

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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Resonate Church of Janesville, Wis., celebrates with the 18 new believers baptized in July. Pastor Jesse Beernink is at far left. Hoyt Wayne Lovelace (eighth from left), pastor of missions for the church, alluding to the Experiencing God study, said, "God is working. We just have to make adjustments in our perspectives to join Him in what He's doing. We are amazed to watch Him."

MWBC responds to sexual assault charges against former president

Rochester, Minn. – Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, said he is "heartbroken by these allegations" and is praying "that the truth is known in full and justice is pursued"

regarding recent sexual assault charges filed against the convention's past president.

Robert Stine resigned the MWBC top volunteer position in May. He has since then also resigned as pastor of

Midvale Baptist Church, Madison, Wis., where he served since 2007.

According to the Wisconsin State Journal, the 60-year-old Middleton resident was charged Aug. 17 with two counts of first-degree sexual

assault of a child. The charges stem from alleged incidents four years ago, in which a girl who was about 10 at the time said he touched her inappropriately during a day care held at the church, the WSJ reported.

Stine's attorney says Stine denies any wrongdoing and looks forward to clearing his name.

Endel said when Stine resigned his MWBC president position, "we had no knowledge of the underlying reason for this resignation."

A few days later MWBC learned of the sexual abuse investigation and the shutdown of Midvale Baptist

Hands of Hope reaches Milwaukee

This year's July 8-14 Hands of Hope focused on Monumental Missionary Baptist Church in Milwaukee where Roy Watson is pastor.

Brown Deer Baptist Church provided lodging for volunteers since Monumental was being worked on during the week.

A total of 75 students and adults came from five churches from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Participating churches were Valley Baptist Church, Appleton, Wis.; Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, Minn.; Church at



Volunteers patch cement on the foundation of a home during Hands of Hope in Milwaukee.

See **HOPE** page 5

See **CHARGES** page 6

Jummai Nache shares in ZOOM meeting

Bloomington, Minn. – In a July 18 ZOOM meeting of national and state Woman’s Missionary Union leaders, Jummai Nache shared challenges and changes that God has brought to her life.

The wife of Pastor Philip Nache of Hope of Nations Fellowship Church in Bloomington, Minn., the Nigerian native experienced a series of illnesses and medical interventions in 2021, including the amputation of both her legs below the knee and portions of both hands.

Past Minnesota-Wisconsin WMU President Cindy Vang organized the online meeting and Betty Lynn Cadle, former M-W WMU executive director, transcribed Nache’s presentation.

Nache began by expressing gratitude to God for “the joy in the journey and challenges along the way.”

She shared about her early life in Nigeria, growing up in a Christian family, involved in choir and other church activities.

“As a teenager, I realized you have to profess with your own mouth that Jesus is Lord, and that’s what I did,” she said.

Encouraged by many to study medicine, she decided instead to go to Bible School and that is where she met her future husband.

“When I met my husband, he loved God and loved to share God’s love with others,” she

said. “He wanted to marry a woman who loved the Lord and would go wherever God led him. I told him, ‘That’s what I’m going to do.’ We met in 1992 and married in 1994. We shared the ministry of reaching out to souls for the Lord.”

In Nigeria her husband worked as a professional carpenter and they used the income from his workshop to reach people for the Lord. Many years later they moved to Kentucky to further their education and then moved to live and work in Minnesota.

“When we came here to Minnesota, I was encouraged to work, to help support our family,” she said. “I studied again and graduated and got a job.”

Her health problems began just as the COVID-19 pandemic was starting to spread. She was hospitalized from July to September. Sometimes, because of COVID, her husband was not allowed to be with her. But when he was permitted to come, he came every day and often twice a day, and would stay through the night when it was allowed.

She said her husband encouraged her to not ask the Lord, “Why?” but rather to ask for His strength.

“The Lord is a faithful and loving God,” she said. “I went through so much. God knew my husband was the right person who was going to take care of me. I



A group gathers around Philip and Jummai Nache to pray over them during the 2017 Pastors and Wives Retreat as they were planting Hope of Nations Fellowship Church in Bloomington, Minn. Since then the Nigerian couple has seen God work in and through them, even as they faced some very difficult life experiences including a life-changing medical crisis for Jummai.

came through that very hard time because of prayers of the church and the prayers and sacrifices of my husband. He didn’t sleep. He stayed with me in the hospital when he could. . . . He was praying all night. I cannot thank God enough. I don’t have all my body but I am complete in the Lord. I thank God for my husband.”

She took her husband’s counsel to heart and prayed for God’s strength as she endured the pain of amputation. She sang gospel songs and meditated on Scripture, such as James 1:2-3, which says, “When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy for you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.”

She also recalled the biblical story of Job who endured great suffering but remained

faithful to the Lord.

“The story of Job in the Bible is there to encourage us believers,” she said. “Sometimes, when you are going through a challenge you ask, ‘Why, why, why me?’ My husband said we are not to ask, ‘Why me?’ We are to ask for God’s strength to go through the challenge. Who do you want the challenge to happen to? Job was the blameless man who feared God. When one is going through a challenge, God knows, and He is proud of us. Job never knew that. When challenges come, know that God knows. He needs me to face the challenge because He promised He would make a way out. He would never leave or forsake us.”

The suffering we experience enables us to encourage others who go through similar experiences, she said.

“Sometimes I get

discouraged when I go to do what I used to do, like going to the kitchen to cook,” she said. “I cannot go to the kitchen to cook. . . . Sometimes I see my family doing everything for me. I feel the pain and I cannot do it. I’m so happy to serve the Lord in this condition. It is not easy but the love of God surrounds me and the challenge that has come upon me is a blessing. That’s the joy: that I have opportunities to share the Gospel in my condition with others in this same condition.”

She told about going to Chick-Fil-A with her husband and seeing a man who had lost his leg. “I saw him in my condition, so God let me go through that so I can share with others who have gone through the same thing,” she said.

“God is at work in every situation,” she said. “He just wants us to open our eyes.”

What if the real strategy is prayer?

Charles Spurgeon is often recognized as one of the greatest preachers of modern times. People were mesmerized by the crowds who attended the London church and submitted their lives to the gospel.

Just as we do today when we hear of a successful church,

people flocked to the church to see how he did it. Instead of showing them plans, tools, technology, and strategies he would take them to a room in the basement where people were constantly interceding for the church. Spurgeon called it “the powerhouse of this church.”

The words “strategy” and “strategic” are impressive sounding words professionals throw around to make it look like they have all the answers, but

I’m not convinced. What if the church is supposed to be run differently than the world? What if, rather than using professional tools, we should be using spiritual tools? What if God is less concerned about our intelligence and our plans and more concerned about our connectedness to Him? What if “the powerhouse of the church” really is prayer?

Of course it is. Smart people can build their own kingdoms—and they do, but only people consistently connected to the King can join

See **PRAYER** page 11



Perspectives

Leo Endel

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.

Leo Endel
Executive Director
endel@mwbc.org
519 16th St. SE
Rochester, MN
55904

David Williams
Editor
davidwilliams@compuserve.com
P.O. Box 628
Liberty, TX 77575

The Great Dechurching

By Jim Davis and Michael Graham

This book suggests some things that people say might bring them back to church. Their survey gives us food for thought and for prayer.

- The desire to make new friends in general (28%) would be enough for some.
- Others would only desire those new friends after a move (18%) or if they became lonely (20%).
- For others, all it would take is a friend inviting them (17%).
- Or finding a good community (17%).
- Some would go back if their child (16%) or spouse (18%) invited them.
- Finding a good pastor (18%).
- Finding a church they like (14%) would be enough for many.

When was the last time you invited anyone to church?

God is for you

A few years ago my son-in-law participated in his first Iron Man race in Boulder, Col. It is a grueling event: a three-mile swim followed by a 56-mile bike route and finished off with a 13-mile half-marathon – 72 miles from start to finish.

We were there, cheering him on. It was important that he knew we were “for him!” We were proud of him.

He had let his weight get out of control and drifted well above 200

pounds. But he was determined to get into shape. Setting a goal was important and the Iron Man gave him incentive. He lost 50 pounds. It wasn’t easy. It might have been impossible if he had

tried to do it alone, without the support of family and friends.

We see it everywhere, especially in sports, but it is also true in the classroom and on the job and in every family. It matters when people are cheering us on, lifting us up, letting us know that they are



Reflections

Bill Tinsley

for us! My father did that for me when I was young. I have sought to do the same for my children. They have pursued different paths, chosen different careers, but always I have wanted them to know that I was in their corner. I was “for them.”

How much more is that true for our spiritual journey. We each need to know that God is on our side. He is cheering for us.

I came across a very simple statement in the Psalms, one I have somehow overlooked. Psalm 56:9b simply says, “This I know, that God is for me.”

This was the secret of David’s success throughout his life,

whether facing wild beasts as a young shepherd, Goliath on the battlefield, the death of his best friend, his own moral failure or the betrayal of his son, Absalom. Down deep, beneath all the terror and anguish of the moment, he was confident of one thing: “This I know, that God is for me.”

Wherever you are, God is for you. He wants to redeem you, to save you from the abyss, to turn you from your own destructive impulses and set your feet on fruitful paths. He wants to rescue you from the depths of despair. He will never leave you

See **YOU** page 7

A pastor search committee uses the Harrison Assessment

One of the great joys of my life was serving as transitional pastor at Journey Church in Amery, Wis., from November 2022 through August 2023.

Journey Church is a creative and active congregation filled with believers who are serving their community and going on mission trips across the United States. As transitional pastor, I met with the elders, preached three out

of four Sundays, and assisted the church's pastor search committee.

The pastor search committee agreed early in their process to utilize the Harrison Assessment to help them with their search. I have been trained to use the Harrison Assessment to help churches identify suitable candidates to consider. The pastor search process is a spiritual discernment experience. I stressed

to the members of the committee that the Holy Spirit would lead them to call their next lead pastor. They would not be relying on the Harrison Assessment to make their choice; however, the assessment would serve as a tool to help the committee clarify their expectations and set criteria important to the church in considering whom to call.

The pastor search committee met and reviewed a set of eligibility and suitability factors. The eligibility factors were education, experience, and other expectations required for the position.

The suitability factors were the traits and preferences the church most valued in their lead pastor. After considering the traits most valued, the committee put the traits in order and I used the Harrison Assessment's system to develop a "job success formula."

Journey Church values a lead pastor who loves to teach and is highly relational. The job success formula expressed these as the most important traits valued by the church along with a dozen other criteria the pastor search committee considered vital to the fit for the role of lead

pastor. The committee agreed that candidates would take the Harrison Assessment as part of the search process and that they would take the results into their spiritual discernment of whom to call.

On July 30, Isaac Karpenske accepted the unanimous call of Journey Church to serve as lead pastor. The leadership of the Holy Spirit was evident throughout the process as first the pastor search committee was unanimous in their recommendation of Isaac to Journey's elders. The elders

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Leadership
Clint Calvert

Sharing Christ, one village at a time

Join us for our 3rd annual SEA (Southeast Asia) mission trip to Thailand!

We continue to support local churches in their outreach to their community. In one

village, a small church is witnessing to more than 400 families who do not know Christ. Many families are open to the gospel, but they fear social ostracization and ridicule. As ministry partners, we have an opportunity to serve alongside the local church to

demonstrate the love of Christ and the unity of believers.

The mission team will participate in some projects including teaching English, running a youth camp, and constructing a children's ministry building for a church.

In preparation for the trip, we will meet multiple times in person and online for training and team building, including with our partners in Thailand.

This trip is open to all Minnesota-Wisconsin

Baptist Convention churches. Participants under 18 may go on the trip, but they must be accompanied by a parent or chaperone. All participants over 18 years of age must pass a background check.

The registration fee

for the mission trip is \$350. Early bird registration (before Oct. 31) is \$250. The final deadline for registration is Dec. 31. Estimated airfare from Chicago to Chiang Mai is \$1650-\$2250. Scholarships are available for stu-

dents needing financial assistance. For more information, visit www.mwbc.org/sea.

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



Intercultural
Na Herr

SEA Missions: Thailand

Trip Date:
July 1-14, 2024

Registration Deadline:
Dec. 31, 2023

Scholarships available for students

www.mwbc.org/sea

Preparation and readiness

It is true that 90 percent of those who train for disaster relief may never actually deploy. Yet it is crucial to be prepared should an event occur in which you may

serve. It is also crucial to the success of the ministry to keep our equipment in ready mode as well. These two factors, our volunteers and our support equipment, enable Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention to serve successfully in the wake of crisis. Preparation and readiness are constants in MWBC disaster relief.

MWBC DR recently served in two major responses, one foreign and one locally.

In June, a team of three – consisting of myself, Jeff Owen and Dave Seamans – joined Missouri Baptists and the Turkish government in earthquake recovery efforts in Asurz, Turkey. Our team, consisting of

American, Romanian, German and English volunteers, assisted in fabricating and assembling shelters for families who lost their homes in the March earthquakes. A

total of 80 families were able to move from their tents to these shelters. The gospel was presented to many with 15 decisions as a result. The families served are now self-sufficient and are hosted by a local Send Relief work.

In July, a small tornado and sheer winds went through Brooten and New London, Minn.. Eight volunteers from MWBC focused on New London, serving eight families in need of cleanup efforts. The four other volunteer agencies that assisted in the effort produced a combined 20 large dump truck loads of debris while our team produced more than 54 total loads! What an amazing

team we had! We were blessed as we were injury-free and blessed to serve Kandiyohi County. Every family was served in the name of Jesus, prayed with and given a New Testament.

Steve Hartman, secretary for the MN VOAD (Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters), wrote, “Your team did an amazing job at this disaster. I’m always impressed with how quickly you can mount a response and the level of skill your folks bring to the job.”

In addition to the deployments, our shower/laundry units have been busy in both states with mission projects. It is good to see our units being used for more opportunities to serve our communities here in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This is all possible because of our individual and church contributions and our churches giving to the state missions offering!

Ben and Kayla Seamans are co-directors of disaster relief for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.



Disaster Relief
Ben Seamans



Among the eight volunteers helping out in the M-W DR response to Kandiyohi County, Minn., were Dale Wollin and Tom Bickford, who in this photo are working to clean a hung limb. In the other photo, some team members take a well-deserved break, resting on the huge logs resulting from their team’s efforts. Left to right are: Team Leader Ed Olson, one of the residents, Ben Seamans, Larry Reedy and Tom Bickford. Ed Olson reports that the chainsaw team with skid-steer services clocked 260 volunteer hours between July 28 and Aug. 4.

HOPE

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Wazeecha, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.; Hmong First Baptist Church, Milwaukee; and Calvary Baptist Church, Sedalia, Mo.

Major events of the week were:

- Block party.

Monumental hosted a block party in a local park on Sunday night. The church was able to connect with people who had not been to Monumental in a while. Volunteers also were able to do some canvassing for Vacation Bible School and meet some new people that came to VBS that

week.

- Vacation Bible School. Monumental had a VBS in the evenings for all ages, children through adults.

Service Projects completed during the week were:

- Monumental. Painted the downstairs and stairwells, updated and fixed bathroom

sinks, deep cleaned the sanctuary and pews, stained the front doors, pulled weeds, and trimmed bushes.

- Brown Deer Baptist Church. Fixed external retaining wall, painted railings, pulled weeds, and landscaped.

- St. Ann Center. Part of the group went to St. Ann Center for

Intergenerational Care to spend time with residents, play bingo, and help serve lunch.

- Three Residential Home Projects. Replaced gate, did yard work, fixed inside railings, patched cement, painted home exterior.

Back to the beginning

Good news from the associations

Baptisms in the Red Lake River, Thief River Falls, Minn.



On June 25 Dr. Tom Johnston, interim pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church, baptized five candidates in the Red Lake River. Because Cornerstone rents a Lutheran-Brethren building, they have no adult baptistry. They had waited until the ice melted on the river to plan their baptismal service.

“The temperature that day was in the low 60s with a cloud cover,” Johnston said. “But the warmth of fellowship in the Lord glowed during this special occasion.”

Johnston shares some of the testimony of the candidates:

• Of the five, one man shared that he had read John MacArthur’s book *Slave*. He learned the meaning of be-

liever’s baptism from Romans 6. He asked to be baptized biblically after his commitment to Christ.

• Two in one family followed Christ in baptism after understanding that believer’s baptism is a prerequisite to taking the Lord’s Supper.

• The Holy Spirit was also at work in the last two who requested to obey Christ’s command to be baptized after they repented and believed in Jesus Christ.

“After hearing their testimonies and baptizing them, we all returned to the church for a wonderful fellowship meal,” Johnston said. “It was a blessed time of celebrating Christ’s ordinance of baptism.”

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

On Tuesday, Sept. 26, SWBA will host a Protecting Your Church event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at City on a hill Church in Fitchburg, Wis. Lunch is provided. Larry Clinton, licensed and experienced insurance agent with Brotherhood Mutual, will share how to protect our churches in a dangerous world.

NORTHWOODS

NBA held its largest youth camp ever in August with more than 120 campers at Camp Jim in Pillager, Minn.

Immanuel Baptist Church in Roseau partnered in mid-August with Flint Baptist Church of Flint, Texas and Evangelism Unlimited to do door-to-door visitation, prayer, and services held at a local park in Roseau.

CHARGES

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Church’s day care center.

“We confirmed that all known allegations of abuse had been reported to the authorities and were informed that the church had placed Mr. Stine on an indefinite leave of absence,” Endel said.

When news stories about the sexual abuse accusations were published on July 31, Endel said he urged “any individuals with relevant information to participate proactively in the investigative process by reaching out to the Madison Police Department as they conduct their investigation.”

Although in Southern Baptist polity churches operate autonomously, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention have in recent years called for the SBC to combat sexual abuse by those in church leadership positions through providing a central database of persons credibly charged with such behavior. The SBC initial response has

been the establishment of a hotline for reporting abuse allegations and a website which enables churches to search for credible allegations against specific SBC ministers and leaders.

“The MWBC stands for the safety and care of all children and supports the reform the messengers have passed,” Endel said. “We have taken part in a number of workshops and discussions related to this reform and are committed to participating in these processes. We likewise encourage others to do the same.”

The phone number of the independent and confidential hotline, run by a trauma-informed team of intake specialists, is 202-864-5578.

“We are heartbroken for those affected by abuse and believe firmly that our God is glorified when we seek justice,” Endel said. “Isaiah 1:17 reminds us, ‘Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.’ We commit ourselves to this command.”

Back to the beginning

Developing Leaders with Mac Lake

Thursday, Sept. 14

Come join us at Gospel Baptist Church for an exciting event focused on developing leaders. Get ready to be inspired, motivated, and equipped to take your leadership skills to the next level. This in-person event will be held at Gospel Baptist Church, Sparta, WI. Don’t miss out on this incredible opportunity to learn from experienced leaders, network with like-minded individuals, and gain valuable insights that will help you excel in your personal and professional life. Mark your calendars and get ready to embark on a journey of growth and empowerment. See you there!

[Click here to register.](#)

Did your church host VBS this summer? Report your info here.



Members of Hmong churches in Minnesota and Wisconsin gather for a summer fellowship picnic on Aug. 19 at Elk Mound Village Park near Eau Claire, Wis.

SEARCH

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interviewed Isaac at length and were unanimous in their recommendation of Isaac to the church. I was delighted when the church unanimously affirmed their support of Isaac's new ministry as lead pastor of Journey Church.

The Harrison Assessment played a key role in the Journey Church's discernment of Isaac's

call. The process helped clarify the church's expectations. Isaac's results in taking the assessment characterized him as an ideal candidate for the church to consider. The church valued both a desire to teach and a desire to relate in their lead pastor. Isaac loves to teach and to relate to people and this was evident not only by his assessment results but also in his successive interviews with the committee, el-

ders, and church.

If you are interested in using the Harrison Assessment in leadership development or selection, please contact me at calvert@mwbc.org or Mark Millman at mark@wisconsinbaptist.org

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

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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.

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**

YOU

continued from page three

nor forsake you. "What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

You may sometimes feel that you are all alone when facing difficulties and trials. The mountains may seem insurmountable. But this is not so. God knows everything about you. He knows your fears as well as your dreams. He knows your doubts as well as your hopes. And He has declared Himself

for you!

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10).

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



Disaster Relief Ministry
25%



Called Out Youth Camp
5%



Urban Ministry
10%

we can do more
Together
than we can alone

State Missions Offering

“Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.”
Ecclesiastes 4:9



Children's Ministry
5%



Hands of Hope
10%



WMU
5%



Pastoral Emergency
5%



Cross-cultural & SEA Missions
15%



Next Gen Internships
20%

How weird are you?

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

– 1 Peter 2:9, KJV

Just like Charlie Brown, I was smitten by a little redhead, blue-eyed girl in elementary school.

Do you remember when elementary teachers would have a Valentine’s Day party? Do they even still do that? If you recall those parties, the most exciting part was seeing who put a valentine in the decorated shoebox you made with a letter slit on the top.

Each year, I gave little Red a valentine expressing my love (or at least what a kid thought was love) to her. Every year, she never returned my affections or acknowledged my existence.

After being crushed each year by Miss Blue-eyes, I began to believe we were not meant to be. But young love is foolish. I decided around 5th grade to send one last Valentine. Imagine my shock, surprise, and excitement when I opened my box and saw that my persistence had been rewarded. I still remember the Valentine the

object of my affection gave me: “Dear Larry, thank you for all the valentines you have given me. Don’t give me another Valentine. Leave me alone. I think you are weird. Love,

”
At least she signed the Valentine with “love.” (Funny how things work out, we would later date for a year in high school. And, yes, my wife knows this story and is confident that she is the love of my life!)

As the years have gone by, there have been a few other people who have called me “weird.” I now wear that moniker as a badge of honor. That means that others have noted that I am different from most.

Now don’t get me wrong, there is Unabomber weird, tattooed on every square inch of your face weird, etc. That is not what I am referring to.

I am referring to people noticing you don’t just go along with the flow of the world. You dare to live a life of faith, have alien values, and pursue God with a passion that is not from this world. If that describes you, the old King James Version of the Bible calls you “peculiar” in 1 Peter 2:9 and Titus 2:14. Do you get it? God says those who live for Him are “weird!”

When you are “pe-

cular,” those who live in the realm of worldly normality will sometimes shun you or stand against you. Don’t let them discourage you and don’t spend too much energy giving credence to their opinions.

The story is told that Andrew Jackson’s boyhood friends just couldn’t understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of other men who had greater talent but who never succeeded.

One of Jackson’s friends said, “Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from

Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now.”

Another friend responded, “How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn’t they usually say three times and out?”

“Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay ‘thrown.’ Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner.”

Remember, the thing that counts is not how

many times you are “thrown,” but whether you are willing to stay “thrown.” We may face setbacks, but we must take courage and go forward in faith. Then, through the Holy Spirit’s power we can be the eventual victor over sin and the world. The battle is the Lord’s, so there is no excuse for us to stay “thrown”!

I have observed that Christians in the church (the peculiar) spend a lot of energy judging those who are not Christians outside the church (the normal). Do you realize that is backwards? We

See WEIRD page 10



Mighty rivers and majestic mountains, fertile plains and thriving urban centers rising beside great lakes.

Our Midwest skyline is broad and varied.

So are its churches. Leading in this setting is challenging. Advancing the gospel in our region is also very rewarding.

3 Days
10 Tracks
53 Presenters
60 Breakouts

**MIDWEST
LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT**



January 23-25, 2024

Springfield, Illinois | Crowne Plaza Hotel

MWAdvance.org

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM/OFFERING RECEIPTS

January - July 2023

Cooperative Program Budget 2023 Year to Date	\$380,532.83
Cooperative Program Receipts 2023 Year to Date	\$329,757.02
Under Budget 2023 Year to Date	\$50,775.81

NAME	CP YTD	AAEO*
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BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$250.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Church of the Living	\$0.00	\$600.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Missio	\$1,700.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Valley	\$30,085.10	\$11,515.00
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$1,105.90	\$440.00
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$3,007.87	\$2,300.00
Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptis	\$26,461.97	\$1,016.00
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$168.09	\$466.07
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$300.00	\$0.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$1,740.65	\$0.00
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$200.00	\$0.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$1,458.20	\$0.00
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$1,111.99	\$0.00
BLBA TOTAL	\$67,589.77	\$16,337.07

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church	\$975.00	\$225.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$500.00	\$1,250.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00	\$0.00
Hartland, Disciples Church	\$1,750.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Amistad Cristiana	\$2,100.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$8,372.66	\$4,377.25
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist	\$2,755.53	\$2,512.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Commun	\$101.99	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist	\$0.00	\$320.00
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue	\$7,205.05	\$4,675.00
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$856.35	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$325.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$150.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist	\$2,924.85	\$0.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$1,235.96	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E.	\$632.35	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$5,363.72	\$1,726.00
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$2,330.95	\$0.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$1,443.30	\$2,180.00
Wauwatosa, Redemption Church	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
LBA TOTAL	\$44,722.71	\$17,265.25

NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$696.00	\$0.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$1,925.00	\$750.00
Crookston, Prairie Community	\$3,644.96	\$79.63
Ely, Berean Baptist	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines Bap	\$1,435.00	\$132.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$800.00	\$0.00
New York Mills, Grace Connectio	\$432.00	\$0.00
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$3,226.90	\$2,075.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church	\$1,290.60	\$0.00
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$865.92	\$0.00
NWBA Total	\$15,316.38	\$3,036.63

NAME	CP YTD	AAEO*
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TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amery, Journey Church	\$5,655.44	\$850.00
Bloomington, Hope of Nations	\$782.34	\$790.00
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Kore	\$700.00	\$1,000.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$9,360.30	\$2,005.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer	\$300.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, N Center Lao	\$0.00	\$400.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center	\$1,792.47	\$20.00
Burnsville, Berean Baptist	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong	\$1,750.00	\$1,200.00
Eagan, Good News Church	\$4,800.00	\$0.00
Fridley, Good News Hmong	\$500.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Northwood	\$700.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$700.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$3,780.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint	\$1,300.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Minnnetonka, Redeemer Bible	\$700.00	\$0.00
Monticello, First Baptist Church	\$321.92	\$85.00
Monticello, Grace Bible Church	\$1,050.00	\$0.00
New Hope, Westview Church	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$15,003.09	\$0.00
North St. Paul - Eternal Life	\$1,848.00	\$0.00
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship	\$350.00	\$150.00
Richfield, Richfield Bible Church	\$600.00	\$0.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$4,900.00	\$0.00
Roseville, Twin City Hmong	\$1,260.00	\$0.00
Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope	\$500.00	\$747.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ	\$4,514.40	\$206.00
St. Paul, Gracepoint Midwest	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$875.00	\$0.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$4,200.00	\$445.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$420.00	\$0.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus Church	\$11,927.00	\$0.00
TCMBA Total	\$97,289.96	\$7,898.00

WEIRD

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are to judge (not tolerate sin being flaunted) those in the church. There is a case in 1 Corinthians 5 of a terrible sin in the church and the church was bragging about how tolerant and accepting they were of it (they were acting like the normal in the world). They were proud of being nonjudgmental. Paul blistered them with these words: "For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5:12-13, NASB).

Take note, it is those who are without Christ who are normal in this world. We shouldn't expect anything more from them. We are to love them, share the message of the good news of Jesus with them, pray for them to come to faith in Jesus, and treat them with dignity. We, the followers of Jesus, are the weird ones!

Do normal people think you are weird because of your faith? If so, praise God! They see you are living with peculiar values!

Larry Griffith is pastor of Brown Deer (Wis.) Baptist Church.

Back to the beginning

Mission Gifts from the Churches

NAME	CP YTD	AAEO*	NAME	CP YTD	AAEO*
SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION			SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION		
Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$659.40	\$100.00	Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$3,114.85	\$301.00
Janesville, Bethel Church	\$2,228.52	\$0.00	Chester, Chester Woods	\$806.00	\$700.00
Janesville, Casa de Oracion	\$20.00	\$130.00	Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$1,000.00	\$1,645.00
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$2,648.99	\$2,600.00	Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,624.64	\$295.00
La Crosse, Crossway Church	\$1,200.00	\$950.00	Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$3,209.50	\$100.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$600.00	\$0.00	Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$9,500.20	\$1,593.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,050.00	\$100.00	Rochester, Northbridge Church	\$5,247.00	\$0.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$4,479.00	\$1,210.00	Rochester, Redemption City	\$6,034.00	\$0.00
Madison, Emmanuel Church	\$155.00	\$0.00	Rochester, Rochester	\$600.00	\$0.00
Madison, Gracepoint	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$4,359.36	\$0.00
Madison, Hope In Christ	\$367.44	\$0.00	St. Cloud, St. Cloud International	\$350.00	\$0.00
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,875.00	\$800.00	Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$0.00	\$100.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church	\$10,829.29	\$2,165.09	Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$2,711.55	\$5,210.00
Madison, Red Village	\$4,250.00	\$0.00	SMNBA Total	\$38,557.10	\$9,944.00
Madison, Shalom Christian	\$425.00	\$0.00	OTHER		
Monroe, Redemption Church	\$399.39	\$0.00	Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$5,100.00	\$0.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$5,387.78	\$0.00	Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$978.55	\$0.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$10,150.00	\$1,652.73	OTHER TOTAL	\$6,078.55	\$0.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$2,166.47	\$1,100.75			
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$700.00	\$0.00			
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ	\$1,062.23	\$0.00			
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$1,968.16	\$0.00			
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$734.21	\$100.00			
Verona, Memorial Baptist Church	\$250.00	\$0.00			
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$120.00	\$30.00			
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$1,100.00	\$0.00			
Watertown, Watertown	\$300.00	\$0.00			
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$1,400.00	\$225.00			
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$2,176.67	\$285.00			
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$300.00	\$405.00			
SWBA Total	\$60,202.55	\$11,853.57	MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED	\$329,757.02	\$66,334.52

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

*Reporting period for Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

PRAYER

continued from page three

God in building God's Kingdom.

Provisionally, I've read two books these past couple of weeks. One book, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, has helped to plant a fresh movement of prayer in my life. A second book, *The Great Dechurching*, has helped me see the collapse of church attendance across America in these last two decades. This was not the result of the COVID-19 virus but was certainly accelerated by it.

The combination of these two books

blending in my mind drove me to the realization that the church is at a crucial moment in U.S. history. The trends are really challenging, and I'm convinced that strategic plans and innovative ministries will not reverse the decline. Only God can!

Unfortunately for those of us in the church, we tend to pray only when we feel that we desperately have to. I believe this is certainly the time for desperate prayer. But I'm not talking about the kind of prayer that shutters us into a room to pray for the sick, I'm talking about the

kind of prayer that can radically transform us and connect us to God. We desperately need the transformational power of prayer. It was said of the early disciples that those who were antagonistic toward them in the culture recognized that they had been with Jesus. Perhaps the biggest problem we have today is encapsulated in this observation: too few of us spend much time being with Jesus.

Now, hear me carefully. I'm not saying that the church needs to stop planning. In fact, I'm the guy who wrote a book just a couple of years

ago challenging the church to get back on a planning cycle. But for those of you who have read my book, *Strategic Planning in the Smaller Church*, you will note that the whole process begins with serious prayer taking place in the context of the church and of the leadership group. I have said repeatedly, if prayer isn't the cornerstone of the planning process, then the plan will not reflect the plans and purposes of God. It will only be our best thinking, and that is not enough.

What is the answer to the overwhelming challenges that we

face today in North America and in the church? The simple but challenging answer is to pray and seek God.

The old expression sums up where we are today and where we need to be:

No prayer, no power. Little prayer, little power.

Much prayer, much power.

Prayer is, indeed, the missing "powerhouse of the church." Let's pray!

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

Back to the beginning

Minnesota-Wisconsin
Baptist Convention
ANNUAL MEETING

October 20-21, 2023

1pm Friday to Noon Saturday

Register **HERE**
for the
Annual Meeting

Southtown Baptist Church
2600 W 82nd St, Bloomington, MN

Hotel: Embassy Suites Bloomington
2800 American Blvd W, Bloomington, MN

Make Hotel
Reservations
Here

we can do more
Together
than we can alone

Church Planter's Meeting--Invitation Only
Thursday, October 19

Friday

WMU Annual Meeting, 9:00 am
Pastors Conference, 9:30 am
Pastors Wives Luncheon, 10:30 am
Pastors Lunch, noon

Afternoon Convention Session, 1:15 pm
Missions Banquet, 5:00 pm

Evening Convention Session, 6:40 pm

Saturday Morning

Saturday morning Great Commission Breakfast, 7:30 am

Saturday morning Convention Session, 9:00 am