

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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## Table of Contents

- 1 SBC Annual Meeting
- 1 Calvert retiring
- 2 Winingham Fund
- 2 CPE certificates
- 3 Send Network One-Day
- 3 Hands of Hope
- 4 Trey Turner: Perspectives
- 4 Bill Tinsley: Reflections
- 5 Clint Calvert: Leadership
- 5 Na Herr: Intercultural
- 6 Endel leaves legacy
- 8 Taplin essay
- 9 Calendar of events
- 9 Unlikely church planter
- 10 Mission gifts from the churches
- 11 Mission gifts from the churches

## Southern Baptist Convention 2025:

## Southern Baptists 'Hold Fast' in Dallas Gathering

DALLAS (BP) — Southern Baptists gathered in Dallas for the 2025 SBC Annual Meeting under the theme “Hold Fast,” drawn from Hebrews 10. President Clint Pressley urged messengers to stand firm in biblical fidelity and Baptist distinctives.

The meeting was preceded by Crossover Dallas, a week of evangelism and service, which culminated in 17,033 people hearing the Gospel and 711 professions of faith.

Messengers celebrated the 100th anniversaries of the Baptist Faith and Message and the

Cooperative Program and commissioned 58 new missionaries serving with the International Mission Board.

Registration exceeded 18,000, including 10,599 messengers from 3,899 churches—surpassing attendance from the last Dallas meeting in 2018.

Messengers re-elected Clint Pressley as president and filled other officer roles, including Daniel Ritchie (first vice president) and Craig Carlisle (second vice president).

Controversial motions saw strong opin-

See **SBC** page 3



*Members of First Hmong Baptist Church in Coon Rapids, Minn., stop for a group selfie on the streets of Dallas between sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.*

## Calvert retiring, starting non-profit

Rochester — Clint Calvert will retire Sept. 1 after 21 years of service to the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. He is starting a new ministry to coach adults during career transitions.

Calvert first served the MWBC as a contract worker beginning Sept. 11, 2004. A year and a half later he joined the convention staff as church health director



*Leo Endel prays over Clint and Tara Calvert as Emmanuel Baptist Church of Rochester endorses his new ministry as he retires from his MWBC position.*

See **CALVERT** page 12



*For 23 years this was the office of Leo Endel as he served as executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. He cleaned it out at the end of May for his successor, Trey Turner, whose first day was June 1. Then Endel stayed through the end of June to help provide a smooth transition of leadership. See [page 6](#) for the story of Leo Endel and his impact on the MWBC.*



# Winningham Fund established

Rochester, Minn. – The 2026 budget of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention will include funding from the newly established, Winningham Fund, a generous gift from the estate of Otha and Louise Winningham.

“The Winningham Fund will operate similarly to the existing Burress-Littleford Fund that helps to fund first church property and building purchases for new churches in our convention,” said Leo Endel, retiring MWBC executive director. “Each fall, the MWBC will adjust the corpus of the fund to offset

inflation. Then the remaining earnings will be budgeted into the next year’s MWBC budget to help fund the executive director’s position. In this way, the fund will provide resources to the convention in perpetuity.”

Otha Winningham served M-W Baptists from 1975 until his retirement in 1993. He led the convention through its early days of expansion and transition through establishing the work as a fellowship and then to full convention status. It was his knowledge and experience that defined and laid the



*In this photo from the past, Otha Winningham (third from left), the first executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, stands next to his successor, Bill Tinsley (far right), and Tinsley’s successor, Leo Endel (second from left). At far left is Charles Dunning, who until recently was president of the M-W Baptist Foundation which holds the Winningham Fund.*

foundation for the work.

Otha’s wife, Louise, also served the convention as the editor of the M-W Baptist, the convention’s monthly news journal.

The Endels plan to follow the Winning-

ham’s example and have written into their will additional funding to be added upon their deaths. You can visit [mwbc.org/freewill](http://mwbc.org/freewill) to do the same or you can give directly to the fund by contacting the new executive director,

Trey Turner, by email at [turner@mwbc.org](mailto:turner@mwbc.org) or by calling the convention office, (507) 282-3636.

“Each dollar given will help extend the work of the convention until Jesus comes again,” Endel said.

## Three receive CPE certificates

Racine, Wis. – Pastors Larry Griffith, Don Bennett, and Garreston Paasewe received the Certificate in Clinical Pastoral Education at the Lakeland Baptist Association Spring/Summer meeting June 3, 2025, at Hope Community Church in Racine, Wis.

The Certificate in Clinical Pastoral Education is granted for

the completion of four courses (CPE 100-400) or 1600 hours, of which 87% is distance education.

CPE courses include participation in small groups, individual supervision, completing online lessons, and an internship.

Clinical Pastoral Education International (CPEI) says it, “exists to provide an unparal-

leled experience as the most trusted partner for clinical pastoral education. CPEI provides quality, inclusive, and life-transforming clinical pastoral education internationally through online and hybrid modalities to develop competent pastoral clinicians and supervisory educators.” CPEI is accredited by the Distance

Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

The pastors were trained by Clint Calvert, church leadership catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Calvert is a creden-

tialed CPE Training Supervisor Educator and provides tuition free CPE training to MWBC pastors and church leaders. The next CPE course is planned to begin Sept. 1 with applications due Aug. 4. MWBC pastors and church leaders may apply by contacting Calvert at [calvert@mwbc.org](mailto:calvert@mwbc.org).



*On June 21, these 20 church leaders participated in a day-long church officer training event at United Cornerstone Hmong Baptist Church in Oakdale, Minn., led by Clint Calvert and Nhia Her.*

## Register now for Send Network One-Day

St. Paul, Minn. – Now is the time to register for the Oct. 23 Send Network One Day at Cities Church in St. Paul, Minn.

The promotional piece for the event says, “Send Network One Day is a local, one-day event designed to inspire and equip

believers to take the next step in God’s mission. Through prayer, worship, learning, and collaboration, participants will discover practical tools and fresh vision for multiplying disciples and churches in their community. Join others from your region as we come together to

see how God can move when His people unite for the Great Commission.”

The event will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 23, the day before the MWBC annual meeting in nearby Rochester, Minn. Click [here](#) to register for Send Network One Day.

## Hands of Hope coming

Eyota, Minn. – Hands of Hope, an annual mission project of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, will be July 14-19 at Hmong Baptist Church in Eyota, Minn.

The purpose is to help a local church serve its communities by providing volunteers to take the gospel into the community.

Activities include block parties, service projects, and communi-

ty evangelism/outreach. The event has the feel of being half mission trip and half family camp.

The cost is \$60 per person with a maximum of \$200 per family.

Click [here](#) to register.



At the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders just before the SBC annual meeting, Mark Millman, was honored for his 20 years as the director of missions/church planting catalyst of the Greater Wisconsin Baptist Association.

## SBC

*continued from page one*

ions but little change. A proposed constitutional amendment to limit the pastorate to men failed to reach the required threshold. A motion to abolish the ERLC was defeated by

57%.

Throughout the gathering, Southern Baptists celebrated Gospel unity, generational discipleship, and their shared mission to take the good news of Jesus to the nations.

**Back to the beginning**



Recently elected executive director for Minnesota-Wisconsin Woman's Missionary Union, Tia Underbakke (far right) posted this photo on Facebook June 8, saying, "Tonight was my first meeting with all the executive directors from across the U.S. It's wonderful that I get to be part of a group so passionate for WMU that, for some, even after 20 years of service, and they are still excited to make disciples of Jesus who live on mission. We are sisters serving together and can't wait to learn more from you!"



Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists gather at the Adolphus Hotel one evening for a state convention get together during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. Left to right are: Mary Collier, Na Herr, Mark Millman, Luckie Vang, Tia Underbakke, Trey Turner, Foua Young, Kabo Vang, Hongyi Yang, Cindy Vang, Liem Vang, and Bounmee Moua.



Trey Turner, MWBC's new executive director, had the opportunity to meet some of his peers during the SBC annual meeting, including these: Barry Whitworth, executive director, Baptist Resource Network of Pennsylvania/South Jersey (center); and Ed Emmerling, executive director, Baptist State Convention of Michigan (right).



The SBC annual meeting is a good opportunity for MWBC leaders to visit with ministry partners from other states. Left to right are: Trey Turner, MWBC executive director; Zac Harrel, Heart of Texas Baptist Network; Tom Henderson, Bell Baptist Association in Texas; and Mark Millman, Greater Wisconsin Baptist Association's director of missions/church planting catalyst.

Minnesota-Wisconsin  
**Baptist**



# The importance of work and prayer

Jesus said, “My Father is still working, and I am working too.”

These words from John 5, along with the teachings of John 15, remind us of our missional witness in the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

God has a purpose for our region, and I am in-

spired by how He leads us through the stories of Scripture. In Hosea 2:14, God declares that

He will pursue and win Israel’s heart, so that one day, Israel will call Him husband instead of master.

In every generation, God passionately draws His people to Himself—and then sends them to extend the gospel, just as Jesus instructed us. This is, and

always has been, God’s mission.

When Jesus said, “I am working too,” He committed Himself fully to the Father’s plan. His example calls us to seek God’s direction for truly impactful, God-honoring ministry. What is true for each of us is true for our convention: “Think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths” (Prov. 3:6, HCSB).

I invite the MWBC family to a renewed season of prayer. Through prayer, we will discover God’s new path forward

for our cooperative work in Minnesota and Wisconsin. If, in this season, I can help us connect more deeply to the missional heart of God, it will be among my greatest joys on this journey.

Our work is as important as ever. Without Leo’s leadership and voice, things feel different. We have honored his service these past months. Now we seek the Lord for our new way forward, knowing God is so good.

Our core tasks remain the same – Healthy ministry leaders, healthy churches, passionate en-

gagement, and mission expansion – these are still our tasks. This has not changed, even as we have grown from Association, to Fellowship, to Convention. Now, we will bring a fresh engagement to these goals.

I am grateful to M-W Baptists for calling me, praying for me, and going by faithful trust of the Lord into the days ahead. May God bless the work of our hands as we seek His ways.

*Trey Turner is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.*



**Perspectives**  
**Trey Turner**

## 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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## Dealing with guilt

The Minnesota humorist, Garrison Keillor, once observed that people do bad, horrible, dirty, rotten and despicable things, then, instead of repenting, they just go into treatment.

“Whatever happened to guilt?” he lamented.

“Guilt, is the gift that keeps on giving.”

Keillor’s tongue-in-cheek appraisal of guilt belies the truth. While there may be a few sociopaths who feel no remorse for their actions and show no capacity for guilt, most of us know the feelings of guilt only too well.

Religious leaders

sometimes revert to guilt as the trump card to keep church members and parishioners in line.

Parents use it with children. Siblings, co-workers and even friends occasionally rely on it to get their way. When husbands

and wives are unable to settle a heated argument, one or the other often reverts to guilt’s lethal weapon by recalling past offenses that were supposedly forgiven and forgotten.

In its best moments, guilt can protect and guide us, much like the pain that teaches us to avoid a hot stove or

sharp objects. When we respond to guilt with confession and repentance, we can move forward to live a better life on a higher plane.

But guilt can be destructive and debilitating. Sometimes we feel guilt over clearly remembered wrongs we have done. At other times we may feel guilty and not know why. We wake up with a feeling of unworthiness and shame with no specific deed to identify as the source. Our feelings of guilt are irrational, leaving us at a loss to identify the source or the solution. Guilt can lock us in its prison and shackle us so that we feel helpless. It robs us of energy and steals our joy. Guilt can leave us smoldering in anger or suffocating in depres-

sion.

The good news is that Jesus came to set us free from guilt. When confronted with the woman caught in the act of adultery, he dismissed those who condemned her and said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and sin no more.” (John 8:1-11).

We can live our lives free of guilt and self-recrimination. Paul wrote, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. (Rom. 8:1-2). John wrote, “We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will

See **GUILT** page 12



**Reflections**  
**Bill Tinsley**

# Retiring from the MWBC to Start My Second Act

God is doing something new in my life and ministry.

This past year has been full of losses and gains. This past year, I have lost a lot: my mother died in November, the pastor who trained me for the ministry died in April, and my boss and friend of over 20 years, Leo Endel, retired and moved to St. Louis last month.

This past year, I have gained a lot. In December, I spent two days in Kentucky at a coaching retreat with Pastor Virgil Grant and completed the Paterson Life Plan. This process contributed to a series of realizations and actions that have

propelled me forward like nothing I have ever experienced.



## Leadership

Clint Calvert

One of those realizations was that I was taking myself too far away from my family and community by serving interim pastors with long commutes over the past three years. It is time to “come home” and spend more time with my family and be more involved in my community and in my local church, Emmanuel.

Another realization was that I did not have to be a bi-vocational minister anymore. For most of my adult life, I have served at the same time, both in a church setting as a pastor and

in a professional setting as (at various times) a professional assistant, development director, public relations director, church consultant, hospice chaplain, and educator.

Now, I have a sense of peace about having one vocation that utilizes all the experiences and skills I have learned over the years. The term “Career Convergence” coined by Richard Lambert, is the coming together of various elements – skills, education, experience, and passions – to form a cohesive and fulfilling career path.

As a result, I will be retiring from my role as church leadership catalyst at the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention on Sept. 1 and starting a new ministry called 2nd Act Career

Services. 2nd Act will coach adults to thrive in career transitions. 2nd Act will be an extension of my training and experience as chaplain and coach. I am a board-certified chaplain, and I am endorsed by Texas Baptist Chaplaincy Relations. I will be coaching adults with Harrison Assessments, a tool that helps predict career success and fulfillment.

2nd Act will support all aspects of a person’s life: character, health, relationships, peace, vocation, and finances. The ministry will be located at the Thrive Business Center in NE Rochester near Century High School. We will share the gospel of John with interested clients through the Pocket Testament League. We will also have a weekly Zoom Bible study of the gospel

of John in a discussion format. I have been assigned to the ministry of 2nd Act by Emmanuel Baptist Church. I will be formally accountable to the elders of Emmanuel for the operations and activities of this new ministry.

Thank you for the honor of serving M-W Baptists starting as a contract worker on Sept. 11, 2004, and on staff as church health director and church leadership catalyst since Mar. 6, 2006. My ministry with the MWBC has enriched my life and perspective in too many ways to count, and I thank God for the opportunity and our shared partnership in the gospel.

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

## Baptism now saves you

The title of this column may surprise you, but these are the words of Peter in his first New Testament letter.

The full verse as translated in the NASB states: “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection

of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21).



## Intercultural

Na Herr

Without the full context of the verse, it would seem that Peter is advocating for salvation by baptism. This clearly goes against the tradi-

tional Baptist belief that baptism is not necessary for salvation. According to the Baptist Faith and Message, baptism is a symbolic act of obedience. There is no men-

tion of salvation.

Though baptism is not necessary for salvation, it is an essential part of the Christian faith. In the Great Commission, Jesus commands all his followers to make disciples and baptize people from all nations. In the New Testament, baptism always accompanied conversion and professions of faith. Unfortunately, churches often fail to follow up on those who make professions of faith (such as in Vacation Bible School, mission trips, or block parties) and many of those new believers are

never baptized.

In the context of Peter’s letter, he is communicating to his audience that baptism plays a pivotal role in the life of the believer. It is the beginning of the believer’s sanctification journey. As the water of the flood brought salvation to Noah’s family, the water of baptism represents the washing away of sins, not just the removal of dirt from the flesh. Finally, Peter makes it very clear that salvation is possible only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

As our churches engage in evangelistic

outreach events this summer, whether it is VBS, block parties, or mission trips, I want to remind us of the importance of baptism. Baptism does not save us, but it is an act of obedience that has been ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ. As we share the gospel with nonbelievers, let us also be ready to baptize them when they are ready to repent and profess their faith in Jesus.

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

## *Faithfulness growing out of faith*

# Endel leaves legacy of resilience, cooperation, and relationships

**By David Williams**  
*Editor*

Rochester, Minn. — With a heart for the gospel and a legacy of steadfast leadership, Leo Endel retired June 30, 2025, after serving 23 years as executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention (MWBC)—the longest tenure in the convention’s history and one of its most influential voices.

Leading one of the Southern Baptist Convention’s most ethnically diverse and most geographically challenging regions, Endel consistently demonstrated his love for all people, his passion for the local church, and his heart for missions.

Faithfulness grows out of faith, and En-

del’s impact has been shaped by his unshakable conviction: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart. . . and He shall direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).

### **Shaped by a Life on the Move**

Born Feb. 22, 1960, in Tampa, Fla., Endel grew up in a tight-knit Air Force family that was transferred six months later to Alaska, and then to Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Alaska (again), Upper Michigan, California, the Philippines, and finally back to Missouri, where he graduated from high school. That journey cultivated adaptability, resilience, and a deep understanding of people—qualities that would become hallmarks of his leader-

ship. It also gave him a love for the Southern Baptist Convention and appreciation of its funding mechanism, the Cooperative Program.

“As we made our moves during my childhood, I became a child of the SBC,” Endel said. “My mom came to faith in a new SBC church plant in Grand Island, Neb. From there, everywhere we moved, outside of the South, no matter how remote it was, it always had a new SBC church plant.

“This taught me the power of the Cooperative Program as many of our pastors were paid by the Home Mission Board as church starters,” he continued. “When we arrived in the Philippines, we saw the international side of the Cooperative Program. It made me a believer in the power of God and the synergy that comes when we work together.”

After high school, Endel’s path took an unexpected turn. He spent a year as a middle school janitor, then six years as an apprentice pipe organ builder, a role that “educated me to the wide range of religious beliefs and practices within Christian groups in the Midwest,” he said. God used that season to call him into ministry and to seminary. He was inducted into full membership of the American Institute of Organ Builders in 1984.



*Sarah and Leo Endel are moving into the next season of their life together and relocating from Rochester, Minn., to St. Louis, Mo. This picture was taken at the wedding of their daughter, Rachel.*

As he honed his pipe organ craft, he also attended the University of Central Missouri, graduating summa cum laude in 1982 with a degree in business and finance, training that would prove valuable in his future leadership of church, association, and convention budgets.

### **Seminary, Shepherding, and Loss**

Endel earned a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1988) and a Doctor of Ministry from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (2012). His doctoral dissertation was recognized as the top research project of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2013. In 2014 he was named Midwestern’s alumnus of the year.

While attending Southwestern he served as a ministerial intern at

Gambrell Street Baptist Church in Ft. Worth. After graduation, he pastored First Baptist Church in Leeton, Mo., then Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa. His 11-year pastorate there opened doors for broader ministry: he served his association as vice moderator and then moderator, and his state convention as second vice president, first vice president, and president. He was named the Baptist Convention of Iowa’s Pastor of the Year in 1998.

Along the way, he and his wife Sarah, whom he married in 1985, walked through both joy and sorrow, including the heartbreaking loss of their first child. The words carved into their son’s headstone—“Trust in the Lord”—became not just a memorial but a life verse. “We walked



*Leo Endel sports an official Vikings blazer presented to him, along with a football, by Southtown Baptist Church and Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association as they said their farewell to him.*



## Endel

*continued from page six*

through the valley of the shadow of death, and He was with us,” Endel said. “He is faithful.”

### A Decisive Moment for MWBC

In 2002, the MWBC called Endel as executive director. The timing was difficult. Within weeks of his appointment, the convention lost a large portion of its income when long-standing outside support began to be phased out.

In the years that followed, further reductions came. A 50-year partnership with the Baptist General Convention of Texas ended, and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) ceased funding state convention staff, focusing instead on church planting. Over time, nearly the entire state convention full-time staff was lost, including associational directors of missions whose compensation had been heavily subsidized.

Yet through careful stewardship, strategic reorganization, and unwavering trust in God’s provision, MWBC emerged stronger. By the time other new-work conventions began their adjustments to NAMB reductions, MWBC was already nearly self-sustaining. “We had already lived through the pain,” Endel wrote. “And we could begin to see how the Lord faithfully directed our steps.”



*During his time in Minnesota-Wisconsin, Leo Endel led 10 trips of pastors and laypeople to Israel, with one more scheduled for next January. This picture of pastors and wives was taken in 2022 in front of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.*

Endel’s leadership was marked by financial integrity, strategic vision, and deep love for the mission of the church. He guided the convention through multiple challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and served as a unifying voice in the broader SBC family—bridging theological divides, fostering cooperation, and championing gospel faithfulness.

His leadership of the MWBC consistently emphasized five strategic priorities: church planting, church revitalization, leadership development, missions mobilization, and resource sharing. He also served as director of operations for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Foundation, helping churches steward their financial resources for kingdom impact.

### Leadership Through Relationships

Though a master of strategy and systems, Endel’s greatest legacy may lie in his relationships. Known for his warmth, humor, and

relational depth, he has mentored young pastors, coached church planters, chaired doctoral dissertations, and led 10 Israel tours for pastors and laypeople.

At the 2024 annual meeting, MWBC President Daniel Goba offered a deeply personal tribute. A native of Liberia, Goba shared that in the U.S., “I had three strikes against me: I’m black, I’m African, and I have an accent.” Yet he felt accepted and welcomed by the MWBC family and especially by Endel: “Leo was the first American who really hugged me and loved me authentically,” he said.

In a formal resolution passed at that annual meeting, messengers summarized Endel’s legacy in four key traits: leadership and vision; mentorship and people skills; integrity and faithfulness; and communication and scholarship.

### All 4 One: Rekindling Cooperative Mission

One of Endel’s most impactful initia-

tives was All 4 One, launched in 2011 and rooted in his Midwestern Seminary dissertation on increasing mission funding. Over three months, he visited every MWBC association, urging churches to increase Cooperative Program (CP) giving by 1% per year—0.75% through the CP and 0.25% to their local association. Drawing from Paul’s appeal for the Jerusalem church, he reframed cooperative giving not as obligation, but as participation in gospel mission.

The result was a remarkable 11% increase

in CP giving, the highest in five years. The initiative garnered attention across the SBC. SBC Life ran a two-page spread on it, and Endel’s work became a model for how theological clarity and relational leadership could reverse funding decline and revitalize support for shared missions.

In 2024 he was asked to co-author with Peter Ramirez, California Southern Baptist Convention’s executive director, a chapter on “What Has God Done in the States?” in the

See **Endel** page 12



*Leo Endel holds one of the main reasons he and Sarah picked St. Louis as a retirement destination – their grandson J.J.*

# Katelyn Taplin writes award-winning essay

Rochester, Minn. — As ten volunteers leave July 14 for a two-week mission trip to Thailand, one of those will be Katelyn Taplin, a University of North Dakota sophomore who won \$750 toward the trip by writing an essay.

Katelyn is the daughter of Dave and Suzanne Taplin and attends Calvary Pines Baptist Church in Grand Rapids, Minn., where her father is pastor. She is studying commercial aviation.

Each year the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention conducts an essay contest for students and awards scholarships to the winners to help them go on the

Southeast Asia (SEA) mission trip. They generally offer a first place scholarship of \$750, second place scholarship of \$500, and third place scholarship of \$250. The contest is open to all students going on the trip.

This year, there was only one eligible entry, and it was an award-worthy submission, said Na Herr, MWBC intercultural catalyst. Another student submitted an essay, but he was ineligible to receive a scholarship due to restrictions at his school regarding volunteer hours, Herr said.

“Katelyn was the only person eligible to

receive the scholarship, so she was an automatic first place,” he said. “With that said, hers is one of the best essays that I have received for the mission trip since we started in 2022.”

“The purpose of the SEA scholarship is to encourage young people to participate in missions,” Herr said. “According to the International Mission Board, young people who go on mission trips tend to remain active in their faith later in life. Many have gone on to become pastors, missionaries, and leaders in their church. The SEA scholarship is made possible through the MWBC state missions



*This is the SEA mission team going to Thailand. They will be serving there July 14-30. Left to right are: Na Herr, Naomi Herr, Khaiyu Vang, Zephany Heng, Katelyn Taplin, Zong Heng, Coraline Heng, Chris Heng (not pictured: Salathit Sayaovong, Sulida Sayaovong).*

offering. The MWBC is proud to support young people in our state convention as they serve God on mission locally and internationally.”

This year’s essay assignment was: “Write an essay on Matthew 4:12-22. 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.

Matthew 4:12-22 marks a turning point in Jesus’s life and Matthew’s gospel. This passage begins with Jesus starting His public ministry and ends with Him calling His first disciples. These verses offer insight into who Jesus is, what Christian missions should look like, and how we are personally invited into God’s plan.

Verses 13-16 show us that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy spoken by Isaiah (Isa. 9:1-2). At first, this might not seem like a significant part of God’s character, but it actually is. If the prophecies of the Old Testament had not been fulfilled, the Bible would be unreliable, and therefore, God would be a liar, which contradicts His very nature. By fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy, Jesus proves that God’s word is trustworthy, and His plan is unfolding exactly as promised.

Next, we see the compassion of Christ. We first can see this in His choice to go to Galilee, a culturally mixed region looked down upon by many Jews. It reflects His heart to reach people beyond culturally accepted boundaries. He laid down His convenience for the sake of the gospel.

Finally, this passage shows Christ’s unquestionable humility and authority. He personally—the Creator of the universe—shows us what it’s like to proclaim the gospel, minister to the lost, and disciple believers. He’s not conceited or distant, but instead, gave us a perfect example of humble servant-hearted leadership to follow. If He with such authority could display such humility, how much more should we?

This passage gives us a good model of what missions

and evangelism should look like. Verse 17 begins with “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” which is the core of the gospel—to turn from sin and live a life under God’s rule. This is what evangelism is all about—inviting people into a new way of life.

He also shows us that the gospel is for everyone by calling ordinary people, like fisherman to follow Him and be a part of His mission. He uses regular people to carry out his plan. It’s all about obedience—a heart that is willing to follow Him wherever He leads.

Looking back on what we’ve already talked about, there are several takeaways.

- Follow Christ with compassion for the lost, even those who may be harder to reach or minister to.

- Follow Him with humility. Do not let pride get in the way of serving others or sharing the gospel. Christ’s example is one of servant-hearted leadership.

- Remember that Christ calls the seemingly unqualified to be witnesses. Serve boldly with the gifts He has given you, whatever those may be.

- And finally, obey the Lord promptly. In verses 20 and 22 we see that Simon Peter and Andrew, and then James and John, “immediately” left their nets/boat and followed Him. Christ may call us to places that are uncomfortable or unfamiliar, but as believers, we are called to follow without hesitation, trusting that His plan is greater than ours. We don’t have to feel completely confident about where we’re at, but we can still step forward in faith, knowing that the One who calls us is good and faithful.



## Resistance to revival: South Dakota pastor becomes an unlikely church planter

YANKTON, S.D. (BP) – Jeff Mueller never intended to plant a church. In fact, he was pretty loud in his opposition to its widespread practice while training to be a minister.

But starting in his teens, he had every intention on entering the ministry. Mueller had been a church attender and an active part of his youth group for years. Then one day he realized he was just playing the part, and it came from God speaking directly through His Word.

His youth minister was out for a meeting and someone needed to speak in his place. Mueller admits he may have been the third or fourth option and had never put together a Bible lesson for a student group that regularly drew 40-60 to its meetings.

“I opened up the Gospel of Matthew and it was the first time I had read it like that, to study it,” he said. “God convicted my heart and soul and the Bible was new to me. It was like He was saying to get off the fence or over the fence, but just stop pretending that I was living my life for Him.”

This October will mark 10 years of Mueller’s tenure as the pastor of Restore Church, planted through the North American Mission Board’s Send Network. Echoing his testimony, the church works to be a place for those who don’t have a spiritual home ... or may not even realize they’re

looking for one.

Mueller and his wife, Brittany, were sweethearts at Yankton High. He later attended Liberty University online, earning a degree in biblical studies and Christian counseling, then lived in a separate apartment prior to their marriage as she attended the University of Minnesota for graduate school toward her degree in occupational therapy.

Mueller didn’t grow up a Southern Baptist. Midwestern Seminary was a candidate for theological study largely due to its location.

“It was the first one I toured, and I instantly fell in love with it,” he said. “Kansas City is amazing, and the staff there was absolutely incredible.”

He was originally “the anti-church-planting guy.”

“I had this mindset that in my hometown, there were 15,000 people and 30 empty churches, so why should we plant more churches?” he said. “I was pretty pharisaical about it and not very gracious.”

Then one day, he said, he had an experience similar to his salvation story.

“The Lord convicted the living daylights out of me. Like before, this was as close to an audible voice as you can get,” said Mueller. “I heard Him tell me to go home and plant a church.”

He wrestled with it



Jeff Mueller, pastor of Restore Church in Yankton, S.D., speaks to Mississippi Baptist pastors. Photo by Tanner Cade/Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

## 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).

### JULY

4 Independence Day – **MWBC Office Closed**

**14-19 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**

# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM/OFFERING RECEIPTS

January - June 2025

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Cooperative Program Budget 2025 Year to Date   | \$320,512.50 |
| Cooperative Program Receipts 2025 Year to Date | \$313,975.45 |
| Under Budget Year to Date                      | \$6,537.05   |

| NAME | CP YTD | AAEO 2025 |
|------|--------|-----------|
|------|--------|-----------|

### BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

|                                   |                    |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Amherst, Amherst Bible            | \$650.00           | \$0.00             |
| Appleton, Living Water            | \$28.98            | \$0.00             |
| Appleton, Valley                  | \$37,514.96        | \$10,071.00        |
| Clintonville, First Baptist       | \$1,628.17         | \$540.00           |
| Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship    | \$3,923.75         | \$1,395.00         |
| Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist | \$21,411.69        | \$225.00           |
| Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist      | \$2,080.01         | \$406.00           |
| Tilleda, Bethany Baptist          | \$1,235.60         | \$1,000.00         |
| Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist       | \$1,147.14         | \$0.00             |
| <b>BLBA TOTAL</b>                 | <b>\$69,620.30</b> | <b>\$13,637.00</b> |

### LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

|  |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bassett, Westosha Community                | \$2,395.00         | \$0.00             |
| Brookfield, Redemption                     | \$5,325.00         | \$0.00             |
| Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist             | \$1,000.00         | \$2,239.00         |
| Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship                | \$1,200.00         | \$0.00             |
| Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist                | \$3,488.65         | \$1,213.00         |
| Kenosha, Redeemer Parkside                 | \$3,000.00         | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Grace Point Community           | \$719.74           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist             | \$600.00           | \$477.00           |
| Milwaukee, Iglesia Su Presencia            | \$371.76           | \$83.00            |
| Milwaukee, Jericho Church Without Walls    | \$500.00           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Korean Baptist                  | \$900.00           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Layton Avenue Baptist           | \$6,214.79         | \$3,672.00         |
| Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial                  | \$750.00           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic                | \$45.00            | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist              | \$1,030.00         | \$325.00           |
| Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist                | \$300.00           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.                | \$900.00           | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist               | \$7,500.00         | \$0.00             |
| Milwaukee, UFlourish                       | \$400.00           | \$0.00             |
| Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. Ministries      | \$810.28           | \$0.00             |
| Mount Pleasant, Immanuel                   | \$4,134.94         | \$1,930.00         |
| Pewaukee, Crossroads                       | \$2,223.61         | \$0.00             |
| Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie Baptist | \$3,007.65         | \$0.00             |
| Racine, Hope Community                     | \$2,053.12         | \$1,080.00         |
| <b>LBA TOTAL</b>                           | <b>\$48,869.54</b> | <b>\$11,019.00</b> |

### NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

|                                     |                    |                   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist          | \$845.00           | \$0.00            |
| Cambridge, Cross Pointe             | \$3,850.00         | \$5,475.00        |
| Ely, Berean Baptist                 | \$1,200.00         | \$0.00            |
| Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines Baptist | \$1,350.00         | \$70.00           |
| Hill City, Hill City Baptist        | \$600.00           | \$0.00            |
| New York Mills, Grace Connection    | \$532.00           | \$0.00            |
| Rice Lake, Hope Baptist             | \$2,428.00         | \$1,740.00        |
| Roseau, Immanuel Baptist            | \$785.70           | \$0.00            |
| Thief River Falls, Cornerstone      | \$1,201.78         | \$130.00          |
| Warroad, Westside Baptist           | \$1,824.60         | \$230.00          |
| <b>NWBA TOTAL</b>                   | <b>\$14,617.08</b> | <b>\$7,645.00</b> |

| NAME | CP YTD | AAEO 2025 |
|------|--------|-----------|
|------|--------|-----------|

### TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

|   |                    |                   |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| Amery, Journey                          | \$5,000.00         | \$500.00          |
| Bloomington, Hope of Nations Fellowship | \$568.32           | \$500.00          |
| Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean Baptist  | \$600.00           | \$0.00            |
| Bloomington, Southtown Baptist          | \$4,730.37         | \$2,831.00        |
| Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community       | \$1,500.00         | \$0.00            |
| Brooklyn Park, N Center Lao             | \$0.00             | \$400.00          |
| Brooklyn Park, North Center Baptist     | \$2,939.17         | \$530.00          |
| Burnsville, Berean Baptist              | \$1,000.00         | \$0.00            |
| Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptist        | \$1,000.00         | \$0.00            |
| Eagan, Eurasia Baptist                  | \$300.00           | \$0.00            |
| Lino Lakes MN, Bethel Moldovian Baptist | \$300.00           | \$0.00            |
| Maple Grove, Northwood                  | \$600.00           | \$0.00            |
| Maple Grove, Unlock                     | \$500.00           | \$0.00            |
| Minneapolis, All Peoples                | \$3,240.00         | \$0.00            |
| Minneapolis, New Hope Baptist           | \$500.00           | \$0.00            |
| Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible              | \$600.00           | \$0.00            |
| Monticello, Grace Bible                 | \$500.00           | \$0.00            |
| New Hope, Westview                      | \$1,500.00         | \$0.00            |
| New Prague, Calvary                     | \$11,482.27        | \$0.00            |
| North St. Paul - Eternal Life Hmong     | \$1,249.98         | \$0.00            |
| Our City-Our Neighborhood               | \$100.00           | \$0.00            |
| Roseville, Roseville Baptist            | \$2,400.00         | \$40.00           |
| Roseville, Twin City Hmong              | \$800.00           | \$585.00          |
| Sartell, Faith Journey                  | \$2,940.52         | \$0.00            |
| St. Cloud, Calvary Community            | \$1,000.00         | \$0.00            |
| St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian Evang.  | \$500.00           | \$0.00            |
| St. Michael, Northwest Bible            | \$2,000.00         | \$0.00            |
| St. Paul, Cities                        | \$10,000.00        | \$0.00            |
| St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong     | \$6,564.00         | \$219.00          |
| St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel         | \$1,200.00         | \$0.00            |
| Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist            | \$3,600.00         | \$640.00          |
| Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist        | \$360.00           | \$0.00            |
| White Bear Lake, Emmaus                 | \$1,500.00         | \$0.00            |
| White Bear Lake, Faith Fellowship       | \$2,880.00         | \$0.00            |
| <b>TCMBA TOTAL</b>                      | <b>\$73,954.63</b> | <b>\$6,205.00</b> |



Wang Ue Vang was ordained as the associate pastor of Followers of Christ Hmong Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minn. Pao Ly, left, vice president of the Hmong Baptist National Association, preached and presented the ordination certificate.



# Mission Gifts from the Churches

| NAME   | CP YTD             | AAEO 2025         | NAME                                   | CP YTD              | AAEO 2025          |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>GREATER WISCONSIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION</b> |                    |                   | <b>SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION</b>  |                     |                    |
| Boscobel, Blue River Valley                  | \$521.04           | \$130.00          | Austin, Austin Baptist                 | \$1,574.00          | \$450.00           |
| Janesville, Resonate                         | \$6,028.59         | \$0.00            | Emmanuel en Espanol                    | \$74.20             | \$0.00             |
| La Crosse, Crossway                          | \$1,200.00         | \$1,371.00        | Eyota, Hmong Baptist                   | \$1,500.00          | \$800.00           |
| La Crosse, New Hope                          | \$600.00           | \$0.00            | Marshall, Radiant Life                 | \$1,580.28          | \$190.00           |
| Madison, Antioch Fellowship International    | \$600.00           | \$0.00            | Rochester, Chester Woods Community     | \$4,707.10          | \$0.00             |
| Madison, Campus Community                    | \$900.00           | \$100.00          | Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist            | \$12,227.25         | \$1,540.00         |
| Madison, Doxa                                | \$9,720.00         | \$0.00            | Rochester, Redemption City             | \$10,620.29         | \$0.00             |
| Madison, East Madison Baptist                | \$4,495.00         | \$1,815.00        | Rochester, Rochester Community Baptist | \$500.00            | \$0.00             |
| Madison, Emmanuel                            | \$455.00           | \$0.00            | Viola, Viola Bible                     | \$916.15            | \$114.00           |
| Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly             | \$1,519.44         | \$0.00            | Winona, Cornerstone Community          | \$962.50            | \$0.00             |
| Madison, Livingstone Baptist                 | \$2,537.00         | \$900.00          | <b>SMNBA Total</b>                     | <b>\$34,661.77</b>  | <b>\$3,094.00</b>  |
| Madison, Midvale Baptist                     | \$5,244.64         | \$1,804.00        |  |                     |                    |
| Madison, Red Village                         | \$8,500.00         | \$0.00            | <b>OTHER</b>                           |                     |                    |
| Madison, Shalom Christian Assembly           | \$500.00           | \$0.00            | Eau Claire, Jacob's Well               | \$4,250.00          | \$0.00             |
| Platteville, Rolling Hills                   | \$3,750.00         | \$0.00            | Eau Claire, One in Christ              | \$919.41            | \$0.00             |
| Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist                   | \$9,399.96         | \$0.00            | <b>OTHER TOTAL</b>                     | <b>\$5,169.41</b>   | <b>\$0.00</b>      |
| Sparta, Gospel Baptist                       | \$1,586.73         | \$862.50          |  |                     |                    |
| Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship               | \$600.00           | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ Baptist        | \$1,005.93         | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| Sun Prairie, Transformation                  | \$1,896.13         | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| Sun Prairie, United Hmong                    | \$655.33           | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca             | \$30.00            | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| Waterloo, Cornerstone                        | \$1,100.00         | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| WI Dells, Rock of Hope                       | \$1,200.00         | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha                | \$2,787.93         | \$410.00          |  |                     |                    |
| WI Rapids, First Baptist                     | \$250.00           | \$0.00            |  |                     |                    |
| <b>GWBA Total</b>                            | <b>\$67,082.72</b> | <b>\$7,392.50</b> | <b>MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED</b>             | <b>\$313,975.45</b> | <b>\$48,992.50</b> |

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

## REVIVAL

*continued from page nine*

for two weeks. Then a church planting strategist spoke in one of his classes. The people best at planting churches are the ones from that particular area, he pointed out. You need Dakotans, who are already acclimated to the winters and culture, to strengthen a young church's legs.

Brittany was initially opposed. She had a dream job as a Kansas City-area occupational therapist. But the next morning she told Mueller God had changed her heart.

"You're right," she said. "We need to go home and plant a church."

Another part of Southern Baptist culture en-

deared itself to Mueller.

"My church growing up was healthy in a lot of ways, but in hindsight, there was an us-against-the-world mentality more than one that was kingdom-focused," he said. "Going to Midwestern taught me who the SBC is, and I learned about the Cooperative Program. I was so moved in my heart by the concept that I literally tell people about it every chance I get. It's the closest thing to being the Kingdom of God. I wanted to be part of that, where churches function together like the body of Christ."

Restore Church bounced around for meeting space before settling at the Yankton Mall. Nearly empty after COVID, the mall

became Restore's home and has since experienced a revival of its own, now being nearly full of tenants.

Restore strives to be a church for those who may not fit the "churchy" look or have been burned by cultural Christianity. They established a block party that was the largest in town at one point, with outdoor movies, bounce houses, food and prizes. A church, as it closed down, gifted them a building. Restore transformed it into a free indoor kids' playground, which has proven popular during the winter. Other parts of the building house a pregnancy resource center and closet for providing items to local foster families.

Attendance has grown as well, from approximately 100 in 2021 to 460 last year. Easter last month saw 630 in attendance. A long-term goal is to make 3 million disciples by 2041.

"That's the dream. I don't know how we're going to pull it off, but

we have a system where one-on-one discipleship is modeled off first century discipleship. Right now we have 125 people going through it," Mueller said.

"There's a lot to be excited about."

**Back to the beginning**



On May 4, Mickey Vang was ordained as the youth pastor at Eternal Life Hmong Baptist Church, St. Paul, Minn.

## Endel

*continued from page seven*

SBC's 2025 centennial volume *A Unity of Purpose: 100 Years of the SBC Cooperative Program*.

### Still a Pastor at Heart

While serving the MWBC, Endel continued local church ministry, serving as interim pastor of four different M-W churches—twice at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn. In 2015 he returned to Emmanuel—this time not as interim, but as bivocational senior pastor, a role he held for more than a decade, retiring from that position as he retired from MWBC. During his tenure, the church experienced revitalization, facility renewal, and staff development as Endel led the renovation of the sanctuary

and implemented a team ministry model of multiple part-time pastors serving a small church.

Endel also continues to serve as an adjunct professor of doctoral leadership studies for Midwestern and is the author of two books:

- *Where Do We Go from Here? Strategic Planning for the Smaller Church* – A simple yet effective guide to help smaller congregations reconnect with God's purpose and move forward.

- *Life Is All About Relationships* – A biblical and personal reflection on how joy, peace, purpose, and fulfillment are found through our relationship with God and with others.

### A New Chapter Begins

His retirement

comes right after that of his wife Sarah, a gifted math educator who taught for many years at Rochester Community and Technical College. Together they raised two daughters, Rachel and Lydia, and have recently entered a joyful new season as grandparents.

They are relocating to St. Louis to be near their daughter Rachel, her husband Josh, and their baby Joshua Leo (J.J.), while also looking forward to future trips to Hawaii to visit their other daughter Lydia.

As they settle into their new home, Leo and Sarah look forward to continuing their journey of faith—grateful for a lifetime of ministry, and open to whatever God has in store.

## GUILT

*continued from page four*

assure our heart before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things." (1 John 3:19-20).

An interesting thing happens when God removes our guilt, and we know it. Not only can we live with greater joy and freedom, we no longer feel compelled to heap guilt upon others.

*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.*

## CALVERT

*continued from page one*

and church leadership catalyst.

"My ministry with the MWBC has enriched my life and perspective in too many ways to count," he said, "and I thank God for the opportunity and our shared partnership in the gospel."

As he retires from the convention, Calvert will be starting 2nd Act Career Services, a new ministry to coach adults to thrive in career transitions. The ministry will be located at the Thrive Business Center in northeast Rochester, Minn.

His ministry is endorsed by Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, where Calvert serves as an elder.

For more details, see Calvert's column on [page 5](#).

Back to the beginning

Back to the beginning

Back to the beginning



Leo Endel, retiring executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, was among dozens of pastors, SBC officers, state Baptist convention leaders, SBC ethnic leaders and others who gathered to commemorate Southern Baptists' adoption of the Cooperative Program 100 years ago in Memphis. Photo by Jim Veneman, Baptist Press