

# LifeWay taps \$6 million for relief funds

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**By Rob Phillips**

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources unanimously voted to authorize the company's executive leaders to use \$6 million in reserve funds to help Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

LifeWay President Jimmy Draper recommended the action to the trustees' executive committee, which brought the matter before the full board of trustees Sept. 12.

The funding will begin immediately and continue throughout the 2006 fiscal year, which runs from Oct. 1, 2005, through Sept. 30, 2006.

"We will disperse these funds based on specific identified needs," Draper noted. "The expectation is that assistance will go to the state conventions in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, to states assisting in handling evacuees, and possibly to the North American Mission Board and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary."

An estimated 925 Southern Baptist churches in the three states were destroyed or severely damaged. The North American Mission Board is

coordinating the SBC's relief efforts across the region. More than 5,000 volunteers are on site, feeding the hungry and working with other relief groups to provide housing and other basic needs.

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in the worst natural disaster in U.S. history, LifeWay, an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, donated \$10,000 each to the Baptist state conventions of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

The Nashville-based nonprofit organization continues to work directly with scores of churches in the three states to restore damaged libraries at deep discounts and to replace at no cost any dated LifeWay curriculum lost in the storm.

"We're partners in ministry with the state conventions of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, but even more important, we're their friends," Draper said. "When their churches hurt, we hurt, and with these donations we simply wanted to provide a tangible sign that we are praying for them and standing beside them."

In addition to contributions to state conventions, LifeWay for years has provided disaster assistance to Southern Baptist churches impacted by natural disasters, fires, theft and vandalism.

"Our goal is to help churches continue to minister spiritually to their congregations while they get back on their feet after a disaster," said Mike Arrington, vice president of the corporate affairs division, which administers the company's disaster relief program.

Affected Southern Baptist churches are encouraged to call LifeWay's disaster assistance line at 1-800-357-7029.

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