

Reaching Africa through Minneapolis

Philip Nache came to the U.S. for seminary after Boko Haram threatened his ministry in Nigeria. He planned to return to Africa after seminary, but God disrupted his plans. Page 6



THE MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN BAPTIST

SPRING
2018

Vol. 34, No. 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Launching a movement in a most secular city

Rob and Lisa Warren moved to Madison to start a church and college ministry in a city of 40,000 college students.

Page 7

Winona church's 'Victory Garden' builds community

Page 8

Fellowship Baptist collects year-round for Christmas boxes

Page 11

Couples celebrate retirement

By David Williams

Green Lake, Wis. – Most attending this year's Pastors and Wives Retreat Feb. stayed after it ended to help celebrate the retirement of long-time state convention staff members, Steve Melvin and Dave Wedekind.

The retirement luncheon was not a time to say goodbye, however, because both men will continue to serve the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention in part-time roles.

Melvin has transitioned to the role of partnership and prayer catalyst. Wedekind and his wife Jeanne will continue to lead MWBC disaster relief efforts.

Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, began the program by reading Mark 10:38-45 and applied the passage to the retirees, saying it had been a pleasure to work with people like them who have servant hearts.

"Any day, any time, no matter what it is, there's always a willingness to help," he said. "Literally, there's a willingness to do whatever. They are modeling their lives after the example of Jesus Christ. It's an inspiration to me."

"You set a high example of what it means to be a servant leader," he told the retirees. "The pastors and leaders in our convention and churches look up to you because you don't look down on them."

Bob Stockland, director of



Steve and Janis Melvin (left) and Dave and Jeanne Wedekind prepare to be honored at a retirement luncheon hosted by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention at the Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center.

missions for the Northwoods Baptist Association, echoed Endel's words as he delivered a tribute to his friend Steve Melvin, saying, "I looked up to Steve as I was trying to learn what it means to be a servant," and adding, "my life is better, my life has been lifted, my experience has been deepened by knowing Steve and Janis these many years."

Jef Skinner, pastor of Gospel Baptist Church in Sparta, Wis., expressed his appreciation for Wedekind, saying, "It's interesting to me how God drops friends into our lives." Referring to the adage that "friendship halves our troubles and doubles our joys," Skinner said, "That's what Dave does for me."

Mycie Vue, founder of M-W Hmong WMU, gave credit to

Jeanne Wedekind for guiding her to lead that organization as well as to be a leader in disaster relief. "You are a great person, a great sister, a great leader," she told her.

Cindy Vang, president of M-W WMU, presented Jeanne Wedekind a canvas photo of a brick that will be placed in her honor in the Walk of Faith at the National WMU Building in Birmingham, Ala.

Dave and Jeanne Wedekind

The Wedekinds moved from Texas to the Green Bay area in 2000 as church planters where they planted Calvary Baptist Church in De Pere. While serving that church, they began in 2005 directing MWBC disaster relief efforts on a part-time basis.

In 2008 the couple joined the state convention staff full-time. In addition to co-directing disaster relief, the husband and wife team

See 'Couples,' Page 9

INSIDE: Photos from MWBC's annual Pastors and Wives Retreat. Page 5.

For sex abuse trauma, churches must be 'trustworthy'

by David Roach

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Attempted suicide, drug overdoses, hatred of God and ruined teenage years are among the effects of sexual abuse described in a Feb. 11 Houston Chronicle report on sexual abuse among Southern Baptists.

Two Southern Baptist mental health experts say the effects of sexual abuse against children and teenagers are worse than the Chronicle described. They also say churches and pastors can mitigate those effects with prompt, biblical and wise responses.

"There are many more" effects of abuse "than the ones listed in the article," said Chuck Hannaford,

a Memphis, Tenn., clinical psychologist. At times, abused children and teens "have fear of being touched. Some get into sexual promiscuity. They can have habit disorders — biting, rocking, pulling their hair out.

"They can be aggressive at times because they're keeping this stuff in. Self-injuries, behavior issues, sleep problems. You can go down the list. Everything that is within the diagnostic context of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder they will have," Hannaford told Baptist Press. "It's a very traumatic event that can make life-changing negative impacts."

The Chronicle said its investigation of sexual abuse among

Southern Baptists had revealed approximately 380 instances since 1998 — including more than 250 since 2008 — of "those who were convicted, credibly accused and successfully sued, and those who confessed or resigned."

The crimes have left more than 700 victims, the newspaper stated.

Citing the Amplified Bible's rendering of Matthew 18:1-6, Hannaford described children as "trusting, lowly, loving and forgiving." Abusing children is horrific because it "changes the way they think about themselves, they think about God and they think about relationships. And often these children feel what we call the 'dam-

See 'Trauma,' Page 10

New MWBC staff

Rochester, Minn. – MWBC has recently added two new staff members, Joshua Whetstine and Na Herr.

In November, Na Herr was added to the staff as intercultural catalyst and team facilitator. He took over office manager responsibilities formerly carried out by Peter Michelson but also has broader responsibilities related to advancing intercultural missions connections and ministries within the MWBC and to the international mission field. In that role, Herr will:



Herr

- * Develop strategies and facilitate intercultural outreach and missions within the MWBC, the associations, and the churches.

- * Assist the convention and our churches in intercultural, language and international missions connections that connect MWBC people groups to countries of origin.

- * Serve as a missions catalyst connecting the MWBC and its churches to missions through the International Mission Board, Baptist Global Response, and international churches connected to our churches.

Joshua Whetstine has joined the staff of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention as church planting field director, filling responsibilities formerly assigned to Steve Melvin who retired at the end of 2018.

Whetstine has served as North American Mission Board's SEND Cities missionary in the Twin Cities since 2015. He will continue in that role until a replacement is identified and enlisted.

He previously served with LifeWay Christian Resources for seven years, the last three years managing the LifeWay Bookstore at Southern Seminary while he finished his master's degree in church planting and cultural leadership.

As MWBC church planting field director, Whetstine will:

- * Work with state convention leadership, church planting catalysts (CPCs), associational leadership, and key church planting leaders to develop effective church planting strategies for Minnesota-Wisconsin.

- * Serve as CPC in areas without

See 'Staff,' Page 9



LIVINGSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH HOSTS FIRST SERVICE

Members of Livingstone Baptist Church, a Korean church plant in Madison, Wis., gather for a group photo after their first service on Jan. 6. The new church meets at 3 p.m. Sundays at Campus Community Church. Peter Ko is pastor.

Mission to the Hmong in Southeast Asia

I strongly believe that God brought the Hmong people to Minnesota and Wisconsin in order that they may be equipped to proclaim the gospel back home in Southeast Asia.

For most of their history, the Hmong people have struggled to reach an elusive goal: freedom from oppression. As an ethnic minority in Southeast Asia, they are often marginalized and manipulated by the governing authorities. During the Vietnam War, many Hmong people supported the U.S. in the war effort, hoping to gain some level of freedom with a U.S. victory. The war ended with the U.S. pulling out of Southeast Asia, and the Hmong becoming even more marginalized. Due to the threat of retaliation, thousands of Hmong people fled and immigrated to the U.S. as refugees.

If the story of the Hmong people ended there, it would be a very sad story. But God had a plan. What Satan intended for evil, God intended for good. Through their suffering, many Hmong people found grace and peace in Jesus Christ. For the first time in a long time, they experienced freedom, not just from physical oppression, but from spiritual oppression.

Even though they were strangers in a new land, they found hospitality and support from many churches and individual believers. With the support of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, many Hmong churches were started. Currently, there are 17 Hmong Baptist churches in

the two states.

It has been almost 50 years since Hmong people came to the U.S. The majority still live in Southeast Asia in authoritarian countries that routinely repress the Christian faith. Now is a critical time to reach out to the Hmong in Southeast Asia. The window may be closing on mission opportunities in this region due to renewed persecution of Christians. Many Hmong people are open to the gospel, but there is no one to evangelize or disciple them.

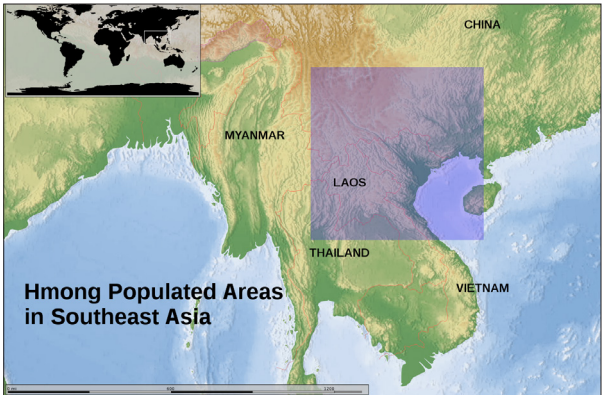
MWBC has partnered with Hmong Baptist National Association to explore ways we can support Hmong and other believers in Southeast Asia. Please pray for this mission opportunity for our churches. This project will be a major part of our upcoming state missions offering. Stay tuned for updates related to this project.

Na Herr is intercultural catalyst/team facilitator for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

MINISTRY



Na Herr



ANNIE ARMSTRONG
EASTER OFFERING®
FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

SENDING HOPE

100% of your gifts support North American Missionaries

THE MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN BAPTIST
519 16th St., SE Rochester,
MN 55904
(USPS 012-645)
Leo Endel
Executive Director
David Williams
Editor

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist, the official publication of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, is published quarterly (4 times per year) for \$5.50 per year by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, 519 16th St. SE, Rochester, MN 55904 in conjunction with Western Recorder Inc. Periodicals postage at Rochester, Minn., and additional mailing offices.

To subscribe: Send \$5.50 to the above address.

To register a change of address: Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the above address.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes and form 3579 to Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist at the above address.

To submit advertising: Contact the MWBC for rates and conditions. Publishing services provided by the Western Recorder Inc., Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist:

A quarterly Christian newsjournal with a focus on Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists—their interests, churches and partners.

Is your church making news? Send news to David Williams, at davidwilliams@compuserve.com or P.O. Box 628, Liberty, TX 77575.

Has your church updated its subscription list? The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist is provided free of charge to all resident member families of churches related to the MWBC. Churches are responsible for updating their portion of our mailing list, maintained at the state convention office. Other people may subscribe for \$5.50 per year by sending payment to: Subscriptions, Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist, 519 16th St. SE, Rochester, MN 55904.

Does your church have something to advertise? Advertising space at \$8 per column inch is available for meetings, products or services sponsored by MWBC churches and missions, the state convention and entities of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Retire to serve

Retirement has become the silver lining of the American Dream. Yet, you're hard pressed to find the concept in Scripture.

As far as I know, the closest Scripture ever comes to the concept is found in Numbers 8:24-25 which speaks of the Levitical priesthood retiring.

Since none of you reading this article are serving in the Levitical priesthood, I assume the Bible has little to say about the modern concept of retirement.

Certainly, the Bible never envisions a time when we quit serving the Lord. Even in eternity we will serve the Lord.

As life expectancy continues to increase and our economic situations improve, we find more and more people reaching the point of financial independence. They may no longer need to work to support themselves. A huge part of our society believes financial independence is the ticket to playing golf three times a week, taking a cruise to the Bahamas, buying a cabin at the lake or wintering in Arizona.

They think these years ought to be years of indulgence — enjoying the good life they didn't have the time to enjoy when they were working.

But does that sound like God's plan for life or our plan for life? The Bible clearly teaches us that

we are stewards of the life and resources God has given us.

I am struck by how many of God's biblical saints had their greatest impact in their "retirement" years.

What if Moses at 80 had added to his excuses at the burning bush, "I'm ready to retire, I want to spend these next years playing this game I heard was developed in Scotland."

Saturday I found myself thinking about the retirement of the Wedekinds and the Melvins. I was swept up in a moment of sadness but then overwhelmed with gratitude for who these leaders are and the example they are setting among us.

We called it a retirement party—and that it was, but in the same breath we spoke about their gracious desire to still serve the Lord.

No doubt, they'll enjoy a level of freedom they've not had in the past, but they will serve in new ways. We have been so very blessed in the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist family.

Steve Melvin will continue to help us encourage and support church planters through coaching and relationship building. He also plans to write the next history of the MWBC.

Dave and Jeanne Wedekind will continue to give guidance to our disaster relief ministries.

Steve Dyess also continues to serve as a coordinator and resource to our associational missionaries.

All four of these leaders jump in to help us in

dozens of ways. And they are not the only ones continuing to serve after "retirement."

Bob Stockland continues to help churches and develop pastors. Bob Smith is serving as the pastor of one of our churches. Bob says someone once said to him, "The only way we're going to get rid of you is to drive a stake through your heart."

Bill Tinsley is serving as a church planter coach, leads two pastor peer learning groups for the MWBC, and is rewriting his church planting book, "Upon this Rock."

The world would say these guys are retired, but I think they have just found new opportunities to serve the Lord.

Steve Dighton recently told our pastors and wives that the call of God is irrevocable. We don't stop serving him.

I see the same thing among our lay leaders. Charles Dunning may be busier today than at any point in his life. He retired from his secular employment and expanded his ministry.

In my own church, Jim Snead recently retired from his high-tech career, and I've noticed he's reinvesting himself in serving the Lord at Emmanuel.

I could go on and on. I know scores of you who retired to serve. That's the kind of retirement that would be biblical.

Leo Endel is executive director of the MWBC.

When my body wears out

I took off my gloves the other day and laid them on the kitchen cabinet. I had been outside watching the sun rise, as is my habit, even though the temperature was in the teens. I have had these gloves a long time, several years.

When I went to put them on again, I saw the gloves sitting limp and useless. They still held the form of my hands, the fingers slightly curved. The thumb in place to grasp something, but they were empty, wrinkled and worn with use.

My gloves reminded me of my body. The day will come when I will put off this body that has served me for seven decades. Like my gloves, my body was once young and new, elastic, unscarred, without wrinkle. But over the years it has grown old. My body groans when it moves, becomes stiff when I sit in one position too long. It aches. Putting on my socks has become an exercise in calisthenics.

When I die I will put off this body like I pull off my gloves when I come in from the cold. It will still hold something of my shape. But it will no longer be me, any more than my gloves are me.

When my hand occupies my glove, it can move and grasp things. The glove is filled with my life. Likewise, my body is filled with me while I still live. But, someday, I will lay it down.

According to Scripture, I will eventually put on a new body, just as I can place my hands in a new pair of gloves. The Bible has a lot to say about this, especially in 1 Corinthians 15. "It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

When my mother was dying we talked about heaven. She was 89. Her body had withered away. Her back was bowed with osteoporosis. Her vision was failing. She had suffered a series of mini-strokes. She had difficulty walking.

When she was young, she was athletic – a beautiful fast runner. She won ribbons in track.

Fresh Ideas: 7 ways to blow it with your social media account

FRESH IDEAS



Autumn Wall

So many Christians try hard but just miss the mark in strategically using social media to be a witness for Christ to their friends and followers.

If you want to join the ranks of blowing it royally through your social media account, be sure to do these things:

1. Don't bother to fact check anything before you post or re-post. Just share anything that fits your current emotional state.
2. Your profile page is the best place to list

- your top five complaints of today. Be specific!
3. Don't worry about how it represents Christ and the Church...just think about how your emotions are telling you to write today's post.
 4. Post a great cheesy Christian meme in the morning, then follow it up with your favorite R-rated movie quote in the afternoon.
 5. Be sure not to let anyone know you're at church by "checking in" on Facebook on Sunday.
 6. Use Sunday's prime-time post to critique your pastor, church or small group leader.
 7. Start off whatever gossip you want to spread with: "Today I'm praying for..."
- OK, OK, so those are horrible suggestions! Are you following the awful advice listed above and ruining your chance to be a witness in your

community?

Instead, why don't you try doing the exact opposite of this list and choose to "do all things without arguing or complaining" (like it says in Philip. 2:14) even in your social media encounters.

Whatever you do, make sure that your everyday life matches what you are posting and sharing, and think about how your image online will represent Christ.

Don't blow it. Represent Jesus well everywhere you go.

Autumn Wall is an author, speaker, worship leader, pastor's wife and mother of three, living in Indianapolis.

Don't wait for a disaster

In 2019, one thing is certain: there will be natural disasters in our communities as well as nationally and internationally.

We cannot predict where or when these disasters will happen but as followers of Christ, He would want us to be prepared to respond whenever the need might arise.

When I was a Boy Scout, our oath was to always be prepared for anything that life may bring your way. As Christians, and when it comes to disaster preparedness this is a great rule to follow.

This year I want to encourage you not to

wait until a disaster happens to start the process of preparing yourself, your family, your church, and your association to be able to respond to a disaster site.

We are pleased to offer the first 2019 disaster relief regional training on May 3-4 at Valley Baptist Church in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The second regional training is Oct. 4-5 in Minnesota with the exact location to be determined. The classes offered are chaplaincy, safe food handling, mud out, chainsaw (recovery is a combination of mud out

and chainsaw), shower/laundry, and international responses.

Both training events will provide you the opportunity to discover where God may want you to serve providing God's help, healing, and hope after a disaster.

We can also provide training classes for family, church, and or association to be prepared to meet the needs during a crisis and especially a disaster. A family preparedness guide is available on

MINISTRY



Dave Wedekind

the MWBC.org web site and provides an excellent checklist to guide you in the process of being prepared for a disaster.

Don't wait until it's too late and the need arises. We are here to help you and your church, so just contact us and let's get prepared, ready to serve.

Dave Wedekind is co-director for disaster relief for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Would your church be missed?

A question that was presented to me many years ago continues to come to my recollection: "If in your community both the Burger King and your church closed, which would be missed the most?"

My immediate thought was, "Well, my church of course!" But then as I continued to contemplate the question, I began to wonder if that was so.

Of course, the church members would have missed the church, but would the greater community have missed the church more than the Burger King? What was our impact, if any, on the community?

While serving as a North American Mission Board missionary in Central Georgia, I learned of a church that found itself in a changing neighborhood and no longer reflected the community which surrounded it. The attendance continued to

dwindle until there were just a few members left.

In this economically challenged community, I suggested that the church was in a perfect setting to reach out to their community through a food ministry.

Funding was made available through the association, state convention, and World Hunger funds. The church responded with a passion to reach out to their community in the name of the Lord.

As people came through the doors of the church for needed food they received something even greater. They were told and shown the love of the Lord and of His people. As folks came in and registered for

the food, they also received a Gospel presentation.

Almost immediately the members of the congregation seemed to ignite. The people who were once almost ready to close the doors for good, began to have spontaneous sharing of testimonies during the worship service. These testimonies were of how the Lord was using them to reach out to those in their community.

One poignant story was shared by their pastor. A man had come to their church for food, but as they shared the Good News with him, he was saved! Just a week after he became a child of God, his name appeared in the obituaries column of the local newspaper. The Lord used this small church to reach out to

this man, whose life was soon to end. The church found that obedience to fulfilling the Great Commission was not only an indescribable blessing to their community, but also to those who were sharing the Good News.

In your community, which would be missed more, a local restaurant or your church? Each church is in a different setting with unique needs. However, every person needs the Lord. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest would give you a great passion for reaching your community and insight into how you can fulfill the Great Commission.

Steve Dyess is state missions catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

MINISTRY



Steve Dyess

VBS is worth it

"Will kids still come to VBS?" asks Landry Holms.

Holms presented an overview of his book, "It's Worth It: Discovering How One Week Can Transform Your Church" during Lifeway's VBS Institute at Ridgecrest on Jan. 11. Landry Holms is publishing manager for LifeWay Kids.

Research for the book shows that 69 percent of American parents will encourage their child to participate in a VBS event at a church they don't attend if invited by their friends.

Holms explained, "VBS is the one week that mobilizes the entire church to reach the community with the gospel while simultaneously providing a unique discipleship experience for the individual child and volunteer."

Holms described why churches walk away from VBS: churches find it difficult to recruit volunteers, other churches in the area meet the need, the church does not have enough kids, and churches view VBS as a low return on investment.

He busted six VBS myths.

Myth 1: People are using us for free child care. Yet the research found that is true of only 12 percent of parents.

Myth 2: We don't have enough workers. Holms suggests planning VBS around the leaders available and recruiting youth to be leaders-in-training.

Myth 3: Every church in town is doing that VBS; no one will come to ours. Research found that going to the same themed VBS matters little to parents. Also, learning is reinforced by repetition.

Myth 4: VBS is too expensive. A quality VBS can be conducted with basic curriculum pieces. Churches need not buy everything produced in support of a VBS.

Myth 5: The only kids who come are our kids. Even if only our kids come, aren't they worth it? Usually half the kids who come are from other churches or unchurched.

Myth 6: VBS is not about discipleship.

Holms challenged this assumption by explaining how VBS strengthens the faith of children through gospel sharing and Bible study. New leaders are developed by volunteering in VBS.

Holms left us with the question, "If we stop using VBS as a tool for evangelism and discipleship, what will take its place?"

The MWBC children's ministry team is ready to help your church conduct VBS with excellence. The team will be at Empower March 15-16 to give a clinic on how to prepare, host and follow-up VBS.

Have VBS questions? Contact Penny Reedy, MWBC children's ministry specialist and state VBS promoter, at (218) 340-0862 or email penny123abc@gmail.com.

Clint Calvert is church leadership catalyst for the MWBC.

LEADERSHIP



Clint Calvert

Retiring but staying

Although I have retired from my North American Mission Board responsibilities, I am staying connected to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

My new part-time responsibilities include maintaining regular contact with church planters, to encourage, coach, and support them; building bridges for new churches to connect with the MWBC and their local association; helping to manage the Missouri partnership in relationship with the MWBC; leading prayer ministries in support of the MWBC church planters and existing churches; and writing the MWBC history from 1993 to 2018.

Also, I have agreed to serve as church planting coaching champion for the MWBC, which means that I will work to enlist, train, and connect coaches with church planters and their spouses. Our first training event, the Coaching Map, is scheduled March 25-26 in Madison, Wis.

From the book "Sending Well: A Field Guide to Great Church Planter Coaching" by Dino Senesi, here are 10 qualities of a great coach:

1. Serving: helping others succeed in life and ministry;
2. Believing: being confident in God's ability to transform people;
3. Listening: giving the gift of listening;
4. Cheering: celebrating large and small wins;
5. Praying: embracing the Holy Spirit's work in a church planter;
6. Pressing: understanding the next step is the most important one;

7. Supporting: believing there is no one-size-fits-all formula for success;

8. Relating: engaging coaching relationships with patience and persistence;

9. Growing: on-going development as a great coach; and

10. Planting: engaging coaching relationships with patience and persistence.

I like what I read in Philippians 2:4. "Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." As I navigate my retirement years of ministry, I paraphrase and personalize Romans 10:1. "My heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them (i.e. people in Minnesota and Wisconsin) is for their salvation."

PLANTING



Steve Melvin

Steve Melvin is partnership and prayer catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.



Top right, Green Lake Conference Center staff welcome MWBC pastors and wives to a special Friday evening Valentine's Day banquet.

Above, Steve Melvin, MWBC partnership and prayer catalyst, leads worship from the piano during the pastors and wives retreat.

Speakers Steve and Mary Dighton, left, visit between sessions with Philip and Jummai Nache, right, from Hope of Nations Gospel Church in Milwaukee.



2019 Pastors & Wives Retreat

GREEN LAKE, WISCONSIN



Above, pastors and wives enjoy a pre-release screening of the Christian movie Overcomer scheduled to be in theaters Aug. 14.



Right, Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, welcomes the more than 100 pastors, wives and guests attending the retreat.



A highlight of each year's Pastors and Wives Retreat is the time of fellowship during meals, as shown by photos to the left and above.



Philip Nache came to the United States for seminary after Boko Haram threatened his ministry in Nigeria. He studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with plans to return to Africa before God disrupted Nache's plans and called him to minister in Minneapolis where a sizeable number of African immigrants resettle. NAMB photo by Daniel McCullough.

Reaching Africa through Minneapolis

By Brandon Elrod

Minneapolis – Philip Nache could have given in to despair. Boko Haram, the jihadist militant group located in Nigeria, had threatened his life, martyred a convert to Christianity and continued to intimidate Christians.

But despite the danger, Nache expected to return and serve the people he'd spent nearly 20 years ministering to, pastoring and planting churches among.

He had come to the United States to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a moment of divine timing that coincided with Boko Haram's first threats on his life.

As he contemplated whether and how to return to Nigeria, another divine appointment redirected his steps.

"At that time, God opened the door for me to come to Minneapolis," Nache said. "When I was told about the need here in the Twin Cities, I was still thinking of Africa, but after praying, I felt convicted to go to Minnesota."

So, he decided to plan a visit. When he arrived, he was surprised by what he saw.

"It's like I was in Africa—the northern part of Africa. Because I [saw a] basket full of people—Africans," Nache recalled of his first vision trip to the city.

Seeing fellow Africans opened his mind and heart, and Nache's disposition toward Minneapolis changed. He sensed God's leading and prepared to go.

Nache saw how the nations had come to North America. This year he is a 2019 Week of Prayer missionary for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions.

When he moved his family to the Twin Cities, Nache discovered a hunger for new churches among the various African populations.

They lacked the means to make it

happen until Nache arrived with the support of Southern Baptists.

"One pastor came to me," Nache recalled, "and said, 'Oh, there are a lot of South Sudanese and Ethiopians and so many Africans that are there. I've tried even to start a church with them, but I couldn't because of resources.'"

That believer asked Nache if he was willing to reach out to those populations even though many of them were Muslim. Nache's response was simple, "Why not? This is [why] God has brought me."

Nache joined a group of believers, started reaching out to their neighbors and began house-to-house fellowships. And that's how God opened the door and established his church, Hope of Nations Gospel Church.

Hope of Nations has gone to two services, one for South Sudanese and another for northern Nigerians. Nache and many of his church members have a vision to reach not only their immediate neighbors but the entire world.

While in Nigeria, Nache pastored and planted churches, and now God continues to use his ministry in Minneapolis to reach the nations of Africa. In the Twin Cities, Nache said, "we are able to identify potential pastors who desire to go and reach out to their people and plant churches in their own countries."

One such example is Khemis Artema, a refugee from South Sudan. Artema traveled through refugee camps, where he endured physical suffering and lack of medication, before arriving in the United States. Nache said that Artema remained faithful to the Lord through those trials, and now he discipled him so that he can return to South Sudan and plant a church.

"They [Artema and his wife] thank God," Nache said, "that the Lord established this church and they're able to know Scripture along with their

children."

Hope of Nations sent Artema on a short-term trip to South Sudan, which was the trip that solidified God's calling for him to return. Nache continues to disciple and train future missionaries like Artema.

"Our desire is to keep multiplying and reaching out to more people groups, especially people from Africa," Nache said. He sees donations to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® as a key part of that vision going forward.

"I must say that without the help of the Annie Armstrong support that we are getting from the North American Mission Board," Nache said, "honestly speaking, I don't think this work will be possible...So, I seriously appreciate and thank God for this offering. Thank God for the churches all over North America that are helping to support this work."

Gifts made to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering go directly to support and resource North American missionaries in the field. To learn more, visit anniearmstrong.com.



Left, Philip Nache and his wife, Jummai, answered the call to move to Minneapolis to serve the African immigrant population. Nache experienced persecution in Nigeria before Boko Haram in Nigeria before coming to the United States to become a church planter.

Right, Rob Warren, Lilly and son Titus. Warren is a missionary who helps disciple the church and college ministries. He and his family reach both the campus and the neighborhood.



2018 Week of Prayer

NAMB supports more than 5,000 missionaries throughout the U.S. and the Week of Prayer for North America is a time to recognize the sacrificial work taking place in college campuses where lives are



Each year the North American Missionary Union produce a prayer book for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. This year two of the six missionary couples serving in the church planting couples served

NAMB stories by

NAMB photos by D



Prayer Missionaries

Send Network and Send Relief and Canada. Six are featured during American Missions. They represent cities, rural communities and being transformed with the gospel.



Mission Board and Woman's prayer guide to help promote the for North American Missions. naries featured in the guide are ing in Minnesota-Wisconsin.

By Brandon Elrod

Daniel McCullough

's wife Jummai ve to Minneapolis to rant population. Nache at the hands of Boko traveling to the United ch planting missionary.

, his wife Lisa, daughter Lisa helps lead worship he women in the church try. The church seeks to University of Wisconsin and Madison. one of the on's most secular cities.



Launching a MOVEMENT in a most secular city

By Brandon Elrod

Madison, Wis. – Home of a population described by some reports as less religious than Los Angeles, Madison, Wis., has become a hub of secularism in the United States. In the middle of the city lies the University of Wisconsin where 40,000 college students navigate a campus intertwined with the state's capital.

Rob and Lisa Warren recently uprooted their family's lives and moved to Madison to start a church and reach the community in and around the university. They represent a growing church planting movement designed to send the hope of the gospel to under-reached university and college towns in North America.

"We want to be a church that's both for the city and the campus, to reach college students and to be around families, pointing them to Jesus," Rob said.

Rob and Lisa, 2019 Week of Prayer missionaries for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®, are ministering in a context filled with college students, many of whom are experiencing new ideas for the first time. These students live in a season of questioning everything and are often open to discussing and hearing the gospel, which is why Rob and Lisa love spending time with students.

"When we think about Madison," Rob said, "we think about a place that, like so many other places, just needs the hope that

only Jesus can bring. Not only that, but a city that is so strategic in reaching more and more people for Jesus beyond Madison."

Together with their launch team, the Warrens are planting Doxa Church. The word "doxa" is a Greek word used in the New Testament that means "glory."

"This is all about the glory, 'doxa,' of Jesus," Lisa said. "I think if we get one thing right, that's what we have to stay focused on, and we have to stay grounded in."

Before Rob grounded his life in the glory of God, however, he dedicated himself to football.

"My senior year in high school, my father committed suicide, and that sent my life into a tailspin," he recalled. "Feeling a huge void and a massive amount of pain and shame, I gave my entire self to the game of football."

Rob excelled at the sport and went on to play at Bowling Green State University in Ohio when his best friend, Andy, became a Christian. As Andy's life began to change, he quit drinking, using drugs and "chasing girls." Rob took notice of the change in lifestyle.

"From that moment, Andy started to share the gospel with me, and over the next three years, I began to feel God working in my life as I learned about Jesus," Rob said.

Over those three years, the lessons Rob learned about Jesus were sinking in, and after one particularly rough night of partying, he sensed conviction of sin for the first time.

"Waking up after a terrible night, I felt so bad but couldn't explain it," Rob remembered. "Not knowing what to do, I decided to go to church for the first time."

"That night, I gave my life to Jesus, and God began a fast and radical transformation of my life, desires and passions, which landed me in full-time ministry."

The transformation that took place in Rob's life is one the Warrens' hope to see duplicated in the lives of countless college students.

"We're super-passionate about seeing young people meet Jesus and have that



Top, Rob Warren, an Annie Armstrong Easter Offering 2019 Week of Prayer missionary, prays with students and volunteers ahead of a preview for Doxa Church's college ministry, The Salt Company, on the University of Wisconsin campus. Above, Warren launched the church and ministry last fall in Madison, Wis., one of the most secular cities in the United States.

change the entire trajectory of their life and take it into their towns, new states and new countries," Lisa said. "I can't think of a more strategic group of people than college students to share Jesus with."

The road to Madison took them through Ames, Iowa, where they trained with Cornerstone Church and became a part of The Salt Network, a group of like-minded Southern Baptist churches with a mission to see churches planted near college campuses across the Midwest.

The North American Mission Board helps resource this movement through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. New church plants minister to both college students and the wider community in those cities that play a strategic role in shaping young adults.

"When people give to North American missions," Rob said, "they're literally giving to the future of reaching the next generation of North America."

The Warrens have a passion and a plan for sending the hope of the gospel to their community.

"I think it's important for us to love the city of Madison well and to be the hands and feet of Jesus and to go into the places that maybe some people wouldn't normally [go] and love them and share the gospel with them," Lisa said.

The story of Doxa Church is just one among dozens of collegiate church plants that are flourishing. Gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering help to make that movement possible. To learn more, visit anniearmstrong.com.



MWBC hosts Pastors and wives retreat

By David Williams

Green Lake, Wis. – Icy road conditions closed Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center for a day in February postponing the start of this year's Pastors and Wives Retreat, but the weather couldn't stop more than 100 pastors, wives and guests from making their way to the annual event.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention learned the morning of Thursday, Feb. 7, that the conference center had decided to close because of the dangerous weather. Green Lake sent most staff home but kept a skeleton crew to take care of about 20 guests who arrived before learning of the shutdown.

Conditions improved the next morning and the retreat was able to begin with Friday lunch. Friday afternoon free time was canceled to make room for the sessions originally planned for Thursday evening and Friday morning.

By dinnertime on Friday, the schedule was back on track with a Valentine-themed banquet followed by a pre-release screening of the newest Kendrick Brothers' Christian film, "Overcomer."

Saturday's schedule went as planned with breakfast and the final session.

Most who attended the retreat stayed for an extra event: a luncheon celebration for retiring MWBC staff members Steve and Janis Melvin and Dave and Jeanne Wedekind.

As in all previous years, the retreat was free to MWBC pastors and their wives. The retreat was financed by MWBC Cooperative Program gifts and funding provided by MWBC's new partner, the Missouri Baptist Convention.

The theme was "Juggling Life and Ministry" and the speakers were Steve and Mary Dighton from Kansas. Dighton is pastor emeritus of Lenexa (Kan.) Baptist Church and his wife is a dentist who practiced in Lenexa.

Dighton acknowledged there are many important things in ministry including pastoral care, preaching, church growth, and church health.

"But the priority must be that you and I would build a strong and stable family," he said. "That is what will make or break our ministry." No matter what else we may do or accomplish, he said, "If your marriage goes south and breaks up there is no survival."

Building a strong family must focus on building a strong marriage, he said. Children are sometimes all-consuming, but eventually they will be gone.

"The greatest thing we can do for our children is to love each other," he said. That requires, he said, "mutual respect, a heavy dose of admiration, and a never-ending helping of grace and forgiveness."

Mary Dighton led a session on complementarianism,



Even the children in Green Lake's sculpture are wearing scarves and hats to protect them from the bitter cold that swept through the Midwest during February.

the view that "God created male and female to reflect complementary truths about Christ."

"We – men and women – were created in God's image," she said. "Any lesson on manhood and womanhood must begin here with equality before focusing on differences."

Men and women are equal in personhood and equal in value, but have distinct roles, she said.

The Hebrew word for helper or helpmate, she said, means someone who does for someone else what he cannot do for himself. The wife is to complete the husband, to fill up the empty spaces in his life. That is why God bonds us together and the two become one, she said.

"As a dentist, I understand the bonding process very

well," she said, explaining that bonding in dentistry involves fitting two objects together and causing a chemical reaction in which the two pieces become one piece that cannot be torn apart.

"We should be so closely bonded to our husband that you can't tell where one ends and the other begins," she said, comparing it to two experienced ballroom dancers who move as one so that an onlooker cannot tell who is leading and who is following.

'That church with the vegetable stand' builds community

Patricia Karnick is a member of Cornerstone Community Church in Winona, Minn. Greg "Gooch" Olcott is pastor.

We were new to Cornerstone Community Church in Winona, Minn. The church building was nestled into the bluff side, just below the tree line. The sanctuary ceiling was built with warm wood planks, and trusses of thick wood beams supported the roof.

I liked to sit on the "uphill" side for service, gazing out the window at the trees, birds, and broad field of church property. A small voice spoke repeatedly to me: "Look at all the land."

God led me to volunteer at the local food shelf. Once a week I'd restock canned goods, put out the fresh produce and pack the customers' selection. I saw how delighted people were to find fresh vegetables beside the crates of cans.

At church the voice got stronger. "Look at that land; lots of space for a garden."

Deep into winter, the voice insisted: "I want you to grow vegetables here." I

groaned. "But Lord, nothing will grow and I will look like a fool. Do you know how much work that would be?" But once I verbalized the vision to someone at church, I was encouraged and given permission to start digging.

We picked the flattest sunny spot and scooped out a rectangle with a bobcat, spread topsoil, picked out buckets and buckets of rocks, and added fencing to keep deer out.

When the first garden was planted, complete with bean trellis, a member dubbed it the Victory Garden and that is what it has been ever since.

God impressed me that we should offer the produce for free to whomever came – no limits and no conditions – and the stand should be at the church. I wanted to be sure people knew that it was God's provision.

The first several years produced small piles of vegetables on a card table twice a week. Sometimes no one stopped to look.

Each year the garden grew and so did the vegetable stand, going from card table to banquet table to flat trailer. One day we

saw cars waiting in the lot for us to roll the wheel barrow full of vegetables down to the stand at the appointed time. We now had a following of people who relied on us to stretch their food budget. Praise the Lord. We had a viable ministry.

2019 will be the 10th Victory Garden. I cannot count the number of people we have met through this ministry. They have all been gracious and thankful. We always keep a Mason jar with a little sign that reads: "All donations go directly to the food shelf."

In 2018 the jar collected \$270. Area gardeners bring their extra produce for us to give out. The Victory Garden is a success because we are feeding the hungry. More



Cornerstone Community Church in Winona, Minn., uses their Victory Garden as an opportunity for ministry and evangelism.

importantly, with Pastor Gooch leading the way, we have shared God's love with so many. We have prayed with the sick, encouraged the struggling, handed out Gideon Bibles and explained that God is providing all that we have.

Many people who wouldn't enter a church have been told of God's love when they stop by what people in the community call "that church with the vegetable stand."



Minnesota Wisconsin Baptist Convention Cooperative Program Receipts January-December 2018



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

2018 CP BUDGET	\$544,000.00
2018 CP RECEIPTS	\$594,874.00
OVER CP BUDGET	\$50,874.00

Name CP SMO*

BAY LAKES ASSOCIATION		
Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$600.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Appleton Hmong	\$4,304.50	\$0.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Missio.....	\$884.02	\$0.00
Appleton, Valley.....	\$44,163.27	\$5,696.43
Ashland, Eagle Wings Fellowship	\$50.00	\$0.00
Black Creek, Community Bible C	\$5,898.00	\$0.00
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$2,307.65	\$0.00
Green Bay, Bethel	\$1,500.01	\$0.00
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship.....	\$7,225.88	\$575.00
Green Bay, Highland Crest	\$79,906.11	\$0.00
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$821.65	\$0.00
Marinette, Cornerstone Fellowshi.....	\$0.00	\$169.87
Neenah, Living Vine Church.....	\$1,734.98	\$0.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist C.....	\$3,922.30	\$258.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$2,100.00	\$0.00
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist Ch.....	\$1,739.42	\$0.00
BLBA TOTALS	\$157,157.79	\$6,699.30

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION		
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$4,219.24	\$0.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$500.00	\$0.00
La Crosse, Three Rivers Fellows	\$1,385.40	\$0.00
Madison, Campus Community Ch.....	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Madison, Casa De Oracion.....	\$119.38	\$0.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist.....	\$6,655.00	\$667.00
Madison, Hope In Christ Assembl.....	\$2,395.28	\$0.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church.....	\$11,963.01	\$1,556.00
Madison, Red Village	\$7,500.00	\$0.00
Madison, Sovereign Joy Baptist	\$2,371.21	\$0.00
Muscoda, Blue River Valley.....	\$1,189.83	\$0.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$3,710.09	\$0.00
Portage, River of Life	\$2,548.76	\$0.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist Church.....	\$17,000.08	\$0.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$3,795.90	\$1,318.50
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$2,642.63	\$0.00
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca.....	\$120.00	\$50.00
Whitehall, Mision Bautista Hispa	\$478.62	\$0.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope.....	\$3,940.19	\$0.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha.....	\$3,382.88	\$0.00
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$550.00	\$0.00
SWBA TOTALS	\$77,667.50	\$3,591.50

LAKELAND ASSOCIATION		
Bassett, Westosha Baptist Churc.....	\$1,881.00	\$605.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$2,000.00	\$1,555.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00	\$0.00
Greenfield, Layton Avenue Baptist.....	\$16,430.71	\$3,118.75
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist Chu.....	\$21,808.55	\$2,554.00

Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$8,445.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist Churc	\$7,179.20	\$1,431.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist Ch.....	\$1,506.00	\$151.00
Milwaukee, Ethnos Church.....	\$1,918.42	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Commun.....	\$230.04	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Iglesia Bautista Nuev	\$310.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist Churc.....	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$1,100.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$3,179.00	\$400.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist Chu.....	\$900.00	\$100.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss	\$2,100.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist Ch.....	\$16,164.18	\$0.00
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church.....	\$4,441.70	\$0.00
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$7,528.04	\$1,399.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$5,760.01	\$0.00
Racine, Immanuel	\$9,821.84	\$1,850.00
LBA TOTALS	\$114,203.69	\$13,163.75

TWIN CITIES METRO ASSOCIATION		
Amery, First Baptist	\$10,800.00	\$0.00
Bloomington, Kangnam Korean	\$550.00	\$0.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$14,627.05	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Commu.....	\$900.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center Bapt.....	\$4,150.51	\$235.00
Burnsville, Church of the Way	\$400.00	\$0.00
Burnsville, Crystal Lake Road.....	\$3,216.66	\$55.00
Burnsville, Richfield Bible Churc.....	\$5,400.00	\$0.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptis	\$3,000.00	\$552.00
Edina, Grace in the City	\$1,759.38	\$0.00
Elk River, Glory of Christ	\$1,235.00	\$0.00
Fridley, Good News Hmong	\$500.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Northwood Commu.....	\$2,166.71	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$5,730.91	\$0.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church.....	\$828.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Grace in the City	\$485.20	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint Minnea	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations Fel	\$406.53	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations Go	\$593.20	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Jacob's Well Dinkyt	\$1,849.29	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Risen Church.....	\$2,586.81	\$0.00
Minnetonka, Slavic Bap Ch of the	\$600.00	\$0.00
Monticello, First Baptist Church	\$687.46	\$0.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$22,477.80	\$0.00
Northfield, Northfield Community	\$14,108.00	\$0.00
Oakdale, Eternal Life Hmong	\$2,316.00	\$0.00
Oakdale, Gospel Hmong.....	\$852.99	\$0.00
Roseville, Iglesia Bautista Nueva	\$300.00	\$0.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist Chur.....	\$8,000.00	\$0.00
Shakopee, River South Bible Chu.....	\$5,948.57	\$0.00
Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope C	\$500.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hm.....	\$2,806.00	\$0.00

St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$850.00	\$267.00
St. Paul, Salt City Church	\$15,772.59	\$0.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$1,925.00	\$671.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist Chu	\$7,200.00	\$0.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptis.....	\$720.00	\$0.00
TCMBA TOTALS	\$147,449.66	\$1,780.00

NORTHWOODS ASSOCIATION		
Badger, Badger Baptist Church	\$918.81	\$0.00
Brainerd, Ch on the Wise Rd	\$2,796.00	\$100.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Crookston, Prairie Community C	\$6,838.97	\$70.51
Ely, Berean Baptist.....	\$840.00	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines Bap	\$2,805.84	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids Bap	\$155.50	\$0.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$400.00	\$0.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest.....	\$4,330.49	\$0.00
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$4,080.00	\$1,150.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church	\$3,065.58	\$0.00
Superior, Lake Point Church	\$387.92	\$0.00
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$850.00	\$0.00
Warroad, Westside Baptist.....	\$332.14	\$0.00
NWBA TOTALS	\$30,801.25	\$1,320.51

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION		
Austin, Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$2,453.07	\$0.00
Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$842.40	\$0.00
Chester, Chester Woods Commu.....	\$1,827.74	\$0.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$2,234.00	\$284.00
Mankato, Hope Baptist Church.....	\$1,980.42	\$0.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$4,024.20	\$200.00
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley Bapti.....	\$1,070.30	\$100.00
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist Ch	\$19,062.95	\$4,074.00
Rochester, Joyful Hope Baptist C	\$160.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Redemption City	\$7,398.14	\$0.00
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$5,273.09	\$0.00
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$2,971.80	\$2,003.00
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$100.00	\$0.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$5,430.18	\$0.00
SMNBA TOTALS	\$54,828.29	\$6,661.00

OTHER CHURCHES		
Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$9,900.00	\$0.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$2,866.13	\$0.00
OTHER TOTALS	\$12,766.13	\$0.00

MWBC TOTAL RECEIPTS **\$594,874.31**....**\$33,216.06**

NOTE: No giving has been received by MWBC-affiliated churches not listed.

*SMO = State Missions Offering. 2018 Goal was \$39,000.

Couples

Continued from page 1

took on other responsibilities, both promoting missions and Jeanne serving as executive director of the M-W Woman's Missionary Union from 2008 to 2014. During recent years the couple led seven-week Hands of Hope events to help church plants reach out to their communities.

MWBC's disaster relief ministry has thrived under the leadership of the Wedekinds. More than 600 volunteers have been trained and scores of teams have gone on call outs to help with disasters across the U.S. and even in Puerto Rico, Greece, Nepal, and Nicaragua. Under their leadership MWBC has established chain saw units, mud out units, shower and laundry units, feeding teams and chaplaincy teams. The number of certified volunteer leaders has increased from 30 when they began serving to 350 today.

Steve and Janis Melvin

The Melvins' connection to MWBC began in 1980 with the planting of a church in Marshall, Minn. From 1987 to

1998 they were in Michigan and Iowa but then returned so Steve could become MWBC's church planting leader, a role he filled for more than 20 years before retiring Dec. 31.

During his span of 38 years of ministry, Melvin has seen the MWBC grow from 110 churches in 1980 to more than 200 churches today. Steve has also seen the success rate of church plants grow from a less than 50 percent chance of success to more than 80 percent success rate today. In his research for his doctor of ministry degree, Steve credits the assessment process that began in 2004 to be a major reason for the increased success rate.

Steve Melvin has a passion for prayer and says that church starting with prayer makes a spiritual impact in our communities. In his new role as partnership and prayer catalyst, Melvin will lead prayer ministries in support of church plants and existing churches, manage the partnership with the Missouri Baptist Convention, maintain regular contact with church planters for the purpose of encouraging and coaching them, and write an updated history of the MWBC.

Janis Melvin is a library para-professional in the Rochester school district and will retire at the end of this school year.

Staff

Continued from page 1

a CPC by working with the associational missions strategists for that region (part-time association-called and supported leaders) and any other church planting leadership or sending churches.

* Help these church planters in the acquisition of coaches.

* Nurture and assist sending churches in developing effective church planting strategies to engage their local church vision.

* Cultivate a church planting pipeline of leadership development to engage the church planting strategy.

* Work with associations and sending churches to develop planting profiles for strategic church planting areas.

* Communicate MWBC church planting strategy and strategic locations to existing and potential church planting partners through attending partnership meetings and hosting vision trips.

Greear previews 'Who's Your One' evangelism strategy

By Brandon Elrod

DURHAM, N.C.—His aim is to encourage every Southern Baptist church member to actively engage in sharing their faith.

On Jan. 31, J.D. Greear, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, led a simulcast to preview an upcoming evangelism emphasis called Who's Your One.

"These are some challenging days for the Southern Baptist Convention," Greear said. "They're challenging days for the church in general in the United States, but is God perhaps setting us up for one of the greatest evangelism explosions that we've ever seen?"

Originating from Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham, Greear introduced associational mission strategists across North America to the material. Between 50 and 60 were expected to attend in-person with 250 strategists registered to take part via the simulcast.

The resource, designed and produced by the North American Mission Board, helps pastors equip church members to share their faith. NAMB president Kevin Ezell said Who's Your One is ideal for churches of all sizes.

"At the North American Mission Board, we want to do everything we possibly can to resource pastors and associations," Ezell said. "Everything we do at NAMB is about the gospel, and we want you to be as equipped as possible."

Johnny Hunt, NAMB's senior vice president of evangelism and leadership, addressed the audience through a prerecorded video message.

"We will be challenging every church in our denomination to simply list a name on a card, begin to pray and ask God for opportunities to engage that person" with the gospel, Hunt said. "By the grace of God, the Lord will use you to win that person to Christ."

Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., said he hopes Who's Your One will be the catalyst for an evangelism movement among Southern Baptists.

"It's very easy for us to let all of the good things that we are about as a convention get in the way of the one thing we're to be about," sharing the gospel with a lost world, Greear said.

The gospel will not advance only through what pastors share from the pulpit, Greear said, but evangelism will happen when "ordinary people" take the gospel message to their neighbors and coworkers.

"I believe this is a very historic meeting.



J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention, recently shared a preview of Who's Your One, the evangelism initiative that he and the North American Mission Board launched in late February. Greear spoke at a gathering of the Yates Baptist Association in Durham, N.C. The session was broadcast by live simulcast to more than 250 Associational Mission Strategists throughout North America, many of whom had gathered pastors from their association to view as well. Below, Johnny Hunt, senior vice president of evangelism and leadership for NAMB, participated in the simulcast via a prerecorded message.

I believe this is helping us to get back to our roots," said Marty Childress, strategist for the Yates Association that hosted the event. "I pray that this initiative will wake us up as a church and help us to see that lostness is real."

Executive directors from Baptist state conventions received a preview of the Who's Your One resource kit in mid-February. Pastors and leaders may order kits online via WhosYourOne.com. The site also offers a prayer guide, implementation guide and other resources.

Who's Your One is one pillar of Gospel Above All, the theme for Greear's presidency. The other pillars have been crafted as ways for the churches of the SBC to expand missions efforts in local communities, across North America and around the world.

Along with the Who's Your One emphasis and resource are: Go2, which is a challenge for college students to strategically spend their first two years after graduation on the mission field; multiplying churches, which emphasizes church planting in



North America and around the globe; and undivided churches, which helps congregations reflect the unity of God's kingdom to a divided world.

More information about the Gospel Above All theme can be found at gospel-aboveall.com.

Trauma

Continued from page 1

aged goods syndrome' — they feel dirty."

In the long term, childhood sexual abuse can result in the abused experiencing sexual difficulties in their own marriages, becoming overprotective as parents, keeping other people at arm's length and even becoming abusers themselves, said Hannaford, who served on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee's Mental Health Advisory Group. At times, victims don't realize their harmful behaviors stem from the abuse they suffered as children.

Dale Johnson, associate professor of biblical counseling at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, stated that "every-one" who has suffered abuse "endures

some symptom or long-term effect that often takes a while to overcome, because when you're talking about sexual abuse, it's so intimate that it touches so many aspects of a person's being."

The first way to mitigate the effects of childhood sexual abuse is to report the abuse to law enforcement authorities, Johnson said. Hannaford noted the law in all 50 states requires pastors to report alleged abuse of children.

After proper reports have been made, Johnson said, churches must help victims understand the acts done to them were evil and not their fault. "If we're condoning the abuse, their world remains quite confused as to what's good and what's evil."

Churches also must build networks around abuse victims comprising believers "who are supportive, who are caring, who are trustworthy so that we can begin to see

true redemption occur for somebody who's been so violated," said Johnson, executive director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. The "ministry of presence" is vital.

Hannaford urged churches to create support groups for sexual abuse victims to communicate love and tell victims they don't have to feel ashamed of what happened. Care from a local church also should include referral of victims to mental health care providers who can help identify unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Pastors without specialized training in the care of trauma victims should always refer sexual abuse victims to mental health care professionals and not try to provide all necessary care themselves, Hannaford said. Approaching abuse with a "hyper-spiritual focus" or lack of training can set back a victim's recovery.

"Most of the time," Hannaford said,

individuals who were sexually abused as children or teens will require "months of regular counseling, sometimes years" depending on "the intensity of the treatment" that may be needed.

Above all, Johnson and Hannaford underscored, the most important way to help underage abuse victims is to report their allegations to the authorities. Churches also must put protective measures in place, including background checks, to prevent abuse in the first place.

"The church has to do everything it can to protect the children and offer some sort of help for members that have experienced abuse," Hannaford said. Church leaders "should be prosecuted if they know of allegations of abuse and do not report it" to legal authorities.



Fellowship Baptist in Waupaca, Wis., has been collecting items for Operation Christmas Child boxes and fundraising for shipping costs year-round.

Fellowship Baptist collects year-round Christmas boxes

Lynn Anderson, wife of Pastor Rick Anderson at Fellowship Baptist Church in Waupaca, Wis., filed this first-person report on their church's Operation Christmas Child involvement.

Our church started taking a greater interest in the shoe box ministry about three years ago and we decided to collect items year-round for Operation Christmas Child, instead of each family filling an individual box each year. We wanted to reach more children and thought this was a terrific way to do that.

The first year we set the goal of 50 boxes and ended up filling 100 boxes. The shipping costs for those boxes were raised from a friendly penny war between the men and women of the church. The winning team would be served ice cream by the losing team! Of course, the women won and the ice cream we were served was awesome!

We select different items for each month to collect. For example, in January we concentrate on toys since a lot of the Christmas sales are taking place. July and

August find us gathering school supplies since it's the best time of year to get the deals on those items. We now have one room set aside for all the items we collect throughout the year and inventory for the packing party.

The last two years we've sent 150 boxes and we're staying at that amount for now because we want to ensure we can collect the shipping costs for each box. We continue to collect change year-round with our change-a-life containers, and we save \$1 bills with our dollar-for-delivery containers.

This ministry has been a blessing to all of us. We're able to give a small gift to someone who has never received a gift and, at the same time, give them the opportunity to receive the gospel. When we see videos and read stories of how these boxes have changed lives, we praise God and can't wait for the next boxes to be sent.

EMPOWER

The Family of God
March 15-16, 2019
Green Lake Conference Center

Pat Pajak

Joseph Yang

Tate Cockrell

Colton Seamans

Shelley Noonan

Tamiko Jones

Call 920-294-3323 to Register



PASSING THE GAVEL

After being named president of the Association of State Baptist Publications, Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist's editor, David Williams (right), accepts the gavel from outgoing president Tim Yarbrough, editor of the Arkansas Baptist News. This is the second time Williams has served a one-year term as president of the national group composed of Baptist state paper editors. The passing of the gavel took place during the organization's annual February meeting which was in Charleston, S.C., this year. Williams is in his 23rd year as editor of the MWBC's news journal.



Gomer Lesch, 96, died in January.

OBITUARY: Gomer Lesch

Bowling Green, Ky. – Gomer Lesch, who served as interim editor of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist 1993-96, died Saturday, Jan. 5, 2019 at The Medical Center in Bowling Green, Ky. He was 96.

When longtime MWBC executive director Otha Winningham retired in 1992, his wife Louise also retired as editor of the convention's state paper. Lesch, a 1988 retiree of the Baptist Sunday School Board, stepped in as interim editor during 1993. He trained the new editor, David Williams, and when Williams was called to a pastorate in Texas, Lesch stepped back in as interim for another two years until Williams resumed editing from Texas in 1997.

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Lesch was a graduate of Buffalo State Teachers College and served in the U.S. Air Force for 20 years before his 29-year employment at the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources). He also worked in radio and TV journalism, including nine years as program director for WFMV-TV in Greensboro, N.C.

He was an active Baptist layman and deacon, serving as deacon chairman for both First Baptist, Nashville, Tenn., and First Baptist, Bowling Green.

Lesch was preceded in death by his wife of 69 years, Dorothy Marie Simpson Lesch. He is survived by two daughters, Connie (Tom) Foster of Bowling Green; Nancy Lesch of Austin; a grandson, Michael Thomas (Sarah) Foster; a great-granddaughter, Kinley Marie Foster; and one great-grandson, Ayden Thomas Foster.



FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST HMONG BAPTIST HOSTS THANKSGIVING MEAL

Followers of Christ Hmong Baptist Church in Saint Paul, Minn., serves a Thanksgiving dinner to the community after a youth cook-off. Each of four cook-off teams prepared a turkey, three side dishes and a dessert for the meal. The meal was followed with a drawing to give away 15 frozen turkeys to families attending the meal. "This event not only brought the youth closer to one another as they prepared, fellowshiped and tested their cooking skills, but it also showed what it meant to be a good steward by showing love and compassion just like our savior Jesus Christ," said Emily Vang, youth director of the church.



LEADERS JOIN PIPELINE TRAINING

Bob Burton, midwest regional leader for the North American Mission Board, introduces the "multiplication pipeline" to a group of 23 pastors and leaders from 20 churches across southern Wisconsin and the Milwaukee area. The Dec. 5 event at Red Village Church in Madison was sponsored by Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association where Mark Millman is church planting catalyst. The Pipeline is a three-year online curriculum that pastors and leaders can take potential leaders through to help them develop in spiritual maturity and leadership. The online material is comprised of excerpts from books, articles, videos, and a customized discipleship training curriculum. You can find out more about the Multiplication Pipeline by going to www.namb.net/pipeline.

CALENDAR

MWBC events are in bold print.

BLBA: Bay Lakes Baptist Association
SWBA: Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association
LBA: Lakeland Baptist Association
NBA: Northwoods Baptist Association
SMBA: Souther Minnesota Baptist Association
TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

To add your events, email to davidwilliams@compuserve.com.

MARCH

3-10 Week of Prayer and Mission Study for North American Missions/Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
15-16 Empower Conference, Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center

APRIL

19 Good Friday – **MWBC Office Closed**
26 **MWBC Executive Board Meeting**, Rochester, Minn.
30 **MWBC Lottie Moon Offering Cutoff**

MAY

3-4 Regional Disaster Relief Training, Wisconsin
17-18 New Pastor Orientation, Rochester, Minn.
27 Memorial Day Observed – **MWBC Office Closed**

JUNE

9-10 SBC WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, Birmingham, Ala.
11-12 Southern Baptist Convention, Birmingham, Ala.
30 **MWBC Annie Armstrong Offering Cutoff**

JULY

4-5 Independence Day Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

SEPTEMBER

1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions
2 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**
13-14 **MWBC Executive Board**, Rochester, Minn.
27-28 Pastors' Conference, Rochester, Minn.

OCTOBER

4-5 Regional Disaster Relief Training, Minnesota
TBA Called Out Youth Conference
25-26 **MWBC Annual Meeting**, Highland Crest, Green Bay, Wis.

NOVEMBER

28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

DECEMBER

1-8 Week of Prayer and Mission Study for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
24-Jan. 1 Christmas/New Year's Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**