

Everything I Would Want to Know if I Were Contributing to the Lehman Immanuel Approach Ministry Fund

(Last revised 2/14/2025)

Where would the resources from the Lehman IA ministry fund go?: For many years, Charlotte and I have been covering all of the hard costs for the resources/activities summarized below, and I have been contributing twenty to thirty hours of non-reimbursed time each week to these activities.¹ In recent years, I have been especially pouring into InterVarsity, during the front-end-loading phase of getting them started with respect to the Immanuel Approach. Reimbursement from the InterVarsity IA training fund for the time I have given them has covered 20 to 25 percent of my usual 20-30 hours/week contribution to the global ministry community. Going forward, if gifts to the Lehman IA Ministry fund can continue to reimburse us for this 20-25 percent, we will be able to continue with everything describe below.²

1. *Ongoing study, new content:* Regular consultation with peers, constant ongoing study of professional literature, constant ongoing testing and observation in sessions. Preparing the best possible new content for the global IA community, most of which is made available at no cost (newsletters, website essays, podcasts, videos, etc.).

2. *Updating/optimizing old content:* For example, updating/optimizing the many hundreds of pages of old essays on the kclehman website. Most/all made available at no cost.

3. *Immanuel Approach website:* Hard costs³, time to manage/maintain.

4. *Immanuel Approach network directory:* Hard costs, time to manage/maintain.

5. *Consultations, mentoring for key people in IA community:* Consultation, mentoring for strategic leaders, trainers, IA “evangelists,” influencers – many of whom are lay-volunteers with minimal resources.

6. *Promoting IA in every possible way:*

Reaching out to strategic contacts/gatekeepers: Teen Challenge, Alpha Course, US military, seminaries (Regent, Wheaton, Western, Duke), World Discipleship Association (WDA), Hope Worldwide, Compassion International

Strategic networking: Chick-Fil-A think-tank, American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), Living Wholeness, Life Model Works, etc.

7. *IA mission teams to areas of special need (E.g., Uganda, Tajikistan, India, Ukraine, Isreal):*

¹ If you are wondering, “How on earth can they afford to do this?”: Charlotte’s salary as the pastor of our church, fees from my small private practice and mentoring groups, and income from our books and DVDs, combined with living very simply, make just enough space for the time and materials we give to the IA community.

² This is a real bargain! For every dollar you contribute, Charlotte and I will contribute four to five dollars worth of time and hard costs.

³ My rough estimate for the cost of domain names, website hosting, website security, website software, consultation for network directory design, and ongoing tech support over the past 20 years = \$50,000.

Recruit leader/whole team/additional team members

Provide various degrees of preparatory training

Work with leader(s) to develop customized material that would be most effective and appropriate for the specific situations they will be facing.

Provide zoom, email, phone consultation while they are on the trip

Provide consultation to maximize learning, debriefing/aftercare following trip

8. InterVarsity, International Federation of Evangelical Students (IFES), REVIVE Europe: Training, supervision, consultation. Urbana and other conferences: team leader onsite, help recruit and prep volunteers, help train staff.

9. Foreign language translations: Many hundreds of hours gathering translated material and making it available from our website. Including translations for the crisis areas that IA teams have been to – Ukrainian & Russian (Ukraine), Hebrew (Israel). Website currently provides free download material in 18 languages.

10. Research: Recruiting, consultation, support for research regarding the Immanuel Approach. Working with graduate students and professors at various seminaries and graduate schools to produce rigorous research support for the Immanuel Approach.

11. Support for other ministries, churches, and individuals: Strategic support of various kinds for a number of other ministries, churches, and individuals working with refugees, working in third world countries, working in inner city neighborhoods, etc, where the needs are huge and the resources are minimal.

Websites with no charges/subscription fees: When I discuss our ministry finances with people, a question that often comes up is, “Why don’t you pay for your ministry work by charging a subscription fee for access to all of the fantastic material on your websites?” I realize that this is not *directly* related to the Lehman IA Ministry fund, but my perception is that any issue related to overall stewardship competence and conscientiousness will affect people’s intuitive discernment when they are deciding where to send their hard-earned dollars in response to the overwhelming number of requests for charitable donations that constantly pour into our inboxes.

So here is the quick summary regarding our decision to not charge for access to our websites: When someone hears about a new ministry resource of some kind, such as the Immanuel Approach, they will be much more likely to explore it and pursue it if they can quickly and easily find good, free information about the new resource. Even with no fee, just needing to fill out a registration form that requires contact information will dramatically reduce the number of people who explore and pursue. I know this is true for me -- if I am exploring some new topic or resource, and all of the websites I find as I begin my research require registration and/or subscription for all of the good stuff, I will often just drop my fledgling exploration into the new topic/resource and move onto one of the many other issues/questions/topics/tasks clamoring for my attention.

In fact, in recent conversations with a business consultant, he mentioned fascinating research results regarding this very phenomenon. As we all know, a very common strategy is for the developer of some

new resource to initially offer it for free. Initially, the new video game, or the new software for counting your calories and tracking your exercise, or the new medical information website is free. But then after you have been using the new video game (or software, or website) for a while, and have come to really like it, you get the notice, “for only \$9.99/month, you can continue using our wonderful product.” The fascinating finding from research studying this common start-up marketing technique is that, *consistently*, around **90% of users** promptly drop out when new product developers start charging. And these studies don’t even talk about the people who will be less likely to ever even try the new product, now that it is no longer free.

Our sense is that the Lord wants us to offer a generous buffet of excellent, easy-access, free introductory material to make it as easy as possible for as many as possible to explore and pursue the Immanuel Approach. (Our hope is that once people really engage with the Immanuel Approach, and discover how profoundly effective and life-giving it is, they will eventually buy a couple of books and a few training DVDs, and maybe even contribute to the Lehman IA ministry fund. But we want to make it as easy as possible for people to get a really good, strong start.)

Income from books, DVDs, online courses: Just like not charging for our websites, income from our books and other products is not directly related to the Lehman IA ministry fund. But I’m guessing that at some subtle, intuitive level, many people’s internal algebra includes thoughts along the lines of, “Yes, it’s certainly reasonable that Dr. Lehman wants to be reimbursed for at least some of the time, materials, and hard costs that he pours into the global ministry community, but there are other causes that need the money more. The Lehmans must be making quite a bit of money on all of those books and DVDs and online courses – they don’t really need my support.”

In response to this possible internal algebra, a few concrete data points might be helpful. For example, with *Outsmarting Yourself*, I have spent more than 10,000 hours writing, editing, publishing, and managing sales. (This includes work on the first edition, second edition, and digital edition.) After subtracting costs for publishing consultation, proofreading, professional indexing, printing, shipping, and 25% commission for the team that does our fulfillment, we make \$15 for each book sold. We have sold about 6,750 books so far, which multiplied by \$15/book and divided by 10,000 hours = \$10.12/hour for the 10,000 hours invested over the past 17 years since I first started working on *Outsmarting Yourself*.

And the numbers are even worse for the *The Immanuel Approach* (big lion book), *Mind and Brain*, the two new intro books, and our DVDs. Regarding the big lion book, my perception is that MANY use the free resources from the website, but far fewer buy the actual book. Regarding our DVDs, my perception is that MANY watch the free preview/trailer versions of our live ministry sessions, and find them to be excellent, inspiring intro appetizers for the Immanuel Approach, but very few ever buy any of the actual DVDs.

We try to lead by example: Just in case this helps with donor morale, Charlotte and I try to lead by example in contributing to the global Immanuel Approach endeavor. We have always pitched in at least as much time, materials, and money as the most generous donors from the wider Immanuel Approach community.