

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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## Trey Turner named MWBC executive director

By David Williams  
Editor

Rochester, Minn. – Trey Turner – pastor of Church at Wazeecha which he and his wife Lea Ann planted 16 years ago – will become the next executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention on June 1, 2025.

Turner was elected at the Apr. 25-26 MWBC Executive Board meeting at Emmanu-

el Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn. He was recommended by a 12-person search committee elected last September when Endel announced his retirement, setting June 30, 2025 as his final day, when he will have completed 23 years of service. Endel and Turner will overlap for one month to facilitate a smooth transition. “God has uniquely shaped Trey to lead

See **TURNER** page 6



**Changing of the Guard** – As Leo Endel, left, retires from his position as executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, Trey Turner will become the fourth to hold that position. Their terms will overlap to provide a one-month transition period, Turner starting on June 1 and Endel staying until June 30. Turner wears a stole presented to him by Tia Underbakke, who was elected M-W Woman’s Missionary Union executive director during the same meeting.

## Underbakke named M-W WMU executive director

Rochester, Minn. – After six years without one, Minnesota-Wisconsin Woman’s Missionary Union once again has an executive director, Tia Underbakke of First Hmong Baptist Church in Coon Rapids, Minn.

The state convention staff position became vacant in 2019 at the re-

tirement of Jeanne Wedekind who had served as a volunteer in the position for more than a decade. Before her, Betty Lynn Cadle had held the position for 23 years as a full-time staff member.

With no executive director, the M-W WMU

See **WMU** page 7



Tia Underbakke, left, newly elected M-W WMU executive director, poses with Trey and Lea Ann Turner at the MWBC executive board meeting. At the same meeting, Turner was elected MWBC executive director.

## Endels honored

Rochester, Minn. – About 200 family and friends gathered at the Rochester International Event Center at noon, Saturday, Apr. 26, to express their appreciation and best wishes to Leo and Sarah Endel as their service to the Minne-

sota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention comes to an end.

Endel will retire June 30 after 23 years as executive director of the two-state convention.

The couple is relocat-

See **ENDEL** page 11

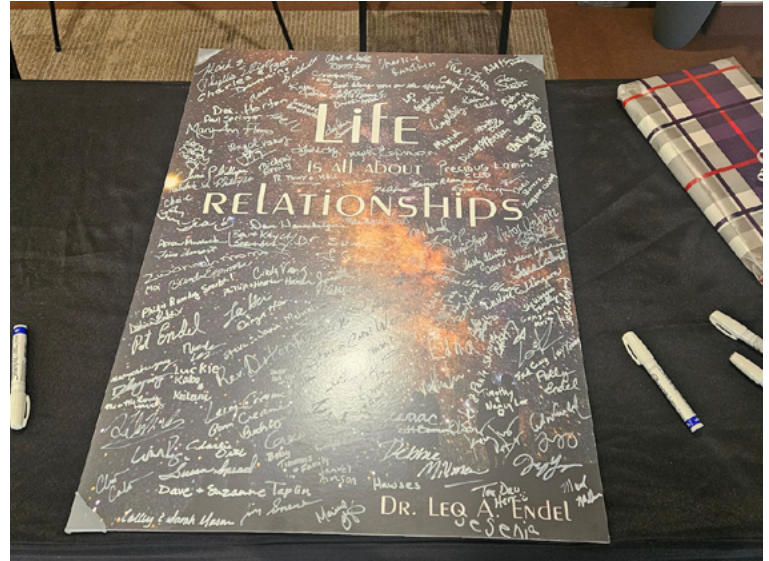


Some of the 200 guests at the retirement reception for Leo Endel look at the books and mugs they received as gifts from the Endels. The book is Endel’s “Life Is All About Relationships,” about the greatest lesson he has ever learned. The mug has a photo of the book cover on one side; on the other side is the message, “With gratitude and love, Leo and Sarah Endel.”

# Leo Endel's Retirement Reception



Retiring MWBC Executive Director Leo Endel and just-elected M-W WMU Executive Director Tia Underbakke take a selfie with the crowd at Endel's reception.



Guests were provided paint pens to sign a poster featuring the cover of Endel's book, "Life is All About Relationships."



Youth from the Endels' home church – Emmanuel Baptist in Rochester, Minn. – sing "The Blessing" as a benediction for the retirement celebration. Left to right are Olivia Hawse, Abigail Mickow, Rachel Lemaster, Emily Mickow, Moriah Mason, Grace Lemaster, and Olivia Mickow.



Daniel Goba, right, MWBC president, presents Leo Endel a Modern Bulova Accutron watch as a retirement gift from the convention.



Leo and Sarah Endel gather with their next generations for a family photo at the reception. Left to right are Lydia Endel, Leo Endel, Joshua Leo Endel, Sarah Endel, Rachel Sellmeyer, and Joshua Sellmeyer.



Endel autographs a copy of his book for Nancy and Timothy Lor, pastor of Followers of Christ Hmong Baptist Church in St. Paul, Minn.



Sarah Endel shares goodbyes with good friends Jummai and Philip Nache and Daniel Goba. Nache is pastor of Hope of Nations Fellowship Church in Bloomington, Minn. Goba is pastor of Ebenezer Community Church in Bloomington, Minn.

# Leo Endel's Retirement Reception



MWBC President Daniel Goba presents Sarah Endel with road map cutting boards of Wisconsin and Minnesota.



Outgoing MWBC executive director Leo Endel, right, congratulates his successor, Trey Turner, who had just been elected by unanimous vote of the Executive Board.



Leo and Sarah Endel share a tender moment while their daughter Rachel speaks during the program of the retirement celebration.



Members of Ebenezer Community Church in Bloomington, Minn., give a Liberian send off to retiring MWBC Executive Director Leo Endel. Standing next to Endel is their pastor, Daniel Goba, who is also MWBC president this year.



Because "if there's not a picture, it didn't happen," Hmong attendees of the reception gather for a photo with Endel. They are members of eight Hmong churches connected to the MWBC, except for Chong Pao Thao, just to the left and behind Endel, who is president of the Hmong Baptist National Association and flew in from Denver to be part of the retirement celebration.



Beth and Charles Dunning of Valley Baptist Church in Appleton, Wis., share a word and a memory with Leo Endel, left. Charles Dunning was convention president and vice chairman of the search committee when Endel was called to serve as MWBC's executive director.



Sarah Endel gives a goodbye hug to Cindy Vang, former M-W WMU president and member of First Hmong Baptist Church in Coon Rapids, Minn.



Special family members attending the reception included, left to right, Leo and Sarah's daughter, Rachel Sellmeyer; their grandson, Joshua Leo Sellmeyer; their daughter, Lydia Endel; and Leo's mother, Pat Endel.

# He is faithful

*Trust in the Lord with  
all your heart,  
And lean not on your  
own understanding;*

*In all  
your ways  
acknowl-  
edge Him,  
And He  
shall direct  
your paths.*

*Prov-  
erbs 3:5-6  
(NKJV)*



**Perspectives**  
**Leo Endel**

I have always “believed” this verse, but in the midst of life’s storms it was often ob-

scured by the challenges, pain, anxiety, and struggles of life.

This was my dad’s life verse, and quite easily it became mine through his influence.

When Sarah and I lost our first child, Nathan, we referenced this verse by having “Trust in the Lord” etched into granite. Though we knew this was the right answer, we hadn’t yet fully come to trust in the Lord. We walked through the “valley of

the shadow of death,” and He was with us, but we hadn’t fully appropriated the promise. I’m not sure we ever got there completely, until we meet Jesus face-to-face.

My dad was still teaching public school when he died suddenly. His students knew this was his verse and took up an offering to buy a bench and a monument to be placed under the school flagpole. It stands there today still proclaiming, “Robert E. Endel, Proverbs 3:6.”

When Sarah and I moved to a small church in northern Iowa, the work was slow and hard. Little

victories seemed always to evaporate with little setbacks. Gradually we learned to trust in the Lord, and He did an amazing work right before our eyes.

God then called us to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. I was beginning to really believe and see that God was faithful, but even before the executive board affirmed God’s call, the bottom dropped out of the convention finances, and we lost more than \$400,000 of budget support before I arrived. In the same meeting, the convention called me, they cut the money from the budget

so we would survive. Even my salary was \$10,000/year less than what we had discussed.

Within the next three years, Texas, who had long supported the work of Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists, began a five-year process of eliminating missions support in our region. The North American Mission Board refused to make any adjustments in the funding formula, and we lost another half million dollars in funding. Ultimately, we lost almost all of the staff serving in the MWBC.

Yet, at every step of

See **FAITHFUL** page 11

## 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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# Celebrating diversity

On May 3, like millions of others, my wife and I sat back and watched the Kentucky Derby, an American tradition.

Simone Biles, the Olympic gymnast gave the call, “Riders Up!” The top thoroughbreds in the world pranced onto the track. Everyone sang, “My Old Kentucky Home,” including my wife. They introduced the jockeys that would vie for the coveted prize.

And there it was, right in the middle of the Kentucky Derby: diversity! Three of the jockeys were from the

U.S., two from Brazil, two from Venezuela, three from Puerto Rico,

one from Mexico, three from France, one from Italy, one from the Dominican Republic and one from Panama.

It is true in every sport: baseball, tennis, golf, basketball. Diverse people from any and every nationality and ethnicity excel in every area of life. The major cities of the world are cosmopolitan. More than 90 languages are spoken in Houston. In Dallas, every ethnicity is a minority, including Anglo.



**Reflections**  
**Bill Tinsley**

When I was pastor of an English-speaking church in Nuremberg, Germany, the church was composed of people from Germany, Ireland, England, Romania, Ukraine, China, Cameroon, India, Sweden, Austria and others. Most were in their twenties and thirties. After we returned to the U.S., we hosted a Bible study for grad students in our home. They came from South Africa, Indonesia, China, the Czech Republic, Japan, Hong Kong and Zambia. They became like family to us.

God must like diversity. There is so much of it. If we all looked alike, spoke alike and thought alike, it would be a boring and shallow world. God has splashed

His creation with rich and wondrous diversity, from the fish of the sea and the stars in the heavens to the people of the earth.

Why is it, then, that we are so prone to make other people conform to our own way of life? Why do we feel it necessary to argue until others adopt our point of view? Why do we want them to dress like us, look like us and talk like us? What should a Christian look like?

It seems to me that most Christians think others should look like they look. But they don’t. I am reminded of a visit I made several years ago to the Harley Davidson factory in Kansas City. A

See **CELEBRATE** page 7

# We give because He first gave

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, Paul offers a helpful perspective on the topic of giving. He is asking the Corinthians to contribute an offering for the poor in Jerusalem. Not once does he mention the word “money.”

He begins his appeal by reminding the audience of God’s grace, which has clearly been

shown in the Macedonian churches (vv. 1-5). The greatest gift of all, salvation from sin and

death, already belongs to them in Jesus. Nothing else compares. Paul expands on this in Philippians 3:8, “More

than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I

have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (NASB).

It is this grace that allows the Macedonian churches to give, even beyond their means. This is possible because they “first gave themselves to the Lord” (v. 5). Giving starts in the heart. Without a humble and grateful heart, any amount of giving would seem like a burden.

In verse 6, Paul finally makes a request for money. He mentions the fact that

Titus is coming to pick up the collection. He refers to the collection only as this gracious work. The Greek word for “gracious work” is *charis*. Most Bible students would recognize this word, because it is the same Greek word used to refer to God’s grace.

The word *charis* appears four times in this passage. In verse 1, it is referring to the grace of God. In verses 6 and 7, it refers to the collection. In verse 9, it refers to the grace of Jesus. Out of grace,

Jesus became poor so that we could become rich – not physically, but spiritually. It is out of this spiritual richness that we give to others. The money that we give to the poor or any charitable cause is an extension of the grace that we have received in Christ. In the words of Jesus, “Freely you received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8).

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



**Intercultural**  
*Na Herr*

## Bringing John to life

What if you could bring the Gospel of John to life with captivating visuals, thematic depth, and a unified plan? Blending The Bible Project’s creative resources with thoughtful preaching, evangelism, and discipleship strategies can transform how your congregation engages with Scripture.

The Bible Project is a non-profit organization, primarily known for its animated videos, that aims to help people understand the Bible as a unified story leading to Jesus. They provide free educational resources including videos, podcasts, classes, and other materials, to help individuals

engage with Scripture. The organization was founded in 2014 by Tim Mackie and Jon Collins.

The Bible Project website is always a great place to visit to see a brief overview of a book of the Bible, complete with descriptive overall themes and contextual continuity. I have enjoyed their videos so much that I chose one to outline five months of sermons in the Gospel of John, from Advent to Resurrection Sunday.

The preaching plan included four elements:

- Sharing The Pocket Testament League Gospels of John, available for a donation of \$1 each, as a church-wide

means of evangelism

- Utilizing Lifeway’s CSB Scripture Notebooks of John for journaling and sermon note-taking. These notebooks are normally \$4.49 each but can be purchased for less using bulk discounts.

- Leading a mid-week discovery Bible study via Zoom on the passages preached.
- Presenting the Bible Project’s visual representation to outline the series.

I led the church to take this approach to give us something we could do together, deepen our appreciation for the unity and themes of the Gospel of John, and give graphical continuity to the series. I also did it to save me time as a preacher, as I could see what was coming in the weeks ahead, which shortened my prepa-

ration time. Preachers know that time can be lost each week if there is no plan to determine what to prepare next.

Looking back on the series, I can see what went well and what could be done better. Using the Bible Project outline gave thematic and contextual continuity, presented graphics reinforcing the content, saved time knowing what text and topic are needed for next week, and provided opportunities to review and preview the material to enhance retention.

As far as improvements are concerned, the theological emphasis of The Bible Project underemphasizes the devotional potential of passages that are more interesting to people, like the signs Jesus performs and Jesus’s “I am” sayings. Oddly,

the Bible Project omits references to John 17, the Lord’s Prayer of the Gospels. To preach this series between Advent and Easter feels rushed. The Gospel of John has 21 chapters and 81 pericopes. Fitting this into 21 weeks seemed to shortchange the Gospel. Many pastors average between one and two years to preach sequentially through the book of John.

Would I do it again? Probably. The advantages of this approach outweigh the disadvantages. Being on the same page literally and metaphorically is a great experience for the preacher and congregation.

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



**Leadership**  
*Clint Calvert*

## TURNER

*continued from page one*

M-W Baptists into the next generation,” Endel said of the man who will succeed him. “He has pastored a small church, a large church, and then came to Wisconsin and planted a church in Wisconsin Rapids.”

Endel said that Turner has “excellent leadership and relational skills” and “the ability to hold people from diverse backgrounds together and then to lead them forward on mission together.”

Turner’s 16 years in the convention give him “a head start as he already knows many of the leaders in our two states,” Endel said.

“I could not be happier or have more confidence in the convention’s choice,” he said. “I can see the activity of God in Trey’s preparation and selection. I’m eager to see how God uses him.”

Of Turner’s wife, Endel said, “M-W women will love Lea Ann. She is gracious, kind, fun and extremely smart. She, too, is a powerful leader in Wisconsin serving as a dean at the community college in Wisconsin Rapids.”

Turner was born in Big Spring, Texas, and grew up in Monahans, Texas, a small West Texas town of about 8,000 people an hour’s drive southwest of Midland-Odessa. He was a member of Southside Baptist Church there. He graduated from Monahans High School in 1988.



*The MWBC executive board gathers for a group photo after unanimously electing Trey Turner as the next executive director. Trey and his wife Lea Ann are behind the podium.*

As the Lord saved him and directed him into a life of ministry, Turner earned a bachelor of arts in religion with a psychology minor in 1992 at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor in Belton, Texas. He then earned a master of divinity with biblical languages in 1995 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. He earned a doctor of ministry in 2002, also from Southwestern.

While working on his doctorate, Turner served as pastor of Duffau Baptist Church in Hico, Texas, and then Northside Baptist Church in Kermit, Texas. He then was called as pastor of Canyon Creek Baptist Church in Temple, Texas, where he served 2002-2009. He left that position to plant Church at Wazeecha in Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

Turner is currently a member of the MWBC executive board, serving a term that began last year. He also previously served 2018-2020. While in Texas, he served on the executive board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas 2006-2008.

He has been actively involved with Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association since moving north; in Texas he was active in the associations in the areas where he served: Bell County, Erath County, and Pecos Valley Baptist Associations. Chaplaincy has played an important role in Turner’s ministry. He serves as a chaplain for the Wisconsin Rapids Police Department, as well as a workplace chaplain for Corporate Chaplains of America.

The Turners’ relocation from Texas to Wisconsin grew out of a partnership between the Bell and Southern Wisconsin associations. Serving as pastor at Canyon Creek Baptist Church in Temple at the time, Turner signed up to volunteer at a church in Madison, Wis., in March of 2009. By July he and his family had relocated to Wisconsin Rapids, he had become a Mission Service Corps volunteer through the North American Mission Board, and they had started a house church, Church at Wazeecha.

“I had been feeling a pull to missions,” he said at the time. “We

were doing a good job of taking care of ourselves, but I still had a sense of seeing more people coming to know the Lord.”

“The partnership between Bell Baptist Association and Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association was visionary to be able to see the need in other areas,” he said.

“We have been led well,” Turner said of his predecessor. “Leo has helped the MWBC traverse some tight financial times. It was his unique skill set. We get to dream about the future instead of worry about the present because of Leo Endel.”

For Turner, those dreams about the future focus on missions and healthy ministry.

“Let’s discover five more strategic opportunities, walk through them and dream again,” he said. “At home, the healthiest ministry leaders will lead the healthiest churches and ministries. I hope to bring added health and strength to our churches, missions, and planting through the two states,” adding that he wants to “connect our churches to their early pioneering heritage and move into a healthy

ministry future.”

Mark Millman, church planting catalyst/director of missions for Greater Wisconsin Baptist Association (formerly Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association), said Turner “will be a great asset to the leaders and churches of the MWBC for years to come. Trey already has many strong connections and is looking forward to the challenges ahead of him.”

In other action, the executive board:

- Elected Tia Underbakke as M-W Woman’s Missionary Union executive director (see related story on [page 1](#)).

- Approved a \$7,500 Burress-Littleford Grant to Westosha Community Church in Twin Lakes, Wis., where Grayson Gilbert is the pastor.

- Opened a special account in the M-W Baptist Foundation to be initially funded by a promised gift from the estate of Otha Winningham, the first MWBC executive director, who died Nov. 16, 2024. The fund will be used to help fund the salary, housing, and expenses of the MWBC executive director position.

**Back to the beginning**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BLBA: Bay Lakes Baptist Association  
 GWBA: Greater Wisconsin Baptist Association  
 LBA: Lakeland Baptist Association  
 NBA: Northwoods Baptist Association  
 SMBA: Southern Minnesota Baptist Association  
 TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

MWBC events are in bold print.

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

### MAY

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

**22 Send Network Multiplication Pipeline Training, Lambeau Field, Green Bay Wis.**

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

### JUNE

6-11 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas

**14-21 Guyana Mission Trip**

### JULY

4 Independence Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

**11-19 Hands of Hope**

**14-30 SEA Mission Trip - Thailand**

### AUGUST

**2-9 Argentina Mission Trip**

### SEPTEMBER

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

1 Labor Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

**12-13 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.**

**19-21 Called Out Youth Conference, Baraboo, Wis.**

### OCTOBER

**23 Send Network One Day, Cities Church, St. Paul, Minn.**

**24 Pastors Conference, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, Minn.**

**24-25 MWBC Annual Meeting, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, Minn.**

**27-28 Missouri Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Branson Hilton Convention Center, Branson, Mo.**

### NOVEMBER

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

27-28 Thanksgiving Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

### DECEMBER

24-31 Christmas/New Year's Holiday – **MWBC Office Closed**

**27-1/5 Israel Trip**

## WMU

*continued from page one*

president has, by default, unofficially served as the liaison between the group and MWBC staff and board.

“Getting a new executive director helps us restore consistent leadership rather than depending upon the election of a series of WMU presidents,” said Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. “We need a representative that can serve alongside the staff team to plan and implement missions strategies. We will continue to have the elected presidents, but we now will have an ongoing connection of WMU leadership on the MWBC staff.”

Underbakke herself has been one of those providing volunteer leadership since We-dekind's departure, having served in various M-W WMU positions including vice president 2020-22 and president 2022-25.

Underbakke's new part-time position gives staff level attention to the work of the M-W WMU which will be helpful for coordination with MWBC staff, ministries, and programs.

As a state convention WMU executive director, she will also represent MWBC in special conferences and training events for ministries at the request of the national WMU and with approval of the MWBC executive director.

“M-W has made an excellent choice for their WMU executive director,” said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, national WMU executive director. “Tia Underbakke has passion, humility and a servant's heart. She is committed to making disciples of Jesus who live on mission. Tia will not only lead well, she will bring others along. I can't wait to see what the Lord does through Tia in this new role.”

### Back to the beginning

## CELEBRATE

*continued from page four*

young man stood up to address the group and introduced himself as a disciple of Jesus Christ disguised as an executive at Harley Davidson. Disciples of Jesus Christ come disguised in the clothing and customs of every culture on the globe.

When we flip through the pages of the Bible to the final book, we find a description of the ultimate consummation of creation. “After this I looked, and there before

me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9).

*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

**mwbc.org**

*‘Could something like this happen in . . . Minnesota-Wisconsin?’*

## Small town miracles drive Rick Gage to share the gospel

LIBERTY, TEXAS – It was another small town miracle – nothing unusual for Rick Gage and his GO TELL AMERICA team who conduct several evangelistic crusades in smaller communities each year.

But for Liberty, Texas – population 8,774 – Go Tell Southeast Texas was a once in a generation, community wide, interdenominational evangelistic outreach that enabled local churches to gather thousands at the local football stadium and see hundreds come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The four nights (Apr. 13-16) at Liberty Memorial Stadium – added to a pre-crusade student rally held in a local church – gathered a total of 5,000 people to hear the gospel. There were 723 decisions recorded, including 390 who trusted Jesus as Savior and Lord and 199 who rededicated their lives to Jesus.

“We had 500 at the student rally and over 1,100 the first night

of the crusade,” said David Williams, crusade chairman who is also director of missions for Trinity River Baptist Association which includes 42 Southern Baptist churches in and around Liberty. Williams is also editor of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist. “Wednesday evening more than 2,000 people packed the stands. Can you imagine a bunch of churches filling up your local football stadium – not with just themselves, but with hundreds of lost people, too?”

That’s nothing new for Rick Gage and his GO TELL AMERICA ministry which specializes in leading high impact evangelistic outreaches in rural and small town America. Working with local leadership, they use tested techniques and tools to craft a personalized event that will draw unsaved people so they can hear a clear presentation of the gospel.

“This is my calling, this is what drives me,”



*Rick Gage preaches to packed stands at Memorial Stadium in the small Southeast Texas town of Liberty.*

said Rick Gage, who has been characterized by the Associated Press as “the small town Billy Graham.”

**Gage said he would welcome an opportunity to explore the possibility of a future crusade somewhere in Minnesota or Wisconsin. “If God opens the door and puts it on the heart of local leaders, we are ready to come,” he said.**

From the beginning, the local leadership in Liberty felt challenged and stretched by the very idea of putting together such a massive event.

“Could something like this happen in Liberty, Texas?” Williams said, remembering the doubts that he and others had at first. “Could we enlist churches across denominational lines to work together? Could we fill the local football stadium for four nights? Could we blanket our whole com-

munity with invitations? Could we enlist more than 500 volunteers? Could we get an assembly program into the local schools? Could we raise the money needed to bring in a high quality Christian band and a professional production company with their high tech equipment? Could we follow up on hundreds of people who would trust Jesus as Savior? No, of course we couldn’t do any of that. But we said yes anyway and God empowered us in a miraculous way to accomplish all that and more.”

GO TELL AMERICA didn’t just bring the event to town, Williams said. “Rick Gage and Chris Palmer, their executive director, led us each step of the way, showing us how to involve churches and organize, how to enlist and train volunteers, how to follow up on each decision made.

Their experience of having done this for 38 years helped us to accomplish all that needed to be done. They got something out of us we didn’t know was there. From the very beginning they challenged us with big numbers we thought were impossible. But as we worked hard and trusted the Lord, even those ‘impossible’ numbers were surpassed.”

Williams said the miracle was not just what happened during the four-night outreach, but also what led up to it and what followed it.

“More than the thousands who came and the hundreds who were saved, the greater miracle was the uniting of Christians in dozens of churches to work together for the one purpose of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus to their whole community,” he said. “And being re-



*Rick Gage talks to those making decisions as they leave their seats and crowd onto the track in front of the stage. “Just leaving your seat and walking down here doesn’t save you,” he tells them. “You are saved by God’s grace as you place your faith in Jesus. Jesus is who saves you.”*

# More than 70 leaders get 'Equip'-ed

Bloomington, Minn. — More than 70 leaders and volunteers gathered for the annual Equip conference Apr. 4-5 at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, Minn.

The conference addressed the needs of church leaders who minister to children, students, and young adults. Planning and implementation was carried out by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention's NextGen Ministry Team. Worship was led by Cody Powell, interim worship leader at Trinity Baptist Church in Reedsburg, Wis.

Lifeway's Jeremy Carroll presented Healthy Habits for NextGen Leaders. His message emphasized the importance of healthy habits as

a foundation for effective leadership. He dove deeper into each area over three sessions during the conference. Carroll is publishing manger for Hyfi, VBS, and Kids Discipleship resources for Lifeway Kids Ministry.

On Friday evening, MWBC Executive Director Leo Endel spoke on being salt and light. On Saturday, Joy McAfee, worship leader for Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., led a powerful session on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Abuse in the Church. She serves MWBC as sexual abuse prevention and recovery consultant.

Erik Lee, who is to be installed June 8 as pastor of United Hmong Baptist



Next-gen leaders listen and take notes as keynote speaker Jeremy Carroll from Lifeway Christian Resources emphasizes healthy habits for leaders.



The Equip leadership team poses with keynote speaker Jeremy Carroll during a break. Left to right are Chris Phillips, Rebekah Phillips, Penny Reedy, Jolina Janus, Kia Broman, and Jeremy Carroll.

Church in Sun Prairie, Wis., spoke to youth ministry leaders, offering valuable insights and strategies to help equip them

to communicate with young people in today's culture and lead them toward deeper faith.

A special highlight of

the conference was the VBS preview on Saturday morning where attendees got an early look at the Magnified VBS theme for 2025.

## A reflective time of year

I tend to be a little more reflective this time of the year, especially considering the recent election of Dr.

Trey Turner to the office of MWBC Executive Director.

I could not be more enthusiastic about the choice.

During my tenure (43 years)

there have only been three to serve in that position.

Otha Winningham



**Student Ministries**  
**Bob Smith**

served in the formative years and guided the convention from a handful of congregations through the organization as a Fellowship and then becoming the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention (MWBC) in 1983. It was his strength as an ad-

ministrator that laid the foundation that has allowed the MWBC to continue to prosper.

Upon Otha's Retirement Bill Tinsley assumed the reigns. He observed that much of the early growth of the convention was due in large part to the influx of "southern transplants." He led the convention with a stronger emphasis on reaching those who were born and raised in the Upper Midwest. His connections with the leadership of Bethel Seminary led to the creation of the MWBC Seminary Scholarship that initially served to train next generation leadership who could

remain in their current ministries while beginning or continuing their theological education. He forged relationships with Converge formerly the Baptist General Conference and Wooddale Church to plant the first congregation jointly funded, Northwood Church, a thriving congregation in the Northwest suburb of Maple Grove.

Leo Endel followed and for 23 years has led the MWBC through seasons of transition as historic relationships with both the North

American Mission Board and the Baptist General Convention of Texas have proved challenging. Changes are often unsettling, but under his leadership he has steadied the course.

As the baton is passed, we look forward to a continued bright future as we welcome Dr. Trey Turner! Thank you, God, for the able leadership You continue to provide.

*Bob Smith is student ministries catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.*

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM/OFFERING RECEIPTS

January - April 2025

Cooperative Program Budget 2025 Year to Date	\$213,675.00
Cooperative Program Receipts 2025 Year to Date	\$216,056.90
Over Budget Year to Date	\$2,381.90

### NAME CP YTD

#### BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amherst, Amherst Bible	\$650.00
Appleton, Living Water	\$28.98
Appleton, Valley	\$24,945.59
Clintonville, First Baptist	\$1,070.40
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$2,646.20
Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist	\$17,975.34
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$1441.77
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist	\$723.10
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$732.90
<b>BLBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,214.28</b>

#### LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist	\$1,994.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$500.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$1,200.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$1,780.93
Kenosha, Redeemer Parkside	\$3,000.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Community	\$719.74
Milwaukee, Hmong First	\$600.00
Milwaukee, Iglesia Su Presencia (Greenfield)	\$209.08
Milwaukee, Jericho Church Without Walls	\$500.00
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist Church	\$900.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue Baptist (Greenfield)	\$4,061.46
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$450.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$30.00
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$440.00
Milwaukee, Mt. Horeb Baptist	\$300.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$600.00
Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist (Wauwatosa)	\$5,000.00
Milwaukee, UFlourish Church	\$400.00
Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. Ministries	\$566.21
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$1,655.34
Pewaukee, Crossroads	\$1,585.15
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie Baptist	\$3,007.65
Racine, Hope Community (Mt. Pleasant)	\$839.32
<b>LBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,338.88</b>

#### NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist Church	\$485.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$3,300.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines Baptist	\$900.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$500.00
New York Mills, Grace Connection	\$532.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest	\$0.00
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$1496.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church	\$785.70
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$1,201.78
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$1,312.60
<b>NWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,513.08</b>

### NAME

### CP YTD

#### TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Amery, Journey	\$5,000.00
Bloomington, Hope of Nations Fellowship	\$334.86
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean Baptist	\$400.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$1,700.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$900.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center Baptist	\$2,189.17
Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptist	\$1,000.00
Eagan, Eurasia Baptist	\$300.00
Lino Lakes MN, Bethel Moldovian Baptist	\$300.00
Little Canada, Our City-Our Neighborhood	\$100.00
Maple Grove, Northwood	\$400.00
Maple Grove, Unlock	\$300.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples	\$2,160.00
Minneapolis, New Hope Baptist	\$500.00
Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible	\$500.00
Monticello, Grace Bible	\$500.00
New Hope, Westview	\$1,500.00
New Prague, Calvary	\$7,949.51
North St. Paul - Eternal Life Hmong	\$833.32
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$1,200.00
Roseville, Twin City Hmong	\$160.00
Sartell, Faith Journey	\$2,940.52
St. Cloud, Calvary Community	\$1,000.00
St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian Evangelical	\$500.00
St. Michael, Northwest Bible Church	\$2,000.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$10,000.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$4,697.00
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$900.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$2,400.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$240.00
White Bear Lake, Emmaus	\$750.00
White Bear Lake, Faith Fellowship	\$2,880.00
<b>TCMBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$56,534.38</b>

#### GREATER WISCONSIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$223.62
Janesville, Resonate	\$6,028.59
La Crosse, Crossway	\$600.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$600.00
Madison, Antioch Fellowship International	\$600.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$600.00
Madison, Doxa	\$6,480.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$3,264.00
Madison, Emmanuel	\$182.00
Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly	\$793.69
Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,690.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist	\$1,542.60
Madison, Shalom Christian Assembly	\$500.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$2,500.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$6,266.64
Sparta, Gospel Baptist	\$1,074.58
Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship	\$400.00
Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ Baptist	\$1,005.93
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$1,329.13
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$541.03
Waterloo, Cornerstone	\$1,100.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$800.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$2,014.19
WI Rapids, First Baptist	\$250.00
<b>GWBA Total</b>	<b>\$40,386.00</b>

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

NAME	CP YTD	NAME	CP YTD
<b>SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION</b>		<b>OTHER</b>	
Austin, Austin Baptist	\$1,084.45	Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$2,550.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist	\$1,500.00	Eau Claire, One in Christ	\$919.41
Marshall, Radiant Life	\$1,015.81	<b>OTHER TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,469.41</b>
Rochester, Chester Woods Community	\$180.10		
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$8,404.07		
Rochester, Redemption City	\$10,620.29	<b>MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED</b>	<b>\$216,056.90</b>
Rochester, Rochester Community Baptist	\$300.00		
Viola, Viola Bible	\$533.65		
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$962.50		
<b>SMNBA Total</b>	<b>\$24,600.87</b>		

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

## ENDEL

*continued from page one*

ing to St. Louis, Mo., where they will be near a daughter, son-in-law and grandson.

Guests received a copy of Endel's book about relationships and a mug that featured a picture of the book's cover. An enlarged poster of the book cover was available for guests to sign.

Endel, who is something of a aficionado of watches, received a special watch as a retirement gift. It is a Modern Bulova Accutron. It reminds him of his grandfather's watch.

"My grandfather's retirement watch was a Bulova Acutron from the 1970s based on NASA technology," he said. "It kept time with a tuning fork and was the most accurate watch ever made until the quartz movements came

out. This watch is something of a reproduction of that, only with a new way of keeping time. It is driven by a unique system that generates its own electricity and runs the watch indefinitely as long as it is worn. It's not driven by a spring like many of the self winding watches, but it produces electricity based on the movement of the person wearing the watch. It is very unique and kind of parallels my grandfather's watch. Somehow Clint (Calvert) knew about my grandfather's Bulova and saw the parallel. I'm very excited about it!"

Sarah received two wooden cutting boards, road maps of Minnesota and Wisconsin, presumably so she will always be able to find her way back to the people of MWBC.

**Back to the beginning**

## FAITHFUL

*continued from page one*

these disappointments, we held on to the Lord and he brought us through. He was and is faithful.

By the time the other new work conventions were adjusting to the massive funding cuts of the last 12 years, we were almost self-sustaining. We had already lived through most of the pain and could begin to see how the Lord faithfully directed our steps to a position of maturity.

Most of you who are reading this article remember our painful journey. We walked this path together... loss countered by the faithfulness of the Lord, frustration followed by God illuminating a path, discouragement enlightened by hope, confusion followed by fresh direction. Together

er we have learned to trust in the Lord.

Now, at the point of my retirement, I believe we can paraphrase Paul's words and appropriate them for us, "We have fought the good fight, we have finished the race, we have kept the faith."

The Lord has been faithful, and I have no doubt that He will continue to be. He is worthy of our trust!

A few years back God put it in my heart to prepare the convention for this transition and for the transition of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester. Through every step of this journey, He has guided this process.

I could not be more confident that God led us to call Trey and Lea Ann Turner to lead the MWBC. God has prepared Trey for "such a time as this." He is a man of deep faith who

has a personal Proverbs 3 walk with Jesus. He knows what it means to trust in the Lord. That, brothers and sisters, is the most important part of this job—trusting in the Lord and letting Him direct your path.

Thank you, Minnesota and Wisconsin Baptists, for walking beside me on the Lord's path these last 23 years. You can trust the Lord as He continues to direct your paths.

Sarah and I love you and are grateful for you! Please know you have a place to stay, a meal to eat, and friends that would love to see you in St. Louis. "We'll leave the light on" for you.

Love, Leo and Sarah Endel

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

**Back to the beginning**

Minnesota-Wisconsin  
**Baptist**

## GOSPEL

*continued from page eight*

mined that working together for the gospel is what we are supposed to be doing all the time.”

It was not just an associational event, Williams said, pointing out that 24 of his association's churches were joined by 16 other churches from the community including non-denominational, Methodist, Baptist, Assembly of God, and a cowboy church. Together they built an army of more than 500 volunteers who served in various areas such as prayer, youth, choir, ushers, counselors, outreach, publicity, and hospitality.

“It was a joy to see our church members work with other people from other churches to bring the gospel to the lost,” said Ken Davis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Dayton. “For me personally, I enjoyed working with my fellow pastors. Before, they were friends; now, they are brothers.”

The Sunday after the event was Easter and the total attendance of partner churches on Easter was 60 percent higher than their normal attendance and 17 percent higher than on last Easter, Williams said. Together, they reported a total of 15 baptisms on Easter Sunday, along with 87 professions of faith, 51 rededications, and 30 other decisions made public. Several churches are scheduling baptisms for the following Sunday and beyond.

Grayburg Baptist Church in Sour Lake normally runs about 20 but had 45 present on

Easter Sunday. Pastor Joseph Trost said that the church had “three youth rededications, one adult rededication, and two who gave their lives to the Lord for the first time. The adult rededication and one of the new converts are a father and son.”

Marvin Denison, pastor of Grace Community Baptist Church in Dayton, said, “This event had a huge impact on this pastor's life. There has been a noticeable revival and renewal for my life,” he said, citing “a fresh new power and boldness to share Jesus.”

Omar Cantu, pastor of North Main Baptist Church in Liberty, said the impact on their church had been “incredible.” On Easter Sunday that church had 320 present, compared to 175 last Easter. “We had the privilege of baptizing nine new believers, with even more planning to follow in the coming weeks,” he said. “Even more amazing, 36 people came forward in response to the gospel.”

South Dayton Baptist Church averages 23 but had 36 attend on Easter. During the crusade, a deacon rededicated his life and two senior church members were saved — one baptized on Easter and the other scheduled to be baptized the following week.

Michael Dorsett of Cornerstone Church in Liberty said, “It was like a shot in the arm,” referring to the coordinated prayer and outreach that preceded the event. “It was a blessing to me personally to see all the pastors so energized and enthusiastic to work to-

gether for the common goal of advancing the Lord's Kingdom,” he said. “If our pulpits are burning with passion to obey Christ, then our pews will be passionate, too.”

Freedom Church had 573 attend Easter Sunday worship, up 45 percent from last Easter. They had 63 decisions, including 25 professions of faith and 25 rededications. Pastor Jason Cowart said he is normally more focused on discipleship and development, but Go Tell Southeast Texas motivated him to be “exponentially more evangelistic than I've ever been in 25 years of being a pastor. I think the event gave me an understanding that there are so many people out there who are lost, and even many who think they are saved, but they haven't really understood the simple gospel.” Now the church is following up, discipling those who trusted Christ.

Tony Hines, pastor of Hardin Baptist Church, said his church mem-



*A counselor prays with a man who has just made a new commitment the opening night of Go Tell Southeast Texas.*

bers personally invited more than 250 people who made decisions during the crusade but were not attending another church. “We had over 50 new visitors and 12 decisions for joining our church,” he said. Their attendance of 220 was nearly double last year's Easter attendance.

Mike Chadwick, pastor of Christ's Way Baptist Church, said that church members have called him, excited about witnessing opportunities they have taken

since the crusade.

“If you want to see a miracle,” Williams said, “the people of Liberty, Texas, have some advice: go all in on a GO TELL AMERICA crusade in your community. When God opens the door for you to reach your community for Christ, go all in, no matter what the cost or how impossible it seems. All we did was say yes when God opened the door. And look what He did.”

**Back to the beginning**

## Hands of Hope

### Date:

July 14-19, 2025

### Host Church:

Hmong Baptist Church  
222 4th St SW  
Eyota, MN 55934

Visit [www.mwbc.org](http://www.mwbc.org) for registration information.

