

BaptistWay Bible study materials for adults become self-supporting_92004

September 16, 2004

Posted: 9/17/04

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BaptistWay Press adult Bible study materials have become financially self-supporting for the first time in their four-year history.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas publisher sold \$260,000 in adult Bible resources in the first eight months of this year while spending \$250,000. This marks the first time BaptistWay adult materials have turned a net profit. With this revenue stream, BaptistWay will not need BGCT funding in 2005.

This is a significant step convention leaders have desired since the inception of BaptistWay Press, said Lynn Eckeberger, coordinator of the BGCT church health and growth section. Texas Baptists churches of varying sizes and locations are purchasing the resources.

The sales increase is “certainly indicative of the interest of Texas Baptists to support curriculum that is true to Baptist distinctives,” Eckeberger said.

Money created by sales of adult materials helps offset the cost of producing adult support, preschool, and children's Bible study resources, which are offered for free online. Language curriculum, supported by the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions, also is provided free online.

At this point, funds generated by the adult literature do not cover fully all expenditures for the online resources.

But sales are increasing. Projected figures for the year indicate a 35 percent climb in sales. Dennis Parrott, director of the BGCT Bible Study/Discipleship Center, estimates \$390,000 will be generated by the adult materials, compared to \$375,000 that will be expended to produce them.

Eckeberger praised the work of the BGCT Bible Study/Discipleship Center for going “above and beyond” to make churches aware of BaptistWay resources. Staff members have outlined the strengths of the materials in many congregations.

The primary source for revenue continues to be Texas Baptist churches, but other areas are expanding as well. Baptist conventions in North Carolina, Washington, D.C., and Missouri have held BaptistWay events. The Baptist General Association of Virginia has added a BaptistWay link to its web site. Believers from around the world use the language materials.

The widespread interest in BaptistWay resources indicates they are high quality materials that are meeting the needs of Christians, Parrott said.

“Though it is written primarily by Texas Baptists, it's not just for Texas Baptists,” Parrott said. “It's for all Baptists.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.