

**State Sunday School Director's Association Annual May Meeting**  
**West Yellowstone, Montana**  
**May 16-18, 2007**

**Wednesday, May 16, 2007, Morning Session**

Mark Langley welcomed the State Sunday School Directors to the Annual meeting and shared his excitement that they were in Montana.

Mark introduced Dr. Brad Wagoneer, Lifeway Vice President of Research and Ministry Development, presented information about new research that Lifeway has just released about teenagers.

Below is a synopsis of that research as reported in the Lifeway Research e-Newsletter (6/4/07)

**LifeWay Research Examines Teenagers' Views on Eternity**

*Written by Libby Lovelace*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Results from a recent LifeWay Research study indicate that many American teenagers are confused about what it takes to get to heaven.

More than 1,000 teenagers were surveyed in January and February of 2007 by mail questionnaire. These results are compared to an identical survey conducted in 2005. Each sample consisted of 12-19 year-olds.

Results show that 69 percent of teenagers believe heaven exists. Also, a majority of teens agree with the traditional Christian belief in Jesus Christ's death for their sins as the reason they will go to heaven (53 percent strongly agree, 16 percent somewhat agree).

While many teenagers believe they will go to heaven because of their belief in Jesus Christ, one quarter trust in their own kindness to others (27 percent) or their religiosity (26 percent) as their means to get to heaven.

Out of those who believe in Jesus Christ, the majority have confused or intentionally combined ideas as to how to get to heaven.

Out of the 69 percent of the teenagers who strongly or somewhat agree they will go to heaven because Jesus Christ died for their sins, 60 percent also agree that they will go to heaven because they are religious, and 60 percent also agree they will go to heaven because they are kind to others.

This indicates that approximately 28 percent of American teenagers are trusting only in Jesus Christ as their means to get to heaven.

"The central theme of Christianity is the person and work of Jesus Christ – His death and resurrection," said Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research. "It is surprising that only about half the teenagers who attended a Christian church in the last month are depending solely on the grace of Jesus Christ to get to heaven."

**Uncertainty about heaven**

Though the large majority of teenagers believe heaven exists (69 percent), there has been a 6 percent drop since 2005 (75 percent) in the percentage of teens who are sure in their belief of heaven. Only 5 percent of teenagers strongly agree that they do not believe heaven exists.

African American teenagers are more likely to believe in heaven than the average teen (81 percent vs. 70 percent). Girls (73 percent) are also more likely to strongly agree heaven exists when compared to guys (66 percent).

Twenty-six percent of teenagers don't know if heaven is in their future, and similar uncertainty (24 percent) exists among teenagers who agree they will go to heaven because Jesus Christ died for their sins.

Four percent of teenagers strongly agree with the statement, "I don't care if I go to heaven."

### **Religious activities and involvement**

Many teenagers have attended a church or religious service in the last 30 days (54 percent). Twenty percent attended a Catholic service, 8 percent attended a Southern Baptist service, and 28 percent attended some other type of Christian service. Four percent indicated they attended a religious service of a religion other than Christian.

Involvement in other church activities is much less common than attending church services. Twenty-three percent indicated that in the last 30 days they attended a church youth group social activity. Twenty percent attended Sunday school, 14 percent attended a small-group Bible study, and 8 percent have been in a leadership role within their youth group.

When asked about personal religious activity within the last 30 days, 39 percent of respondents said they prayed regularly and 14 percent said they read the Bible regularly during that time.

Compared to the 2005 results, there are several significant statistical declines. Fewer teens are attending Sunday school (20 percent vs. 24 percent) and small-group Bible studies (14 percent vs. 18 percent).

As for outreach activity, fewer teenagers are discussing their beliefs with friends and inviting them to church activities. Twenty-four percent said they had told a friend about their religious beliefs in the last 30 days (compared to 30 percent in 2005). Fifteen percent had invited someone to a church activity in the last 30 days (compared to 19 percent in 2005).

"Previous research has shown the vital role that invitations and word of mouth have in motivating people to visit church," McConnell said. "As outreach has declined among teens, it is not surprising that Bible study attendance has also declined."

### **Age and gender differences**

Older teens (18 and 19 year-olds) are less likely than 12-17 year-olds to attend youth group activities (13 percent vs. 26 percent), and they are less likely to attend Sunday school (8 percent vs. 24 percent).

Female teens are more active religiously than their male counterparts. More females pray regularly (48 percent vs. 31 percent) and read the Bible regularly (17 percent vs. 11 percent) than male teenagers.

The level of teen participation is also higher for females than males for church youth group social activities (26 percent vs. 20 percent), small group Bible studies (18 percent vs. 11 percent), and leadership roles in their church youth group (10 percent vs. 6 percent).

To listen to a podcast with McConnell discussing this research, go to [www.lifeway.com/insidelifeway](http://www.lifeway.com/insidelifeway). Inside LifeWay is the official news podcast of LifeWay Christian Resources. Read more about what these findings mean for church leaders by going online to [www.lifewayresearch.com](http://www.lifewayresearch.com).

Out of the discussion, Dr. Wagoneer suggested two great books:

- Creative Bible Teaching by Lawrence Richards, Gary Bredfeldt
- Great Leader, Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership by Gary Bredfeldt



Students want substance  
Fuel2 doing well

- 4. Grouping Adults by Life Stage      Age grading still good  
A hybrid—averaging ages
- 5. Growing Preference for Bible Book      ETB starts new 8 year cycle in Fall 07  
Four 2 year mini-cycles (balance)
- 6. On-line Delivery of Curriculum  
Materials      The way the teacher teaches  
Go digital, stay Biblical
- 7. A return to a standard curriculum      Makes it easier to enlist/train new workers  
Start new classes
- 8. Calling Sunday School by other names  
Most people don't care  
Applies to denominational labels
- 9. Small Groups      Need to be familiar with small groups,  
discipleship training and Sunday  
School

Class/group format	Main Purpose	Top Benefits*	How different?
Small groups	Discussion and fellowship	1. Flexible 2. Intimate 3. Informal	1. Held off-campus (usually) 2. Limited # of group members 3. Most informal and least in-depth study of Scripture
Sunday School classes	Bible study	1. Familiar/Traditional 2. Welcoming 3. Structured	1. Held in church on Sunday mornings 2. Participants grouped by age/maturity 3. Most structured, traditional class format
Discipleship courses	Disciplemaking/equipping	1. In-depth 2. Personalized 3. Short-term	1. Short-term groups organized by topic of interest 2. Courses often include one-on-one mentoring 3. Most introspective, least fellowship-oriented

- 10. Simple Church      4 step process
- 11. Invitation = Evangelism      Is our current model really working?  
Personal evangelism

## Church evangelism

### **Thursday, May 17, 2007, Morning Session**

Steve Sallis, New York, shared a devotion from John 9. His questions: What are you pretending not to know? There are some important things we do know: keeping spiritual life refreshed is key as well as sharing the gospel and ministry. Jesus can change our lives...we do KNOW? Jesus!

### **Workgroup Reports**

**Darryl Wilson, Kentucky, and chairman of the Issues Discovery Workgroup reported the following issues discovered:**

1. Collegiate/youth/young adults
2. Technology
3. Small group –look into launching curriculum  
(Darryl asked everyone to send to Sandy Coelho every article, paper, and presentation that members had done on small groups so that this could be compiled on our website.)

Darryl reminded the group that we need to plant seeds. We need to intentionally ask churches to start 1 group outside of church. Challenge churches to start 1 new group. Serendipity is working on a 6 week launch book for small groups. We also need to connect small groups with collegiate ministries.

4. Single adults: segregate or integrate?
5. Decongesting Sunday School – is Sunday School really our passion?
6. New units/enrollment – we need to emphasize enrollment

**Rob Lee, Utah-Idaho, and chairman of the Church Planting Workgroup gave the following report:**

#### **State Sunday School Directors Church Planting Group Report**

Update on what NAMB and Lifeway are doing related to Church Planting handouts.

NAMB is hiring a person to help church plants become healthy and are discussing staying with them for up to six years. This leads to the question when does a church plant become a church?

California has seen a great increase in the survivability of church plants since the Church Health Group and Church Planting Group have started to work together.

Nevada hears about church plants late in the process and usually after the plant has happened.

Discussion on how do we get involved in the Church planting process. The key is where there is money those are involved in the process and at the table. Church Development/State Sunday School people use to be at the table when Lifeway gave us new starts funds. Montana, Nevada, Utah-Idaho were at the table then. **We would like for Lifeway to reconsider this support that David Laird was a part of implementing in early 90's. They also had excellent Outreach Bible study materials that were used.**

Lifeway will have a church planting person in the pastoral Ministries department this October. Lifeway is very excited about getting involved in church plants and everyone is talking about it. Coming out of West Regions SUMMIT in Phoenix Lifeway went back having heard that Church Planting is critical to the health of emerging regions.

NAMB has leader training and mentors for Church Planters but there is no talk about having quality Bible teaching. This has also lead to the issue that the Leadership development has used a corporate model of leadership instead of developing Pastors.

How do we get Church Planters to see Church Health is a need from Day One? We need to see models that are still working with Sunday School in the DNA to help show the principles still work. The key in the Dakota's is that the church plant has to have a Discipleship Process in their ministry plan otherwise the convention will not support the start. We also need to raise up and train bivocational pastors that are indigenous.

**Must have Peace Making, Bible Study, and Discipleship Training to cause a church plant to survive.** We must own the church planters (spend) time with the planter from day one, mentor church planters under a healthy pastor for a period of time.

Who are church planters? They don't have training to do a healthy church plant from just a few classes at seminary. Many times these are the folks who couldn't get a church position so they turn to church planting. They need practical training.

**We must build a support system/network for Church Planters with the focus on Church health (Discipleship and Bible Study).** Discipleship is the key to survival and must be put into the DNA. Develop Pastor/mentors, Church development, partner whole church to church plant, clustering retired ministers to start a church (Lifeway retired folks are a great potential to help in this area).

Basic requirements/covenant with church plants at day one

Set down with State Director of Missions/Church Planter to put process together, get Associational Director of Missions on board with process, Go see every church planter on the field, and have a new pastor & Church planters orientation for your convention and make sure you are a part of this. Relationships are key.

Attendance was all emerging region folks and Rich Murrell from Lifeway.

Rob Lee provided these reports about the NAMB and Lifeway process:

## **DOM ADVISORY TEAM FOR LAUNCHING HEALTHY CHURCHES REPORT**

### **2006 Priority Recommendations from DOM New Church Start Advisory Team**

- ❖ LifeWay needs to identify a “champion” for responding and relating to church planters. This champion would be to develop relationships with state church planting leaders, Directors of Mission and local church planters for resource processing and development.
- ❖ LifeWay can develop quick wins by...
  - Identifying current resources that can be used by new church starts.
  - Creating a new church start section in the LW and NAMB catalogue.
  - Creating awareness and equipping for LW personnel in new church start resources.
  - Ask NAMB to put LW new church start resources onto NAMB’s church planting village website.
  - Repackaging current LW resources for new church starts to include ethnics and African-Americans culture.
  - Developing a strategy for training and discipling new believers in a new church start.
  - Developing and communicating new church start materials.
- ❖ LifeWay needs to have a functional “tool box” that would be developed by church planters to include...
  - On-line Bible studies for church planters to download.
  - Samples of new church start specific resources developed by LW.
  - Self-help equipping tools for church planters to infuse healthy church DNA.
  - Develop an assessment tool in determining the health of a new church start plant.
- ❖ LifeWay and NAMB partner together to develop a process of intentionally infusing healthy church DNA into all new church starts.
- ❖ LifeWay needs to develop a communication and partnering strategy to raise the awareness for launching healthy churches.
- ❖ LifeWay needs to jointly develop a workgroup with NAMB, State Conventions, Associations, and Church Planters to recommend to LifeWay a process for launching healthy churches.
- ❖ LifeWay Research needs to develop a survey to discover the need for launching healthy churches.

### **LifeWay Response Update**

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|--------------------|---|
| August 21-22, 2006 | A group of four Directors of Mission, four State Directors of Mission, one church planter, one NAMB church planting leader, and two LifeWay leaders worked together on developing a list of solutions to address how LifeWay might resource new church starts. A report and recommendations were submitted to John Kramp in September 2006.   |
| December 5-7, 2006 | Four regional summits were conducted simultaneously with three of the four spending significant time on church planting. A consolidation of those notes concluded that LW must be more involved in partnering with NAMB in launching healthy churches. Dr. Tom Hellams responded to the West Regional Summit that LifeWay was seriously considering how to get involved in church planting. |
| December 2006      | John Shepherd in Pastoral Ministries made a proposal to have a new church starts position added to their staff.   |
| January 23, 2007   | A follow up meeting was held by Gary Jennings and Rick Howerton to discuss on how to proceed with the findings of the regional summits. A “Launching Healthy Church WorkGroup” proposal and action plan was developed to meet that need   |

in getting specifics on what are the best creative ways for LifeWay to make a difference in partnership with NAMB, State Conventions, Associations, and Church Planters.

- January 2007      An announcement was made from John Kramp that LifeWay's Church Resources Division would be adding a new church start initiative to the budget and would be a full time position in Pastoral Ministries supervised by John Shepherd. John is currently interviewing candidates and hopes to have the position filled by June 2007.
- February 15, 2007      Gary Hauk, Director of Publishing, asked for a meeting to include topics such as: (1) what new churches might need; (2) current resources/training that might be helpful; and (3) some new strategies for helping new churches.
- March 2007      Dr. Hellams hosted a meeting between NAMB and LifeWay here in our building to discuss ways on how the two entities could work together to launch healthy churches. That meeting included the following....
- ❖ A decision to have a joint research project that will survey what church planters need. Results will be available prior to the SBC in San Antonio.
  - ❖ A decision to host focus groups at the Church Planting Conference in Orlando in April 2007 to raise awareness.
  - ❖ A willingness and commitment to work together for launching healthy churches.

#### **What we are asking?**

- ❖ What does a healthy church plant look like? Balanced? Missional? Reproducing? etc
- ❖ Can healthy DNA be infused in an existing new church start? If so, how?
- ❖ What are current SBC and non-SBC resources related to launching healthy churches?
- ❖ What are state conventions doing in launching healthy churches?
- ❖ What assessment tools are there to assist associations and state conventions in recruiting healthy launchers?
- ❖ What churches are committed to launching healthy churches?
- ❖ What existing state convention and associations strategies focus on launching healthy churches?
- ❖ Is there a curriculum that teaches a step-by-step method in launching a healthy church?

**End Goal: *Launch and establish rapport and relevance for LifeWay as a church planting collaborator.***

#### **What we are recommending?**

1. Develop a New Church Champion profile.
2. Recommend a time line to the new church champion to accomplish specific goals.
3. Recommend suggestions for a church planter's tool box to launch healthy churches.
4. Create a template for healthy DNA.
5. A survey to find out what church planter networks are doing currently to promote Launching Healthy Churches.
6. Create and communicate a list of LifeWay resources that are available to church planter networks.

#### **Recommendation specifics**

1. *Develop a New Church Champion profile.*
  - ❖ Church planter/multiplier
  - ❖ Networker of SBC & non-SBC church planting individuals and groups
  - ❖ Writer and designer of Launching Healthy Churches resources
  - ❖ National Leader that has great communication, listening and people skills
  - ❖ Catalyst for inside and external influencers and bridge builders

- ❖ Collector & collaborator of national, state, associational and local church planting resources and strategies.

2. Recommend an April '07 -Dec '08 time line to the new church champion to accomplish specific goals.

April '07	design a church planter network survey that will reveal current issues and strategies to Launching Healthy Churches.
June '07	new church position filled in Pastoral Ministries; Stetzer/Waggoner Church Planter Survey results made public
Summer '07	LifeWay church health resources, events, and strategies identified and communicated to SBC church planting networks
Oct '07	New Church leader introduced and leads New Church Start Advisory Team
Dec '07	New Church leader introduced and has significant role in December Summit
April '08	New Church leader leads New Church Start Advisory Team
Oct '08	New Church leader leads New Church Start Advisory Team
Dec '08	Assessment

3. Recommend suggestions for a church planter's tool box to launch healthy churches.

LifeWay host a tool box website that will include resources, models, and strategies. Contents to include resources for the following....

- ❖ Launch and pre-launch customizable LifeWay and NAMB resources
- ❖ Pastor section to assist their shepherding, teaching and leading.
- ❖ Three-five year commitment from LifeWay on how they will assist church planters.
- ❖ How to develop healthy small groups
- ❖ Undated Bible study resources
- ❖ Free new church start order information
- ❖ Financial, time, personnel and staff management information
- ❖ How to develop a Launching Healthy Churches growth strategy.
- ❖ Outreach section
- ❖ How to access and use LifeWay and NAMB resources
- ❖ Church health assessment tool/guide
- ❖ Offer a box of The Gift New Testaments to witness and share with searchers
- ❖ Worship Project info
- ❖ Stewardship info
- ❖ Leadership development

4. Create a template for healthy DNA.

- ❖ Discover, adapt or develop an assessment tool that evaluates and gages healthy church indicators.
- ❖ Suggest that LifeWay and NAMB develop this tool together with mileposts for pre- and post-launch timelines
- ❖ Template is suggested to include 6-10 church health indicators that will guide the development of an effective, relevant church planters' tool box and church planting strategy.

5. A survey to find out what church planter networks are doing currently to promote LHC.

- ❖ Identify current SBC church planting networks.
- ❖ Survey to target SBC church planting networks including state, association, local churches, NAMB, and church planters.
- ❖ Survey to be a simple, email format.
- ❖ Questions to be asked are....
  1. What are your current initiatives in Launching Healthy Churches?
  2. What are your greatest challenges/obstacles in Launching Healthy Churches?
  3. What is the role of the association in Launching Healthy Churches?
  4. How does the association work with SBC & other entities in Launching Healthy Churches?
  5. What is the best example of healthy church planting in your area? (Please give details.)

6. Create and communicate a list of LifeWay resources that are available to church planter networks.
  - ❖ Dr. Hellams committed to NAMB/LifeWay March meeting that this will be done as soon as possible.
  - ❖ John Shepherd is assisting Dr. Hellams on this project.

## **The Church Planting Process Overview**

Although you may not recognize it, many activities in life are done in an orderly fashion with the hope of a particular, predictable outcome. For example, we get up in the morning and do certain things to prepare for the new day. We may stretch, brush our teeth, take a shower, put on clothes, drink a cup of coffee, grab our keys, and head for the car. The order in which these activities are done may vary; and we may even add to or subtract from the list. The desired outcome, however, is to get to work. When we do this week after week, it is called a routine. This series of activities form what is known as a process.

Processes get us from point “A” to point “B.” They are the underlying or basic organizational components that direct our activities so we will reach a preferred destination or outcome. Processes define how we will move from vision to reality.

Church planting is no different. There are certain things that must be done to plant healthy, reproducing churches in order to touch lost people with Christ. There are four keys or foundational components of any effective Church Planting Process (CPP): (1) Readiness, (2) Enlistment, (3) Equipping, and (4) New Church Strengthening and Reproduction.

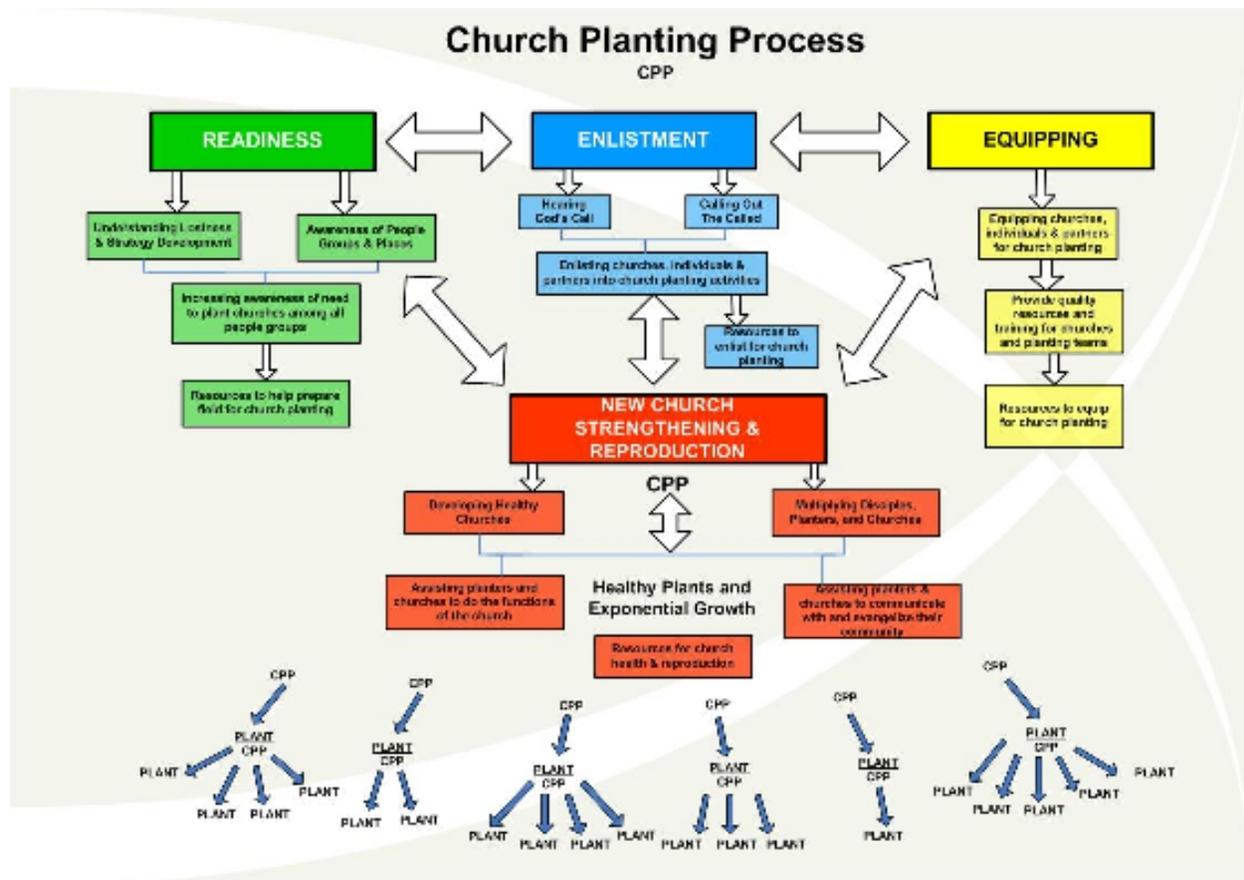
The North American Mission Board’s Church Planting Process has very specific desired outcomes. **READINESS** builds an awareness of lostness and the need to plant churches contextualized for specific people groups. When Readiness has fulfilled its desired outcome, churches, planters, and planting teams are **aware** of God’s call on their lives to reach the people groups around them who do not know Jesus. They are willing to explore what God is calling them to do.

The **ENLISTMENT** component of the Church Planting Process engages individuals and churches in church planting activities. The desired outcome of Enlistment is individuals and churches actively engaged in church planting endeavors. They are **committed** to church planting.

The **EQUIPPING** component of the Church Planting Process provides the resources, training, skill development, and nurture needed by churches, planters, planting teams, and those who work with them. The desired outcome of Equipping is that churches and individuals are **equipped** for effectively planting healthy, reproducing churches among all people groups across North America.

The final component of the Church Planting Process—**NEW CHURCH STRENGTHENING and REPRODUCTION**—is designed to foster church health, life, and growth in newly planted churches. The desired outcome of this component is strong, healthy churches that are **reproducing** new Christians, leaders, planters, planting teams, and churches.

When existing and new churches use the Church Planting Process to reproduce these desired outcomes, the results are an ongoing cycle of reproduction that can lead to the exponential growth of God’s kingdom. Over time, and through partnership with the Father (Acts 1:8), His kingdom will advance into the vast segments of lostness in North America and the world.



**Steve Sallis, New York, and chairman of the Field Service Workgroup gave the following report:**

1. Lifeway Trainer Days are taken care of by Network Partners and the submit date cannot be changed due to Lifeway's budget process.
2. Development of a database of the State Sunday School directors and their specialties
3. Continue to share our resources through the website
4. Continuation of the field service workgroup only if necessary

**Richard Nations, Iowa, and chairman of the Technology Workgroup gave the following report:**

1. Technology as it intersects with Sunday School  
Richard noted two promising mediums: Equip (a Canadian group that is providing training videos on-line) and Blogging (Darryl Wilson, KY, is using this way of communication and has had more than 14,000 hits... it is a great way to get information out there.

## 2. SSDF website

Sandy Coelho noted that since she took over from Randy Tompkins last year, she has spent much of the time transitioning the website... changing the look, making updates, etc. She continues to look for feedback from the members with suggestions and she is also looking to find out how to tweak the system even more to make it more user friendly.

## 3. sundayschooldirector.com (.net and .org) website

Sandy Coelho reported that she is finally getting ready to start putting content up on the site. The group spent time reviewing the layout of the content and Sandy recorded information that the group was going to send over the next few weeks.

Mark Langley used the last few minutes of the session helping the group to decide about details for next year's meeting in Orlando, Florida.

John Boone shared that he has gotten the information so that we can be in the Disney Resort... Rooms would be \$155/night ... This is a tourist destination so it is going to be more costly. The group would also have to spend \$4000 in food... Sandy Coelho noted that this might be possible with the banquet as well as having a meals package for the whole event. There was a consensus that this would be a good idea. It was suggested that we use Lake Yale, but the consensus was that this was not up to good standards. A vote taken revealed that all but one wanted to use the Disney facilities.

## **Friday, May 18, 2007, Morning Session**

Myron Gruenich, Dakotas, shared a devotion from Haggai 1:1-11. God wants us to participate in His agenda, invest in his Kingdom, and look to him for his provision. The group spent time praying for specific requests around the table.

Sandy Coelho shared a report of the budget for 2006-2007. Keily Young motioned to accept the report, seconded by Darryl Wilson. Budget report accepted. Sandy also presented her 2007-2008 Budget. Budget approved by consensus.

Bob Mayfield brought the recommendations for officers and workgroup chairpersons. Recommendations approved unanimously.

Mark Langley shared with the group that the Officers would be getting together at Glorieta to discuss the format of the May meeting and would welcome any suggestions or comments.

The officers would be changing the 2009 meeting as there is going to be a change in Illinois. They would bring a recommendation at next year's meeting.

#### Miscellaneous Business

1. Steve Sallis shared the Field Service form for directors to complete. He would compile and see that Sandy gets it for the website.
2. Steve Sallis made a motion to show appreciation for Sandy's support staff for all of the stuff they do to support the work of the Association. Motion approved.
3. A special thanks to the Alumni for coming and being a part of our meeting.
4. Richard Nations made a motion that Mark Langley write a letter to Lifeway thanking them for their support. Motion approved.
5. A special thanks to Rich Murrell for this presence.
6. Keily Young asked about the May meeting being a mission opportunity. This would be discussed by the officers in July.

Steve Sallis closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Coelho  
Clerk/Treasurer