

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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Executive board addresses decreased funding by lowering budget, CP percentage

Rochester, Minn. — Faced with an imbalance between receipts and expenditures that Executive Director Leo Endel said “is not sustainable,” the Executive Board of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention revised the current budget, decreasing from 36 to 22 percent the portion of Cooperative Program giving that is passed on

to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Endel attributed the current situation to:

- a \$50,000 operating loss in 2022;
- a 14.5 percent decrease in CP gifts from the churches during the first quarter of 2023;
- decreased State Missions Offering receipts

See CP page 5



Members of the Executive Board of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention pose for a photo. That's Ben Seamans, MWBC disaster relief catalyst, in the front.

Clifton urges churches to dig their wells again

Rochester, Minn. — “There’s nothing about a church dying and closing its doors that brings glory to God,” said Mark Clifton, featured speaker at this year’s Empower conference, meeting Mar. 10-11 at the Kahler Grand Hotel in downtown Rochester, Minn.

As senior director of replanting at the North American Mission Board, Clifton’s passion is seeking to reclaim dying churches, noting that 800 Southern Baptist churches close each year and 90 percent of them are in communities where the population is growing.

“Churches are not declining because the gospel isn’t powerful,” he

said, adding that many are coming to Christ in countries where it is dangerous to be a Christian. The problem with many Southern Baptist churches is that their wells are stopped up.

He explained his statement with the story from Genesis 26 about Isaac becoming prosperous in the land which caused the Philistines to envy him. To get Isaac to leave their area, the Philistines stopped up Isaac’s wells by filling them with dirt.

“Isaac is doing well and the Philistines are not happy,” Clifton said. “They stopped up the wells. Why? Cause

See DIG page 11



Mark Clifton, keynote speaker at Empower, started pastoring at 18 and has been in ministry 45 years. “For most of my ministry I have pastored ‘normal’ – I don’t call them ‘small’ – churches,” he said, noting that the median size of SBC churches is 67.

Empower/Equip reach 295

Rochester, Minn. — This year’s Empower/Equip dual conference reached 295 people, of which 118 (40 percent) were young adult or younger, said Clint Calvert, church leadership catalyst for the

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

The Mar. 10-11 sessions were held at the Kahler Grand Hotel in downtown Rochester, Minn., as well as at Em-

See REACH page 11

Empower and Equip 2023



Attendees take advantage of a break to visit in the hallways.



Gary Jennings, worship leader for the event, referred to himself as a "recovering strategist now in the miracle business," where he is seeing "miracle after miracle" in the faith-based non-profit he directs in Hendersonville, Tenn.



These children were well taken care of by volunteers while their parents participated in sessions.



The Equip Next Gen Ministry Conference gathers in the sanctuary of Emmanuel Baptist Church.



This disaster relief team spends time making plans for future call outs.



Equip leaders are, left to right, Jack Lucas, Penny Reedy, Delanee Williams, and Jana Magruder.

Lead like Jesus

In Greek mythology, Narcissus was the god who fell in love with his reflection in a pool of water. Today, we call people narcissists when they too, fall in love with themselves.

Narcissists see everything from only their perspective. They have an excessive need for attention and

approval (social media has fed this ailment). They exalt themselves.

They are always right in their own eyes. They believe they are the center of the world. They have made an idol out of them-

selves and usurped even the very place of God. They use people to build their image and fame. Narcissist leaders are especially dangerous.

By now, you are probably already visualizing the narcissistic people and leaders in our culture, in politics, and even in our churches. In their attempt to exalt themselves, they damage

the churches and the people they lead.

In my adjunct teaching role, we assess the strengths and weaknesses of an individual's leadership tendencies. At the beginning of the course, I tell my students that this will both be the easiest doctoral course they ever take, and it may also be the most painful. Leaders are born with deep cracks—we are all broken. Interestingly enough, some of what might make us effective leaders in the beginning, may be the very things that ultimately lead us to crash, burn, and hurt the people we lead.

Too many churches are held captive by such leaders who want the church to serve them, rather than their being willing to serve

the church. They are the fount of all wisdom. They alone are right. Their way is the only way. "The rest of you don't know what you're talking about." They want to be recognized. They want their vision. This is "my church."

Narcissist leaders devalue the contributions of others. Their way is the only way. They get angry when they seem to lose their dominance. They become judgmental when someone else makes a contribution equal or greater in value than theirs. At any cost, their agenda is all that matters. They discount and reject the contributions of others.

Jesus, the greatest leader of all time, set a very different path for leaders. Of all human-

ity He alone was perfect in every way, yet the Apostle Paul writes that He, "who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped [held on tightly to], but emptied Himself... He humbled Himself..." (Phil. 2:6-8). Rather than exalt himself, Jesus humbled Himself, and then gave His life for us. This is true leadership greatness.

Jesus' disciples did not find this easy to do. In fact, it was completely counterintuitive to all they thought they knew about life and leadership. At least one time, Jesus caught them arguing about which of them was the greatest. On another occasion, James and

See **LEAD** 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



I am a senior citizen

I am a "senior citizen."

I have been for some time. How did this happen? I never intended to become one. I spent my life busy about making a living, raising kids, pursuing career goals, trying to serve God and others and then . . . I woke up and I was a "senior citizen."

This was never my goal. I never looked down the corridors of time and wished

that someday I could become a senior citizen. It happened without

my knowing. I was assigned the title without my consent.

The first indicator was a card in the mail from AARP. I did not ask for this.

It just came, about the time I turned 50. And then I received advertisements from the Neptune Society encouraging me to think about cremation. I don't want to think about having

my body burned, stuffed in a jar or thrown to the wind. I want to think about living.

Part of it is my own fault. I have sold out my pride for a few cents and asked for a "senior coffee," a "senior menu," or a "senior discount." Do I have no shame?

Little things remind me I am aging. When I purchase a plane ticket on the computer, I have to page down four times to find my birth year. When I check out at Walmart, the cashier calls me "Sweetie." When I go to the barber, the floor is littered with white hair clippings.

We discipline ourselves in our youth so that we will live a longer life. But, when we live long, we discover that it leads to "old age." What is this? I want my youth back. I want to run and feel the exhilaration of running; to get out of bed without aching, to fly up the stairs two at a time, and to run down them without a thought and without a limp. I want to eat whatever I want without gaining weight.

But, if we are successful and live long lives, old age will come. Some-

See **SENIOR** page 10



Reflections

Bill Tinsley

Every church can have a community ministry

Every church can reach its community with a unique ministry that meets needs and creates opportunities for sharing the gospel.

Journey Church in Amery, Wis., has a Journey

to Prom ministry that provides free prom dresses and tuxedos to students attending prom each spring. The ministry serves over 60 students each year and involves as many as 20 volunteers.

The ministry began in

2021 when members of Journey's youth ministry team were planning

to assist students as COVID-19 concerns were impacting prom details.

Weeks before prom, Journey's

sanctuary is transformed into a boutique featuring hundreds of dresses, suits, and accessories. Students make appointments to pick out whatever they need for prom.

As word of the ministry spread, so did



Leadership
Clint Calvert



donations from prom apparel companies and community members. The ministry has enjoyed community support in the form of media coverage, donation drop off locations, gift certificates, dona-

tions of dresses, suits, shoes, and jewelry, and information sharing. Each student goes home with a gift bag which includes a Bible, candy, and information about Journey Church and other local events

in Amery such as the Good Friday/Easter Service.

Journey Church Executive Assistant Jen Luchtenburg says, "We want anyone that

See **COMMUNITY** page 6

Reaching the next generation in immigrant churches

A common theme among immi-

grant churches in our convention is the struggle to minister to English-speaking young people. They are the

children of immigrant parents who speak little to no English.

Many immigrant churches have strong ethnic ministries, because that is how most of them started, but they have few resources when it comes to reaching the next generation. Many young people in immigrant churches do not speak their native

language fluently, if at all. They primarily speak English. The question is: how do you reach out to these English-speaking young people without alienating

the older generation?

Recently I preached at my church during a special Sunday service geared toward young people. This church was started by Hmong refugees back in the 1980s. One of the founding members still serves on the church council. For this Sunday service, my focus was on the young

people, so most of my sermon was in English. When I looked out into the room, I noticed that the number of older people outnumbered the number of young people by a large margin. Even though my intended audience was English-speaking young people, most of them were not in the room. The older people who came only understood about half of my sermon because of their limited understanding of English.

This presented a dilemma for me. I was preaching the gospel to a target audience who was not in the room. Should I not have been preaching to those who were actually in the room?

To overcome the

language issue, some immigrant churches have started separate English-speaking ministries for young people. This can be a second service in the church, or it can be a new church plant sponsored by the first generation church. At my church, we dedicate one Sunday a month to the youth, where the majority of the worship service is in English. I am not sure if there has been much research done in terms of the effectiveness of each of these models of ministry. However, I am encouraged that many immigrant churches recognize the need to reach the next generation and are doing something about it.

This month, I will be attending the Korean Baptist English Ministers Fellowship conference at Gateway Seminary in California. This is a group of Korean pastors who serve English-speaking congregations. I look forward to hearing from the group about ways that they have navigated issues affecting immigrant churches in the Korean community. My intention is to gather resources that can be shared with immigrant churches in our convention as they reach out to the next generation.

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



Intercultural
Na Herr

Renewal retreat offered for pastors

Green Lake, Wis. — Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center is offering pastors an opportunity to get away and focus on spiritual renewal.

The Spiritual Renewal Retreat for Pastors is May 22-24.

“Green Lake is offering a place and space to reconnect with God, share burdens and trials with other pastors and a counselor, and to rest, walk, sit by the lake, and pray,” according to the event’s promotional material.

The cost is \$199 per person which includes two nights’ lodging, six meals, and breaks. Check in is Monday, May 22, from 2-4 p.m. To register, call (920) 294-3323 and mention Spiritual Renewal Retreat Booking 2372.

Clinical Pastoral Education offered

Rochester, Minn. — The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention is sponsoring a Clinical Pastoral Education unit that will meet 7-9 p.m. CST on Thursday nights via Zoom, Sept.

4, 2023 to Feb. 18, 2024.

CPE tuition is normally \$1,199 per unit, but MWBC has arranged for MWBC pastors to take their first unit for \$250. The

group is limited to nine pastors. Pastors will pay their application fees (\$75), for their books (\$45), and \$250 for tuition.

For more information, click [here](#).

CP

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during 2022;

- a decline in investment returns for the M-W Baptist Foundation; and
- the 2021 cumulative loss of funding from the North American Mission Board and Lifeway Christian Resources.

Meeting at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., Apr. 21-22, members of the Executive Board voted to lower the 2023 budget 6.5 percent from the \$1,001,376 approved at the annual meeting to \$935,797. The new figure is lower than the 2022 budget total of \$968,313.

The reduction of CP gifts sent to the SBC is in stark contrast to the convention’s recent trend of increasing the percentage each year with a goal of someday reaching 50 percent.

The percentage passed on to the SBC grew from 17 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2016, 22 percent in 2017, 32 percent in 2018, 35 percent in 2019, and 36 percent in 2020, and has remained at that level since then.

“National funding changes have necessitated adjustments at the state convention level,” Endel said.

As a part of his report, Endel spent several minutes teaching the biblical basis and practical value of the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists’ unified plan of giving through which cooperating Southern Baptist churches give a percentage of their undesignated receipts in support of their respective state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention missions and ministries.

In other action the Ex-

ecutive Board approved:

- a \$50,000 gift from reserves as startup funds for a new midwest branch of Builders for Christ. The national organization has done extensive work in MWBC for many years under the local leadership of Charles Dunning, member of Valley Baptist Church in Appleton, Wis. Creating the new Builders for Christ Midwest team will enhance the group’s work in and around MWBC. The gift will help the new team purchase equipment, trailers, tools, tents, and component-assembly tables.

- a \$7,500 Burrell-Littleford Grant to Amistad Cristiana of Kenosha, Wis., to help with renovation of the church’s sanctuary, basement, kitchen, classrooms, and bathrooms.

Back to the beginning



Family and friends gather on Mar. 11 at Christ the King Baptist Church in Milwaukee to celebrate the homegoing of Bobby Sinclair who died Feb. 27. Trayvon Sinclair (holding microphone) presents the eulogy for his grandfather. Bobby Sinclair was senior pastor of Community of Grace Baptist Church in Milwaukee for 32 years. His nephew, Courtney Sinclair (left), is now pastor of the congregation. Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, called Sinclair “a strong and helpful voice during our strategic planning process completed in the fall of 2021.” He also served on the MWBC Executive Board and the board of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Foundation.

LEAD

continued from page three

John’s mom came to ask Jesus for her sons to sit in positions of power and authority in Jesus’ kingdom.

Jesus said, “It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man [Jesus] did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mt 20:26-38).

Jesus gave His life and His leadership so that others might be saved. His purpose was not to glorify Himself but to save humanity. Yes, He was ultimately exalted by the Father (Col 2:9) and this revealed who God is, but His great sacrificial act — the cross — was motivated by His love for us. Though He was the greatest, He

humbled himself and served us.

Pastors and church leaders, what does it mean for you to set aside the folly of your own self-importance and submit your agenda to God’s plan and purposes for those you lead? What does it look like for you to serve the people God has called you to lead? What will you have to give up for the sake of serving others?

Blanchard and Hodges write in *Lead Like Jesus*, “To successfully combat the temptation to be self-serving in your leadership, every day you must put your EGO [Edging God out, double entendre intended] on the altar and Exalt God Only.”

Ultimately, Christian leaders need to lead like Jesus.

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

Back to the beginning

Good news from the associations

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Mark Millman, SWBA director of missions/church planting catalyst, reports that more than 20 people from across the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, joined 450 others attended the Apr. 12-14 Send Network Gathering event for church planters and their wives in Columbus, Ohio.

Pastor Matt Wunderlin of Rolling Hills Church in Platteville, honored the request of some baptismal candidates to be baptized outside on a day when the temperature was in the 20's. They found a suitable day in February, walked through the snow and waded into the river for an unforgettable spiritual marker in their lives.

Several SWBA pastor and church planter families gathered Feb. 17 for a Family Night at Doxa Church featuring rock climbing, trampoline, refreshments, and other activities.

NORTHWOODS

Northland Missions is partnering with Cornerstone Baptist Church in Thief River Falls to help provide gas money for their interim pastor, Thomas Johnston, who travels 200 miles round trip each week to minister at the church.

COMMUNITY

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comes to, of course, look and feel beautiful or handsome on the outside for their prom but, more importantly, we want them to know that God created them, He knit them perfectly together and each one of them is precious and loved by Him. Journey is a great place to come and learn about who God is!"

In 2023, Journey added an adult prom fundraiser called Journey Back to Prom. A prom for adults was held in the Amery Community Center in January. Church members and the community were invited to

a night of food, music, and dancing to raise funds for the Journey to Prom ministry. As Journey Church's transitional pastor, I was able to take my wife, Tara, to the prom.

I am so impressed with Journey Church's support of this ministry and willingness to provide for students. As a lifelong Baptist I know that many Baptists don't dance, but every Baptist church can have its own community outreach ministry.

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

Back to the beginning



The Next Gen Peer Learning Group gathers for its first meeting Feb. 24-25 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn. Pictured, left to right, are: Xai Lor, Neng Vang Lor, Sean Yang, Chris Phillips, Joseph Young, Rebekah Phillips, Leo Endel, Foua Young, Rebekah Lemaster, Jonathan Lemaster, Erik Lee, Maivue Yang, and Jonathan Juedes.



Pastor Rob Warren of Doxa Church in Madison, Wis., baptizes a young woman, one of more than a dozen baptized on Easter Sunday. Before the baptisms the congregation watched a video during which each baptismal candidate gave his or her testimony. The church set an attendance record that day of 900 in their two services.



Aaron Ramquist, pastor of Rock of Hope Church, Wisconsin Dells, Wis., teaches on cross-cultural evangelism at the SEA (Southeast Asia) mission training in Oakdale, Minn., on Apr. 8.



Keith Cogburn, director of missions, shares photos on Facebook of LBA's winter meeting Feb. 18 at Korean Baptist Church. In the bottom right photo Cogburn is pictured with Sol Ki Lee, who prepared the meal and also led worship (top right photo).

People and places



Pastor Roy Watson of Monumental Missionary Baptist Church addresses the congregation at their 54th anniversary service on Apr. 23. Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, was guest speaker. The church was founded by Olee and Burnell Sutton in their home in 1969. Four years later they affiliated with Lakeland Baptist Association, MWBC, and the Southern Baptist Convention.



Ber Yang is ordained to the gospel ministry at Eternal Life Hmong Baptist Church, North St. Paul, Minn., on Apr. 23. Pictured (left to right) are: Tra Xiong, Ka Vang, Chucklu Vang, Pang Yang, Chris Reinertson, Ber Yang, Na Herr, Xai Lor, and Joseph Young.



More than 40 pastors gather Mar. 30-31 at Transformation Church in Sun Prairie, Wis., for an SWBA sponsored livestream coaching training event to develop coaches who will coach church planters, spouses, and church leaders. Most were from Wisconsin and Minnesota, but Indiana and Texas were also represented at the event and they were joined by others from 11 countries around the world. Training was conducted by Eddie Hancock, national coaching trainer for the North American Mission, and Bob Burton, NAMB's Midwest equipper. Among those at the local site were 12 Hispanic leaders who used special equipment purchased by SWBA so they could hear the translation live.

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.

MAY

29 Memorial Day Observed – **MWBC Office Closed**

JUNE

11-12 WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, New Orleans, La.

13-14 Southern Baptist Convention, New Orleans, La.

15-30 SEA mission trip (Thailand)

30 MWBC Annie Armstrong Offering Cutoff

JULY

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

8-14 Hands of Hope, Milwaukee

16-18 Baptist General Convention of Texas Annual Meeting, McAllen, Texas

AUGUST

27 Global Hunger Sunday

SEPTEMBER

1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions

4 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

15-16 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.

22-24 Called Out, Baraboo, Wis.

OCTOBER

19 SEND Network Planters Gathering, Twin Cities, location TBA

20 Pastors Conference, Southtown, Bloomington, Minn.

20-21 MWBC Annual Meeting, Southtown, Bloomington, Minn.

23-24 Missouri Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Springfield, Mo.

NOVEMBER

23-24 Thanksgiving Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

DECEMBER

3-9 Week of Prayer and Mission Study for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

25-1/1 Christmas/New Year's Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

Church planter reaching across dividing lines in Twin Cities

Sam Choi, church planter at All Peoples Church in Minneapolis was featured in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missions, promoting the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The offering provides half of the North American Mission Board's annual budget, and 100 percent of the proceeds go to

the field. The offering is used for training, support and care for missionaries. This year's goal is \$70 million.

MINNEAPOLIS (BP) — The coronavirus pandemic has marked 2020 as a watershed year for everyone around the globe. For the Twin Cities, though, George Floyd's death on May

25 while in police custody unleashed a wave of turbulence in the city and became ground zero for escalated tensions in the U.S. and the world.

Sam Choi, planting All Peoples Church, lives and pastors just a few blocks from where Floyd lost his life.

"At least two places that we shopped at or used, like a pharmacy and grocery store, were burned down to the ground, or destroyed," Choi said. "So, it was really real. It wasn't like something we just saw from afar. We would drive through the streets; it looked like we were in a war zone."

Choi and his family first came to the city for seminary with a sense that planting a new church was in his future. So, Choi, a church planting missionary with the North American Mission Board (NAMB), had been invested in and living in the community for several years.

He didn't expect that



In 2020, the Twin Cities became an epicenter of cultural and ethnic tension in the United States. Dozens of people decided to leave the city in the midst of the turmoil, but church planting missionary Sam Choi and his family decided to stay and remained committed to the task of planting All Peoples Church. NAMB photo by Ben Rollins

Minneapolis, though, would be the destination of his plant, and he could not have imagined that tragedy would strike the city not long after they started church planting.

"It feels like such a long time ago, but it was only a few years ago," Choi said. "I remember the anxiety of our whole city and seeing every night, I think we were like, 'What is going to happen tonight?'"

Protests and violence

filled the streets, Choi said, and neighbors would start chat groups to help everyone stay aware. Then, the next day, people would wake up and start helping one another.

"In the very beginning, there was this huge influx of care, and we were on the streets, cleaning, doing outreach, praying for people, providing meals," he said.

See **TWIN CITIES** page 12



Sam Choi has been planting All Peoples Church in Minneapolis since 2018 with his wife, Joanna, and their children working alongside him to help their church be a light in their community. NAMB photo by Ben Rollins



Church planting missionary Sam Choi has intentionally sought to engrain being a church for all people into the DNA of All Peoples Church in Minneapolis. Together, he and the congregation aim to be a place that welcomes everyone, no matter their ethnicity or economic status. NAMB photo by Ben Rollins

First-Person: 18 good things about being a Southern Baptist

By **David W. Johnson**

Editor's note: David W. Johnson is the executive director of the Arizona Mission Network of Southern Baptists.

Recently I was asked to speak at a gathering of pastors in an association in our state. As most denominational leaders know, these meetings can sometimes turn into a discussion of all the things that are wrong with the Southern Baptist Convention in light of the turmoil of recent days.

When I expressed this anticipation to the association mission strategist, he suggested that I talk about what is good about being Southern Baptist right now.

What a great idea! What I discovered as I made the following list was that I may have needed it more than the pastors did. I started out with a top 10 list. Then there was a dozen and then 15. I stopped at 18 because I knew the time would be limited. The sum total of the list was more powerful than the specifics of it. You can fill in your own details from your own context. I hope it is as encouraging to you as it was to me!

18 good things about being Southern Baptist right now

- We are reaching the nations together through

the International Mission Board to address the world's greatest problem: lostness!

- We are planting new churches together in our state and across North America through the North American Mission Board.

- We are preparing people for all kinds of ministry through our seminaries around the country.

- We are not doing nothing about sexual abuse. We have recognized the problem and are taking action to address it.

- We are helping people in crisis through

Disaster Relief in places that have experienced devastating events like hurricanes, tornadoes, fire and floods.

- We are responding to human needs around the world through Send Relief in refugee camps, clean water wells and famine projects.

- We are staying true to biblical truth as expressed in our shared confession, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000).

- We are helping churches share the Gospel through evangelism training and equipping partnering with the North American Mission Board.

- We are helping feed the poor through hunger relief funds provided by the World Hunger Of-

fering.

- We are reaching college students with the Gospel through collegiate ministries on campuses around the country.

- We are responding to children and families in need through children's homes and family ministries in our states.

- We are working to revitalize and replant churches in our local associations.

- We have a resource for advocacy and expertise dealing with political issues that affect us through the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

- We are taking care of retired pastors and their widows in need through Mission:Dignity.

- We are the most eth-

nically diverse denomination in America, which gives us greater strength and a stronger witness to the world.

- We have a network of state conventions and local associations to partner together for more effective ministry and mission work.

- We have the best resource for Bible study and discipleship materials in the world through Lifeway Christian Resources.

- We still have the best missionary supporting system on the planet, the Cooperative Program!

After sharing this list, I told the pastors that it made me realize again that it really is good to be a Southern Baptist, in spite of all the turmoil!



David W. Johnson



More than 240 attended the Hmong Baptist National Association North Region conference Mar. 25 in Hudson, Wis. The theme of the conference was "All for Christ."



Koua Vang, pastor of Madison Hmong Baptist Church and board member of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Foundation, leads a discussion with a group of Hmong pastors at the HBNA North Region conference. Facing the camera (left to right) are: Koua Vang, Lor Lee, Tong Zong Vang, Tra Xiong, and La Her.

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM AND LOTTIE MOON OFFERING RECEIPTS

January-April 2023

Cooperative Program Budget 2023 Year to Date	\$217,447.33
Cooperative Program Receipts 2023 Year to Date	\$177,723.32
Under Budget 2023 Year to Date	\$39,724.01

NAME	CP YTD	LM*
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BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$250.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Mission	\$1,700.00	\$288.00
Appleton, Valley	\$14,290.11	\$33,187.20
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$513.30	\$1,070.00
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$1,806.05	\$1,200.00
Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist	\$16,432.63	\$1,175.00
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$83.52	\$223.00
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$150.00	\$200.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$1,014.50	\$350.00
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$200.00	\$0.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$860.20	\$1,025.00
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$785.35	\$0.00
BLBA TOTAL	\$38,085.66	\$38,718.20

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church	\$528.00	\$440.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00	\$182.00
Hartland, Disciples Church	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Amistad Cristiana	\$900.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$4,935.68	\$5,536.25
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist Church	\$2,755.53	\$555.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Community	\$101.99	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist	\$0.00	\$126.00
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist Church	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue Baptist	\$4,144.77	\$3,683.06
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$450.00	\$142.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$570.96	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$600.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$524.73	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. Ministry	\$375.64	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$2,627.04	\$1,495.00
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$1,126.81	\$0.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$968.70	\$2,225.00
LBA TOTAL	\$24,009.85	\$15,384.31

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$1,905.30	\$299.00
Chester, Chester Woods Community	\$171.00	\$940.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$1,000.00	\$570.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,056.05	\$185.00
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley Baptist	\$0.00	\$2,675.00
Rochester, Northbridge Church	\$3,598.00	\$3,598.00
Rochester, Redemption City	\$6,034.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Rochester Community	\$300.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$4,801.81	\$2,327.00
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$1,472.72	\$0.00
St. Cloud, St. Cloud International	\$150.00	\$0.00
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$0.00	\$420.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$1,749.05	\$6,900.00
Waseca, Faith Baptist Church	\$0.00	\$408.02
SMNBA TOTAL	\$22,237.93	\$18,322.02

NAME	CP YTD	LM*
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TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amery, Journey Church	\$5,100.00	\$963.30
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean	\$400.00	\$0.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$3,900.00	\$5,020.03
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$300.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, N Center Lao	\$0.00	\$400.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center Baptist	\$0.00	\$392.58
Burnsville, Resurrection Church	\$0.00	\$500.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptis	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Northwood Community	\$300.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$400.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$2,160.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint	\$1,300.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations	\$0.00	\$570.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible	\$400.00	\$0.00
Monticello, Grace Bible Church	\$350.00	\$0.00
New Hope, Westview Church	\$1,250.00	\$0.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$9,171.61	\$448.00
North St. Paul - Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,344.00	\$0.00
Northfield, Northfield Community	\$0.00	\$2,850.47
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship Center	\$350.00	\$50.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist Church	\$2,800.00	\$0.00
Roseville, Twin City Hmong	\$720.00	\$750.00
Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope	\$500.00	\$748.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$1,921.00	\$30.00
St. Paul, Gracepoint Midwest	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$425.00	\$200.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$2,400.00	\$657.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$240.00	\$0.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus Church	\$5,334.00	\$0.00
TCMBA TOTAL	\$44,265.61	\$13,579.38

SENIOR

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one, somewhere said, "Growing old isn't for sissies!"

At age 79, Thomas Jefferson lamented about growing old to his friend John Adams, "It is at most but the life of a cabbage, . . . when all our faculties have left, or are leaving us, one by one, sight, hearing, memory, . . . friends of our youth are all gone, and a generation is risen around us whom we know not," (Monticello, June 1, 1822).

And yet, we discover treasures that we did not expect. Our children find their way and establish successful careers. Grandchildren giggle and squeal and leap into our arms.

Retirement brings freedom to live where we want, think

what we want and do what we want. Friendships grow deep and nourish our souls like the roots of a tree.

And, the experience of God's love grows deeper: "You who have been borne by Me from birth and have been carried from the womb; even to your old age I will be the same, and even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you" (Isa. 46:3-4).

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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Mission Gifts from the Churches

NAME	CP YTD	LM*	NAME	CP YTD	LM*
SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION			NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION		
Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$224.40	\$100.00	Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist Church	\$293.00	\$0.00
Janesville, Bethel Church	\$1,114.26	\$0.00	Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$825.00	\$1,635.00
Janesville, Casa de Oracion	\$20.00	\$30.00	Crookston, Prairie Community	\$2,046.33	\$63.14
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$1,889.87	\$0.00	Ely, Berean Baptist	\$400.00	\$0.00
La Crosse, Crossway Church	\$600.00	\$1,400.25	Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines Baptist	\$820.00	\$0.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$600.00	\$0.00	Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$400.00	\$0.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$600.00	\$100.00	New York Mills, Grace Connection	\$100.00	\$0.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$2,112.00	\$1,953.00	Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$1,710.90	\$1,980.00
Madison, Emmanuel Church	\$96.00	\$0.00	Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church	\$1,290.60	\$0.00
Madison, Gracepoint	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$772.20	\$250.00
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$868.00	\$1,000.00	NWBA Total	\$8,658.03	\$3,928.14
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church	\$7,352.29	\$800.00	OTHER		
Madison, Red Village	\$4,250.00	\$7,800.00	Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$2,550.00	\$0.00
Monroe, Redemption Church	\$133.13	\$0.00	Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$978.55	\$194.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$2,185.47	\$0.00	Grantsburg, Living Hope Church	\$0.00	\$100.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist Church	\$5,800.00	\$7,709.96	OTHER TOTAL	\$3,528.55	\$294.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$1,105.90	\$1,100.75	MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED		
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$400.00	\$0.00		\$177,723.32	\$117,814.79
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ	\$551.93	\$0.00	NOTE: No giving received by MWBC-affiliated churches not listed above during stated giving periods		
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$1,178.92	\$2,282.78	CP - Cooperative Program		
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$372.69	\$0.00	LM* - Lottie Moon Receipts 5/1/22-4/30/23		
Tomah, Waterbrook Community	\$0.00	\$150.00			
Verona, Memorial Baptist Church	\$250.00	\$0.00			
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$120.00	\$30.00			
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$1,100.00	\$1,705.00			
Waterloo, Shalom Christian Assembly	\$125.00	\$0.00			
Watertown, Watertown Community	\$300.00	\$0.00			
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$800.00	\$300.00			
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$1,437.83	\$885.00			
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$150.00	\$0.00			
WI Rapids, Mosaic Fellowship	\$0.00	\$242.00			
SWBA TOTAL	\$36,937.69	\$27,588.74			

DIG

continued from page one

that's where the life comes from. Any time your church is doing well Satan is not happy. And he stops up your wells."

Clifton referred the crowd to Gen. 26:18, saying, "If you're a pastor, you need to know this verse. I know this verse isn't about church planting, but, devotionally, this is what it says to me." The verse says that after the Philistines stopped up his wells, Isaac dug the wells again.

Clifton offered some ways churches give Satan an opening for stopping up their wells:

- Members value the past more than they are encouraged by the future.
 - Failure to meet God where He is working before the opportunity has passed.
 - An unwillingness to pass true leadership to the next generation. "When you're my age," he said, "we're only one flu season away from heaven and we need to be sure our passion is to pass on the gospel to the next generation."
 - Resenting the community your church is in.
- How does a church dig again the wells? Clifton said a church must preach the gospel, pray, love, and stay.

"Within a few miles of every church that closes, every church that struggles, are people suffering from abuse, addiction, disease and despair," Clifton said, and those people desperately need the living water that should be coming up out of the church's stopped up wells.

REACH

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manuel Baptist Church and Redemption City, both in Rochester.

A total of 75 volunteers supported the event.

Mark Clifton, Chris Allen, and Jack Lucas were featured speakers. Gary Jennings led wor-

"The number one tool in Satan's tool kit to use on pastors is discouragement, depression, doubt and fear," he said. "If you suffer from that, you have that in common with John the Baptist."

Clifton confessed that he himself had sometimes "gone home from

church so discouraged and so despondent that I wept."

Ministry has its struggles, he said, adding, "Paul didn't say, 'I sang the good song and I danced the good dance.' He said, 'I fought the good fight.'"

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ship. Breakout session leaders included Bob Bickford, Curtis McGinnis, Jay Vineyard, Gary Jennings, Preston Condra, and Clint Calvert.

Calvert expressed special thanks to Tia Underbakke, Minnesota-Wisconsin Woman's Missionary Union president and Empower

director; Kabo Yang, children's ministry coordinator; Kia Yang, youth and young adult program leaders; Chris Steiner, tech team leader; Na Herr, Kahler Grand Hotel coordinator; and Penny Reedy, MWBC Kid Min team leader.

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TWIN CITIES

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“For the most part, our church was unified way more than most. It was a scary time, but there was a lot of opportunity for outreach.”

Following Floyd’s death, the church had an opportunity to serve its community by providing food and helping with cleanup after nights of unrest. Many residents decided to leave the city for the suburbs, but Choi and his family felt called to stay.

He organized and launched his church in 2018 to be a church that intentionally reached across the various cultural lines that have a tendency to divide churches in the U.S.

“The very beginning of Jesus’ heart is going after and seeking and saving the lost, as the Gospel of Luke says so well,” Choi said. “So, what would it be like to have a church that was of all peoples? And all peoples doesn’t mean just ethnically, but it means generationally, socially, economically.”

Choi said that one of the most powerful apologetics for a local church — especially in a diverse city like Minneapolis — is that the Gospel transforms lives and brings people together from all different backgrounds, people you wouldn’t typically think of as spending time with each other.

Throughout the church’s ministry, All Peoples Church has seen people come to faith, but the process tends to be slow and messy as they reach people who are

struggling with addiction to drugs and alcohol or have a steep financial hill to climb to achieve economic stability.

One member, Elizabeth Efteland, started attending while the church was meeting at Martin Luther King Jr. Park during the pandemic and slowly started getting to know people. She had grown

up in church but started wrestling with questions in college.

“In college, things got more complicated, and people started asking more questions. And I started asking more questions,” Efteland said.

She made friends who had experienced hurt in the church, and she struggled with whether

she believed that Christianity was true. Efteland met with one of the church’s pastors to walk through the doubts she was experiencing.

As she became a part of All Peoples, she invited her brother, Johnny, who eventually came to the church, put his faith in Christ and was baptized.

“It’s a beautiful chain,

and that’s how it’s supposed to be. You see that pattern in the gospels,” Choi said. “Someone encounters Jesus, and they go tell people, ‘Come and see!’ And that’s what’s been going on. Our church has almost 100 percent grown just through, ‘Come and see.’”

Back to the beginning



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