

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

Volume 36, Number 5

September 2021

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M-W Baptists ready to 'shine' in October

Brooklyn, Park, Minn. – “Let Your Light Shine” is the theme of the 38th Annual Meeting of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention next month.

Messengers and guests will gather at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn, Park, Minn., on Friday,

Oct. 22 and Saturday, Oct. 23 to conduct convention business and to celebrate what God has done during the past year, as well as to see old friends and to make new friends.

The church, located at 9200 W. Broadway, has just dedicated an addition to their building which includes a

1,000-seat sanctuary.

The “Let Your Light Shine” theme, shared by this year’s MWBC State Missions Offering, is based on Matthew 5:16 which quotes Jesus as telling His followers to “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your

See **MEETING** page 11



Ebenezer dedicates new building – On Sept. 5 Ebenezer Community Church dedicated a 20,000 square foot addition to their facilities, including a 1,000-seat sanctuary. The church was filled to capacity for the special Sunday afternoon event which also celebrated the church's 21st anniversary and culminated a week of evening revival services. The ministry began Sept. 9, 2000 with eight persons in its first Bible study and prayer meeting, said Pastor Francis Tabla, who with his wife Christine started the church. From that small beginning, he said, the church has grown to more than 700 members from nine nations: Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the United States. Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, was keynote speaker at the event.

September is the
Month of Prayer for State Missions.
Follow MWBC Pray on Facebook.

Lakeland Association issues racism statement, plan of action

MILWAUKEE – The leadership team of Lakeland Baptist Association has affirmed a statement on racism and sent it to the churches of the association, asking them to “respond in writing to these col-

lective statements and actions.”

The May 18 statement was drafted by six pastors appointed to the task by the LBA moderator, Larry Griffith, pastor of Brown Deer (Wis.) Baptist Church. The pastors

were Griffith; Bobby Sinclair, Community of Grace Baptist Church in Milwaukee; Keith Cogburn, Layton Avenue Baptist Church in Greenfield; Raymond Monk, Ephesians Missionary Baptist Church in

Milwaukee; Lenard Tavernelli, Fellowship Baptist Church in Kenosha; and Roy Hopgood, Jr., Mt. Horeb Baptist Church in Milwaukee.

The statement has also been sent to the Southern Bap-

tist Convention, the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, and the National African American Fellowship, requesting written responses from each.

The full statement is printed below.

RACISM: STATEMENTS OF BELIEF – PLAN OF ACTION

Racism is defined as prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different skin color based on the belief that one's own race is superior. Racism results in fear and inhumane treatment for a person because of their ethnicity or the color of their skin. Racism is an emotional commitment to ignorance, however, it is not excusable.

The Lakeland Baptist Association requests our pastors, churches, and believers to engage in positive steps to declare racism as sinful and promote understanding that brings harmony among different peoples. The following Scriptural beliefs guide and direct our thoughts and actions.

- We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord of all and over all
- We believe all forms of racism and its corresponding acts are a sin issue and therefore, condemned by God and His believers
- We believe racism leads to injustice and evil acts of discrimination towards fellow human beings.
- We believe that race is not a biblical concept, therefore it is conceived in the minds of sinful humanity

The love of Christ is modeled for us in the picture painted in Revelation 7:9 of people from every nation, worshiping God, standing together as brothers and sisters in Christ. God loves every nation and every person and it is made abundantly clear in Scripture that racism is not compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. May the Lakeland Baptist Association, as a body of believers, model the love of Christ in this issue!

The Word of God is clear on the inclusion “of all peoples” in creation as equal in His sight. The following are Scriptures to guide our study and thought.

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of

commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Ephesians 2:14-16 (NKJV)

Psalm 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” Galatians 3:28 where he wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Hebrews 9:22, 10:19-22), Romans 6:1-2,

There is only one race of mankind (Genesis 1:24-28). (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 10:25-37; John 4:1-35; Romans 12:14-21). As no one desires to be mistreated based upon the color of his/her skin or ethnicity, so we are to treat them as we desire to be treated (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31).

ACTIONS

We will pray without ceasing to God for reconciliation of all peoples to Him and each other

We will pray for unity in the body of Christ and consistency of God's message to the world

We will not condone or encourage any acts of violence or destruction

We are requesting each church of the LBA to respond in writing to these collective statements and actions

We will submit this document to SBC, MWBC and National African American Fellowship (NAAF) requesting written responses from each.

We will urge NAMB to restore funding for the African American Ministries Consultant position to affirm they value continued African American contributions, perspectives and fellowship.

May 18, 2021

It will be okay

I must admit that I'm worn out with all the bad news: Hurricane Ida, Afghanistan, cultural insanity, and unimaginable moral depravity.

You can't turn on the TV or listen to the radio without being bombarded with it. You know the script... yada yada, yuck, yada yada, yuck!



Perspectives

Leo Endel

I can go days without hearing any news and when I do, it's the same old load of venom, conflict, fear, and anxiety.

While I'm not going to disconnect from the world, I do plan to cut the cable. If I don't cut

off the steady stream of poison I will be overcome with discouragement, fear, and anxiety.

Against the polluted onslaught that assaults my faith and morality, I need encouragement. Perhaps you do, too. Here are some thoughts that might help.

1) God is still on the throne; He has not lost control. He is not surprised. He is not defeated. He is not dead. He has told us there would be times

like these (John 16:33). I will not forget this powerful truth: "When I am afraid, I will trust in Him." (Psa. 56:3).

2) Jesus will never leave us or forsake us.

3) The Holy Spirit will give us the strength and wisdom to handle any opposition that may come.

4) The truth of Scripture has not failed. It has been assaulted before by the philosophies of this age. They've all been tried before and failed. They promise what they never deliver. The Bible has stood firm and its teachings have proven to be trustworthy and irrefutable.

5) We still enjoy incredible religious freedom in this country. We must not take this for granted.

6) Christianity has prospered in times of cultural antagonism.

7) God still blesses those who chose to live

His way. His Word is wise and perfect. It is a "lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). It continues to show me the best way to live life in this broken world.

8) I have family and friends who continue to trust the Lord and love and encourage me. Seeing their faith strengthens mine. Knowing they will stand with me keeps me strong.

9) God has given us our churches to love, support, and encourage us. Regularly meeting with them gives me the strength and courage to face the world. It reminds me that I am not alone.

10) People are still being transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every time I see someone affirm Jesus as their Lord and Savior, I am reminded of the power of the gospel to transform us and save

us.

11) People still respond to the power of Christian love. The hatred and anger of this age cannot overcome love. "Loving our enemies" is exceedingly powerful (Matt. 5:44).

12) We ultimately win. God is working His redemptive plan through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Soon and very soon, we are going to meet the King. We will live with Him for eternity and never again need to be encouraged, for evil will be dead and all will be well.

"Take heart" brothers and sisters, "for Jesus has overcome the world" (John 16:33). Since we know how it all turns out, be encouraged! It will be okay. Trust in the Lord!

Leo Endel is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist:

- The state paper and official publication of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

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

- A digital only publication, the PDF emailed free to all who subscribe and posted on MWBC's website and Facebook page.

- Formatted for letter size paper for those who want to print a copy.

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Dealing with depression

Naomi Osaka made international news when she withdrew from the French Open and opted not to play at Wimbledon due to her struggles with depression. Then Simone Biles, the world's most gifted gymnast, catapulted into the spotlight by withdrawing from competition



Reflections

Bill Tinsley

at the Olympics due to mental health issues.

Simone Biles wrote, "The outpouring of love and support I have received has made me realize I am more than my accomplishments and gymnastics which I never truly believed before."

If you are suffering from feelings of depression, anxiety,

loneliness or despair, you are not alone. Depression is widespread. It afflicts the wealthy, the famous, and the talented: writers, artists, musicians and athletes as well as the unknown and obscure. In 2020 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that more than a third of U.S. citizens show signs of clinical depression and anxiety. Our battle with COVID has caused this number to grow.

No book in the Bible is filled more with adoration, praise and

prayer than the Book of Psalms, most of them attributed to King David. There is a strange stream in the midst of these songs written by the musician who, in his youth, soothed King Saul with his skill on the lyre. We see it in Psalm 42, a psalm that starts out with a beautiful imagery for worship, "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants after you, O God," (Psa. 42:1). This is followed

See **DEPRESSION** page 11

The only God who can rescue us

In Daniel 3:15 the Babylonian ruler says derisively, “Who is the god who can rescue you from my power?” But only 14 verses later in Daniel 3:29 the same Babylonian ruler says, “There is no other god who is able to deliver like this.”

What changed the king’s mind? Three men who were willing to stand on God’s protection and provision in spite of what

looked like certain death. Those three men – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – did not know the end of the story as we do. The Babylonian leader saw four men in the fire, exclaiming that “the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” (Dan. 3:25)

You and I do not know the end of the story of how God will use us as we take unpopular stands on issues in today’s culture.

But we can trust that the God who protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will come to our rescue also.

As the three men stated to the king before being thrown into the fire, “If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he can rescue us from the power of you, the king. But even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up” (Dan. 3:17-18).

In today’s cancel cul-

See **RESCUE** page 11



Partnership and Prayer

Steve Melvin



Intercultural

Na Herr

As I reflect on the tragedy in Afghanistan, I am reminded of my own family’s plight as refugees.

In the 1960s and 1970s, many Hmong in Laos aligned with the U.S. in the Secret

War in Laos. After the U.S. withdrew from Southeast Asia, U.S. allies were faced with a choice to either stay and live under Communist rule or flee the country in hopes of finding freedom.

My family fled to Thailand. We stayed in refugee camps for almost ten years before immigrating to the U.S.

Two of my siblings and I were born in the camps. My father died while on a work assignment the year I was born.

It breaks my heart to see a similar tragedy unfold in Afghanistan. The images

of desperate Afghans rushing airport gates and clinging to airplanes are forever etched in my memory.

I will never understand the decisions that are made to start a war and to end a war. They have consequences that affect too many innocent lives. I yearn for the day when nations will

beat their “swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives” (Mic. 4:3).

As the precarious situation in Afghanistan continues to worsen, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless. One thing we can do is to assist refugees who are resettled into our community. It is an opportunity to welcome the stranger in our midst (Lev. 19:33-34).

Local refugee resettlement agencies are always looking for volunteers. In Minnesota, you can contact **Arrive Ministries** for opportunities to serve Afghan refugees arriving as soon as this month.

SEND Relief, a joint disaster relief effort of the IMB and NAMB, has an Afghan prayer

You are being paid to think

“You are not being paid to think!” bellows a toxic leader who is seeking compliance rather than cooperation from the ones being led. This statement is the organizational equivalent of the exasperated parent’s “Because I said so!”



Leadership

Clint Calvert

As I reflected on this phrase recently, I concluded that I *am* being paid to think. Church leaders will consult

with the staff of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention as thinking partners to brainstorm, dream, strategize, and consider courses of action. We consider issues related to facilities, policies, challenges, and opportunities. We consider finances, demographics, ministry contexts, and current realities. We think together in God’s presence, seeking His guidance to the right and best ideas to proceed. The MWBC welcomes your calls, and we are delighted to think along with you.

Not only am I paid to think, but *you* are also paid to think. Whether you do your thinking with or without the MWBC, your church has called you as a leader to lead and is paying you to think. Our culture places such a high value on doing, doing is sometimes valued over thinking. An anonymous woodsman once described most of the time in cutting down a tree being used to sharpen the ax. How much time could be saved by thinking before reacting to a given situation?

You are being paid to think, so take the time you need to think, even if others are pressuring you for an answer right now. You are being paid to think, so the time you save by choosing preferred solutions can save many valuable hours of your church’s time. You are being paid to think, so think!

Clint Calvert is church leadership catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

guide and other resources available on its website.

Pray for safety and protection as well as opportunities for the people of Afghanistan to receive the hope

of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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

Coming next year . . .

There are a couple of significant events that I would like to highlight that are coming in 2022.

First is Beach Reach, Panama City Beach, Fla. This is a mission trip experience where servant evangelism takes the form of free van rides and pancake breakfasts. Thousands visit the beaches during spring break and many are hurting and searching for meaning. College students provide simple acts of service that open the door to life-changing conversations about the



Student Ministries

Bob Smith

hope and love of Jesus. Many college students have been impacted by the ministry of Beach Reach and several of our national leaders are working to continue

this vital ministry. Wes Grimm, a Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention intern serving Red Village Church, has agreed to serve as a point person. More complete details will be coming. I anticipate that costs for registration, transportation, housing and meals to be approximately \$450 for the eight-day trip.

The second event is REV7:9, Dec. 29-31. This movement exists to help 18- to 25-year-olds explore ways they can use their gifts, talents, and careers to change the world. Every minute, 120 people die without Christ. REV7:9 seeks to change that, one gospel conversation at a time. As a part of the REV7:9 movement, you will discover the part you can play in changing someone's world. Email me at BSmithMWBC@msn.com or text me at (612) 940-3701 for more information.

Bob Smith is student ministries catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.



Losing ourselves in isolation

One reality that has remained consistent since the cross and throughout all time and cultures is that we, as the church, gather.

We've always worked through a variety of philosophies on gathering as a church, and that has gotten even more nuanced since 2020. Given that reality, there must be something divinely embedded at many layers as to why

gathering is a constant. To paraphrase C.S.

Lewis in his work "The Four Loves," if you have three friends, A, B and C, if B passes away you would think A and C

now have more of each other, but they actually have less because now they no longer have B's shared experience in A and C.

Malcolm Gladwell refers to it as transactive memory, a term coined

in 1985 by Daniel Wegner to explain our deep connectivity to each other. If you've ever heard someone say as they grieve, "It feels like a piece of me died," well, that's because it actually did. We store pieces of ourselves and experience within those closest to us in relationship. This transactive memory connection keeps us grounded within the relationship as if, to a great degree, we were loving ourselves.

The disruption to our rhythms of gathering have strained our connectivity and subsequently our mechanisms of grace, kindness and

forgiveness with each other, both within the church and within networks of churches.

So what should we do? Drive presence! We're going to be rightfully tempted to drive the negative byproducts of not being together, like reconciliation, unity, and conflict resolution, and

there is a place for that. The one primary reality we must creatively drive is presence with one another. Without it, we are losing part of ourselves.

Joshua Whetstine is church planting field director for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.



Church Planting

Joshua Whetstine

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

Good news from the associations

TWIN CITIES

Pastor Johnny Russell of Bethlehem Worship Center in Brooklyn Park reports that the church has a new location and now has their worship services on Sunday mornings. In addition, in answer to prayer, a new worship pastor will arrive this month.

Vitalie Huzun, pastor of Romanian Baptist Church of Ramsey baptized two new believers recently. The Romanian congregation is a very young community with a lot of potential to grow.

All Peoples Church in Minneapolis has relocated to the Lebanon Lutheran building in the Corcoran neighborhood. Pastor Daniel Simmons said the move allows them to meet for worship on Sunday mornings as well as provide more space for ministry needs.

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

On July 19 Redemption City Church purchased a long-term home in the heart of Rochester, the former Bethany United Methodist Church building located at 1835 19th Ave. NW. Having a "permanent" home feels good to the congregation that has previously met in a building of a different denomination, a middle school, a warehouse, and a hotel. Pastors are Jake Tonak and Adam Pohlman.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Rock of Hope Church in Wisconsin Dells hosted a mission team of 25 from Missouri July 17-23. The team focused on "neighborhood impact ministry," helping six neighbors with significant work projects at their homes (yard work, cleaning, concrete repair, stripping and repainting a garage). The service opened doors for friendship, conversation, prayer, and gospel proclamation. Aaron Ramquist is pastor.

Jose and Marylu Marco are moving to the Madison area to start Emmanuel Church which will meet at East Madison Baptist Church. The new congregation will reach out to Spanish speaking people on the east side of Madison.

LAKELAND

Ethnos Church in Milwaukee reports that God moved powerfully in the lives of many during a six-day revival Aug. 17-22. Pastor Elie Hasbani said eight people were baptized and others healed emotionally, mentally and physically. One lady who had not been able to walk for more than 15 years threw away her crutches and began to jump after being baptized.

NORTHWOODS

Grace Connection in Wadena is making great progress on their new building project, hoping to have it complete this fall.

Northland Missions has recently helped two congregations with \$3,000 grants to help finance their roofing projects: Grace Connection in Wadena and Hill City Baptist Church.

Immanuel Baptist in Roseau had a great Vacation Bible School with 52 children enrolled and 90 people attending the program on Friday.

Pastor Nathan Satchwill of Cornerstone Baptist in Thief River Falls, baptized nine this summer.



Northwoods Baptist Association's annual summer youth camp at Camp Jim in central Minnesota was the largest in the association's history with 117 campers and 70 workers. There were 11 salvations.

MIDWEST LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



January 18-20, 2022

Springfield, Illinois | Crowne Plaza Hotel

MWAdvance.org

By invitation only. Please contact your associational missionary or director of missions for more information.



Philip Nache and the children welcome home his wife and their mother Jummai, center, who was released Sept. 4 after spending six months in the University of Minnesota Hospital. They celebrated with a service of thanksgiving, prayer, and testimonies.

Kingdom Growth Conference points way to the future

Milwaukee – With a theme of “Where Do We Go From Here?” the annual Milwaukee Kingdom Growth Conference offered suggestions, challenges, and encouragement to those attending.

Held July 14-16 at the Jericho Church Without Walls, the event – now in its 22nd year – focuses on making disciples, maturing believers, and multiplying ministers. The conference is led by a network of predominantly African American churches in the Milwaukee area, focusing on building stronger ministries, ministers, and members.

The conference featured worship services and small group sessions for clergy and for laity.

Sermons were brought by William H. Curtis, senior pastor of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Penn.; John Faison, Sr., senior pastor of Watson Grove Baptist Church



Mark Croston, national director of Black Church Partnerships for LifeWay Christian Resources, drives home a point during his laity track session on “Big Results: Grasping, Gathering and Going!”

(The Grove) in Nashville, Tenn.; and George L. Parks, Jr., pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Ark.

Laity leadership track speakers included Mark Croston, national director of Black Church Partnerships at LifeWay Christian Resources; Marcus Allen, pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist

Church in Madison, Wis.; and Brenda Croston, women’s ministry trainer for LifeWay.

Clergy sessions were led by Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, and John Faison, Sr., senior pastor of Watson Grove Baptist Church (The Grove) in Nashville, Tenn.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MWBC events are in bold print.
Associational events are in color.
BLBA: Bay Lakes Baptist Association
SWBA: Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association
LBA: Lakeland Baptist Association
NBA: Northwoods Baptist Association
SMBA: Southern Minnesota Baptist Association
TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

To have your events included, email them to davidwilliams@compuserve.com.

SEPTEMBER

1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions

6 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

17-18 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.

OCTOBER

21 Annual Church Planter Forum – Ebenezer Community Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

22 Pastors Conference – Ebenezer Community Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

22-23 MWBC Annual Meeting, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

NOVEMBER

6 SWBA Annual Meeting, Trinity Baptist, Reedsburg, Wis.

25/26 Thanksgiving Holiday – MWBC Office Closed

28-12/4 Week of Prayer and Mission Study for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

DECEMBER

24-1/1 Christmas/New Year's Holiday – MWBC Office Closed

Are more pastors quitting today?

By Scott McConnell
Executive Director
LifeWay Research

Recently my brother-in-law was in charge of getting the cake for his mom’s retirement party. The family was surprised when they saw the cake’s short message: “Quitter”

Having worked a couple of years beyond her standard retirement age in the U.S., few would

consider her a quitter in the normal, judgmental use of the word. But, the morsel of truth that she was walking away from her job, made the cake humorous for at least some of those present.

In the same way the cake was not immediately appreciated by his mom, talk of pastors quitting today is often not appreciated by other pastors. A pastor shouldn’t have to walk

away from the job at a church for others to realize the job is hard.

When Michigan State Professor of Organizational Psychology, Rick DeShon, first studied the work of pastors, he agreed with earlier findings from Kuhne and Donaldson that “the pastor’s work activities are highly varied, taxing, fast-paced, unrelenting, and often fragmented.”

DeShon was no newcomer to analyzing jobs. This is his area of research expertise having analyzed the observable characteristics of countless jobs in diverse types of work. He concluded, “the breadth of tasks performed by local church pastors coupled with the rapid switching between task clusters and roles that appears prevalent in this position is unique. I have

never encountered such a fast-paced job with such varied and impactful responsibilities.”

Consider for a moment the fact that almost every task a pastor has is by nature complex: studying for a sermon, giving marital advice, providing leadership to a volunteer organization, having budget responsibility, helping

QUITTING

continued from page seven

those who are grieving, etc. That diverse complexity alone is taxing.

But the demands on a pastor require them to quickly switch between different complex tasks that require completely different knowledge, skills, or abilities. Matt Bloom is Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame where he leads the Wellbeing at Work Program. He describes the toll that this takes on a pastor. The switching, “is costly in terms of cognitive effort, behavioral control, and emotion regulation.”

And this list of tasks for a pastor never ends. There is always another complex task to switch to and to pour your all into.

A congregation’s needs, demands, and desires seem never-ending and are often ill-timed. Yet, few pastors quit.

Lifeway Research found about 1% of pastors leave the pastorate prior to retirement each year. To get this estimate, we surveyed 1,500 pastors. Each was asked who pastored their church 10 years ago and where was that pastor today—2% had left the ministry completely and 5% served in a role other than pastor in ministry. Among churches that existed and had a pastor 10 years ago, 13% are estimated to have left the pastorate for reasons other than death or retirement. This is less than 250 a month.

Because information flows so quickly today, it is easy to string together a handful of crowd-sourced stories of pastors quitting and to assume you have a new trend or a new epidemic in the American church. In reality, even a list of 100 pastors is still a fraction of the normal range of pastors chang-

ing career direction in a typical month.

Why would pastors quit?

The same survey that identified a previous pastor of their church who quit also obtained the reasons. The largest group had a change in calling (37%) as evidenced by most of them still serving in ministry somewhere, though not as a lead pastor.

Two other common reasons are tied to the pastor’s interaction with their church: 26% left because of conflict in the church and 13% because they were a poor fit for that church.

Pastors also leave because of family issues (17%), moral or ethical issues (13%), burnout (10%), personal finances (8%), and illness (5%).

Considering the nature of the job, you would expect burnout to be at the top of the list. But there are ways pas-

tors can prevent burnout and refill their tank.

Why are we hearing about quitting now?

Two topics that have been the focus of much attention in America recently have been the impact of COVID-19 and political conflict. The church has not been immune to either of these outside influences.

Throughout 2020 pastors described to Lifeway Research the rapid pace of change within their congregation triggered by the pandemic. Pastors were forced up a steep learning curve on new technology. Within weeks churches added online worship options and online giving options.

It seemed each week pastors received new information on what their church could/could not do, what was/was not safe, and where they could/could not go. The speed of these changes

and the lack of reliable information at times made the already stressful job of being a pastor even more demoralizing.

In many cases what has made continuing seem impossible is not the need for sacrifice, but the failure of other believers in the church to share the load they are called to carry. No pastor is called to do the work of a church alone. When each believer uses their spiritual gifts, it not only benefits others in the church, it lightens the load of others, including the pastor.

By July of 2020, pastors’ greatest pain point had become maintaining unity within their church. As their church navigated safety concerns, members of their congregation voiced differing opinions loudly, often reflecting the political leaders they listened to.

As the nation was fixated on politics and the pandemic, it is not surprising that people noticed and pointed others to any pastor who chose to walk away from one of these flashpoints.

There are no tracking studies to show whether the number of pastors leaving the pastorate has changed significantly in 2020-21. Because of the long-term nature of the pandemic, it is likely there has been an increase in pastors leaving the ministry, but it is also likely the number is still small. Even if the number of pastors leaving because of conflict doubled, the overall percentage of pastors leav-



Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention

Pastors Conference

October 22, 9-11:30 am

Ebenezer Community Church

9200 W Broadway, Brooklyn Park, MN

Dr. Terry M. Turner
Pastor, Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church, Mesquite TX

Free lunch provided then join us for the MWBC Annual Meeting

This conference is free and is provided by the Cooperative Program.



QUITTING

continued from page eight

ing would still round to 1% a year.

Even if the number of pastors leaving because of conflict doubled in 2020, the overall percentage of pastors leaving would still round to 1% a year.

The reality is that most pastors that reach an impossible point in their current church go on to serve another church. They don't leave the pastorate. They shift to a congregation where they are a better fit or the conflict is not pointed at them. When we asked pastors the reasons they left their previous church, 54% say they took their last church as far as they could, 34% say their family needed a change, and 23% say there was conflict in the church.

In addition, 19% say the church did not embrace their approach to pastoring, 18% were reassigned, 18% were not a good fit for the church, 18% say the church had unrealistic expectations of them, and 8% were asked to leave their last church.

How do so many pastors not quit?

Calling

Most pastors believe God has specifically called them to the role of pastor. Until God gives them a different assignment, this assurance that they are where they are supposed to be provides a reason to dust themselves off and get up again when they find themselves

knocked down.

Perspective

One of the realities that research on the well-being of pastors has often failed to capture is that God uses difficult seasons. It is easy to paint a picture of well-being that reflects a single point in time. At this moment, the pace of change is more than I can handle. Right now, I can't stand this conflict. Today, I don't have what it takes. But most of us, if we had to choose, would trade some pain today if it led to genuine, long-term wellness.

God's promise to work all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose is not something we typically see immediately. It is often a refinement or a reshaping of us that occurs in a fire that brings new growth and renewal to our lives.

Not alone

Ultimately pastors know they are not alone. As discouraging as today may seem, pastors have faith that God is present and cares for them personally. God often shows this care through others he places in the pastor's life. Research has shown the value of the pastor's spouse, time with family, and being able to share their struggles with a Bible study group in their church. All of these predict higher likelihood of a pastor staying in ministry.

Nobody celebrates

when a pastor shows up to work on a Monday morning to serve their congregation another week. In the same way, nobody applauds when

a custodian, or software programmer, or customer service rep arrives at work. It is their work. The reason we are surprised when a pastor

doesn't continue is because it is such a low percentage who actually quit.

Back to the beginning

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters,
to give recognition
to those who labor among you
and lead you in the Lord and admonish you,
and to regard them very highly in love
because of their work.

1 Thesalonians 5:12-13

Appreciate your Pastor

Let Your
Light Shine

Let your light shine before others,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16

25% Disaster Relief
20% Urban Ministry
15% Cross-cultural Missions
10% Hands of Hope
10% Internships
5% Children's Evangelism
5% Called Out Youth Camp
5% WMU
5% Pastoral Emergencies

Convention Goal:
\$100,000

Mission
Minnesota-Wisconsin
mwbc.org

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GIVING

January - August 2021

CP Budget \$410,224.00
CP Receipts \$453,249.17
OVER Budget YTD \$43,025.17

NAME	CP
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BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$250.00
Appleton, Fox Valley Hmong	\$180.00
Appleton, Valley	\$32,992.68
Black Creek, Community Bible	\$4,897.00
Clintonville, First Baptist	\$1,506.15
Green Bay, Bethel	\$666.64
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$5,509.98
Green Bay, Highland Crest	\$54,989.42
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$652.23
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$350.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$2,434.47
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$600.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist	\$1,597.50
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$1,731.01
BLBA TOTAL	\$108,357.08

TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSN.

Amery, Journey Church	\$5,000.00
Bloomington, Southtown	\$16,262.40
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean	\$1,000.00
Bloomington, True Light Chinese	\$200.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$2,200.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center	\$5,053.07
Burnsville, Berean Baptist	\$2,000.00
Burnsville, Crystal Lake Road	\$2,000.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong	\$1,250.00
Fridley, Good News Hmong	\$500.00
Maple Grove, Northwood	\$1,166.69
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$800.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples	\$4,320.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint	\$700.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations	\$620.58
Minneapolis, New Hope Baptist	\$250.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$954.92
Monticello, Grace Bible Church	\$2,700.00
New Hope, Westview Church	\$3,500.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$16,541.81
Oakdale, Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,176.00
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship	\$100.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$8,000.00
St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian	\$250.00
St. Michael, Northwest Bible	\$4,000.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$5,000.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$4,863.15
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$1,000.00
St. Paul, Salt City Church	\$21,450.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$1,169.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$4,800.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$420.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus Church	\$3,400.00
TCMBA TOTAL	\$122,647.62

SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$728.19
Janesville, Casa de Oracion	\$45.00
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$2,589.26
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,200.00
Madison, Dosa Church	\$35,499.66
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$4,584.00
Madison, Hope In Christ	\$1,522.42
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,357.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist	\$7,720.02
Madison, Red Village	\$5,000.00
Madison, Shalom Christian Assembly	\$50.00
Madison, Sovereign Joy Baptist	\$3,553.90
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$4,705.90
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$11,500.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$2,650.73
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$50.00
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$600.00
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$80.00
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$600.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$1,600.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeech	\$2,069.00
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$350.00
SWBA TOTAL	\$88,055.08

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist	\$965.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$12,198.89
Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$7,547.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist	\$4,284.80
Mequon, Westlake Church	\$200.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$2,400.00
Milwaukee, Family of Christ	\$250.00
Milwaukee, Iglesia Bautista Nueva	\$140.20
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist	\$900.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue Bapt	\$8,885.76
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$950.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$201.20
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$495.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$450.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$600.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$2,512.85
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$8,685.14
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$2,540.86
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$6,516.00
Racine, Hope Community	\$1,300.48
Wauwatosa, Redemption Church	\$625.00
LBA TOTAL	\$63,248.18

NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$887.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe	\$2,000.00
Crookston, Prairie Community	\$2,789.89
Ely, Berean Baptist	\$580.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$1,867.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist	\$700.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest	\$583.94
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist	\$3,405.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist	\$1,520.28
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$1,746.82
Wadena, Grace Connection	\$300.00
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$4,454.97
NWBA TOTAL	\$20,834.90

Mission Gifts from the Churches

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$2,713.20
Austin, Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$557.90
Chester, Chester Woods	\$787.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$1,753.20
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,570.45
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$4,407.10
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$13,217.74
Rochester, Redemption City	\$9,281.13
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$3,321.80
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$2,069.33
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$75.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$3,162.46
SMBA TOTAL	\$42,916.31

OTHER

Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$6,150.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ	\$1,040.00
MWBC AFFILIATED TOTAL	\$7,190.00

MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED **\$453,249.17**

NOTE: No giving received by MWBC-affiliated churches not listed above during stated giving periods

DEPRESSION

continued from page three

by another recurrent theme, "Why are you in despair, O my soul, and why have you become disturbed within me?" (Psa. 42:5).

Can it be that the young shepherd who slew Goliath and became the beloved King of Israel could have suffered from depression?

When I have felt the dark clouds of depression gathering above my head I have learned

several important things.

First, do something. Sitting and brooding only throws the mind into a deeper spiral of despair.

More than that, do something good for someone else. It doesn't matter who or what or how small. Find someone you can help in some way, whether within your family, among your friends or a total stranger.

Meditate on the Scripture, especially

the psalms. They will encourage your trust in God, even when times are difficult. And remember that moments of depression will pass. God will see you through.

In his famous letter to Fanny McCollough, Abraham Lincoln wrote, "You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less

miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say."

In the midst of his own mental anguish David repeatedly affirmed, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence," (Psa. 42:5, 11; 43:5).

Bill Tinsley is a for-

mer executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Appearing in various local newspapers around the country, his column "reflects" on current events and life experiences from a faith perspective.

Back to the beginning

RESCUE

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ture, it is imperative that Christ followers stand for biblical morality in spite of what looks like certain rejection. In today's relativism, it is necessary for Christ followers to stand for biblical principles in spite of what looks like certain ostracism. In today's culture of acceptance of subjective truth, Christ followers must stand up for the absolute truths in God's Word in spite of almost

certain rejection. Christ followers should understand that the culture of tolerance does not necessarily mean tolerance for the things of God.

As King Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel and rescued his servants who trusted in him. They violated the king's command and risked their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God . . . For there is no other god who is able to deliver like this."

(Dan. 3:28-29).

You and I can and should trust in God's promises, protection, and provision in spite of what we see and hear in the world around us. What difference could we make in these challenging days by trusting the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

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

Back to the beginning

MEETING

continued from page one

good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

The annual meeting will be preceded by two other events at 9 a.m. Friday at the same location: the annual Pastors Conference and the annual Woman's Missionary Union meeting.

The Pastors Conference will feature Dr. Terry M. Turner, pastor of Mesquite (Texas) Friendship Baptist Church, author of "God's Amazing Grace: Reconciling Four Centuries of African American Marriages and Families." Those attending the Pastors Conference will have lunch provided.

Registration for the MWBC annual meeting begins at 11 a.m. Friday and the opening session begins at 1 p.m. All present are invited to attend a 5 p.m. missions dinner at the church, which will be followed by a 6:30 p.m. evening session.

The Saturday schedule includes a 7:30 a.m. breakfast sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and a 9 a.m. to noon morning session.

One option for lodging is the convention hotel, Embassy Suites Minneapolis North, 6300 Earle Brown Dr., Brooklyn Center, Minn. The phone number is (763) 560-2700.

Back to the beginning

Join us for the **THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING** **MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION**

October 22-23, 2021
Ebenezer Community Church
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Let Your Light Shine

LOCATION

EBENEZER COMMUNITY CHURCH
9200 BROADWAY AVE
BROOKLYN PARK, MINNESOTA

Everyone is encouraged to attend.

IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A MESSENGER
TO THE CONVENTION WITH THE ABILITY
TO VOTE ON PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND
BUDGET OF THE CONVENTION, PLEASE
CONTACT YOUR PASTOR FOR INFOR-
MATION ON THE APPROPRIATE PROCESS
OF APPROVAL APPLICABLE TO YOUR
CHURCH.

For more information, go to
www.mwbc.org or call
507.282.3636

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22ND

9:00 AM	PASTORS CONFERENCE WITH DR. TERRY TURNER,
9:00 AM	WMU MEETING—R&R RETREAT
11:00 AM	REGISTRATION BEGINS
1:00 PM	OPENING SESSION
5:00 PM	MISSIONS DINNER—ALL WELCOME
6:30 PM	EVENING SESSION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23RD

7:30 AM	BREAKFAST SPONSORED BY SBC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE— ALL WELCOME
9:00 AM	MORNING SESSION
NOON	ADJOURNMENT

CONVENTION HOTEL—OPTION
EMBASSY SUITES MINNEAPOLIS NORTH
6300 EARLE BROWN DRIVE, BROOKLYN CENTER MN
763-560-2700