

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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Hands of Hope reaches Rochester community

Rochester, Minn. — More than 80 volunteers from across Minnesota and Wisconsin converged on Rochester, Minn., this summer to help a new church plant and impact the community.

The July 9-16 Hands of Hope Youth and Family Mission Trip conducted block parties, service projects, and community evangelism and outreach. The goal was to help a new church, Grace City Church, make connec-

tions and build relationships with people in the community.

Sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, the annual family mission trip is designed to help churches and church plants serve their communities by providing volunteers to take the gospel outside the walls of the church and into the community. Each year's event is at a different location.

Emmanuel Baptist



These are among the more than 80 volunteers who participated in Hands of Hope this summer, blessing Grace City Church and the people of Rochester, Minn.

Church provided volunteers housing and showers, three meals a day, and a place to worship together in the evenings. Jonathan Lemaster, Emmanuel's youth pastor

and Hands of Hope director, preached through the Book of James during those worship services.

More photos on page 7

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Mission team returns from Southeast Asia trip

Rochester, Minn. — A team of ten has returned from their July 26 through Aug. 9 mission trip to Southeast Asia, celebrating the opportunities that God provided them overseas.

Despite obstacles, the team "accomplished everything we set out to do," said Na Herr, team leader and intercultural catalyst for MWBC.

Those accomplishments included leading

training conferences and English camps, as well as discussing future mission strategy with representatives of the International Mission Board. The training conferences provided biblical leadership training for men and women's ministry training for women. The English camps used English lessons, Bible stories, group activities and worship songs to teach conversational English.

"I am extremely grateful for my team members, who were flexible and displayed great patience and resilience," Herr said.

One highlight of the trip was a training conference that drew 60 attendees, involving people from all eight Baptist churches in the region. Another highlight was presenting the gospel to a group of 70 students at a village

school.

Six ministry leaders and four students composed the team that worked together to minister to believers and nonbelievers on the other side of the world. Although 11 had signed up for the trip, sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, one team member had to cancel at the last minute due to COVID.

MWBC awards 37 evangelism grants

Rochester, Minn. — So many churches applied for the 20 evangelism grants offered this summer by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention that the program was nearly doubled to make sure

each church applying received a grant.

Julie Sundeen, MWBC executive/financial assistant, reports that 37 churches applied for 48 grants, which are funded by churches' gifts through

the Cooperative Program.

"Although we only had 20 grants available, Leo made the decision to find additional funds in the

See **GRANTS** page 5



Enny Chang and Salathit Sayaovong teach English to little children during the SEA Mission Trip.

*I have come
so that they may have
life
and have it in abundance.*

John 10:10

Church Planter's Meeting

Invitation Only, October 20, 12:00 (Lunch Provided)
to 5:00 PM with dinner gift cards provided
English, Hmong, and Hispanic Tracks

Pastor's Wives

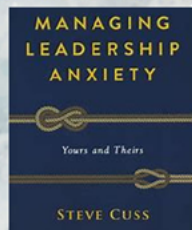
October 21, 10:30-12:30
Free Lunch and Conversation

Pastor's Conference

October 21, 9:30 am to Noon with lunch.

Move from Being
Managed by Anxiety
to Managing Anxiety

Does anxiety get in the
way of your ability to
be an effective leader?



Is your inability to notice when you and
those around you are anxious keeping
you "stuck" in chronic unhealthy patterns?

Join Dr. Clint Calvert, Clinical Pastoral
Educator and MWBC's Church Leadership
Catalyst, in putting Steve Cuss's tools to work
on pastors lives and ministries.

MWBC Annual Meeting

October 21-22

1 pm Friday to Noon Saturday

Northwest Baptist Church
4373 N. 92nd St. Wauwatosa, WI 53222

WMU Missions Banquet

Friday Night, 5:30 to 6:30
Featuring IMB Missionaries
with Minnesota roots
Cost per person \$20/each

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention

What your smaller church needs right now

A little over a decade ago, our church had a serious problem. When the “amen” was said at the conclusion of the worship service, the room quickly emptied in almost complete silence. In less than three minutes everyone was gone.

The church had gone through a painful experience

having lost two-thirds of its attendance through squabbles and infighting. Those who had stayed were drowning in pain. Their friends were gone. The grief was almost as intense

as that caused by death. The relationships that had nourished their lives were no more.

Yes, we had the perfunctory greeting time of “turn to your neighbor and tell them you’re glad to see them this morning.” It seemed a feeble attempt to force what was not warm and natural. Incidentally, most churches give too much time to this tradition and make it awkward for visitors. Studies reveal few visitors respond well to the

meet and greet. They do respond to a church that does this naturally before and after the service.

Well, a new pastor was called, and Martin Knox did much to love the congregation past the pain and begin the process of reconnecting with each other. It took two years to heal the hurt and restore the love. But you could see it change. People gradually lingered longer after worship. Eventually, there were conversations and groups of people connecting as much as 20 minutes after church. You could feel the difference! People started to risk and to love again.

I can’t tell you how many times while traveling I have attended amazing worship services that ran perfectly down to every detail of the excellent music, the astounding sermon, and

meaningful prayers, yet I left the worship service without a single person speaking to me. The morning felt incomplete and even superficial. The gospel of restored relationship with God and with others was spoken but not demonstrated. I’ve attended two well-known mega churches where even the distracted, professional greeting was done with a grunt and a nod!

Often there are groups of people deeply engaged in conversation with each other, but I’m on the outside looking in. These people often think of their church as warm and welcoming, and in some ways, it is, but what is intimate among the insiders can be exclusive to the outsiders. No one makes room for them. They leave with the perfunctory, “Glad to have

you with us” greetings, but without any real attempt by anyone to really connect with them.

I know big churches are often filled with people who want to hide in a large church. There are many good reasons why people go to large churches. Yes, the worship services and ministries are often done with excellence, and that’s undeniable, but another reason is people are sometimes hiding from their lingering pain from another church.

But why would someone pass the church that has everything and come to your smaller church? Could it be that they are looking for a place where they can make friends and live life together with a church family? They have passed up

See **NEEDS** page 5

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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Perspectives

Leo Endel



Never give up

Ken Burns’ documentary about Mohammed Ali contains an interesting and pivotal moment that might have determined the destiny of the young athlete.

21-year-old Cassius Clay had finally obtained his dream, a match with the heavy weight champion of the world, Sonny Liston.

After three rounds, Liston and his corner were shocked at the young fighter’s toughness. Entering the fourth round many believe Liston’s handlers smeared his gloves and should

ders with an ointment that would burn his opponent’s eyes. Clay stumbled to his corner unable to see. He

begged his trainer, Angelo Dundee to cut off his gloves. He was done. He couldn’t continue.

Instead, when the bell rang, Dundee pulled him to his feet and shoved him into the ring. His eyes cleared and he unleashed a barrage of withering blows to Liston’s face, opening a gash around his left eye. After the sixth round Liston refused to rise from his stool. Cassius Clay was crowned heavy weight champion and

a week later changed his name. Had Dundee removed his gloves and allowed him to quit, the world might have never known Mohammed Ali.

Few elements are as important to success as the determination to continue, to refuse to give up. How many victories have been lost because the competitor lost the will to continue? How many marriages have failed because a husband or a wife decided to walk

See **GIVE** page 6



Reflections

Bill Tinsley

SEA mission accomplished

We had a great trip to Southeast Asia!

Though there were many obstacles along the way, we accomplished everything we set out

to do. The day before the trip, one of our team members got sick with COVID, so we lost one team member right from the start. However, everyone on the team came together and filled in the gaps. I am extremely grateful for my team members, who were flexible and displayed great patience and resilience. Our team consisted of six ministry leaders and four students.

At our first training conference, twenty ministry couples came, with some driving over 12 hours on their motorbikes to get there. Seeing their joyful smiles after the long drive really brightened my day! About 20 students from the village showed up for English camp. Many came early and eagerly participated in the learning activities. We had to make some changes to our lesson plans after observing that the students had almost zero experience speaking English.

During the training conference, we had a workshop for ministry wives led by the women on our team. They talk-

ed about many aspects of ministry and practical matters, such as proper hygiene and child rearing. In conversations, we observed that some of the women lacked a

full understanding of the gospel. They thought that if your family goes to church, you were automatically saved. We explained to them the full gospel, starting with the confession of sin to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

After the training conference, we made our way back to the city and met with some IMB partners. We discussed strategies on how we could better reach and equip unreached and unengaged people groups. I am excited for a potential partnership to provide more ministry training opportunities for rural pastors.

Next, we headed to Thailand for the second part of the mission trip. After meeting our IMB hosts in Bangkok, we drove 12 hours to Nan province for the second training conference. During the ride, our team bonded over food as our driver took us to many popular highway destinations where we tasted some good barbecue chicken, durians, coconuts, and meatballs on a stick.

The training conference in Nan went better

than we expected. We had planned for about 30 attendees, but I counted more than 60 people on the last day! One local leader informed me that this was the first time all eight Baptist churches in the region came together for an event. Many attendees were farmers in the middle of planting, but they made time to attend the conference.

Our English camp team had an opportunity to teach students at a village school located

about an hour from the conference center. The team was able to share the gospel with a group of about 70 students. After the camp, the head teacher asked if we could come back. What a privilege to share the gospel at a secular institution and be invited back!

I want to thank everyone who lifted our team up in prayer during the trip. We could not have done anything without your prayer support. All during the trip, I could

sense God's power and protection over us. Please pray for the lives that we touched, especially for those who heard the gospel for the first time. I am already planning a return trip next year. Please continue to "pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

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



Intercultural
Na Herr



Members of the SEA Mission Trip team pose with three local leaders. Pictured are, left to right, back row, Mee Her, Tiarra Xiong, Hannah Ramquist, Enny Chang, Thi Hoang, Zong Heng, and Ming Her (a local partner); front row, Saard Yangsanseon (a local partner), Tra Xiong, Salathit Sayaovong (a local partner), Na Herr, Aaron Ramquist, and Thai Her.



Tra Xiong prays for those who have made a decision for Christ or rededicated their life to Christ.



Enny Chang, Aaron Ramquist, and Hannah Ramquist teach English at a local school in Thailand.



Mee Her prays for an elderly woman with a health issue.



Tiarra Xiong leads the team in a devotional. Pictured from left to right, clockwise, are: Tiarra Xiong, Enny Chang, Salathit Sayaovong, Aaron Ramquist, Thi Hoang, Mee Her, Tra Xiong, Zong Heng, and Hannah Ramquist (back to camera).

Lessons I learned on sabbatical

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention granted me a sabbatical for May, June, and July of this year. I thank the MWBC for this generous provision that allowed me



Leadership
Clint Calvert

of sabbatical, I had time to truly slow down and enjoy a less demanding rhythm.

Sabbaticals do not need to be filled with homework and projects to be effective. When I started mine, a

colleague in another state relayed the story of being so busy with writing during his sabbatical that he returned to work exhausted. I was asked many times, "What are you doing on your sabbatical?" My answer was "just what I want and love to do." People seemed surprised that I did not have a major project to complete. I estimate that I worked 30 to 40 percent of the time leading a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and doing Harrison Assessment debriefs. These activities gave me enough creative challenge and mental stimulation to keep me content.

Sabbaticals can be

opportunities to establish new rhythms. I traveled to Missouri and Texas to visit my mother, siblings, in-laws, and nieces. I realized that I could make a similar, shorter trip annually to re-connect with my extended family. I was also reminded that God has provided time for me each week in the Sabbath to be renewed for a sustainable pace of life and ministry. Taking a few hours each week can give me an immediate benefit, rather than neglecting these rhythms to my peril.

Sabbaticals can be a place where God clarifies His calling on your

life. I tell churches who give their pastors sabbaticals that at the end they will get a new pastor. Either the pastor they have will re-imagine their ministry with the church or they will realize that they may be called to serve in a new capacity or context. Granting a sabbatical is a risk for the church that could bring their pastor back to them with a new energy or lead to a new chapter in the church's life with a different pastor.

The MWBC has a new church leadership catalyst – me! God blessed me and clarified my calling for my ministry here.

I saw the beauty of God's creation on the highways between here and Anaheim, Calif. I heard God speak to me through the Psalms. I felt God's comfort in the fellowship of my family. My hope is that MWBC churches will provide sabbaticals for their pastors. If the church needs pulpit supply to make it happen, I am happy to volunteer to fill the pulpit and do all that I can so others may enjoy the blessing of taking a sabbatical.

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

NEEDS

continued from page three

the huge church and have placed themselves in a vulnerable place to see if they can connect. If they are met with warmth, and not unintentionally excluded, they may see the vibrancy of people living and loving as the family of Christ. They

will be drawn to a people who make real the love of Christ.

The old cliché is still true: "People aren't looking for a friendly church, they are looking for friends." People don't want a church that talks about love; people want a church that loves. Your small church can probably do that more easily than

the big church down the road. Brothers and sisters, let's give careful thought to how we can love the people whom God brings through our doors.

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

Back to the beginning

GRANTS

continued from page one

budget so that each church could receive one grant," she said, referring to Leo Endel, MWBC executive director.

Each of the churches received a \$500 grant to help them with specific projects described in their appli-

cations.

"These dollars translate to believers equipping the church, building relationships and beginning gospel conversations with the unchurched, sharing the Good News, and seeing people coming to faith in Christ and learning to walk in Him," Sundeen said, adding that work

funded by the grants includes:

- Launching of three new church plants
- Revitalization of two existing churches
- Summer outreach events such as Vacation Bible Schools, camps, meals/movie nights, block parties, and cook-outs
- Evangelism trainings/development of

church members to renew evangelistic efforts

- Social media and printed promotion of seasonal/holiday events and life of the church
- Evangelistic ministries at farmers' markets, parks, street corners, parking lots, and community events
- Back-to-school and back-to-church events

in the fall

- Literature, book and Bible distribution
- Fall college campus outreach events
- Free garage sales
- Outreach to new-to-town families/singles, multicultural groups, youth, and seniors
- Community revival meetings

Back to the beginning

Minnesota-Wisconsin
Baptist Convention

MWBC

THANK YOU
for giving to the
STATE MISSIONS OFFERING



Empower Youth Nex Gen



Hands of Hope 2022



Hands of Hope 2022, Grace City Church, Rochester, Minnesota.
Pastor Joseph Zayas & HOH Director, Jonathan Lemaster.

2022 has been a tremendous year of ministry because of your giving!

- + You helped six ministry couples through difficult challenges.
- + You helped fund our Disaster Relief efforts by funding ministry and leadership through Ben and Kayla Seamans.
- + You provided stipends for seven ministry interns in M-W.
- + You funded planning resources for Empower, Kingdom Growth, Hispanic Ministries and more.
- + You've helped fund this fall's Called Out Youth Conference.
- + You've helped fund this year's SEA Project trip to Thailand.
- + You've helped fund Next Gen Leadership development among our children, youth, and young adults.
- + And much, much more!

State Missions Offering

GIVE

continued from page three

away? How many dreams have vanished because a student, an artist, an entrepreneur decided to quit?

Winston Churchill, the World War II prime minister of England, is best known for his determination. Standing alone against Nazi Germany's onslaught, he issued this challenge in 1941, "...never give in, never give in, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in, except to convictions of honor

and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

The Scripture has a great deal to say about the importance of endurance and perseverance.

James wrote, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him," (Jam. 1:12).

Paul wrote, "We celebrate in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also celebrate in our tribu-

lations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope," (Rom. 5:2-4).

Peter said, "Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness,

Good news from the associations

NORTHWOODS

Ridgewood Baptist Church in Bemidji had a great week of revival with Dr. Thomas Johnston, professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. A mission team from Grace Point Church in Henderson, Ky., was involved in five kinds of evangelism during the week: four mornings of "How Can We Pray for You" ministry in public parks; one afternoon of prayer walking; three afternoons of door-to-door outreach; three evenings of revival services; and one morning of Backyard Bible Study. There were eight decisions from the door-to-door outreach.

NBA will host an evangelism conference Sept. 24 in Thief River Falls, featuring Dr. Thomas Johnston from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Immanuel Baptist Church in Roseau baptized two adults this summer.

love," (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

Like Moses enduring 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. . . like the Apostle Paul imprisoned, beaten, and left for dead. . . like Elijah driven to despair . . . we must all face moments of discouragement, tests that will determine our destiny. We must never quit, never give in. We must endure to the end looking to Jesus who endured the ultimate suffering and shame

NBA held youth camp at Camp Jim in Pillager July 31 through Aug. 5. A total of 105 campers attended and three accepted Christ.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Dr. Julio Verela, vice president of Rio Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, Texas, will be guest speaker at SWBA's Sept. 8 meeting at Bethel Baptist Church in Janesville.

Mike and Angie Lopp celebrated 25 years of ministry at Trinity Baptist Church in Reedsburg.

Bob Burton will present "Be a Kingdom Catalyst for Missional Revival" in a virtual event Oct. 13. Participants will receive a free copy of the workbook, "The Spiritual DNA of a Church on Mission" and free access to the Church Development Library of the North American Mission Board.

that we might be "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37).

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.

Back to the beginning

Scenes from **Hands of Hope** Youth and Family Mission Trip

Grace City Church in Rochester, Minn.

July 9-16, 2022



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.

SEPTEMBER

1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions

5 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

16-17 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.

23-25 Called Out Youth Conference, Baraboo, Wis.

OCTOBER

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**

29-Dec. 8 Pastors' Holy Land Tour

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**



Hope With Little Hands and Little Feet

The following is excerpted from Angel Vang's blog post about her family's experience with Hands of Hope. [Click here to read the entire post.](#)

What can eight little hands, eight little feet and four little hearts do with hope? What can they do to serve Jesus and the community?

This summer, I decided to take my kids to Hands of Hope [Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention's annual Youth and Family Mission Trip]. I thought it would be a great opportunity for my kids (9, 9, 7, almost 6 years old). So, with Hands of Hope in mind, I informed my kids that this summer, one of our goals was to do a family mission.

In June I gave my kids a great idea: instead of buying a prize for good report cards, they could save their end of the school year money for a hotel night after we were done with Hands of Hope. Belle, Ellie, Leeland and Mila all agreed and were even more excited for Hands of Hope. Between the four of them, their total in savings amounted to \$92.75, so a hotel night with Mommy was put into our calendar! (Handsome was not going to be with us due to his job.)

This year, Hands of Hope encouraged youths to attend and even though my babies were not quite youths yet, it was still a great opportunity and time to expose them. Especially because

I had incorporated mission classes with Girls in Action and Royal Ambassadors back up at our church in between all of this. I wanted them to do something hands on. We are so blessed to have a supportive family to help Handsome and me invest and pay for our kids to be able to participate with Hands of Hope.

SUNDAY

During the first mission, I was able to watch my four children in the start of evangelizing to the community. Their cute, sweaty and happy faces were lit up with who was going to OPEN the door for them next. I remember when I first went evangelizing, I was just hoping the doors would not open. But nope, not my kids. They exclaimed with delight when people asked them to pray and accepted a Bible. The kids told me: "Mommy, it's so cool! The other people actually have Bibles and some of them do believe!"

Below are some stories my kids told me about their experiences.

Belle: I prayed for one guy and then I asked if he wanted a Bible. He said to save them for those who need it since he already has one.

Ellie: There was a guy who said he didn't believe in religion but he let me pray for him.

Leeland: I talked to two boys that were blowing up a boat. One was a little older than me and I think the other might be like me. I gave them a Bible and when we were at the next

house, one of the boys came to ask for another Bible because his sister didn't have one.

Mila: I went to a house and the dog scared me. It was big, black, brown and white. Auntie Dee had to carry me a little bit. Then I prayed for them to not be sick.

MONDAY

This was our first official project day and the kids' mission was to help pull weeds and clean up the yard of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention building. I am NOT much of an outdoor, nature, yard, gardening, camping type of person at all. So I was a little worried but had to be the strong mature adult and go at it with the kids. The kids mentioned they were getting too hot and that even their backs were hurting! Of course I found this hilarious but also had some sympathy since I surely wasn't enjoying all the insects and dirt, myself. So as they are complaining, I remind them that they always help Daddy at home so it's just the same thing. Plus, they need to remember that they were cleaning this wonderful place for God and His disciples who were working inside. As I was telling them this, I was also prompting myself to keep going despite not wanting to kneel on the grass and dirt.

We completed our project early, so after having lunch with our whole group and doing a mini devotional, I decided that we'd leave to our hotel to



Belle, Ellie, Leeland and Mila Vang get ready to do some gardening at the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention office building during Hands of Hope.

relax. We said goodbye to our family since they were heading back home and then our mommy hotel night started! Once at the hotel, I took an hour nap and then took my babies swimming where they even had a small pool slide. After washing up, we grabbed some delicious Vietnamese food for dinner and watched TV for the rest of our night.

TUESDAY

We woke up and had a full warm breakfast at our hotel. The kids were so happy to have bacon on the menu again! We decided that we would do a movie as our activity before heading back home. I looked up a few theaters and found that one of them had their "Tuesday Deals" with movies all day being only \$5.50! That is such a steal with how prices are now a days going to the theaters. (Especially with four kids, things add up so fast!) I did drive to the movie place to buy and reserve our seats since ordering them online was going to charge me processing fees equaling to another whole ticket. After getting all that situated, I looked up a local park

for the kids to play at; then we grabbed a snack at our go to place during this trip: Kwik Trip. Before our movie time, we went to sit at a picnic table and had a mini family devotional.

It was show time and I allowed the kids to take one lollipop as their treat since we just had a snack. (To save money, I wasn't planning on buying any food in the theater so this was a great alternative.)

After the movie ended, we went to refill our water bottles with ice and water and were on our way home to Daddy! We couldn't wait to see Daddy after four days without him! Plus, the kids and I couldn't wait to tell Daddy all about our adventures for Jesus!

Through my mommy eyes, my babies were the hands and feet of Jesus. Even if their hands and feet at the moment are so little, no more crucial hour to prepare them than NOW. I'm going to miss these little hands and feet along with the chaos, but hoping that they will continue to grow big and strong to do God's work with a full heart and endurance for Jesus.

First Person: Content and Community

By Jeff Iorg

ONTARIO, Calif. (BP) — We enjoy attending live events — concerts, musicals, sporting events, etc. While we enjoy community theater and high school football, we are fortunate to live in the greater Los Angeles area where we also experience world-class entertainment. We have been to many events at stadiums, arenas and concert halls in our area. When we leave, one of my recurring thoughts is “Why are churches trying to replicate these



Jeff Iorg

events? We are wasting our time (and energy and money) doing so. We need to learn the discipline of doing what

only we can do and doing it well.”

Except for a few very large churches with corresponding financial resources, most churches cannot compete

with the show put on by top entertainment producers. Mid-size and certainly smaller churches cannot replicate what people experience at entertainment venues and even larger churches. As a result, some of them have a programming inferiority complex that

convinces them they are out-of-date and out-of-step with what it takes to provide meaningful ministry to people today.

That’s simply not true. We actually have two incredible advantages in meeting the needs of people — needs much more profound than temporary, titillating entertainment. In two words, churches have content and community.

Our content is the Gospel. We have Good News which satisfies the deepest longings, cures the greatest ills and offers true hope for hurting people. We have Good News that God loves us, Jesus died for us, and salvation is available to anyone who repents and believes in Jesus

as Lord and Savior. We have content no message from any contemporary entertainer or athlete can supersede.

Our community provides need-meeting, support-giving, human connections facilitated by and available to every person who participates in a local church. Particularly when trouble comes — like sickness, death, job loss, or familial breakdown — fellow church members rally to the cause of caring for other members. Our family has received (and given) this kind of support for decades. It is a support network no fan base or booster club comes close to replicating.

We enjoy secular en-

tertainment. We enjoy living in a place that does it with excellence. But we enjoy church services and church relationships much more. We don’t need a show on Sunday. We have the Gospel to celebrate. We don’t need the energy of an anonymous crowd to sustain us. We have Christian friends.

No matter how small or plain or simple your church may be, never forget you have two great assets. You have content and community. Make the most of those and watch God energize your work for His glory!

Jeff Iorg is the president of Gateway Seminary in Ontario, Calif.

Pastors of very small churches express joy, commitment, challenges

By Diana Chandler

AUSTIN, Nev. (BP) — Pastor Charlie Vaughn and his wife Kathie were trying to fix a church member’s washing machine midday Aug. 4. He’s not a washer repairman, but since 2008 has pastored Austin Baptist Church of about 12 worshippers in Austin, Nev.

Yomba Baptist Church, his second pastorate about 40 miles south on a Shoshone Indian reservation, has three worshippers.

“There are many pastors here in this state who serve in a church, some smaller than Austin, but do so faithfully as that is where God has placed them to do His work,” Vaughn said. “Praise the

Lord for that.”

Cornell Denson Sr., pastor of Walk By Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Gainesville, Fla., drove a group of his 17 members in the church van to Orlando to the 2022 Black Multicultural State Church Fellowship of the Florida Baptist Convention, convening through Aug. 6 at Rosen Shingle Creek.

As Denson is focused on the Great Commission, the church bought a van to help neighborhood families attend church.

“And it’s been working,” he said. “We’ve been having two extra (in attendance), three extra, something like that.”

Joshua Goepfrich in Warsaw, Ind., pastor of the 18-member Hilltop

Community Church and president of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, fields a question often.

“People ask you questions like how large is your church, and sometimes as men we feel that is an attack on us,” Goepfrich told Baptist Press.

“And the simple answer to that question is the church that I belong to, has millions of members. Growth is not about the local church. It’s about the walk with God.

“As we walk, we invite people onto the journey. My job is not to save people. Your job is to present the Gospel,” Goepfrich tells pastors. “God has not called you to build His church; He’s called you to be faithful to the



Pastor Charlie Vaughn and his wife Kathie converted the basement office of Austin Baptist Church into an apartment and lived there the first eight years he pastored the church.

ministry. You stay faithful. Let Him deal with the results. And that’s hard to live in.”

Vaughn, Denson and Goepfrich are among the majority of Southern Baptist pastors, the approximately 51 percent that report Sunday attendance of less than 50, according to statistics compiled by the Bivoca-

tional and Small Church Leadership Network. A quarter of Southern Baptist churches serve less than 24 on Sundays.

Joys and challenges await pastors of small churches. They report a sense of intimacy not common among larger congregations, enjoying

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM RECEIPTS YTD through July 2022

Cooperative Program Budget 2022 Year to Date	\$391,890.92
Cooperative Program Receipts 2022 Year to Date	\$404,047.71
Over Budget 2022 Year to Date	\$12,156.79

NAME	CP YTD
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BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$250.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Mission	\$1,727.95
Appleton, Valley	\$37,397.93
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$1,048.50
Green Bay, Bethel	\$651.54
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$3,471.91
Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist	\$47,765.39
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$369.30
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$300.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$2,098.36
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$400.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$1,390.90
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$1,282.02
BLBA TOTAL	\$98,153.80

TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSN.

Amery, Journey Church	\$5,000.00
Bloomington, Ebenezer Community	\$250.00
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean	\$500.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$10,196.06
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$1,800.00
Brooklyn Park, N Center Lao	\$300.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center	\$2,548.42
Burnsville, Berean Baptist Church	\$2,000.00
Burnsville, Resurrection Church	\$500.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptist	\$1,750.00
Eagan, Eurasia Baptist Church	\$50.00
Fridley, Good News Hmong	\$500.00
Maple Grove, Northwood Commu	\$1,000.02
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$700.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$3,780.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint	\$700.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$235.50
Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible	\$600.00
Monticello, Grace Bible Church	\$1,800.00
New Hope, Westview Church	\$1,500.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$12,866.56
North St. Paul - Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,008.00
Richfield, Richfield Bible Church	\$300.00
Roseville, Gospel Hmong	\$803.82
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$4,200.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$2,500.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$5,528.73
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$750.00
St. Paul, Salt City Church	\$20,300.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$1,260.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$4,200.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$420.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus Church	\$2,990.00
TCMBA Total	\$92,837.11

NAME

CP YTD

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church	\$1,180.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$600.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00
Hartland, Disciples Church	\$400.00
Kenosha, Amistad Cristiana	\$1,500.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$9,149.30
Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$4,096.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist Church	\$2,406.60
Mequon, Westlake Church	\$300.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$1,800.00
Milwaukee, Family of Christ Baptist	\$100.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Community	\$94.15
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist Church	\$900.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue Baptist	\$9,486.67
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$900.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$580.40
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$1,285.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$350.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$300.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$2,122.83
Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. Ministry	\$749.49
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$8,028.94
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$2,410.03
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$3,719.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$1,434.24
South Milwaukee, The Vine Comm.	\$2,290.98
LBA TOTAL	\$56,783.63

SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley (Muscoda)	\$893.46
Janesville, Bethel Baptist Church	\$890.87
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$3,076.43
La Crosse, New Hope	\$600.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,050.00
Madison, Doxa Church	\$27,846.20
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$5,239.00
Madison, Gracepoint	\$1,000.00
Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly	\$1,671.32
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,638.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church	\$5,563.63
Madison, Red Village	\$6,750.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$5,784.28
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist Church	\$10,150.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$2,799.72
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$700.00
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ	\$580.33
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$1,115.56
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$525.00
Verona, Memorial Baptist Church	\$250.00
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$1,100.00
Waterloo, Shalom Christian	\$70.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$1,400.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$3,327.08
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$300.00
SWBA TOTAL	\$84,320.88

Minnesota-Wisconsin
Baptist

Mission Gifts from the Churches

NAME	CP YTD	NAME	CP YTD
SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION		NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION	
Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$2,909.90	Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$684.00
Chester, Chester Woods Comm	\$856.10	Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$1,625.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$1,500.00	Crookston, Prairie Community	\$4,568.57
Mankato, Hope Baptist Church	\$663.80	Ely, Berean Baptist	\$500.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,801.03	Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$2,629.00
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$2,757.50	Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$700.00
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$12,289.71	New York Mills, Grace Connection	\$200.00
Rochester, Northbridge Church	\$8,790.00	Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$3,205.00
Rochester, Redemption City	\$10,244.45	Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$3,270.54
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$1,852.36	NWBA Total	\$17,382.11
St. Cloud, St. Cloud International	\$150.00		
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$1,555.00	OTHER	
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$25.00	Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$5,100.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$2,962.11	Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$1,113.22
SMNBA Total	\$48,356.96	OTHER TOTAL	\$6,213.22
		MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED	\$404,047.71

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

PASTORS

continued from page nine

the ability to visit the homes of all of their members and maintain close fellowship. Nearly 100 percent of able-bodied members are involved in church ministry and outreaches. Members give generously to missions.

Pastors of small churches often serve bi-vocationally or draw a retirement income. Vaughn, a retired law enforcement official, draws a salary that amounts to a small portion of his retirement income, he told Baptist Press. Neither Denson nor Goepfrich draw salaries.

"Many of the flock desire to take care of the pastor and his family, but realize there's not the number of people available to make that happen," said Goepfrich, who owns Goepfrich Financial Services, founded the American University of Martial Arts and is president of the Ambassador Martial Arts Christian Fellowship.

"That doesn't just have a burden on the pastor and his family, it burdens – at least in our church – the love of the people because one person can't, and multiple people together in a flock of 14 to 20 people, cannot give enough to support fully the pastor and his family."

Financial limitations also strain community outreaches, but the churches are active within the congregation within their communities. Hilltop, in an outreach supported by the North American Mission Board, distributed 140 backpacks of school supplies, 100 New Testaments and children's Bible stories at the Kosciusko, Indiana, county fair, generating questions about the church.

Walk By Faith continues to serve a low-income housing development in Gainesville.

Austin Baptist offers free space at an RV Park it owns, and supports international missions through a project launched two years ago

to collect a mile of quarters.

"That comes out to quite a bit of money when you start adding it all up," Vaughn said. "But we're a quarter of a mile into it, and we've already purchased some land, some sheep and goats, chickens and rabbits for some of the countries abroad. We've sent money to some children's homes and orphanages. Our people are just looking out for those opportunities."

Robin Stork, director of missions of the Northeast Baptist Association in Elko, Nev., praised the many pastors of small churches in the association for their commitment to fulfilling their calling.

"I think I've got the best association in the country," Stork said. "The pastors we've got, they're not here for money. They're not here for prestige. They're here because they love God and they're going to serve God, for little or no

wages, literally.

"Most of our pastors are probably making less than \$2,000 a month and many of them have been here for a long time," he said.

For months, Stork has been driving 400 miles roundtrip on weekends to offer pulpit supply to Kingston Village Baptist Church in Kingston, a mining and tourism community where 10 in attendance is a good day. He has recruited two other pastors to help, but averages about three Sundays a month at the church.

"It's a beautiful little church," Stork said. "It sits right at the mouth of this canyon that goes up into these big, tall, huge mountains that probably go up, 10 to 12,000 feet, something like that. This little pond and this little wood church just touched my heart; the people touched my heart."

Pastors also see the fruit of their Gospel work.

Vaughn tells of Big

Jim, an equipment operator and martial arts expert who lost his job and stayed at the church's RV park two years at no cost. It was months into the stay before Big Jim accepted Vaughn's invitation to church, and months longer before he would remain for the entire service.

"One Sunday he showed up for Sunday School. He stayed halfway through and then he got up and walked out. Didn't say a thing."

Months later Big Jim, 6 feet six inches tall and 400 pounds, accepted Christ.

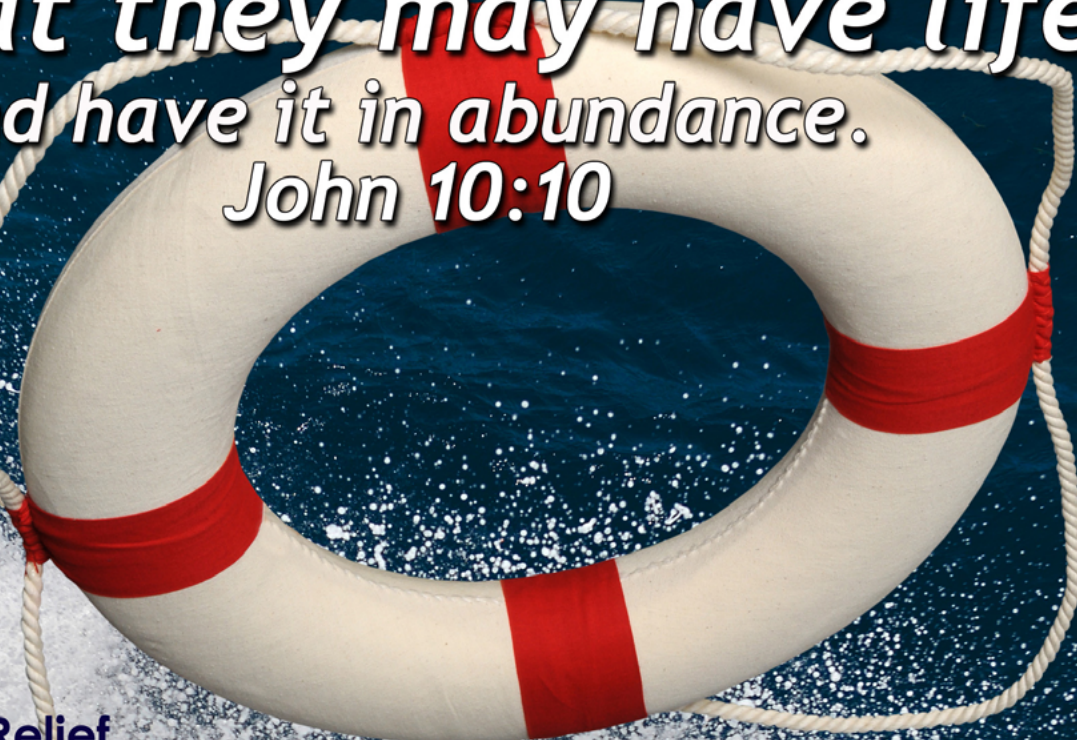
"I baptized him the next week."

That was five years ago.

"He calls me pretty much every day just to pray," Vaughn said. "He's since moved to North Dakota. What a transformation. His story is one that tells us to never give up."

Back to the beginning

*I have come
so that they may have life
and have it in abundance.
John 10:10*



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

*State Missions Offering
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\$75,000*

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Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention