

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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## MWBC adopts vision, targets next generation

By David Williams  
Editor

Brooklyn, Park, Minn. – Messengers to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention unanimously adopted a vision statement at their annual meeting, putting a new focus on “reaching the next generation.”

Meeting at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn, Park, Minn., Oct. 22-23, messengers gave their stamp of approval to Vision 2025, a statement that had been developed through a convention-wide “SWOT” analysis, seeking to discover MWBC’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Chris Heng, MWBC president and pastor of Twin Cities Hmong in St. Paul, Minn., said the process included input from an emailed survey, an executive board and state staff strategy session in September, and final wording approved by the administrative committee in October.

The result of the process was the following Vision 2025 statement adopted by messengers: **“Inspiring a passion among the MWBC family to glorify Christ by reaching the next generation, mobilizing volunteers, and**

**developing leaders to start and strengthen churches.”**

Heng called the statement “motivating, Christ-centered, actionable and simple.”

During his president’s message, Heng emphasized the “next generation” aspect of the Vision 2025 statement.

“Reaching our young people is something that is not only on my heart but has become a national priority” he said, referring to the Southern

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For a donation to missions, messengers enjoyed a varied menu at the Friday evening Missions Celebration Dinner, as well as a report from a missionary couple serving in a risky part of the world. See [WMU Annual Meeting story and photo on page 14](#).

## Pastor conference focuses on racism

Brooklyn Park, Minn. – “Reconciling our races is key in America today, because America is in trouble,” Terry Turner told 42 pastors who gathered for the annual Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention Pastors Conference at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park, Minn.

The Pastors Conference was on the morning of Friday, Oct. 22 and preceded the MWBC Annual Meeting which began that afternoon, also meeting at Ebenezer.

Turner is pastor of Mesquite (Texas)

Friendship Baptist Church which he planted 30 years ago. In 2011 he became the first African American president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. He is the author of a book, “God’s Amazing Grace: Reconciling Four Centuries of African American Marriages and Families.”

The book is a result of his research into marriage happiness among five different ethnic groups in the United States, during which he discovered that “African Americans have the highest risk factors of all

ethnicities, across the board.”

He found that trend to be the result of a common thread that is found in African American families but in no other ethnic group in the U.S. – their history of slavery and continued systemic repression since the end of slavery.

“Racism is incorporated into almost every aspect of society,” he said. “That’s what makes it systemic.”

Turner ended his presentation with five recommendations for MWBC to take **steps toward racial reconciliation**.

## MEETING

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Baptist Convention's Vision 2025 statement that includes as one of six strategic actions the reversal of "the ongoing decline in the SBC in reaching, baptizing and discipling those under the age of 18."

Noting that Christianity Today recently reported that "nearly half of Southern Baptist kids leave and never come back," Heng said, "I think it would be fair to call this a crisis. . . . It's an issue that needs to be discussed, prioritized and acted on now."

**See related story: Five Keys to Preventing Church Dropouts, page 8.**

Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, said the process of developing the vision statement revealed several challenges facing the convention, not the least of which is geography: 880 miles separating the northwest corner of Minnesota and the southeast corner of Wisconsin, a distance equal to that from the convention to Atlanta.

"Geography works against connections and opportunities," Endel said, suggesting that the solution is to take advantage of various "touch points" throughout the year when people from all the churches can come together, such as the Annual Meeting and Pastors Conference, the Pastors and Wives Retreat, Empower, Kingdom Growth Conference, Hands of Hope, and various youth and children's events.

Other challenges include communications, diversity and finances. The communications challenge is being addressed through weekly emailed announcements and the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist, the convention's every other month digital newspaper.

The diversity challenge is being addressed by planting churches for all types of people. "Fifty percent of our churches are not Anglo majority," Endel said, indicating that MWBC is one of the most diverse of all state Baptist conventions. The diversity was on full display at the annual meeting as worship was led by Liberian and Hmong musical groups.

The financial challenge has come as partners depended upon for decades — particularly the North American Mission Board and the Baptist General Convention of Texas — have drastically decreased financial support during the past several years. The changes prompted Endel to lead the convention to become self-supporting over the past six years, a goal that he said has now been reached.

"The budget you just passed is a self-sufficient budget," he said, referring to the **2022 budget** totaling \$968,313. "It is the first budget fully funded exclusively by the churches of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention," he said, noting all personnel, programming and operating expenses are covered by Coop-



*Officers elected to serve 2021-2022 are, left to right, Wes Shemwell, recording secretary; Daniel Goba, second vice president; Jonathon Woodyard, first vice president; Bob Stine, president; Jim Gress, assistant recording secretary.*

erative Program gifts from MWBC churches and the annual state missions offering. The offering reached a new record last year and will provide \$100,000, nearly 10 percent, of the 2022 budget needs.

The only outside resources now are special evangelism grants and new church funding from NAMB and an annual grant from BGCT's Mary Hill Davis State Missions Offering which provides much of the funding for the annual Pastors and Wives Retreat.

Endel called the new budget "self-supporting, sustainable and lean," adding that "God has gotten us to where I believe He wants us to be."

The budget is actually up 8.3 percent from the 2021 budget of \$894,366, but that year saw a big decrease of 36.4 percent from the previous year's budget of more than \$1.5 million.

The amount passed on for global SBC missions through the Cooperative Program remains at 36 percent, the same as in 2021 and 2020.

Charles Dunning, chairman of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Foundation, reported the foundation now has more than \$4 mil-

lion in assets and over the last five years has used earnings from the Burress-Littleford Memorial Fund to give 13 grants of \$7,500 each to churches to help them provide more space for growth.

Dunning also reported on the foundation's partnership with Free Will. M-WBF pays an annual fee of \$18,000 to partner with Free Will. During the past two years 58 free wills have been written and those wills include 14 bequests to churches and/or other Baptist causes. Last year alone those bequests totaled \$1.5 million, he said.

Joshua Whetstine, field director for church planting for the North American Mission Board, reported MWBC has seen a 20 percent increase in number of churches through church planting, the highest percentage growth of any state Baptist convention. "Our goal is to plant a church everywhere for everyone," he said.

Messengers passed three resolutions. One expressed appreciation to the host church and another expressed appreciation to Endel for his leadership "through these challenging days." The third was a resolution (1) to pray often

for the 11.6 million residents of Minnesota and Wisconsin; (2) to pray regularly for our political leaders in our nation, our states, and our local communities; (3) to pray faithfully for our leaders in our associations and local churches.

A total of 141 attended the meeting including 67 messengers from 47 of the convention's 180 churches. Theme for the meeting was "Let Your Light Shine," from Matthew 5:16

Bob Stine, pastor of Midvale Baptist Church in Madison, Wis., was elected president. Jonathon Woodyard, a member of Northfield (Minn.) Community Church, was elected first vice president. Daniel Goba, pastor of Ebenezer Community Church in Bloomington, Minn., was elected second vice president.

Ebenezer Community Church had been scheduled to be the site of last year's annual meeting but the in-person event was canceled in favor of an online only annual meeting. During that virtual meeting messengers voted to schedule the 2021 meeting at Ebenezer. Because of the year delay, messengers this year were able to see the church's new

# A vision for the future

**H**ave you ever felt hemmed in by God to see something new that changed your priorities or perspective?

This year's MWBC 2025 Vision Statement came into focus

through the multifaceted voices of our convention's people and God's guiding hand. After the survey input



## Perspectives

**Leo Endel**

of people across our two states and through the assistance of a professional facilitator, our executive board and staff, God focused our eyes on glorifying Christ by doing two things (start and strengthen

churches) through three strategies (reaching the next generation, mobilizing volunteers, and developing leaders).

2021 was a strange but encouraging year for me. Much has been said of the distractions of COVID, the sociological upheavals of our culture, and the political tensions within

our society. There has been a heavy cloud of discouragement hanging over us since March of 2019. However, God quietly encouraged me with several conversations that at first struck me as simply nice but ultimately revealed a lighted path to what He wanted me to see.

The first connection was with a young lady

I knew in my home church back in the 1980s. After many years of separation from God and the church she reconnected to tell me of her journey back to the Lord. She then asked me questions about what her late father would have thought of certain issues she was trying to understand from a biblical worldview.

Then two women whom I remember as little 10-year-old girls, now in their 40s, contacted me independently and shared their journeys back to the Lord. One of them said, "Thank you for teaching us Scripture and helping us memorize verses. I could never get them

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## 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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## What are we missing?

**W**hen we listen to the news regarding the economy, international politics and religious trends in America, we could easily conclude that the world is spiraling out of control.

Christendom seems to be on the skids. Church buildings that once housed vibrant congregations stand empty. Some have been turned into offices, lofts or restaurants. Many of the great cathedrals of Europe now operate as

museums.

In a similar day to our own, Habakkuk posed the following question to God: "Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before

me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails" (Hab. 1:3-4). It seemed to Habakkuk that God had abandoned the world to its own destructive devices.



## Reflections

**Bill Tinsley**

God's answer to him was quick and clear: "Look at the nations and watch – and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told" (Hab. 1:5).

Like Habakkuk, maybe we are missing something.

The Bible teaches that God is active in human history. The Old Testament carefully charts God's hand at work among the Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. The New Testament introduces Jesus in the "fullness of time." It would be

illogical to conclude that God turned his back on human events and walked away 2,000 years ago.

While Christianity has waned in the West, it has exploded in South America, Africa and Asia. Only 35 percent of the world's Christians live in the United States and Europe. In some regions of South America, the number of Christians has grown at more than twice the rate of the population. South Korea has become the second largest mission-sending nation in the world. Despite

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## SBC EC 'moving forward'

**G**uy Fredrick – who serves as bi-vocational pastor of Mapledale Baptist Church in Sheboygan, Wis., and associational mission strategist for Bay Lakes Baptist Association



### Guest Column Guy Fredrick

spective of the current controversy involving the Executive Committee.

To describe to my father, a former dairy farmer, some of the effects of the issues before the

Executive Committee, I turned to an allusion that he would instantly recognize.

Every farmer understands that the “stuff” that comes from the south side of

a north-going cow can be one of two things – a money maker or a mess maker. All of that “stuff” needs to be dealt with, but it is in the dealing with “stuff” that problems may occur.

Farmers understand that the money is in the milk, but most often fail to see the other “stuff” in the same light. It is a daily chore of the farmer to shovel that “stuff” into a spreading machine that is towed into a field by a tractor turning a rotary spreading device that flings the “stuff” into the air.

Every farmer who

has ever spread “stuff” understands innately that a continual moving forward while spreading ensures the “stuff” will land on the field rather than on himself. Once applied to a field, that “stuff” becomes the fertilizer that produces a magnificent crop in the next season of planting and harvesting.

Such is precisely the case in the current affairs of the SBC EC. There are a lot of things in the air right now and no one is completely sure exactly where those things will land. As the wise farmer knows, the best

thing for us to do is keep moving forward, hoping and praying that what lands will fertilize the field for even greater things in our convention.

Now is not the time to run from Cooperative Program giving nor from the convention. Now is the time to double down and to run with endurance the race set before us.

As Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37-38, ESV).

## The importance of sustainable missions

**I** spoke with a missionary recently who expressed some concerns about short-term mission trips.

Churches with good intentions go on mission trips to

bring aid to places that have very real needs. Too often, however, they go in without coordinating with local missionaries and church leaders.

In one case, the mission team brought valuable supplies to a village and distributed them for free. After a week of ministering to the village, the mission

team returned home. Later on, a missionary who had been trying

to reach that same village came and started sharing the gospel. A villager asked her if she had any free

supplies, which she did not. The villager became disinterested and left.

While the work of short-term mission teams is important and necessary, it has to be done in coordination with local missionaries and church leaders. After all, they are the ones who stay after everyone else has gone home.

Our teams should not make the work of missionaries any harder than it already is.

Next time your church goes on a mission trip, contact local missionaries and church leaders first. Instead of presenting your own agenda to them, ask how they think you could best assist them in the mission.

The goal is long-term sustainable missions. This requires a coordinated effort with ministry partners on the ground who can continue the work when borders close and funding dries up. When there is healthy ministry partnership, the mission goes on undeterred by political instability, economic



### Intercultural Na Herr

### SEA Mission Trip 2022 July 26 - August 9



hardship, and crippling pandemics.

Na Herr is intercultural

catalyst/team facilitator for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

# Partnerships available to MWBC churches

Rochester, Minn. — Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., tested the waters of partnership this summer when they scheduled not one, not two, but three events involving mission teams from Missouri.

The church put together an integrated plan for outreach and evangelism that included a June 27-30 basketball camp assisted by Southside Baptist Church, Fulton, Mo., then Vacation Bible School on July 25-28 assisted by Lake of the Ozarks Baptist Association in central Missouri, and then an archery camp conducted

Aug. 2-5 by Deer Creek Church from Cuba, Mo.

The teams that came are a product of a five-year partnership that began in 2017 between the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention and the Missouri Baptist Convention. Rick Hedger, multiplying churches catalyst for the Missouri convention, reported at the MWBC annual meeting last month that the partnership peaked in 2019 with 65 teams coming from Missouri to help MWBC churches. The pandemic caused numbers to drop to only a handful of teams per year in 2020 and 2021.



*This team from Deer Creek Church in Cuba, Mo., part of the Meramec Association, was one of three Missouri teams that helped Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., with outreach and evangelism projects this summer.*

“We’re waiting to hear from you,” he said. “Where does God want the next Missouri Baptist church to go?”

“More and more churches and associations from outside MWBC are inquiring into partnership opportunities with our

churches and associations,” said Steve Dyess, MWBC assistant to the executive director. “Teams from our future partners could support most requests from our churches, such as teams for VBS, evangelism, sports camp, or light construction.”

The first step to connecting with a partner in Missouri or elsewhere is to **complete a mission project form** and return it to Dyess. You are asked to attach a photo to the form: either the pastor, the pastor and his family, or the church building.

## A coach's challenge shaped my ministry

This is a personal story that shapes the way I serve church leaders today. At the beginning of my ministry, my basketball coach challenged me in ways that affect the way I serve the

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

My mother was employed by a Christian school in east Texas when I started the eighth grade. My siblings and I left public school and began to attend the private Christian school where my mother taught. I was not a good fit for the Christian school in

my eighth-grade year. I was frequently in trouble for my language and attitude. I got a lot of attention from teachers and administration due to my negative behavior.

In the summer before ninth

grade, I went on a mission trip to Minnesota. During the mission trip, I surrendered to the call to the gospel ministry. When I returned from the trip to begin the ninth grade, I still received attention from teachers and administration. Now, having surrendered to the ministry, adults in my life expected me to live

consistently with that calling as a “preacher boy.”

My basketball coach was Chip Ingram. Chip is a well-known pastor and author today. Over 30 years ago he was pastor of a Bible church in Kaufman, Texas and my basketball coach at my Christian school. Chip challenged me one day with some life-changing admonitions.

Picture me as a 14-year-old teenager. Acne covered my face and I never knew what my hair would do from one day to the next. As I practiced basketball, I did not wear the proper clothes and shoes for the sport. I felt a lot of pressure to live up to the expectations of others.

Chip took me aside after practice and said he could see the weight of the world on my shoulders. He explained that I was a boy trying to carry the expectations of an adult. He assured me that I would become a pastor in time, but not overnight. He showed concern for me as a whole person, not just as a minister. He also challenged me to buy the right clothes and shoes to perform at my best in basketball. He wanted me to take pride in my appearance and boost my confidence.

Chip’s challenge to me shaped the way I minister to others today. I am committed to do for others what Chip did for me. I am committed to serving

you as a church leader with a concern for you as a whole person and not just your ministry. I am committed to helping you get the best equipment and resources. I am also committed to helping you be who God made you to be, not a copy of me.

Whenever we work together, I will fulfill these commitments to you. If you ever feel these commitments are not being kept as I serve you, please remind me. I want to bless you with the kind of help God graciously gave me from my coach.

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



**Leadership**  
*Clint Calvert*

# Good news from the associations

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

Redemption City Church in Rochester has had many visitors each Sunday since moving into their new building in August. A block party was attended by several families from the neighborhood and two people have started attending worship as a result of that connection.

## LAKELAND

Redemption Church in Wauwatosa celebrates God's answers to prayer: four were recently baptized, a part-time pastoral assistant has been hired, and three new elders will be appointed in October. Danny D'Acquisto is pastor.

## NORTHWOODS

Immanuel Baptist in Roseau and Cornerstone Baptist in Thief River Falls joined together to have a speaker Sept. 26 from Creation Ministry International.

Pastor Cubby Westerberg of Cross Pointe Church in Cambridge brought biblical teaching on conflict resolution to the NBA annual meeting on Oct. 30 at Eagles Nest Baptist Church.

Westside Baptist Church in Warroad recently had a missionary speaker who works in South Korea.

## SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

SWBA's annual meeting on Nov. 6 at Trinity Baptist in Reedsburg offered those attending a first hand look at the renovation and expansion project of the church. Also scheduled to be on the program were several church planter testimonies, reports from partners in Bell Baptist Association (Texas) and the Heart of Texas Baptist Network, and special guest Chris Allen from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

## TWIN CITIES

Three people were baptized Sept. 5 by Brett Toney, pastor of Westview Church in Crystal, Minn. Since beaches were closed due to an outbreak of E coli, the baptism took place in a cattle water tank in the front yard of the Toney residence. A picnic followed.

Aaron Downs is leading Resurrection Church in Burnsville, Minn., as they remodel and move into a new location in late November. He is co-pastor with Joshua Huber.



Chris Reinertson (standing left) and Leo Endel (standing right) reflect on praises of the past year at the annual meeting of the Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association, Oct. 4, at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington. Reinertson is pastor of Southtown and director of missions for Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association. Endel is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. The meeting featured a multicultural dinner.

## VISION

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out of my mind.”

Another young woman I remember as an older rebellious teenager sent me a Facebook message and told me how God had brought her back to Himself through her personal pain and depression. She had tried the culture's way and found it empty. Now she was returning to Jesus.

All of this is to say that investments we made in kids many years ago make a difference! It is discouraging to see our young people swayed by the culture and leave our churches, but don't despair. God's not done with them yet.

At first, I didn't see a pattern. As the executive board began discussing the convention's strategies, I didn't connect these personal experiences to the work of the convention—in spite of the fact that the SBC had adopted a similar strategy in June of this year. In our conversations with the executive board, “reaching the next generation” kept coming up. In attempting to process all the input from the convention, this strategic initiative rose in prominence.

I am more convinced than ever that we must do everything possible to

disciple our children and youth and equip them with a biblical worldview that will withstand the antagonistic culture of the 21st Century. We must give our children opportunities to grow and to serve. We must help them think through the hard questions. We must equip them to follow Jesus in a post-Christian age.

“God is always at work” wrote Henry Blackaby in his popular study, *Experiencing God*. Indeed, He is. I have often found it amazing that God uses His Word, His people, and the circumstance around us to invite us into His plans and purposes. Memories from Wendy, Mindy, Stacy, Angie, Bob, and Ron helped me see and understand what the leaders of our churches were saying to me.

**Lifeway repeatedly cites their research that, “66% of young adults who attended church regularly as a teenager drop out for some time, but it doesn't have to be that way.”** I agree. Let's do everything we can to help our kids follow Jesus to joy.

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

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**mwbc.org**

## MISSING

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persecution in China, the number of Christians has grown from 22 million to 38 million in the last decade. The number of Christians in Africa skyrocketed from 10 million in 1900 to more than 300 million in 2000. The Pew Forum projects the African continent will be home to more than 1 billion Christians by 2050.

Christianity is growing faster than at any time in history. It simply is not happening in America or Europe. And Christianity outside the West does not look like the Christendom structures of the Reformation. Christians are not building cathedrals these days. They are becoming passionate followers of Christ. When people become passionate followers of Jesus they become more honest, generous and industrious, the very elements that create an economic, political and spiritual future.

Perhaps, if we look at the nations and watch, we will stand in utter amazement at what God is doing in our day.

*Bill Tinsley is a former 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.*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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: Southern Minnesota Baptist Association

TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

To have your events included, email them to [davidwilliams@compuserve.com](mailto:davidwilliams@compuserve.com).

### NOVEMBER

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

26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday - **MWBC Office Closed**

29-12/6 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**

### JANUARY

**4-13 Pastors' Holy Land Tour**

18-20 Midwest Leadership Summit, Springfield, Ill.

### FEBRUARY

**3-5 Pastors and Wives Retreat, Green Lake, Wis.**

### MARCH

6-12 Week of Prayer and mission Study for North American Missions/Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

**11-12 Empower Conference**

### APRIL

15 Good Friday - **MWBC Office Closed**

**22-23 MWBC Executive Board Meeting, Rochester, Minn.**

**30 MWBC Lottie Moon Offering Cutoff**

### MAY

**20 New Pastor Orientation, Rochester, Minn.**

30 Memorial Day Observed - **MWBC Office Closed**

### JUNE

12-13 Southern Baptist Convention, Anaheim, Cal.

**TBD Hands of Hope**

**30 MWBC Annie Armstrong Offering Cutoff**

### JULY

4 Independence Day Holiday Observance - **MWBC Office Closed**

**26-8/9 SEA Mission Trip to Thailand**

### AUGUST

### SEPTEMBER

**1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions**

5 Labor Day - **MWBC Office Closed**

**16-17 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.**

### OCTOBER

**TBD Called Out Youth Conference, Baraboo, Wis.**

**20 SEND Network Planters Gathering, Northwest Baptist Church, Wauwatosa, Wis.**

**21 Pastors Conference, Northwest Baptist Church, Wauwatosa, Wis.**

**21-22 MWBC Annual Meeting, Northwest Baptist Church, Wauwatosa, Wis.**

24-25 Missouri Baptist Annual Meeting, St. Charles, Mo.

### NOVEMBER

13-15 Baptist General Convention of Texas Annual Meeting, Waco, Texas

24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday - **MWBC Office Closed**

### DECEMBER

4-10 Week of Prayer and Mission Study for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

26-30 Christmas/New Year's Holiday - **MWBC Office Closed**

## MEETING

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1,000 seat sanctuary and educational space just completed and dedicated in September. Pastor Francis Tabla planted the church 22 years

ago and it has grown to a weekly attendance of 600-700 comprised mostly of immigrants from Liberia and other African nations.

Next year's meeting will be Oct. 21-22, 2022, at Northwest

Baptist Church, Wauwatosa, Wis., where Paul Springer is pastor. The preacher of the convention sermon will be Kurt Owens, pastor of UFlourish Church, Milwaukee. The alternate will be Sam Choi, pastor

of All Peoples Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

The 2023 meeting will be at Northwood Community Church in Maple Grove, Minn., where Brian Doten is pastor.

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# 5 Keys to Preventing Church Dropouts

**By Aaron Earls**  
*Lifeway*

Every church wants to avoid losing teenagers as they become young adults, yet most will drop out for some time. Some will return, but many leave and never return.

According to Lifeway Research's in-depth study of young adults and church dropouts, there are steps your church can take to reduce the likelihood the teens in your congregation walk out and away for good.

If these principles guide your student ministry, you'll make it less likely those students become part of the dropout statistics.

## 1 Involve other adults

Student ministers and youth leaders should not only spend time with their students, but they should spend time talking to other adults about getting involved with the teenagers in the church.

Among students who drop out of church, 17% say no adult in the church made a significant investment in them personally or spiritually between the ages of 15 and 18. Among those who stayed in church, less than 5% say that was their experience.

Having other adults besides the student pastor and more adults develop healthy relationships with teenagers in church decreases

the odds those students will drop out of church.

Conversely, among those who dropped out 27% say five or more people made such an investment. Among those who stayed in church, close to 4 in 10 (39%) had five or more people intentionally pouring into their lives personally and spiritually.

When asked specifically if an adult spent time with them regularly to help them grow spiritually, 46% of those who dropped out said yes, compared to 58% of those who stayed.

Having other adults and more adults develop healthy relationships with teenagers increases the odds those students will remain in church as adults. One way to bring in other adults is through small groups and classes, which also matter.

## 2 Connect students to small groups

Encourage teenagers to be connected in small groups which help them see other adults living out their faith and knit them closer together with those their age as they study Scripture.

Among eventual church dropouts, 71% say they attended a small group or Sunday school class as a teenager. For those that stayed in church as a young adult, that increased to 78%.

Those who dropped out of church as a young adult are less likely than those who continued to attend to say they were regularly involved in a small group as a teenager.

Beyond that, 41% of those who dropped out said they were involved with an in-depth Bible study or discipleship class at church. For those who continued attending church throughout their young adult years, 50% said such a class was part of their teen years.

Having students listen to an adult teach about the Bible with other teenagers who are studying Scripture has a lasting impact. Students shouldn't merely sit and learn, however. Getting them out to serve is also important.

## 3 Get them involved in serving

One of the priorities of student ministry should be moving students from being merely receivers of Bible lessons to those who are living out that message. A great place to take first steps of service is within the church itself.

Compared to those who stayed in church, those who dropped out as a young adult were less likely as a teen to have given financially (37% to 46%), participated in a mission trip (35% to 46%), participated in service proj-

ects through the church (60% to 69%), held a leadership position in activities at church (30% to 39%), and had regular responsibilities at church (42% to 56%).

One of the priorities of student ministry should be moving students from being merely receivers of Bible lessons to those who are living out that message.

Make sure your church provides such opportunities to students. Allow them to take the lead on ministries. Offer mission trips and local service projects. Give them chances to live out their faith within the church body. But also stress the need for being faithful at home as well.

## 4 Encourage personal spiritual disciplines

Student ministers and church leaders should be concerned about what happens in the spiritual lives of teenagers outside of church because that also influences whether they stay involved.

Among the students who stay in church, 74% say they regularly spent time in prayer privately as a teenager. For those who dropped out, 63% said that was part of their normal practice.

Young adults who stayed in church are more likely than their counterparts who dropped out to say

they regularly prayed and read their Bible as teenagers.

Students who continued to attend church were also more likely to read their Bible regularly. Among those who stayed, 61% spent regular time reading the Bible privately. For those who dropped out, 46% said the same.

Don't spend all your student ministry focusing on how involved teenagers are with what is happening at church that you forget the larger amount of time they're away from you. What they do at home matters, which leads to the final point.

## 5 Disciple their parents

Student ministers play a vital role in the spiritual development of a teenager, but that influence pales in comparison to that of the parents. So, in addition to seeking to grow students spiritually, church leaders should be working to encourage the parents in their walks with Christ.

Among those who dropped out of church as a young adult, 77% say their parents attended church regularly during the student's teen years. Among those who stayed, 83% say their parents were regularly at church.

If you want churchgoing teenagers to become churchgoing young adults, make sure you are not only



Stan and Carol Weese are honored for 33 years of faithful ministry through North Center Baptist Church in Brooklyn Park, Minn. Their Oct. 9 retirement celebration was held at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park, Minn.

## KEYS

*continued from page eight*

discipling them but also their parents.

Two in three (66%) who dropped out say their parents provided spiritual guidance during those formative teenage years. For those who continued to attend church, however, 83% said their parents helped to guide them spiritually.

Overall, 66% of young adults who attended church regularly as a teenager drop out for some time, but it doesn't have to be that way. That percentage is a four-point drop from 2007 when Lifeway Research first studied the teen drop-out rate. Churches can continue to lower the percentage of teenagers who leave our congregations by focusing on the spiritual health of students—at church and at home.

**Back to the beginning**

## RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING 30 YEARS OF PASTORAL SERVICE BOBBY SINCLAIR

Pastor Sinclair and I have served together in Kingdom Building Ministry for over thirty years. We attended the same High School North Division, from the same hometown Jackson, Tennessee and we both served our country in the military. We served in the same home church Jeremiah Baptist Church under the leadership of the same pastor Fred Boyd (deceased).

**WHEREAS**, he and my wife Sherry sang together in the choir. He followed me at Jeremiah in leading the Sunday School Teaching Ministry. This led to him accepting a preaching call into the Gospel Ministry.

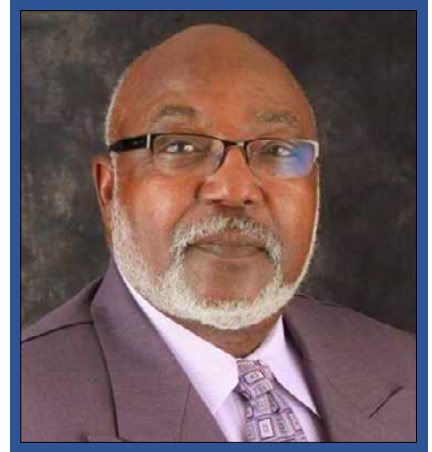
**WHEREAS**, when he was called to Pastor the then Mount Hermon Baptist Church I had the privilege to give him the pastoral charge and Dr. Bridges gave the charge to the church.

**WHEREAS**, we have served together in the community: during the Katrina flood receiving refugees, on the board of directors of Heartlove Place, Common Ground, Lakeland Baptist Association, Minnesota/Wisconsin Baptist Convention, Kingdom Growth Conferences and many other ministry opportunities.

**WHEREAS**, he led his church in the purchase of our church property 3918 west center street. He later led his church to purchase a former hardware store and remodeled it into the current facilities known as Community of Grace Baptist Church.

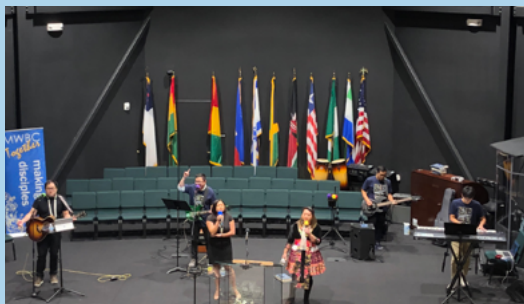
**WHEREAS**, we have joyfully served together in ministry, there were times we shed tears of grief together, at the lost of his parents, daughter, and our other loved ones. We give the honor and praise to our Heavenly Father for his continued grace and mercy.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that we commemorate this day October 10, 2021 for your 30 years of faithful leadership service to the church God has called you to serve. We wish the church, you and your wife continued blessings in the years to come.



**DONE BY ORDER OF MOUNT HOREB BAPTIST CHURCH  
OCTOBER 10, 2021 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
REVEREND ROY HOPGOOD JR. SENIOR EMERITUS PASTOR  
SHERRY HOPGOOD, CHURCH CLERK**

# MWBC Annual Meeting 2021



The diversity of Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention was seen in the music leadership which included (clockwise from upper left) Betsy Timmons, MWBC worship director from Rochester, Minn., First Hmong Worship Team from Coon Rapids, Minn., Ebenezer Community Church Choir from Brooklyn Park, Minn., and Twin Cities Hmong Praise Team from St. Paul, Minn.



"We have work to do," said Daniel Goba, pastor of Ebenezer Community Church in Bloomington, Minn., as he led Bible study on Matthew 5:3-4. Goba was elected second vice president of the convention.



Jonathon Woodyard, assistant professor of theology and history at Bethlehem Seminary in Minneapolis, Minn., urges messengers to find their joy not in the world they see around them but in the God of the Bible. "We cannot hope in larger churches, a flourishing convention, or health and wealth to deliver ultimate joy," he said. "Instead, when churches decline, when our convention fights, and when pandemics hit, we hope in God, our 'exceeding joy'." Woodyard was elected first vice president of the convention.



"Sometimes Jesus is going to do something, but we must wait for Him to choose the right time," Dave Jacobson, pastor of City on a Hill in Fitchburg, Wis., tells messengers. "I know that this has been a year of waiting on the Lord," he said. "His timing is always perfect. His power is perfect and He is working out His perfect plan in our lives, our families, and our churches."



Jonathan Parnell, pastor of Cities Church in St. Paul, Minn., tells messengers that knowing his church worships in a facility that once belonged to a church that closed has a humbling and sobering effect on him. "It is not lost on me when I stand in the building where we meet, which we now own, that it was previously owned by another church which is no longer a church."



Pastor of the host church, Francis Tabla points to Ebenezer Community Church as "a small example of what happens when we all cooperate." Started by a handful of Liberian immigrants 22 years ago, the congregation in September dedicated a \$10 million sanctuary and education addition to their facility. "I believe all of you should be very proud of what we as a convention have been able to do." The flags behind Tabla stand for the nine nations represented in the church.



Preaching from 1 Peter 4:10-11, Willie McLaurin from the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, tells messengers that love needs to be our number one priority, and love takes work. "If you have been married for more than two days, you know love takes work," he said. "If you are a member of a Baptist church, you know love takes work."



"I don't have much to report because all of our events got canceled by COVID," Na Herr (left) tells messengers. Then he gave them the good news: All nine individuals from five churches who had signed up to go to Thailand before the trip was canceled have now committed to go on the rescheduled trip in 2022. Others who want to go on the July 26-Aug. 9 trip need to apply before the Jan. 31 deadline, he said.

Raymond Monk (right), pastor of Ephesians Missionary Baptist Church in Milwaukee, encourages pastors to stay. "Don't leave; invest," he said. "Go ahead and shred those resignation papers. . . . Don't pack up and leave just yet. . . . This is not the time to quit. [God has] brought you this far by grace and now is the time to invest."

## APPROVED 2022 MWBC BUDGET

MWBC BUDGET ITEMS	2022
<b>World Missions</b>	
COOP. PROGRAM (36% for 2022)	182,502
<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	
EX DIR SALARY	49,575
EX DIR HOUSING	42,000
EX DIR TRAVEL	15,400
ADMIN SUPPORT SALARIES	32,240
ANNUITY PASTOR/STAFF	52,000
FICA/WORKERS COMP/INS	70,000
<b>Strategic Support</b>	
CONVENTION OPERATIONS	25,000
EXECUTIVE BOARD	6,500
OFFICE FACILITIES	30,000
COMPUTER RESOURCES	2,500
AUDIT/FINANCIAL SERVICES	5,000
STEWARDSHIP PROMO	1,000
FOUNDATION	1,500
<b>State Paper</b>	
EDITOR STIPEND	6,180
EDITOR TRAVEL	4,500
STATE PAPER	2,500
<b>Development</b>	
PASTORS & WIVES RETREAT	20,000
NEW PASTOR ORIENTATION	1,000
PASTORS CONFERENCE	2,500
STATE OFFERING PROMO	2,000
<b>Student Work</b>	
DIRECTOR, HOUSING	6,180
STUDENT WORK TRAVEL/PROGRAM	2,000
<b>Disaster Relief</b>	
DISASTER RELIEF, SALARY	8,000
DISASTER RELIEF, HOUSING	5,000
<b>Multicultural Missions</b>	
INTERCULTURAL CATALYST, SALARY	30,650
INTERCULTURAL CATALYST, HOUSING	22,000
INTERCULTURAL PROGRAM/TRAVEL	6,000
<b>Church Leadership</b>	
CHURCH LEADERSHIP, SALARY	31,086
CHURCH LEADERSHIP, HOUSING	50,000
CHURCH LEADERSHIP DIR TRAVEL	12,500
CHURCH LEADERSHIP, PROGRAM	13,000
<b>Prayer/Partnership</b>	
PRAYER/PARTNERSHIP, SALARY	6,000
PRAYER/PARTNERSHIP, PROG/TRAVEL	3,000
<b>MWBC BUDGET ITEMS TOTAL</b>	<b>733,313</b>

STATE MISSIONS OFFERING CATEGORIES	
DISASTER RELIEF	25%
URBAN MINISTRIES	20%
CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS	15%
HANDS OF HOPE	10%
INTERNSHIPS	10%
CHILDREN'S EVANGELISM	5%
CALLED OUT YOUTH CAMP	5%
WMU	5%
PASTORAL EMERGENIES	5%
<b>STATE MISSIONS OFFERING GOAL</b>	<b>100,000</b>
<b>NAMB FUNDED EVANGELISM</b>	
KINGDOM GROWTH	17,000
EMPOWER EVANGELISM CONF	30,000
MIDWEST LEADERSHIP CONF	5,000
CALLED OUT YOUTH EVANG. CONF.	13,000
MN-WI EVANGELISM CONF (2)	12,000
HANDS OF HOPE	13,000
EVANGELISM GRANTS	20,000
SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH	5,000
CHURCH PLANT EVANG SUPPORT	20,000
<b>NAMB EVANGELISM TOTAL</b>	<b>135,000</b>
<b>COMBINED GRAND TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>968,313</b>

\*The total housing allowance request for DR IS \$40,000, with additional amount from support raised, if applicable.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR 2022 BUDGET	
MWBC CP	671,813
STATE MISSION OFFERING	100,000
NAMB	135,000
INTEREST	40,000
MHD	17,500
DESIGNATED	4,000
<b>FUNDING SOURCES TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>968,313</b>

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GIVING

January - October 2021

CP Budget	\$512,780.00
CP Receipts	\$570,599.73
OVER Budget YTD	\$57,819.73

### NAME CP

#### BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$500.00
Appleton, Fox Valley Hmong	\$180.00
Appleton, Valley	\$42,083.00
Black Creek, Community Bible	\$5,532.00
Clintonville, First Baptist	\$1,948.05
Green Bay, Bethel	\$833.30
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$6,783.84
Green Bay, Highland Crest	\$64,909.10
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$809.23
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$450.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$2,744.02
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$600.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$1,952.10
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$2,225.17
<b>BLBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$131,549.81</b>

#### TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSN.

Amery, Journey Church	\$10,000.00
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean	\$1,200.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$19,385.10
Bloomington, True Light Chinese	\$200.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer	\$2,500.00
Brooklyn Park, N Center Lao	\$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	\$1,500.03
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$900.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$5,400.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint Mpls	\$900.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations	\$620.58
Minneapolis, Jubilee	\$2,500.00
Minneapolis, New Hope Baptist	\$250.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$1,151.90
Minnetonka, Slavic	\$600.00
Monticello, Grace Bible Church	\$2,700.00
New Hope, Westview Church	\$5,400.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$18,411.09
Oakdale, Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,512.00
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship	\$200.00
Richfield, Richfield Bible	\$600.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$10,200.00
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	\$6,206.85

St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$1,250.00
St. Paul, Salt City Church	\$28,150.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$1,670.00
St. Paul, Vertical Church	\$6,000.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$6,000.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese	\$540.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus	\$3,400.00
<b>TCMBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$159,600.62</b>

#### SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$956.25
Janesville, Casa de Oracion	\$55.00
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$3,137.48
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,350.00
Madison, Doxa Church	\$42,818.32
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$5,616.00
Madison, Hope In Christ	\$2,313.90
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,834.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist	\$8,955.42
Madison, Red Village	\$7,500.00
Madison, Shalom Christian	\$50.00
Madison, Sovereign Joy Baptist	\$3,553.90
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$5,253.80
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$14,375.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$3,353.53
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$50.00
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ	\$98.28
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$750.00
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$100.00
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$600.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$2,000.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeech	\$2,069.00
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$450.00
<b>SWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$107,239.88</b>

#### LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist	\$1,333.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$14,284.29
Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$9,614.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist	\$5,235.88
Mequon, Westlake Church	\$200.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$3,000.00
Milwaukee, Family of Christ	\$450.00
Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist	\$300.00
Milwaukee, Iglesia Bautista Nueva	\$140.20
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist	\$900.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue	\$10,254.75
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$1,250.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$236.36
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$495.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$450.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$600.00
Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist	\$8,000.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$3,227.33
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$11,337.20
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$3,054.29
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$8,254.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$1,691.80
Wauwatosa, Redemption Church	\$625.00
<b>LBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$85,533.10</b>

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$1,057.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe	\$2,500.00
Crookston, Prairie Community	\$4,380.79
Ely, Berean Baptist	\$880.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$2,313.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist	\$900.00
Int'l Falls, Pleasant Hill	\$200.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest	\$583.94
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist	\$4,405.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist	\$1,520.28
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$1,746.82
Wadena, Grace Connection	\$300.00
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$4,454.97
<b>NWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,241.80</b>

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$3,504.90
Austin, Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$557.90
Chester, Chester Woods Comm	\$1,040.50
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$2,115.00
Mankato, Hope Baptist Church	\$1,857.32
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$2,091.04
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$4,407.10
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$16,202.50
Rochester, Redemption City	\$9,281.13
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$4,485.48
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$2,571.33
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$75.00
Winona, Cornerstone	\$3,866.12
<b>SMBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$52,055.32</b>

## OTHER

Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$7,850.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ	\$1,529.20
<b>MWBC AFFILIATED TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,379.20</b>

## MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED

**\$570,599.73**

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



The Hmong National Baptist Association celebrated its 30th anniversary Oct. 7-9 at Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center and installed these new officers, from left to right: Pastor Danielying Yang, pastoral ministry director; Chris Vang, youth ministry director; Pastor Chue Ger Herr, president; Pastor Chong Pao Thao, vice president; Chai Chang, men's ministry director; Zer Vang, women's ministry director; and Lydia Ly, treasurer. They also honored these 14 graduates from [Gateway Seminary's Advance program](#).

## Steps Toward Racial Reconciliation

Dr. Terry Turner made these racial reconciliation recommendations to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention as he spoke during the Oct. 22 Pastors Conference.

1. Help pastors by providing resources that will help their church understand the challenges of African Americans.
2. Hire and train African Americans for diversity in leadership.
3. Encourage state convention ministries to be intentional in opposing racism and working on race relationships.
4. Consistently preach and teach against the evils of racism. Teach love for all races, with a knowledge base of the destructive power of racial hatred.
5. Develop race sensitivity for your state convention staff.

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

# WMU re-elects officers, focuses on 'Relentless'

Brooklyn Park, Minn. — Meeting at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park, Minn., the morning of Oct. 22 just before the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, the M-W Woman's Missionary Union conducted their annual business and training meeting.

The training time was called R & R Retreat, but the letters did not stand for "rest and recuperation," but "Resilience to Relentless." Gwendolyn Sutton, president, introduced the theme and focused on the word "relentless" which is the WMU emphasis for

2020-2022.

"The pandemic has changed our lives forever," she said. "It has taught us more about how important it is to be relentless. We faced physical, emotional, relational, spiritual and financial challenges that tested our resolve, and our resilience to keep going with strength and intensity."

She referenced Hebrews 10:39 as a "powerful picture of living an authentic, relentless faith in Christ." The verse says: "But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are

saved."

Following Sutton's introduction, various women spoke briefly about how they were helped to overcome a difficult situation by drawing on a specific characteristic of resilience: grit, resolve, gall, courage, and perseverance.

M-W WMU also provided an International Missions Celebration Dinner on Friday evening for all attending the MWBC annual meeting. Donations for the meal went to missions and the program featured a missionary couple who exemplify relentless service in a dangerous part



Members of Minnesota-Wisconsin Woman's Missionary Union share personal testimonies of how resilience helped them face difficult situations.

of the world.

Members re-elected officers: President, Gwendolyn Sutton, Monumental Missionary Baptist Church, Milwaukee; Vice President, Tia Underbakke, First Hmong Baptist Church, Coon Rapids,

Minn.; Secretary, Ramona Griffith, Brown Deer (Wis) Baptist Church; and Members at Large, Xee Yang, Good News Hmong Baptist Church, St. Louis Park, Minn., and Ann Kirchner, Hope Community Church, Racine, Wis.

The advertisement features a background image of several people, including a man in a green shirt and a woman in a pink sari, working with large baskets filled with yellow and orange marigolds. The text is overlaid on this image.

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**\$185 million**

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