

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

(Last revised 6/9/2025)

**NOTE:** The Lehman Immanuel Approach Ministry Fund is not set up as a 501(c)(3), so your contributions will not be tax-deductible (more details in section IV below).

**I. Overview regarding Lehman Immanuel Approach Ministry Fund stewardship:** 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 Immanuel Approach 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.<sup>2</sup> If you do the math, this is a fantastic deal -- For every dollar you give, Charlotte and I will provide four to five dollars worth of my time to the global IA community, in additional to continuing to cover all of the hard costs described below. With the hard costs included, this is at least a five-for-the-price-of-one bargain!

## II. Where would the resources from the Lehman IA ministry fund go?:

*A. 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.).

*B. 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.

*C. Immanuel Approach website:* Hard costs<sup>3</sup>, time to manage/maintain.

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

*E. 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.

*F. Promoting IA in every possible way:*

Reaching out to strategic contacts/gatekeepers: Teen Challenge, Alpha Course, US military, American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), World Discipleship Association (WDA), Hope Worldwide, Living Wholeness, Compassion International, Trauma Healing Institute (THI), Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA), Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Saddleback Church Mental Health Initiative, seminaries & universities (Regent University, Wheaton University, Western Theological Seminary, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminar (AMBS), Easter Mennonite Seminary (EMS), Duke Divinity School, Fuller Seminary, Pepperdine University, Truth Christian Ministries (TCM) International Institute), etc.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

*G. Strategic networking, collaboration:* Chick-Fil-A think-tank, Life Model Works, efficacy research with Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling (NICC), etc.

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

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 trips

*I. 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.

*J. 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 eighteen languages.

*K. 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. Immanuel Approach research collaboration with Neuroscience Informed Christian Counseling (NICC) and WinShape Foundation.

*L. 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.

**III. Note regarding “cost of sales” for IA promotion:** since we have not copyrighted the Immanuel Approach, and don’t charge other IA ministries royalties, I spend LOTS of time and energy promoting IA around the world but most of the benefits end up going to other ministries. The Lehman IA Ministry fund would help balance this.

**IV. A little more about mission teams to areas of special need:** These teams are usually going to areas where there has been extreme trauma and where there are minimal resources. There is also sometimes time urgency, and the logistics are often complicated and/or dangerous. Furthermore, the mission trips are often operating on a shoestring budget, with team members covering their own expenses as well as volunteering their time. In these situations of special challenge, urgency, and complexity, I am usually asked to provide Immanuel Approach consultation without thought of reimbursement. My perception is that the people involved usually somehow think that they only need a few hours of my time, and that I can easily contribute this small consultation as a gift. However, I usually end up helping to recruit the Immanuel Approach ministry leader (and sometimes also additional team members); I usually end up providing various amounts of preparatory training for the team; I usually end up working with the leader(s) to develop customized material that would be most effective and appropriate for the specific situations they will be facing; I usually end up providing zoom, email, and phone consultation while they are on the trip; and I usually end up providing debriefing and aftercare following the trip to maximize learning and minimize trauma to the team.

After all is said and done, I usually end up giving 50 to 70 hours of my time to each of these special mission trips. And again, the other people involved are usually volunteering their time, in addition to paying their own expenses. So it seems reasonable to them that I give my time without reimbursement. I am working on the maturity skill of initiating hard conversations regarding my financial reality --

explaining how there are many mission teams and ministries that ask me for this kind of help, and asking for at least some reimbursement whenever a larger ministry or organization is sponsoring the trip. But in most of these situations, the Immanuel Approach component of the adventure would simply not happen if I required any kind of reasonable payment.<sup>4</sup> My and Charlotte's sense is that the Lord is calling me to provide these consultations, and that part of the Lord's plan is for the Lehman IA Ministry Fund to help make this possible.

**V. Lehman Immanuel Approach Ministry Fund not set up as a 501(c)(3):** As noted above, we have not set up this new Immanuel Approach fund as a 501(c)(3). The reason for this is that the administration required for 501(c)(3) status is substantial (for example, records for each donation and receipts to the donors for their tax accounting, careful documentation and receipts for even the smallest expenditures, etc.) This administrative overhead is bearable if the 501(c)(3) is covering the work of fifty full-time employees. However, as described in the first paragraph of this document, the Lehman IA ministry fund will be reimbursing us for only 20-25% of the 20 to 30 hours I give to the global IA community each week.

As noted above, without 501(c)(3) status, any contributions you make to this fund will not be tax-deductible. However, if you do not itemize income tax deductions then this lack of 501(c)(3) status will have no actual effect on your finances. So if you do not itemize deductions (or you itemize but are willing to give without the benefit of the charitable deduction), and if you trust Charlotte and I to steward your contributions with conscientiousness and integrity (even without the administrative oversight required for 501(c)(3) status), then please give as you feel led.

**VI. Details re options for donation:** **Zelle:** Email associated with account is [drkarl@kclehman.com](mailto:drkarl@kclehman.com)  
**Venmo:** @Karl-D-Lehman-MD-SC **Old-fashioned check:** Make checks out to Karl Lehman MD, put "Lehman Immanuel Approach Ministry fund" in the memo line, and mail to Karl Lehman, 707 Madison St., Evanston IL 60202. **Wise** info pending. **PayPal** PayPal button pending.

**VII. 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.

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<sup>4</sup> Or there would be a much higher risk of the Immanuel Approach component encountering serious problems, which might even lead other members of the team to be inoculated against the Immanuel Approach.

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.)

**VIII. 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.

**IX. We will let you know when we have met our goal for each year:** As described above, our goal is for the Lehman IA Ministry fund to reimburse me for just 20-25% of the time I give to the global IA community. We will keep you posted regarding the status of the training fund as each year progresses, we will let you know when we reach our goal for each year, and if funds come in beyond the goal for a given year they will roll into the funds required for the following year. You will never need to wonder, “Do they still need my contributions? And what happens to the funds if giving exceeds the goal/budget?”

**X. We will let you know if we no longer need the Lehman Ministry Fund:** Our hope is that income from paid consultations and product sales might some day provide sufficient income that we will no longer

need support from the Lehman IA Ministry fund. We will let you know if/when this happens. You will never need to wonder, “If thousands of people start actually buying their training materials, will they just keep asking for money and start taking fancy vacations (while I’m giving sacrificially to their training fund)?”

**XI. 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.