

Member book, LifeWay product #0-0546-9703, \$11.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0546-9702, \$99.95

## **Stolen**

by Chris and Kerry Shook

The enemy uses our circumstances to rob us of treasures like passion, joy, peace, strength and dreams. In this

creative group Bible study, Pastor Kerry Shook and his wife, Chris, will lead you into a discovery of the ways you can reclaim the treasures God intended for you. (6 sessions) Released in February.

Study guide, LifeWay product #0-0546-9706, \$7.95; DVD leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0546-9705, \$49.95

## **The Ways of God: How God Reveals Himself Before a Watching World, Revised**

by Henry T. Blackaby and Roy T. Edgemon

*The Ways of God* gives believers greater insight into God's nature and provides guidance for aligning their lives with His ways. God's ways are different

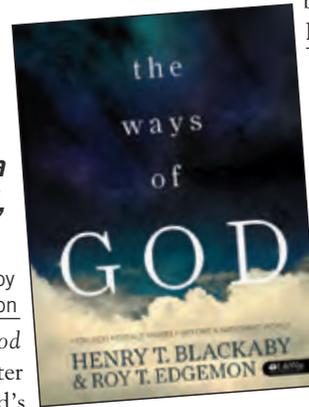
from our ways. So if we want God to work through us, we first need to understand His nature and His ways. This careful study of His sovereignty, love, holiness and other aspects of His nature presents clear statements about the relationship between God's ways and the impact this understanding will have on a believer's life. (6 sessions) Released in March.

LifeWay product #0-0550-0139, \$9.95

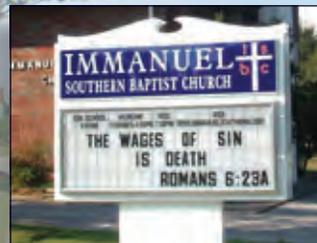
## **Creation Restored: The Gospel According to Genesis**

by Matt Carter and Halim Suh

This study examines Genesis 12-50 and explores how the early portions of the Bible foreshadow the gospel of Jesus Christ – the Good News of salvation and



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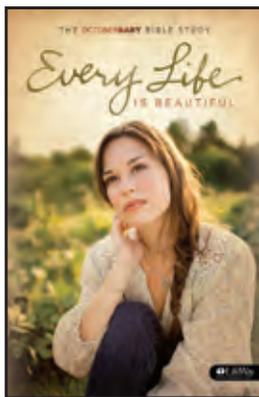
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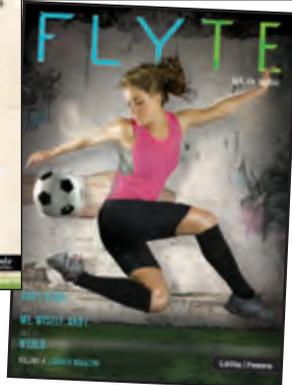
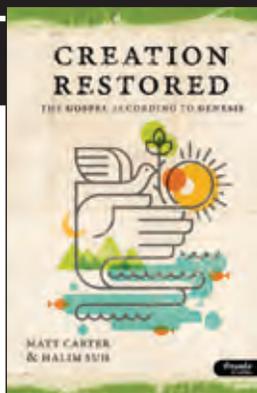
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As the culture around preteens continues to inundate them with worldly messages, *FLYTE* is the resource that can help churches walk alongside preteens and help them develop a godly worldview – combining faith and life. *FLYTE* enables leaders to cater to the specific needs of preteens, while equipping leaders with fresh video content, sound Bible study and life applications relevant to their preteens. (13 sessions) Released in March.

Learner magazine, LifeWay product #0-0539-9884, \$4.95; Leader guide, LifeWay product #0-0539-9877, \$9.95; Leader kit, LifeWay product #0-0539-7460, \$89.95

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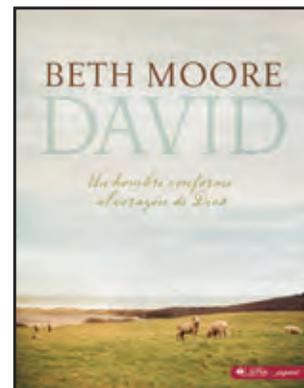
### **Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break**

by Kelly Minter  
Nehemiah's heart was so broken for those in need that he left the comfort of his Persian palace

to help them. Like Kelly Minter's other studies in the Living Room Series, you'll find authentic Bible teaching, recipes and a relational approach. Are you ready to let God break your heart for a hurting, lost world and move you in compassion to be the hands and feet of Jesus? (7 sessions) Released in February.

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Marty Duren, LifeWay social media strategist

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## Is social media dangerous?

**remember a number of years ago when the wife of a friend reconnected with an old friend through a high school graduates' website. The site was like a forum where old classmates could share information and get caught up on who was doing what. Pretty much all the same things people might do at a class reunion. Her reconnection was with an old boyfriend, and she decided to leave her husband for this fellow she had not seen in 15 or 20 years.**

Not long after this, there were a few reports of the same thing happening via Facebook. One church pastor went so far as to encourage his entire church to get off Facebook and made all of his staff close their accounts.

Often people fear new forms of communication due to the problems and excesses of a few. Facebook is approaching one billion registered users worldwide, but everybody is not leaving their spouse or abandoning their family.

Social media has made it easier than ever to reconnect with people from your past. Just enter the name of your high school and suddenly you see the names and faces of people with whom you sat in shop, for whom you blocked in football, and maybe even one or two who joined a dare to cut

classes. Many memories, both good and bad, can flood back in a short period.

There is no direct line, though, from using social media and becoming involved in sin. It is frustrating to think about it, but the fact is people have been sinning long before social media ever made an appearance. Frankly, they've been sinning a lot, too. King David did not need a smartphone, Internet connection or Facebook account to start a downhill slide into adultery, deceit and murder. Gomer did not need email to leave Hosea and go back into harlotry.

Social media, just like the telephone, may make connections easier, but does not plant the temptation in our hearts. Jesus warned it's not what is outside of us that is corrupt, but what is inside (Mark 7:18-20).

On the other side, social media presents us with ongoing opportunities for learning, encouraging and being encouraged. My friends regularly post prayer requests and the answers to those requests. Pastors give praise for how God is working in their churches. People on mission give immediate updates on Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

The opportunities with social media far outweigh the negatives. It opens doors to dozens or hundreds of relationships waiting to be impacted with the gospel. ■



Marty Duren is LifeWay's social media strategist. He can be reached at [marty.duren@lifeway.com](mailto:marty.duren@lifeway.com).

# The Exchange

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research

## Guiding beliefs

**B**eing able to discern the difference between attitudes in the “pulpit” and in the “pew” is a critical skill for the church leader. All church leaders (vocational and volunteer) need to know if there is a disconnect or difference with the beliefs of a congregation. In recent studies by LifeWay Research, we discovered that such a difference exists on a national level between Protestant clergy and Protestant churchgoers.

In a survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors, they were asked to respond to the statement, “If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity.” Only 12 percent agreed with the statement. A full 77 percent strongly disagreed and 7 percent somewhat disagreed. It is an overwhelming number that believe that salvation is exclusively found in the Christ of Christianity. Additionally, it is an indicator that most pastors are in line with historic the Christian belief of the necessity of Christ for salvation.

However, a different belief system is present when we surveyed Protestant churchgoers. When presented with the same statement, just 32 percent of churchgoers disagree strongly and 8 percent somewhat disagree. The shift from 84 percent of total disagreement by pastors to a total of 40 percent disagreement by parishioners should set off alarm bells for church leaders.

On the issue that is perhaps the essential of our faith – salvation through Christ alone – there is not agreement between the pulpit and the pew. The question is how can a pastor address the universalism that is creeping into the church.

First, address it publicly. In a separate survey of



**“On the issue that is perhaps the essential of our faith – salvation through Christ alone – there is not agreement between the pulpit and the pew.”**

— Ed Stetzer

1,000 Protestant pastors, we found that they overwhelmingly believe that sermons during weekly worship service and other pastor-led teaching times (such as Sunday evening or Wednesday evening) are the primary vehicles for discipling the church. If that is the case, then a clear case for the gospel should be made in those gatherings. Pastors should present the gospel as a necessity for salvation for the lost and as the guiding principle in life for the saved.

Secondly, move your small group structure toward a gospel-centered focus. Believers will listen to sermons, but many need the dialogue of a small group (Sunday school class or off-campus group) to personally appropriate the belief. It is one of the reasons I've invested so much time in The Gospel Project (releasing fall 2012). Though preachers can make a large doctrinal splash during worship services, people will often need to work through passages in community with one another to truly learn all of its implications. Leading your small groups to focus on the gospel will enable them to see the

necessity of the Christ's work alone for salvation.

Finally, do regular check-ups with the congregation. Obviously, I believe that facts are our friends or I would not work in research. I meet too many pastors who don't fully know what is going on in the lives of their church members simply because they don't ask. Find a good assessment or survey instrument and use it regularly to ensure that everyone is still on the same doctrinal page.

The issue of the exclusivity of Christ for salvation is at the heart of what we do. I hope that, as church leaders, we will be willing to face the facts of our culture head-on and help all believers to do the same. ■

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## MORE

Follow more of Ed Stetzer's thoughts on his blog: [EdStetzer.com](http://EdStetzer.com).

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## Related content:

Turn to pages 6-7 for more details on LifeWay Research's findings about pastors and congregations.

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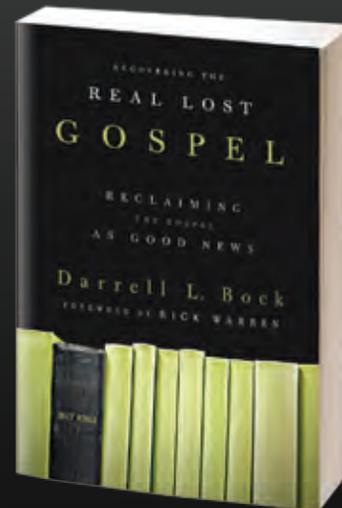
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