

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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## Table of Contents

- 1 Empower/Equip
- 2 Empower Photos
- 3 Equip Photos
- 4 Leo Endel: Perspectives
- 4 Bill Tinsley: Reflections
- 5 Leadership: Clint Calvert
- 5 Intercultural: Na Herr
- 6 Minnesota Church
- 7 Good News from the Associations
- 8 Calendar of Events
- 9 SEA mission trip essay second place
- 10 Mission gifts from the churches
- 11 Midwest Leadership Summit
- 12 Hands of Hope

## Empower/Equip train M-W leaders

Rochester, Minn. – Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention’s two big annual training events “empowered” and “equipped” church leaders for their work this spring.

Empower drew 210 to Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center, Mar. 8-9, and Equip NextGen Ministry Conference gathered 75 at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, Minn., Apr. 5-6. Equip focused on leaders and volunteers in children’s and youth ministries, while Empower had a more general focus and covered a wide range of emphases including evangelism, church planting, discipleship, volunteers, and Vacation Bible School.

Keynote speakers at Empower were J. J. Washington, national director of personal evangelism for the North American Mission Board; Peter Yanes, former associate vice

president for Asian relations and mobilization of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; and Omar Segovia, church planting missionary with the Missouri Baptist Convention. Worship was led by John Francis, minister of worship at Parkway Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo. The theme was “Creating a Culture of Evangelism.”

Equip’s theme was “Pass It On.” Keynote speaker was Landry Holmes, manager of Lifeway Kids Ministry Publishing. Breakout sessions were led by Naomi Andrs, Chris Phillips, Rebekah Phillips, Penny Reedy, Hnou Yang, and Joseph Young. Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, preached on Psalm 78:4-7 and 145:4, challenging the group to “tell the next generation the glorious deeds of the Lord.” Foua Young led worship.

See more photos on pages 2 and 3



John Francis, minister of worship at Parkway Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo., leads worship during Empower, playing both trumpet and keyboard at the same time.



Leaders of the Equip NextGen Ministry Conference included, left to right: Chris Phillips, MWBC student ministry specialist; Rebekah Phillips, MWBC KidMin team; Hnou Yang, MWBC KidMin team; Landry Holmes, manager of Lifeway Kids Bible Studies; Penny Reedy, MWBC KidMin specialist; and Naomi Andrs, MWBC KidMin team.



# Hands of Hope

Youth & Family Mission Trip  
June 15-22 Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
see page 12 for more information

# Empower

Mar. 8-9



*Clint Calvert, church leadership catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, announces that each church at Empower will receive a “Creating a Culture of Evangelism” kit created by the North American Mission Board. Calvert said that when he started working through the kit, he found it to be “life-changing.”*



*J. J. Washington, NAMB national director of personal evangelism, tells Empower attendees that, to do the work of an evangelist, one must be available, sensitive, ready, and committed.*



*Church planting missionary with the Missouri Baptist Convention, Omar Segovia talks about miraculous church planting movements overseas and in the U.S., encouraging those at Empower to “glorify God and mobilize others to do likewise.”*

# Equip

Apr. 5-6



About 70 people gather at Equip at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, Minn., to improve their ministry to children and youth.



Foua Young, worship director at First Hmong Baptist Church in Coon Rapids, Minn., leads worship during Equip.



Landry Holmes, manager of Lifeway Kids Ministry Publishing, delivers the keynote address at Equip.

# I need a vacation, and so do you

Vacation season is upon us! On Friday afternoons I-35 North will be packed with cars “going north” for the weekend. On Sunday afternoons the trip back will take an hour and a half longer to return home. After being winter-locked in our houses, we run to delight in the beauty



## Perspectives

Leo Endel

that emerges from the darkness. This season doesn't last long, so off we go!

I didn't always understand this. At my second church, one week we had 35 people in church; the next

we had 12 (including myself, my wife and our daughter). School was out and everyone was going “up north.” Life was busy and I felt the pressure to get something going, but the church was gone. I must admit I was a bit afraid they wouldn't come back, and they didn't until October.

Our young family didn't have the time or money to go any place, and I thought I had work to do. If I had it to do over again, I would find a way to go north, too.

Last week we vacationed at Madeira Beach, Fla. Friends helped make this possible, and we did our best to slow down and enjoy it. I have always said that life is about the journey but, really, I was too task driven for that to be completely true. Even “vacations,” mostly our trips to our denomination's annual meeting, were tightly packed with activity. We had places to go and things to do. We would come back from “vacation” in need of a

vacation.

Fifteen years ago, God began working in me and showed me His design for weekly rest.

I started writing and teaching about this gift from God, and then began to gradually adjust my life and

my schedule to God's prescription. Imperfect as my Sabbaths are, this has been transformative. It turns out that God knows what He is talking about; life is more peaceful and fulfilling when we learn biblical patterns of rest.

Our vacation stirred

many things in me: peace, quiet, contemplation, hunger for Scripture, and unrushed conversation and

connection with my wife and with God. It gave me time to think deeper past the clutter of today's to-do-list and its accom-

panying demands.

Being fully present in a beautiful place, I found myself thinking a great deal about the beauty of God as seen in His creation. Flowers, sunsets, blue-green water, waves,

See **VACATION** page 6

### 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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## The power of words

When we were children we had a saying: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”

We usually quoted this little jingle when words had hurt us, and it was usually followed by sticking out our tongue for emphasis. Somehow this ditty has been passed down through the generations, even though it is not true. Sticks and stones may break our bones, but words can destroy

us. It is not the well thought out words that

give us trouble, words that we wrestle with before writing them down, words that we edit a dozen times before finally

putting them in print. The words that trouble us and cause our difficulty are the careless words, the thoughtless words, the words that escape our lips without thinking. These words cannot be called back. Unlike animals escaped

from the cage, words cannot be hunted down and returned to captivity.

Sometimes the careless words run rampant, causing unknown damage without our knowledge. We don't even remember what we said, or when we said it. But the damage is done, nonetheless.

We try to bury our careless words beneath repeated apologies. “I'm sorry.” Or “I didn't mean it.” Sometimes we are forgiven. Sometimes others

claim to overlook them. But words are rarely forgotten. They lodge in the memory and cast a shadow on everything else.

Jesus said, “I tell you that men will have to give account on the Day of Judgment for every careless word they have spoken.” (Matt. 12:36) Jesus was referring to our final judgment before God. Ultimately, when we stand before Him we will be required to give account for every care-

less word.

See **WORDS** page 7

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees,  
takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round it  
and pluck blackberries...

– Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The opposite of careless words is not careful words, words that are guarded and self-serving, but caring words, words that are spoken in the interest of others.

# Good for the church and good for the pastor

Over the past few years, I have conducted many Harrison Assessments on pastors and chaplains. Harrison Assessments are predictive analytics that ask participants to prioritize their preferences. The data, input by the participants, is then sorted by the program to show the participant's tendencies. Analyzing these tendencies helps participants improve performance, fulfill employment expectations,



**Leadership**  
Clint Calvert

and explore career opportunities. I have noticed some trends that are worth bringing to the attention of church leaders. I recently compiled 25 reports from MWBC pastors to consider the similarities and differences in this group of 25 participants.

Of the 25 participants I selected, I observed that these pastors tend to prefer to help others more than assert their own needs, maintain warm relationships

more than holding others accountable, make decisions based on logic more than intuition, and achieve more than focus on managing stress.

None of these preferences are wrong. When I debrief a Harrison Assessment, I remind the participants that I am a tour guide and not a judge. Churches appreciate pastors who are helpful, empathetic, logical, and achieve. All these traits that this group of pastors prefer are good for the church.

The question that I raise with the pastors is: "Are these traits in balance with other traits that are good for the pastor?" For pastors

to thrive in ministry they need to consider they need to consider and make time for their needs and the needs of their families. Pastors need to challenge the members of their church to equip them for ministry. As Ed Stetzer frequently says, "Facts are our friends." Many decisions in life require the use of intuition as well. Without adequate self-care, even a high achiever cannot maintain productivity for long.

My friend, Jack Bell, is fond of saying, "When your output exceeds your input, your upkeep will become your downfall." This maxim is a great reminder for pastors to balance their preferences for sustainable, fruitful ministry.

Church leaders can

encourage their pastors: to be realistic when setting deadlines, to take time to care for themselves, to invite the intuition of others, and to clarify expectations for ministry leaders. This way the needs of both are met – what is good for the church and what is good for the pastor.

*Clint Calvert is church leadership catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Clint is certified by Harrison Assessments in Recruitment, Debriefing & Coaching, and Employee Development. Harrison Assessments are provided to MWBC pastors through Cooperative Program giving. Contact Clint at calvert@mwbc.org or 507-254-0237 for more information.*

## Partnership missions

Missions is best done in partnership with other churches and missions agencies.

Part of my role as intercultural catalyst is connecting churches with our very own International Mission Board (IMB). I cannot emphasize enough the value of working with missionaries on the field. They have the best knowledge and strategy for reaching any given place.

Effective missions work is more than just flying into a foreign location, distributing free

supplies, and sharing the gospel. The greatest need in missions is not evangelism. It is discipleship. Someone has to do the hard, follow-up work with individuals who accepted Christ. If

a mission team is there for only two weeks, that is not nearly enough time to disciple someone effectively. This is why we need partners. After the mission team leaves, the local partners continue the important work of discipleship.

Instead of building a missions project from

the ground up, why not partner with the IMB, who has already deployed 3500+ missionaries across the globe? They provide the missionaries and the training. We just have to show up.

In addition to the IMB, there are many other like-minded churches and missions agencies around the world who share our faith and vision. I encourage churches to do a little research and find some missions partners to serve with together. Partnership missions is a great way for churches of any size to live out the Great Commission.

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



**Intercultural**  
Na Herr



*This summer, this team will take the good news of Jesus back to the birth countries of some of the team members — Thailand and Laos. Sponsored by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Woman's Missionary Union, the June 22-July 9 mission is a return visit to follow up on a trip taken five years ago in 2019. A special offering of \$1,302.62 was given at Empower to help fund the trip. Since then the trip has been fully funded. Pictured are, left to right, front row: Tia Underbakke, Dee Thao, Cindy Vang; back row — Leo Endel, Huechee Moua, VaBoun Moua, Steven Yang, Keng Thao; not pictured — Ricky Moua, Luckie Vang, Kabo Yang. They all attend First Hmong Baptist Church in Coon Rapids, Minn., except Endel who is with Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn.*

# Three families start Minnesota church

By Karen Willoughby

NEW PRAGUE, Minn. (BP) – When three families here decided they wanted to plant a church that would be outward-focused, they turned to Southern Baptists for help.

Roman Catholics and Lutherans are the strongest Christian emphases in this town of about 8,200 people, but no missions-minded Southern Baptists surfaced until 11 years ago, when the three non-Southern Baptist families started talking.

“We didn’t have any churches in New Prague that would go out to the community,” Kurt Stepka told Baptist Press. The families met a few times in the basement of Dave Mulder’s home, prayed about it, “let it rest for a few months, and God said, ‘Yes,’” Stepka said.

“Dave was well-ex-

perienced in this process,” Stepka continued. “He was older and had been around more. He contacted the SBC [the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention] and they were very supportive, financially and with guest speakers. They supported us tremendously to get this off the ground.”

The Stepka and Mulder families continue today as members of the multi-generational Calvary Church of New Prague, now in its 10th year. The third family, the Bivens, have moved out of state. About 130 people attend Sunday morning worship at New Prague Middle School. Wednesday activities take place at Falcon Ridge Elementary School.

Thirteen acres have been purchased for a future church home, but more important than their own brick-



*A block party hosted by Calvary Church in New Prague, Minn., each July allows the church to interact with hundreds of people in its community.*

and-mortar building is Calvary New Prague’s focus on reaching people with the gospel of Jesus.

“One of the things we desired when we first were talking about starting a church was to be missions-oriented, to reach lost souls,” Stepka said. “That was important for us: to see people in our community who are lost and need Jesus. That’s what prompted us to help reach lost souls.”

Members started

a summertime block party to introduce the church to the community. The congregation interacts with up to 1,500 people in July. The block party provides “food, music, testimonies and is an attempt to connect with people,” Pastor Robert Doleshal told Baptist Press. “It is a ‘Hi!’ to the community to let them know, ‘We’re here for you,’ as well as introducing them to the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Rather than Vacation Bible School, Calvary New Prague each June provides “Energize,” which involves age-graded team-building, Scripture memorization, Bible study, worship, gospel presentations and “a huge rec time,” the pastor said. Energize takes place at a city park that has a covered pavilion, which the church rents for the week.

The leaders then take

See **PARTY** page 8

## VACATION

*continued from page four*

seashells, even the breeze (theologically rich as symbolic of the ruach/pneumatosis/spirit/wind of God) drew me to the God who created all of this! I was delighted when I found a dried-out, perfectly intact seahorse on the beach! Do we need seahorses? Probably not, but God was showing off His creative ability when He added it to His enormous list of

interesting sea creatures.

Why is our world exquisitely painted in color, and why were we created to see and enjoy it? After all, Bailey, our beloved Doodle, is red and green color blind (all dogs are). She can see some of the beauty around us but not all of it. I really doubt she would have been impressed with last night’s sunset... but I was.

I heard the soothing waves; I saw the layered blues of the sea’s colorful waves; I felt

the gentle sea breeze; I felt the warmth of the sun on my face; and I smelled the beach seafood, and experienced the resulting grumble in my stomach. My senses were aroused. I came alive.

Who could design this world with such beauty and splendor? Only a Designer who is more magnificent than these. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” and, like David, I felt like I had gazed upon the beauty of the Lord. I could see Him

behind the splendor of what I sensed. His perfection, His beauty, and His glory were fully on display.

Only when we tune in and observe do we see Him. Quietly witnessing God’s beautiful creation invites you to see and enjoy the God who dazzles us with His creativity. If you slow down and pause, you too might sense the glory of God, and be awakened and renewed by an encounter with Him.

But if you never slow

down, if you never rest, you will miss Him. You will fill your time with busyness, entertainment and social media that feeds a lesser you and fills you with emptiness, inadequacies, and dissatisfaction rather than the wonder of God.

Please take a vacation this summer and taste and see that the Lord is good.

*Leo Endel is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin*

**Back to the beginning**

## WORDS

*continued from page four*

less word. Perhaps He had something else in mind. Perhaps He was drawing our attention to the reality of human relations. Careless words destroy relationships.

We have seen prominent careers come to an abrupt end due to careless words spoken in the public arena. Like the classic movie, *A Face In the Crowd*, few are able to overcome racial slurs and arrogant expletives caught on an open microphone. But more damaging to us all are the careless words spoken in the privacy of our homes. Careless words chip away at relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children. They leave families fractured and psyches shattered.

On the other hand, an encouraging word, the right word spoken at the right time, can make an enormous difference. The opposite of careless

words is not careful words, words that are guarded and self-serving, but caring words, words that are spoken in the interest of others.

Nothing is more important than learning the discipline of our speech. James compared the tongue to the small rudder that turns a huge ship, or the bit placed in the mouth of a horse, able to harness the animal's great strength. Careless words, he said, are like sparks that ignite an uncontrollable fire that consumes everything in its path. "If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check." (James 3:2).

*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**



First Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Church celebrates the opening of their new building Mar. 24.

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS

### NORTHWOODS

Aaron Satchwill reports these are some ways that giving to Northland Missions blessed congregations and individuals during 2023:

- Camp Jim – \$2,500 - The Lord used your giving to help us offset the rising cost of camp. It was the biggest camp in Northwoods history and there were 14 salvations!
- Immanuel Baptist Church Outreach – \$197.50 - The Lord used your gracious giving to print 1,000 tracts to be distributed throughout the city of Roseau, Minn., last summer during the city wide outreach.
- Grand Rapids Baptist Church – \$3,000 – The church had experienced water damage and was behind in their payments. Your financial support helped the relationship with the contractor in a major way.
- Cornerstone Baptist Church – \$6,000 travel assistance to the Interim pastor. Dr. Johnston drives four hours round trip to minister in Thief River Falls. His work at the church has been a blessing and they had five baptisms last year.
- Director of Missions Support – \$12,000 - This role has transitioned to part time, and your giving has greatly blessed the support of this ministry.
- Pleasant Hill Baptist Church – \$1,200 – They had an unexpected bill and Northland Missions helped cover the cost.
- Hill City Baptist Church - \$7,000 – New roof on the building. The church was able to cover just over half of the cost, and you assisted with the other portion.
- Block Party Trailer – \$429.48 – New tires on the trailer that is used for Vacation Bible Schools and other ministry events in the association.
- Pastor and Wives Appreciation Christmas party – \$569.51 went to bless the pastors and wives of Northwoods Baptist Association.

### SOUTHERN WISCONSIN



A new Burmese church plant, El Bethel Baptist Church in Milwaukee, officially became part of the SWBA at the Spring executive team meeting on April 23. All the pastors and leaders voted unanimously to receive El Bethel Baptist Church into the association.



More than 200 Hmong Baptist ministry leaders from Minnesota and Wisconsin gather for an Apr. 20 conference in Hudson, Wis.

## PARTY

*continued from page 6*

Energize to Austin (Minn.) Baptist Chapel en Español, located about 90 minutes southeast of New Prague.

“The folks go and sleep in the church, do work projects in the church and in the community, and in the evening, Energize,” Doleshal said. “Pastor Victor [Ordonez] three years ago asked our missions team if they could help. We see it as both a missions project, to help a church smaller than us, and great fellowship with fellow believers from a different local church.”

Doleshal, a Texas native who spent

several years pastoring in Texas and Arizona, said he has learned Minnesotans’ Eastern European ancestors endured difficult and rugged lives, which led many to less hopeful perspectives and little consideration of Jesus beyond their traditional heritage.

He infuses their dutiful Christianity Sunday morning with straight-talking “this is how the Bible says His people should live and think” messages, centered on a trust relationship with Jesus.

“For those who come out of long-held traditional religions, there is a rewiring of the way people understand and relate to God, but this is true coming out of any

worldview into a biblical comprehension,” Doleshal told Baptist Press. “Our congregation loves God and His Word, the Bible. Because God and His wisdom are infinite, we are constantly learning, which is necessary for all of us to mature spiritually.”

Calvary New Prague offers Bible studies for all ages, plus 10 community groups, as well as ministries to meet specific local needs, such as parenting teens, being a good grandparent, and partnering with people at stress points in their lives.

Time is given the last Sunday of each month for the five-person mission team to bring up matters of interest

to the congregation, such as the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering video produced by the North American Mission Board.

In addition to helping provide for several independent missionaries, Calvary New Prague members allocate 7 percent of undesignated offerings to missions through the Cooperative Program, the way Southern Baptists pool their mission dollars so people in North America and around the world can hear of God’s unconditional love for them.

“From our very first budget we’ve been giving 7 percent,” Doleshal said. “It doesn’t do any good or make any sense to be a

member of something you believe in and not contribute to it.

“We know from the national level to the state and associational level there are all sorts of services and help available to us. By participating in the Cooperative Program we are part of something much bigger than what we ourselves can do alone.”

Stepka added to his pastor’s comments.

“Southern Baptists supported us tremendously,” the church elder said. “I’m glad we can support them back so they can re-give to someone else, to keep the church planting going wherever it may be needed.”

**Back to the beginning**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BLBA: Bay Lakes Baptist Association  
SWBA: Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association  
LBA: Lakeland Baptist Association

MWBC events are in bold print.

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

### MAY

**19 New Pastor Orientation, Rochester, Minn.**  
27 Memorial Day Observed – **MWBC Office Closed**

### JUNE

9-12 Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis, Ind.  
**17-22 Hands of Hope, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.**  
**22- July 9 WMU Mission Trip, Thailand and Laos**  
30 MWBC Annie Armstrong Offering Cutoff

### JULY

**1-14 SEA Mission Trip, Thailand**  
4 Independence Day Holiday Observance – **MWBC Office Closed**

### AUGUST

### SEPTEMBER

**1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions**  
2 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**  
**13-14 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.**  
**20-22 Called Out Youth Conference, Baraboo, Wis.**

NBA: Northwoods Baptist Association  
SMBA: Southern Minnesota Baptist Association  
TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

### OCTOBER

**24 Church Planters Gathering, Valley Baptist Church, Appleton, Wis.**  
**25 Pastors Conference, Valley Baptist Church, Appleton, Wis.**  
**25-26 MWBC Annual Meeting, Valley Baptist Church, Appleton, Wis.**  
28-29 Missouri Baptist Annual Meeting, St. Charles Convention Center, St. Charles, Mo.

### NOVEMBER

10-12 Baptist General Convention of Texas Annual Meeting, Waco, Texas  
28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

### DECEMBER

1-8 Week of Prayer for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering  
25-1/1 Christmas/New Year’s Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**  
**27-1/5 Israel Trip**



# Sarah LeMaster wins second place in essay contest

Rochester, Minn. — Sarah LeMaster won second place in the SEA Mission Trip essay contest and received a scholarship award of \$500. She attends Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, Minn., and is the daughter of Jonathan

and Rebecca LeMaster.

The contest assignment was to write an essay on Mark 5:1-20. The instructions stated: “In your response, you may want to consider the historical background of the text and its relevance to today. Your essay

should answer the following questions. What does this text teach us about Jesus? What does this text teach us about missions and evangelism? How can I apply this text to my life?”

Here is her award winning essay.



Sarah LeMaster

At first glance, this passage may seem like just another miracle that Jesus performed. While on the surface that is what it is, this passage reveals many ways to help our spiritual walk. The first way is by seeing who Jesus is, the second is by teaching us about missions, and finally seeing how we can apply this passage into our daily lives.

First, this passage alone reveals so much information about who Jesus is. For example, it demonstrates that Jesus is more powerful than anyone. This can be seen with the man who has an unclean spirit. The man was bound with chains attempting to restrain him. Each person who attempted to restrain him failed. Once Jesus was in the area and the man ran to him. Jesus was able to send out the demons and heal the man from the unclean spirits. This is something no one else was able to do. This action demonstrates the power that Jesus has over everything, especially spiritual warfare.

Another characteristic of Jesus is revealed in this passage. It is the love that Jesus has for us. When the man ran to Jesus, Jesus didn't even hesitate to drive the demons out. He didn't ask the man why he had the unclean spirits or any other questions. He knew what was happening and took action to relieve the man of the spiritual torture. He loved this man so much that he didn't want the man to live with the unclean spirits anymore, so he cast it out. This is just like the love of a parent with a child. The parent doesn't have to know why a child may be crying to know that the child doesn't want to cry anymore. The parent goes out of their way to do what they can do to help the child with no questions asked. Just like the parents, Jesus knew what afflicted the man and did what was best for the man because of his unconditional love.

Second, this passage teaches us about missions and evangelism that should be taking place. There are two perspectives we can see from this passage. This first one is following the example of Jesus. Being followers of Christ we have the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit is used to share the Gospel. In this specific passage, works are done specifically as a miracle. While our acts don't have to always be a miracle. A simple act for someone can be life-changing and they can see the characteristics of Jesus shine through us. Through these acts, we can change the course of a person's life forever. From this perspective, we use the abilities God has given us to spread the Gospel

wherever we are.

The second perspective is from the man. Jesus commanded the man in verse 19 to go to his people and share what the Lord has done. This command also tells us to go out and share what the Lord has done. By going out and sharing our testimonies. We are used by the Lord to transform other lives because of what God has done for us.

Lastly, there is a call to action to put this passage into our daily lives. There are two major ways to implement this into our lives. The first one is that we can bring our worries and struggles to the Lord no matter how big they may be. While the man had extremely difficult life struggles, it can be implemented the same way with any worries or struggles we have. The man was suffering from crying daily and having self-harm caused by the unclean spirits demonstrated how broken he was. Once the man saw Jesus he didn't walk to him, he ran, and knelt before him. As soon as he knelt before Jesus, Jesus started transforming the man's life by ridding him of the unclean spirits. As we can see even the most difficult problems of problems Jesus can address them. Even when we feel that we cannot handle the problem, we can run and confide in the Lord. This is a reminder that we should surrender our worries and struggles to the Lord for he can take care of them no matter how difficult they may appear.

The next major way we can apply this to our daily lives is by sharing what the Lord has done. Once all the unclean spirits were cast out of the man, he wanted to follow Jesus. Instead, Jesus commanded him to share his story. This is a simple command to share what the Lord has done with others. As followers of Christ, we should want to support our brothers and sisters, including celebrating what the Lord has done. Just like a baptism at church, we rejoice in what the Lord has done. While we don't see the effects of the story from this passage, we do know that the people were amazed. We never know how the Lord changing our lives will help others through their journey.

While this may be the first recorded history of “deviled ham”, this passage serves as a reminder of how our walk should be. Mark 5:1-20 clearly demonstrates who Jesus is, how we can be on missions, and how to apply it to our daily lives. As followers of Christ, we study and learn God's word to prepare ourselves to share the Gospel with others.

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

January - March 2024

Cooperative Program Budget 2024 Year to Date	\$170,311.25
Cooperative Program Receipts 2024 Year to Date	\$180,941.40
Over Budget 2024 Year to Date	\$10,630.15

NAME	CP YTD
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### BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Appleton, Church of the Living	\$103.87
Appleton, Hmong Baptist	\$581.22
Appleton, Valley	\$20,531.05
Clintonville, First Baptist	\$616.20
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$1,460.40
Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist	\$9,534.08
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$960.05
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist	\$671.40
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$408.84
<b>BLBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$34,867.11</b>

### LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist	\$696.00
Brookfield, Redemption	\$1,200.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$500.00
Franklin, El Bethel Baptist	\$1,000.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00
Kenosha, Amistad Cristiana	\$300.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$6,599.59
Milwaukee, Grace Point	\$112.72
Milwaukee, Iglesia Su Presencia	\$113.88
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue	\$3,391.56
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$300.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$162.46
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$250.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish	\$600.00
Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. Minist	\$330.47
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$2,773.75
Pewaukee, Crossroads	\$848.02
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$4,797.10
<b>LBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$24,575.55</b>

### NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$308.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe	\$275.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$615.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist	\$100.00
New York Mills, Grace	\$1,116.60
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist	\$2,055.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist	\$2,768.10
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$2,535.52
<b>NWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,773.22</b>

### SOUTHERN MINNESOTA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$1,410.20
Chester, Chester Woods Commu	\$554.50
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$1,500.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,284.08
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley Bapti	\$749.60
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist Ch	\$5,414.89
Rochester, Redemption City	\$7,125.97
Rochester, Rochester Communit	\$300.00
Sartell, Faith Journey Church (Pa	\$2,314.48
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$592.36
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$962.50
<b>SMNBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,208.58</b>

NAME	CP YTD
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### TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amery, Journey	\$5,000.00
Bloomington, Hope of Nations	\$269.82
Bloomington, MN Kangnam	\$300.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$2,986.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer	\$300.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center	\$1,405.75
Coon Rapids, First Hmong	\$750.00
Maple Grove, Northwood	\$300.00
Maple Grove, Unlock	\$300.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples	\$1,620.00
Minneapolis, Jubilee	\$2,000.00
Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible	\$300.00
Monticello, Grace Bible	\$250.00
New Hope, Westview	\$1,500.00
New Prague, Calvary	\$6,864.39
North St. Paul - Eternal Life	\$168.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$2,100.00
Roseville, Twin City Hmong	\$340.00
Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope	\$500.00
St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian	\$500.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$10,000.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ	\$4,186.60
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$450.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$1,800.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese	\$180.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus	\$750.00
<b>TCMBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,120.56</b>

### SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$479.46
Janesville, Resonate	\$1,122.08
La Crosse, Crossway	\$600.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$600.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$450.00
Madison, City on a Hill	\$10,000.00
Madison, Doxa	\$8,804.05
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$2,106.00
Madison, Emmanuel	\$225.00
Madison, Hope In Christ	\$149.00
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,272.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist	\$2,003.09
Monroe, Redemption	\$240.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$3,306.60
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$4,350.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist	\$1,270.31
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$300.00
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ	\$314.99
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$749.56
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$271.66
Waterloo, Cornerstone	\$1,100.00
Watertown, Watertown	\$150.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$600.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$1,876.98
WI Rapids, First Baptist	\$150.00
<b>SWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42,490.78</b>

### OTHER

Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$1,700.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ	\$205.60
<b>OTHER TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,905.60</b>

<b>MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED</b>	<b>\$180,941.40</b>
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NOTE: No giving received by MWBC-affiliated churches not listed above during stated giving periods. CP - Cooperative Program

# Nearly 1,000 train at Midwest Leadership Summit

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP) – Church leaders from the central states engaged 12,000 hours of training, teaching and worship at the three-day Midwest Leadership Summit meeting in Springfield Jan. 23-25.

In multiple plenary sessions led by denominational speakers and church-planting practitioners, and in 80 break-out sessions, almost 1,000 leaders shared and received equipping for ministry in their unique Midwest settings.

The biennial event brings together nine Baptist conventions covering 12 states. It is sponsored by Lifeway Christian Resources, GuideStone Financial Resources, the North American Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union.

Lifeway Christian Resources President Ben Mandrell opened the activities on Tuesday with an early bird session on "the short bench," the difficulty faced by many churches in finding and developing leaders.

"Multiplication is one of the most intimidating things in ministry,"

Mandrell said of raising up leaders. He cited statistics showing that in some states, as many as 27 percent of churches are searching for pastors – a process that is harder and takes longer than in times past. "Who is the next generation, and how will we find them?" Mandrell asked.

In day two of the gathering, Vance Pitman, president of NAMB's Send Network, encouraged pastors, "The size of the church does not determine the significance of the church. The size of the mission determines the significance of the church."

Noting it might be controversial, Pitman said, "Church planting is not the goal. The church that you are planting one day is going to die. All the churches that were planted in the New Testament are all dead and gone. . . . But the kingdom of God is alive and well."

Then where does the local church fit in? To introduce people to Jesus, disciple them, and launch them into serving Him. "We've



Ohio church planter Aaron Taylor shares the miraculous story of his church's free furniture store.

made the local church the goal," said Pitman. "We're doing it wrong. The church is a tool for establishing the kingdom of Jesus."

Pitman said, "The church being born isn't the finish line of God's activity. It's the starting line."

Church planter Aaron Taylor from Columbus, Ohio, said his congregation, Living Hope Baptist Church, runs 120 on a "banner day," but is impacting its city in a big way. The church started a free furniture store, Finding Hope Center, three years ago with virtually no inventory or funds, only God's calling.

When space across from the church opened up, Taylor asked the landlord to give the church 30 days. "It was

going to cost \$25,000 to pay rent for a whole year," he said. "We did not raise \$25,000. God did it in 22 days, and we raised \$31,000."

A year later Taylor received a call about connecting with a friend who had a storage unit with some furniture he wanted to give away. "We pulled up and it was the Midwest Distribution center for La-Z-Boy Furniture, and we found out the director of that facility loved Jesus a whole lot," Taylor said. They were given permission take as much scratch and dent furniture as they wanted. Over the course of the last few years, the church has given away more than \$700,000 in furniture and shared the Gospel with 350 families.

"We're living in the middle of a miracle," Taylor said.

The Midwest Leadership Summit started as the North Central States Rally in the mid-1950s to encourage Baptists in a largely unreached area outside the SBC stronghold. The rally was staged between two SBC annual meetings in Chicago in 1950 and 1957. It was part of a move to create new local associations and plant churches in midwestern cities. The event met every three years, then switched to every two years in 2018.

In the Midwest today, self-identified evangelicals range from 18.7 percent in Wisconsin to 32.7 percent in Missouri. Illinois claims 23.7 percent evangelical believers.



These 63 leaders from MWBC attended this year's Midwest Leadership Summit Jan. 23-25 in Springfield, Ill., along with about 900 others from Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, and the Dakotas.

# hands

Wisconsin  
Rapids

June 15-21

# of hope

For more information visit [mwbc.org](http://mwbc.org)  
or contact Jonathan Lemaster ([jhlemaster@gmail.com](mailto:jhlemaster@gmail.com))  
or Na Herr at [herr@mwbc.org](mailto:herr@mwbc.org)



## Youth & Family Mission Trip

Hands of Hope is a MWBC mission project designed to help churches or church plants serve their communities by providing volunteers to take the gospel outside the walls of the church and into the community. This year's event will be held in Wisconsin Rapids at Church @ Wazeecha with a block party, service projects, and community evangelism and outreach. This year's event is \$70 per participant and includes housing, meals and snacks, plus a T-shirt. Adult sponsors, parents, youth and children's leaders are free. The event has the feel of being half mission trip and half family camp. Register by going to [mwbc.org](http://mwbc.org) or by calling 507-282-3636 or emailing [contact@mwbc.org](mailto:contact@mwbc.org).