

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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Winningham left mark on M-W Baptist work

Knoxville, Tenn. – Otha Winningham, the first executive director of what is now the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, died Nov. 16, 2024. He was 93.

Those who succeeded him in that position say he was an exceptional, quintessential missions leader who challenged M-W Baptists to take next steps in God’s plan for the work in these two states.

His passing at Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville, Tenn., came just 41 days after the death of his wife Louise Winningham at the age of 91.

In 1975 the Winninghams moved to Rochester, Minn., from Pennsylvania, where he had been serving as director

of missions for the 33-county Keystone Baptist Association. His new position was coordinator of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Fellowship, which he led to become the Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptist Convention.

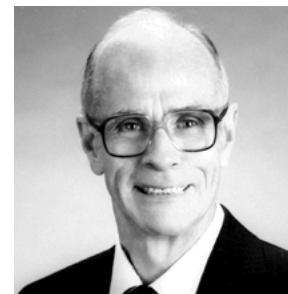
When that change was made in 1981, Winningham became the convention’s first executive director.

His wife Louise served alongside her husband as state paper editor for M-W Baptists. They had married in 1966, and he referred to her as a faithful wife whose contributions to his life and their ministry

together were joyous blessings in his life in the ups and downs of sickness and health issues.

Leo Endel, current MWBC executive director, said Winningham “represented the diligent strategist and administrator that was necessary for us to move

beyond a few scattered churches to strategically plant churches



Otha Winningham

throughout the two states. He proved to be an extremely capable leader who led the churches through the process of uniting

See **WINNINGHAM** page 2

See Endel’s entire tribute to Winningham on page 2.

MWBC has three big events coming up

Rochester, Minn. – February, March and April will bring three major events offered by the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Pastors and their wives are invited to the annual Pastors and Wives Retreat, Feb. 6-8, at Green Liake (Wis.) Conference

Center. “Sharing the Journey” will be the theme of this event. The retreat is free to all MWBC lead pastors plus one additional pastor from churches with multiple pastoral staff. In addition, retired pastors can attend for free. The retreat is funded through the Cooperative Program and Texas

Baptists’ Mary Hill Davis Offering.

The retreat begins with registration at 4 p.m. on Thursday and ends with breakfast on Saturday. The light schedule is designed for fellowship, renewal and growth. Dress is casual. Childcare is not provid-

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Merry Christmas! – Just in time for Christmas, these 750 heaters were delivered to North Carolina the morning of Dec. 23 with more scheduled to arrive the following week, along with electric heaters and extension cords. The project was sponsored by Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention’s disaster relief ministry to meet the need of families impacted by Hurricane Helene. Ben and Kayla Seamans, MWBC disaster relief directors, put out the appeal in November and MWBC churches were quick to respond.

Winningham was 'a man for the times'

Leo Endel
MWBC Executive Director

You can learn a lot about a leader by following in their footsteps.

Otha Winningham was a man for the times. He was a quintessential missions leader who pressed Southern Baptists out of our Southern culture to embrace a national presence. His background in pastoring SBC churches in the non-South prepared him for the task of stepping in during key days of leadership transition in Minnesota-Wisconsin. Ultimately, he would lead the consolidation of the fellowship and guide our churches into a state convention.

It is often forgotten that Winningham stepped in during tenuous days. Winningham

brought stability after the shocking death of our two key leaders, Warren Littleford (died 1973), who had been instrumental in Minnesota and Frank Burrell (died 1974) in Wisconsin. These two losses left a great void. Winningham brought the confidence, strategy, and strength to chart a path forward.

Otha assumed responsibilities for the two states in July of 1975. He represented the diligent strategist and administrator that was necessary for us to move beyond a few scattered churches to strategically plant churches throughout the two states. He proved to be an extremely capable leader who led the churches through the process of uniting as a fellowship and then stepping up to full convention status. He was a careful and

precise leader known for his clarity and decisiveness. It took a strong leader like Otha to firmly organize and guide the developing convention. His fingerprints are still on our founding documents and in the cities and towns of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Otha was an old school, no nonsense leader who could draw together strong opinions and make a decision. That was what was expected, and he did it admirably. He

had a passion for planting new churches and he left that legacy firmly established in us.

Everyday I walk into the Winningham building I am reminded that God used a strong, visionary, devoted man to lay the foundation for what we do today.

Those who came before me told me that Otha retired early due to the transitions of the upcoming computer information days. He made personal sacrifices because he knew it was going to take

a new kind of leader to take us to the next level. God provided Bill Tinsley to pick up the baton and press forward. I am struck by three things: (1) The strategic insight Otha had to see this upcoming challenge; (2) His confidence that he had completed his task here; and (3) his willingness to sacrifice what could have been a personally beneficial smooth three-four years of ministry for the good of the MWBC.

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

WINNINGHAM

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as a fellowship and then stepping up to full convention status. He was a careful and precise leader known for his clarity and decisiveness."

"Otha Winningham's exceptional leadership transformed Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists from a fellowship of churches into a fully functioning state convention in the Southern Baptist Convention," said Bill Tinsley, who succeeded him when

Winningham retired in 1993. "Following their retirement, Otha and Louise Winningham extended their stay to help Jackie and me transition to the challenges of Minnesota-Wisconsin. They were exceedingly kind, thoughtful and wise. No one could have been more helpful and encouraging. We will forever hold deep gratitude and love for Otha and Louise in our hearts."

Winningham was born Nov. 13, 1931, in Camden, Ark., to Otha Winningham Sr. and

Myrtis (Seal) Winningham. The family later moved to Bogalusa, La., then to Jacksonville, Fla., where he graduated from Andrew Jackson High School and Stetson University, DeLand, Fla. He earned a bachelor of divinity from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1957 and later, a master of divinity. In 1991 Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo., conferred an honorary doctor of divinity degree on him.

While a seminary student he held pas-

torates in Kentucky and Henryville, Ind., where he was the founding pastor of the first of four churches that he began in Indiana and Phoenix, Ariz., between 1954 and 1962. He also pastored churches in Gary, Ind., and New Tazewell, Tenn. He taught Bible one year at Grand Canyon College, Phoenix.

He served M-W Baptists from 1975 until his retirement in 1993 when he and Louise moved to Knoxville, her hometown. They were



Louise Winningham

members of First Baptist Church, Knoxville since 1994.

After retirement in 1993 he authored *From a Small Stream*, a 40-year history of Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists.

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EVENTS

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ed. Infants less than six months or still nursing are welcome. However, since this is a “get-away” weekend for all, older children will need to be left in the care of family or friends. Click [here](#) to register.

Mar. 7-8 M-W Baptists will return to Green Lake for Empower, featuring Tim Dowdy, vice president of evangelism for the North American Mission Board; John Francis, minister of worship for Parkway Baptist Church in St.Louis, Mo.; Sandy Wisdom-Martin, national executive director-treasurer of Woman’s Missionary Union; and Mark Croston, Sr., national director of


Black Church Ministries at Lifeway Christian Resources. Click [here](#) for more information and to register and to make reservations for lodging and meals.

Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, Minn., will be the site of the third event, Equip NextGen Ministry Conference on Apr. 4-5. Special guest will be Jeremy Carroll, Lifeway Kids Ministry publishing manager for Hyfi, VBS and Kids Discipleship resources. Registration is \$39 through Mar. 15, after which it increases to \$49. Pastors attend free with a paid registration from their church. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

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**March 7-8
2025**


Green Lake



EMPOWER



Tim Dowdy
Vice President
of Evangelism
NAMB



John Francis, Ph.D.
Minister of Worship
Parkway Baptist Church
St. Louis, MO

**We
will
tell
the
next generation
the
praise
worthy
deeds
of the
LORD,
his
power,
and the
wonders
he has done.
Psalm 78:4**



Sandy Wisdom-Martin
National Executive
Director-Treasurer
WMU



Dr. Mark Croston, Sr.
National Director
Black Church Ministries
Lifeway Christian Resources

Register at <https://Empower2025.eventbrite.com>



A NEW IDEA FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL SPACE – Charles Dunning, Sunday School leader at Valley Baptist Church in Appleton, Wis., shows two of the church’s 10 adult classrooms which have been remodeled into a tiered arrangement which provides 50 per cent more seating in “a healthy, inviting environment, with wonderful acoustics, in which you can see the eyes of the other learners.” The second elevated row of chairs was made possible by simply adding a raised platform against the wall around the room. The innovative design is ideal for adult learning, engaging the learners in interactive dialogue, he said. There are 49 chairs in this room and when average attendance reaches 40 it will be time to start a new class of about 15-20 regular attenders. “Sunday School works in the Upper Midwest,” he said. “It’s a matter of learning how to do it.”

Looking for a Leader

I feel like a mouse caught in a multilayered maze.

On level one, a search committee is at work seeking the next executive director for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

On another level, Emmanuel Baptist Church is seeking a new pastor.



Perspectives

Leo Endel

In the basement, I'm rummaging around dazed, asking the Lord, "What is next for me?"

Though I'm praying about all three processes, I am not overly concerned, because I've watched the Lord lead

and provide for these kinds of transitions repeatedly.

God does some of His best work during times of transition. We might feel like things are out of control, but God has been working His plan and directing our ways. His work goes on.

God continues His Work

One of the best biblical examples is found in the transition between Moses and Joshua. Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses. The next book of the Bible, Joshua, begins with the call of Joshua. God buries His workers, but His work goes on. (Thank God, He's not burying me yet.) We are instruments in the hand of God for a season, but He is steadily bringing glory to Himself by redeeming humanity and the world. He has the end in mind from the beginning (Isa. 46:10). He is bringing His people to the new promised land (Rev. 21:1). His work goes on. God will

accomplish His plan.

God works through people

The Bible is the story of God raising up common people and then working through them. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon. . . . God works through people just like you and me. We think they are biblical superheroes, but they are frail, imperfect human beings, just like us.

God prepares leaders

God shaped Joshua. He was slave, soldier, servant of Moses, spy, and then the successor. God provided the life and leadership experiences to grow the next

leader He desired and needed. Jesus prepared His disciples; Paul prepared Timothy; several leaders prepared me; others are shaping our next executive director or pastor. Through all these leaders God still prepares the next leaders to answer His call.

God appoints leaders

God works in the heart of the leader to see, hear, and respond to His call. "Moses my servant is dead, Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River." God is still calling out leaders. He places His anointing on them for the task to which He calls them. I have found

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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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Morality and Eternity

Recently the nation spent time eulogizing and laying to rest President

Jimmy Carter. Some of us remember when he was elected during the bi-centennial celebration of our nation, a crucial

moment when we were trying to find our way past Watergate. Our nation was searching for someone who could restore our confidence in the honesty and character of our highest office. Jimmy Carter stepped forward to give us hope. He lived to see his

100th birthday, the oldest surviving President in our nation's history.

He had embraced his own mortality long ago, submitting to hospice care almost two years before his death, facing the inevitable

with confident faith and peace.

We are all mortal. We will all die.

The Bible says, "For the Lord God himself knows our estate, that we are but dust. For man is like the grass of the field that flourishes as a flower. After the wind

passes, it is no more, and its place remembers it no longer, but the loving-kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him" (Psa. 103).

We all want to be remembered. I suppose that is part of the reason we engage in funerals and obituaries. But obituaries soon fade and funerals are soon forgotten. For some, like former Presidents, we engage in lengthy ceremonies. For a few decades, maybe even a few centuries, historical records and books will bear testimony to their lives. But eventually they will all be forgotten.

There is something better than being remem-

bered. According to the Bible we can actually live after our mortal bodies cease.

The eulogies for Jimmy Carter were filled with references to his faith. His grandson read extensively from the Scripture regarding God's promises. There is a place where we are never forgotten, a place where we can live, another dimension that Jesus refers to repeatedly as "life into the age" (*eis aionos*).

The Bible's promises are clear. "He will swallow up death for all time. And the Lord will wipe tears away from all faces. And He will re-

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Reflections

Bill Tinsley

Register today for Empower and Equip

EMPOWER will be Mar. 7-8 at the Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center.

This year's theme is "We Will Tell the Next Generation." Featured speakers include

Tim Dowdy, Sandy Wisdom-Martin, Mark Croston, and Omar Segovia.

The conference is free to attendees; however, lodging and registration must be arranged and paid for with the Green Lake

Conference Center. Register at mwbc.org or directly with

Eventbrite.

The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Union will provide ministry to children.

Breakout topics will include disaster relief training, preventing sexual abuse in the church, mental health and the church, and many more.

EMPOWER will feature North American Mission Board's vice

president of evangelism, Tim Dowdy, who came to know Jesus at 11 while attending a Southern Baptist RA camp in Panama City, Fla., and was called to the gospel ministry at 18. He graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a master of divinity (1985) and doctor of ministry (1991). Before serving with NAMB, he served as the lead pastor of Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church, McDonough, Ga., for 31 years and as the president of Eagle's Landing Christian Academy. He also served the Georgia Baptist Mission Board

as lead strategist for pastor wellness.

EQUIP NextGen Ministry Conference will be at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, Minn., Friday, Apr. 4, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday, Apr. 5, from 8 a.m. to noon. You can register [here](#). If you register by Mar. 9, the cost is only \$39. If you register after Mar. 9, the cost will be \$49. Pastors attend for free with paid registrations from their church. EQUIP will address the needs of those who minister to children, students, and young adults.

EQUIP will feature Jeremy Carroll, Life-

way Kids Ministry publishing manager for Hyfi, VBS, and Kids Discipleship resources. Before coming to Lifeway, he served in various church staff positions. He continues to serve each week in the kids' ministry of his church. Jeremy earned a master of arts in Christian Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. A Middle Tennessee native, he and his family live in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

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



Leadership
Clint Calvert

Running a race starts with a decision to run

A few years back a group from Jacob's Well Church

ran the Twin Cities Marathon. What follows are a few insights drawn from the message that I brought to encourage them. My hope is that this may encourage you as well.

The year was 490 B.C. On the plains of Marathon a much smaller force of Greek soldiers routed the Persians and proved the turning point that eventually brought an end to the Greco-Persian wars. Pheidippides, a

Greek soldier known for his strength as a runner brought news of the victory to Athens 40,000 meters (24.2 miles) away.

The writer of the book of Hebrews knew something about competitive running.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that

was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).

First, a general observation. Running a race begins with the decision to participate.

This may seem obvious at first, but I am sure that there are many more people who have had running a marathon on their bucket list than ever get around to actually lacing up and beginning the race.

The reason I know this is because a good friend of mine was in just such a place. When he was in his 20's he said he wanted to complete a marathon before he turned 50. At age 48 he decided

it is now or never and took the plunge. He decided to sign up for the Philadelphia Marathon. There is a difference between thoughtful planning and wishful thinking.

Everyone who is on a spiritual journey at some point came to the understanding that something was missing that only a decision to become a follower of Jesus would satisfy. They may have had some life changing event that has drawn them to search for something greater than themselves. They may have questions about what it means to join others on this spiritual journey.

Let's look at the text.

1. Surrounded by witnesses. We are

not in this race alone. There are those who are cheering us on. Life is tough and the challenges are real. We all need a community where we are encouraged to raise questions; a safe place to wrestle with doubts. Life can throw us some cruel curves that won't stand up to bumper sticker cliches or easy answers. Every one of us will sooner or later need someone standing beside us with an encouraging word or a shoulder to lean on.

2. Lay aside every weight. There are so many distractions that cloud our focus and sins that trip us up. Always remember to keep the main thing the main

English camp leads to community outreach

Back in July, our mission team taught English at four schools in Thailand.

Teachers and village leaders were overjoyed that a team from the U.S. would travel so far to support their schools.

They invited us to partici-

participate in other community events. We connected them to our partner churches in Thailand.

During Christmas and New Year, our partner churches led outreach events in two villages. Village leaders invited our churches to lead a session on the main stage during the New Year festival. Church leaders and members sang songs of worship, passed out Bible literature, gave presents away, cooked a meal for festival attendees, and, of course, shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. Over 600 people participated in activities hosted by our partner churches that day.

It is amazing to see the results of brothers and sisters in Christ working together to

show God's love to the world. Our mission team played a very small role in connect-

ing our partner churches to the community, but it made a huge difference. Even though our

team could not be part of the outreach events on the ground, we were able to support them with monetary donations to help with the purchase of food, supplies, and presents. We praise God for raising up faithful leaders in the local churches who served faithfully and made an impact on their community.

We have a fourth team going to Thailand in July of this year. Even though the deadline for registration has passed already, if you are interested in being part of this team, please email me at herr@mwbc.org.

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



Intercultural
Na Herr



Members of several local churches performed a worship song at the New Year festival in Ban Huay Khu village.



Church members serve a free meal to festival attendees during the New Year outreach event.



The New Year festival is held on the sports field in front of the school where our mission team taught English to over one hundred students. The school can be seen on the hill in the background.



An overhead view of the New Year festival at Ban Huay Khu village.

RUN

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thing and never lose sight that Satan is like a hungry lion seeking whom he may devour.

3. Run with endurance. Life is filled with

difficulties. It's not a matter of, "Will I fall?"; it's, "Will I get up and keep moving forward?"

4. The race set before us. God has a plan and a purpose for each of us. Commit to follow His plan, don't

just ask Him to bless yours.

5. Looking to Jesus. He is our example. He began the race. He overcame the challenges. He asked, "Is there another way?" He endured all in order to

finish the race that was set before him.

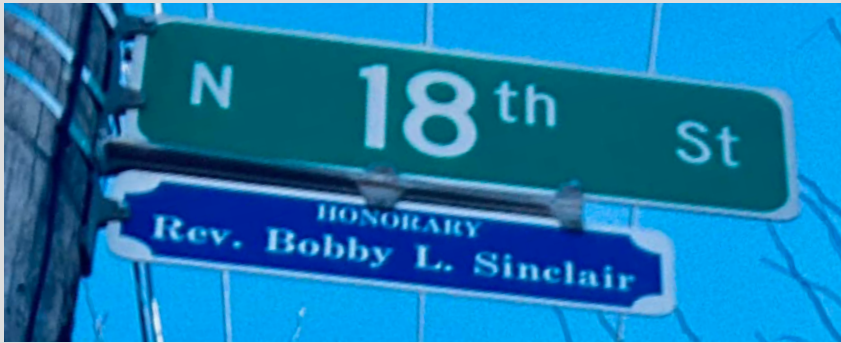
I didn't make it to the finish line, but a friend reminded me that Paul didn't make it to Spain either. Take risks, aim high. Even if you fall short, you will most

likely accomplish more than you think.

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

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GOOD NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS



On Jan. 4, a street naming ceremony took place at Community of Grace Church (formerly Mt. Hermon Baptist Church) to honor Pastor Bobby Sinclair as a portion of 18th Street was named after him. Courtney Sinclair serves as pastor now. Trayvon Sinclair, associate pastor at Christ the King Church, is shown here speaking on the family's behalf. Also present and pictured here with Courtney Sinclair (right), were Roy Hopgood Jr., pastor of Mount Horeb Baptist Church, and Keith Cogburn, LBA director of missions.

LEADER

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that God's call always stretches us beyond what we think we can do. I believe this is essential to keep us from operating out of our human knowledge and expertise so that we are totally dependent upon Him.

God strengthens leaders

If we are doing what God has called us to do,

we will need strength and courage that comes from Him. Why did God say three times to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous?" Because Joshua feared the task was too great, and it was! Joshua needed the strength and courage from the Lord to do what even Moses had failed to accomplish.

God keeps His promises to His People

The call of Moses in

Deuteronomy 11:24 is nearly identical to the call of Joshua in Joshua 1:3. God called a people, Israel, to Himself. Through Israel He would declare His glory to the nations. He promised Moses, in Exodus 3:17, "I will bring you up from the misery of Egypt to the land... flowing with milk and honey." He had already made this promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Ex. 32:13). In Joshua, God was about

NORTHWOODS

NBA held its annual meeting in October at Cross Pointe Church in Cambridge, Minn. Dr. Leo Endel, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, gave a message about the life of Elijah. Pastors and wives received a gift and enjoyed a meal together. Following the meal, Randy Westerberg of Cross Pointe Church shared how he led the church into biblical counseling.

Grand Rapids Baptist Church was in a major financial crisis. In addition to their monthly building payment to the bank, they owed a construction company about \$40,000 for repair work following water damage. The pastor was able to raise some funds and negotiate with the company, settling for around \$34,000. A gift of \$3,000 from Northland Missions was part of the solution to their financial issue.

BAY LAKES

BLBA continues working toward owning its own camp, Lake Ellen Camp in Michigan. Guy Fredrick, associational mission strategist, reports: "Currently, we have created two endowment fund accounts to receive grant funding that we have applied for across multiple grant-providing agencies, asking for roughly \$16 million. The two funds will be for general support of BLBA and the second specifically for camp purchase and operation. We have negotiated a purchase price for the camp. We have established a stand-alone board of directors for the camp to oversee operations. We have applied for and received 501c non-profit tax exempt status."



to complete His promise.

Brothers and sisters, God is at work in this broken world to redeem it through the work of His Son Jesus Christ. Until Jesus returns, our work is not done. Leaders come and go but God's work goes on. When our time is finished and our work is done, God's next leader will step up and continue God's work. "Moses my servant is dead. Now you . . ."

God's leader is in his final stage of preparation. Soon, God will deploy him. I'm confident of this because 23 years ago God finished His preparation in my life for this role and then said, "Now you . . ."

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

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MORALITY

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move the disgrace of His people from all the earth. For the Lord has spoken. And it will be said on that day, ‘Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited. Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation’ (Isa. 25:8-9).

Daniel wrote, “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Dan. 12:1-3).

Awakening to everlasting life, shining brightly, forever and ever. That’s better than being remembered.

Bill Tinsley is a former executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Appearing in various local newspapers around the country, his column “reflects” on current events and life experiences from a faith perspective.

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SEA Mission Trip Thailand

July 14-30, 2025

Apply at:
www.mwbc.org/sea



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

MWBC events are in bold print.

To have your events included, email them to davidwilliams@compuserve.com.

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

FEBRUARY

6-8 Pastors and Wives Retreat, Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center

MARCH

6-8 Empower Conference, Green Lake (Wis.) Conference Center
16-28 Liberia Mission Trip

APRIL

4-5 Equip – NextGen Ministry Conference, Sutherland Baptist Church, Bloomington, Minn.
18 Good Friday – MWBC Office Closed
25-26 MWBC Executive Board Meeting, Rochester, Minn.

MAY

16 New Pastor Orientation, Rochester, Minn.
26 Memorial Day Observed – **MWBC Office Closed**
22 Send Network Multiplication Pipeline Training, Lambeau Field, Green Bay Wis.

JUNE

6-11 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Dallas, Texas
14-21 Guyana Mission Trip
TBD Hands of Hope

JULY

4 Independence Day – **MWBC Office Closed**
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.
TBD Called Out Youth Conference, Baraboo, Wis.

OCTOBER

23 Church Planters Gathering, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rochester, 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

CP's 'long-term stability' considered as state conventions rethink SBC allocations

NASHVILLE (BP) – Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention is not the only one finding it necessary to decrease the percentage of Cooperative Program gifts that are passed on to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Once on an ambitious pathway toward sending half of CP gifts to national causes (from 17 percent in 2015 to 36 percent in 2020), in recent years MWBC has stopped annual incremental increases and instead decreased the share sent to 20 percent in 2024 and 2025.

“National funding changes have necessitated adjustments at the state convention level,” MWBC Executive Director Leo Endel said at the time.

The MWBC is not an anomaly but was to be expected as local churches found their attendance and giving on the decline, impacting their own CP gifts. Even if they kept their CP percentage the same, the lower income of the churches caused their CP contributions to decline.

The situation is not unique to MWBC but is playing out throughout the nation, causing some analysts to say that the Cooperative Program stands at a crossroads as its 100th birthday approaches.

Multiple state and regional conventions this fall sought to cope with a stark reality: they cannot keep giving more to SBC causes when they are receiving less from churches.

“Giving to the Coop-

erative Program is impacted by many factors – including economic pressures on churches and conventions – as well as competing funding requests from many other Christian organizations,” said Jeff Iorg, president of the SBC Executive Committee. “Southern Baptists still believe in cooperation, and a new generation must decide how to prioritize Cooperative Program giving to assure the long-term stability and fiscal health of our global efforts.”

Messengers to the Tennessee Baptist Convention’s Summit felt the reality this fall. They voted reluctantly to decrease the SBC percentage of the Tennessee convention’s CP allocation from 47.5 to 45 and retain 55 percent for Tennessee ministries.

“When we started moving toward 50/50 distribution of Cooperative Program giving, that was overwhelmingly approved by our messengers,” said Randy Davis, president of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB). But CP “giving over the past decade has remained flat” in Tennessee. “When you couple that with an inflation rate over the last decade of 24 percent, you can see the dilemma we’re in” to fund Tennessee ministries.

Originally, the TBMB recommended allocating 40 percent of the 2025 CP budget for SBC causes, 55 percent for Tennessee ministries and 5 percent directly to the International Mission

Board (IMB). The proposal was intended to funnel the same percentage of CP dollars to the IMB that it would have received through a 50/50 split of receipts. But Tennessee messengers amended the distribution to a straight 45/55 split over fears that giving 5 percent directly to IMB would hurt other SBC entities by decreasing their allocations.

Budget cuts

CP is Southern Baptists’ unified mechanism for funding missions and ministries in North America and around the world. A local church gives through CP by sending money to its state Baptist convention. That convention, in turn, decides a percentage of CP receipts to use for in-state ministries and a percentage to forward to the Executive Committee for distribution among SBC causes.

All appears well with CP when considering funds forwarded from state conventions to the SBC. Twenty years ago, state conventions forwarded \$175.5 million to SBC ministries. Ten years ago, the figure climbed to \$183.4 million. For 2022-23, the most recent year for which complete statistics are available, it was \$187.4 million.

But state conventions have been forwarding more money to the SBC even as they receive less from churches. Twenty years ago, churches gave a total of just over \$501 million through CP. It dropped to \$482

million 10 years ago and \$449 million last year. The bottom line: state conventions forwarded \$12 million more to CP last year than they did two decades ago even though they received \$52 million less.

Southern Baptist leaders have wondered for years how long that trajectory can be sustained. For some state conventions, the answer is not any longer.

The California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC) voted this fall to restructure its formula for distributing CP funds. The convention adopted an in-state CP budget of \$3.85 million and a “CP gifts objective” of \$5 million. That means from the first \$5 million given through CP next year, 2 percent will go to California Baptist University, 1 percent to the Baptist Foundation of California and \$3.85 million will be used for budgeted California ministries. The rest will go to SBC causes. All CP receipts over \$5 million will go fully to SBC causes.

If California CP receipts come in at \$5 million, that would mean 20 percent forwarded to SBC causes. CP receipts of \$5.2 million would mean 25 percent to SBC causes, and \$5.4 million in receipts would mean 30 percent to SBC causes. The CSBC’s 2024 budget of \$6 million allocated 35 percent to SBC causes.

As CP receipts from churches decreased from \$5.85 million in 2022 to a projected \$5.1 million this year, “we

have been doing budget cuts and cutting staff,” CSBC executive director Pete Ramirez said. “Our executive board had been discussing this new [CP] formula for a couple of years. They finally said, ‘We don’t want you to continue to be cutting staff. We want you to be able to continue to do the ministry in California.’”

Leaders of SBC entities have been sympathetic about the CSBC budget adjustment, Ramirez said, because everyone understands the real challenge of CP is inspiring churches to give more.

“We are at a crossroads where the Cooperative Program might not be what it was in the past,” Ramirez said, adding, “The way this younger generation gives to missions is different than the previous generations. We’re going to have to figure out how do we do things different in our states to continue to do the great work we do as Southern Baptists.”

‘We remain confident’

California was one of six state and regional conventions this fall that decreased the percentage of CP receipts allocated to SBC causes. Five state conventions increased their percentage to SBC causes, with the biggest jumps coming in at 1 percent in Indiana and the Baptist Resource Network of Pennsylvania-South Jersey. Twenty-seven con-

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM/OFFERING RECEIPTS

January - December 2024

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Cooperative Program Budget 2024 Year to Date | \$681,245.00 |
| Cooperative Program Receipts 2024 Year to Date | \$634,412.97 |
| Under Budget Year to Date | \$46,832.03 |

| NAME | CP YTD |
|------|--------|
|------|--------|

BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Amherst, Amherst Bible Church | \$525.00 |
| Appleton, Fox Valley Hmong | \$360.00 |
| Appleton, Hmong Baptist Mission | \$1,434.82 |
| Appleton, Living Water Church | \$407.52 |
| Appleton, Valley | \$71,289.06 |
| Clintonville, First Baptist Church | \$2,900.88 |
| Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship | \$6,034.61 |
| Green Bay, Highland Crest Baptist | \$48,816.79 |
| Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist | \$3,475.32 |
| Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church | \$2,687.60 |
| Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist | \$2,234.94 |
| BLBA TOTAL | \$140,166.54 |

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church | \$3,940.00 |
| Brookfield, Redemption Church | \$2,450.00 |
| Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist | \$1,500.00 |
| Franklin, El Bethel Baptist | \$1,000.00 |
| Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship | \$600.00 |
| Kenosha, Amistad Cristiana | \$2,100.00 |
| Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist | \$11,704.15 |
| Kenosha, Redeemer Parkside | \$6,000.00 |
| Milwaukee, Grace Point | \$1,081.93 |
| Milwaukee, Iglesia Su Presencia | \$510.40 |
| Milwaukee, Korean Baptist | \$900.00 |
| Milwaukee, Layton Avenue | \$13,103.52 |
| Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial | \$1,800.00 |
| Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic | \$322.94 |
| Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist | \$1,120.00 |
| Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist | \$450.00 |
| Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss. | \$900.00 |
| Milwaukee, Northwest Baptist | \$10,000.00 |
| Milwaukee, Pillar Church | \$800.00 |
| Milwaukee, UFlourish Church | \$1,400.00 |
| Mount Pleasant, I.C.A.R.E. | \$1,361.65 |
| Mount Pleasant, Immanuel | \$13,640.25 |
| Pewaukee, Crossroads Church | \$3,563.53 |
| Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie | \$6,914.20 |
| Racine, Hope Community Church | \$3,399.49 |
| LBA TOTAL | \$90,562.06 |

NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist | 1,262.00 |
| Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church | 550.00 |
| Ely, Berean Baptist | 600.00 |
| Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines | 2,460.00 |
| Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church | 1,000.00 |
| New York Mills, Grace Connection | 5,389.10 |
| Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church | 6,819.00 |
| Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church | 5,967.35 |
| Thief River Falls, Cornerstone | 1,350.00 |
| Warroad, Westside Baptist | 3,435.52 |
| NWBA TOTAL | \$28,832.97 |

NAME

CP YTD

TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Amery, Journey Church | \$10,000.00 |
| Bloomington, Hope of Nations | \$1,481.94 |
| Bloomington, MN Kangnam | \$1,200.00 |
| Bloomington, Southtown Baptist | \$16,882.88 |
| Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer | \$1,800.00 |
| Brooklyn Park, North Center | \$3,683.51 |
| Burnsville, Berean Baptist | \$3,000.00 |
| Champlin, Living Hope Church | \$2,400.00 |
| Coon Rapids, First Hmong | \$2,000.00 |
| Eagan, Eurasia Baptist Church | \$150.00 |
| Eagan, Good News Church | \$9,250.00 |
| Fridley, Good News Hmong | \$750.00 |
| Lino Lakes MN, Bethel Moldovian | \$400.00 |
| Maple Grove, Northwood Church | \$1,200.00 |
| Maple Grove, Sonlight Community | \$300.00 |
| Maple Grove, Unlock Church | \$1,300.00 |
| Minneapolis, All Peoples Church | \$6,480.00 |
| Minneapolis, Foundry College | \$1,200.00 |
| Minneapolis, Jubilee | \$2,000.00 |
| Minnetonka, Redeemer Bible | \$1,100.00 |
| Minnetonka, Slavic Bap Ch | \$600.00 |
| Monticello, Grace Bible Church | \$750.00 |
| New Hope, Westview Church | \$6,000.00 |
| New Prague, Calvary Church | \$24,689.91 |
| North St. Paul - Eternal Life Hmong | \$1,512.00 |
| Richfield, Richfield Bible Church | \$1,200.00 |
| Roseville, Roseville Baptist | \$7,200.00 |
| Roseville, Twin City Hmong | \$1,460.00 |
| Sartell, Faith Journey Church | \$7,392.15 |
| Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope | \$1,500.00 |
| St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian Ev | \$500.00 |
| St. Michael, Northwest Bible | \$2,000.00 |
| St. Paul, Acts2 Midwest | \$1,200.00 |
| St. Paul, Cities Church | \$10,000.00 |
| St. Paul, Followers Of Christ | \$12,971.60 |
| St. Paul, Hmong Unity Christian | \$500.00 |
| St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel | \$600.00 |
| Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist | \$7,626.84 |
| Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist | \$660.00 |
| White Bear Lake, Emmaus Church | \$3,000.00 |
| White Bear Lake, Faith Fellowship | \$1,869.18 |
| TCMBA TOTAL | \$159,810.01 |

2025 Mission Trip Opportunities



LIBERIA
MARCH 16-28

GUYANA
JUNE 14-21

THAILAND
JULY 14-30

ARGENTINA
AUGUST 2-9

www.mwbc.org/missions

Mission Gifts from the Churches

| NAME | CP YTD |
|--|---------------------|
| SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION | |
| Boscobel, Blue River Valley | \$1,720.92 |
| Janesville, Resonate Church | \$7,101.99 |
| La Crosse, Crossway Church | \$2,400.00 |
| La Crosse, New Hope | \$600.00 |
| Madison, Antioch Fellowship | \$600.00 |
| Madison, Campus Community | \$1,800.00 |
| Madison, City on a Hill | \$10,000.00 |
| Madison, Doxa Church | \$23,384.05 |
| Madison, East Madison Baptist | \$8,888.00 |
| Madison, Emmanuel Church | \$909.00 |
| Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly | \$1,671.56 |
| Madison, International Student | \$1,200.00 |
| Madison, Livingstone Baptist | \$5,305.00 |
| Madison, Midvale Baptist Church | \$8,574.80 |
| Madison, Red Village | \$4,250.00 |
| Madison, Shalom Christian | \$162.00 |
| Monroe, Redemption Church | \$1,440.00 |
| Platteville, Rolling Hills | \$9,556.60 |
| Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist | \$17,400.00 |
| Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church | \$4,289.35 |
| Sun Prairie, Christ Fellowship | \$1,200.00 |
| Sun Prairie, Reborn in Christ | \$1,846.96 |
| Sun Prairie, Transformation | \$3,037.01 |
| Sun Prairie, United Hmong | \$605.50 |
| Waterloo, Cornerstone Church | \$1,100.00 |
| Watertown, Watertown Communi | \$300.00 |
| WI Dells, Rock of Hope | \$2,400.00 |
| WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha | \$5,778.28 |
| WI Rapids, First Baptist Church | \$600.00 |
| SWBA Total | \$128,121.02 |

| NAME | CP YTD |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| SOUTHERN MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION | |
| Austin, Austin Baptist Church | \$5,414.28 |
| Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church | \$3,000.00 |
| Mankato, Great Oaks Church | \$1,200.00 |
| Mankato, Hope Baptist Church | \$4,735.45 |
| Marshall, Radiant Life Church | \$3,903.17 |
| Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley | \$8,348.78 |
| Rochester, Chester Woods | \$2,118.59 |
| Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist | \$19,499.42 |
| Rochester, Redemption City | \$19,113.65 |
| Rochester, Rochester Communit | \$1,300.00 |
| Viola, Viola Bible Church | \$2,462.29 |
| Winona, Cornerstone Community | \$4,812.50 |
| SMNBA Total | \$75,908.13 |
| OTHER | |
| Eau Claire, Jacob's Well | \$10,200.00 |
| Eau Claire, One in Christ | \$812.24 |
| OTHER TOTAL | \$11,012.24 |
| MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED | \$634,412.97 |

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



NextGen Ministry Conference
Ephesians 4:12

April 4-5, 2025
Southtown Baptist Church
Bloomington, MN

This conference is for all leaders & volunteers in Children and Youth Ministries. It will be a time of encouragement, equipping, community, and fun. Make plans to bring everyone who works with the youth and children's ministries.



Special Guest
Jeremy Carroll
Lifeway Kids Ministry Publishing Manager for HyFL, VBS, and Kids Discipleship resources

Price: \$29 until 12/31/2024
\$39 01/01/2024-3/15/2025
\$49 after 3/15/2025

Senior Pastor may attend free with a paid registration from their church.

Registration now open!



If you have any questions, please ask on Facebook @ MWBC KidMin Community or call Penny @ 218-340-0862

[Get Tickets!](#)

CP *continued from page nine*

ventions kept their SBC allocations the same.

Two state conventions (the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Baptist General Association of Virginia) offer churches various giving plans for supporting out-of-state ministries, with CP being among the options.

Ten years ago, the picture was very different. In 2014, 23 state conventions increased their percentage of CP receipts to SBC causes.

Nevada was among the states to reduce its SBC allocation this fall, going from 50 percent in 2024 to 25 percent

in 2025. But Nevada Baptists have a plan to boost giving from local churches and money forwarded to SBC missions and ministries.

“We had a 10-year stint of being a 50/50 state and were proud of that,” said Damian Cirincione, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention. But when he assumed his current role three years ago, “we had already been operating in a deficit and pulling out of reserves.”

The 75/25 allocation adopted this year will both fund increased efforts to assist Nevada churches and facilitate the work of a task force to strengthen CP giving. About five

years ago, transitions at the state convention and in local churches resulted in hundreds of thousands fewer dollars coming into Nevada CP. Cirincione is optimistic giving can increase again.

“Though we’ve had to pivot slightly, we remain confident,” he said, noting that Nevada Baptists continue to enjoy a warm relationship with all the SBC entities. “We are working with our churches to build out a strategy that will strengthen our giving in the coming days and our generosity in our contributions to CP as we engage and educate.”

Back to the beginning

Pastors & Wives Retreat

February 6-8, 2025

Sharing
the
journey

As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17

Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake, WI