

January 2024

MISSIONS

Malawi
Encouraging Healthy
Churches and
Spiritual Lives

Zambia
A Safe Place for
Vulnerable Students

Brazil
Spiritual Care in
São Paulo's Hospitals

Italy
The "Eternal City" Receives
the Eternal Message





THINKING IT THROUGH

BY JOHN PEASLAND

Finishing the Task

As part of CMML's Annual Fall Conference in late 2020—titled “Where Do We Go from Here?” and held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic—a virtual choir sang the following words:

Facing a task unfinished that drives us to our knees,
A need that, undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease,
We who rejoice to know You renew before Your throne
The solemn pledge we owe You to go and make You known.
(Frank Houghton, “Facing a Task Unfinished,” 1931)

In these words, penned almost 100 years ago, the song eloquently states the purpose of the church as a whole and the vision of CMML. The last line comes from the commission of the early disciples, memorialized for us in Luke 24:48 and Acts 1:8: “You are witnesses of these things” and “You shall be witnesses to Me.”

Although more than 2,000 years have passed, we must respond to that commission to go and make Christ known. Unfortunately, we need to be jolted from our “slothful ease.” Last year, 2023, was a year of turmoil, disasters, and conflict, reminding all believers that time is short. Today continues to bring more

**There is a task unfinished,
a need that remains
undiminished.**

of the same. It would seem that the end of all things is at hand, yet there is a task unfinished, a need that

remains undiminished. In John 4:35, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself tells us to “lift up [our] eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest.” More than 2,000 years later, there is yet much to be done.

At this time, 3.4 billion out of the world's 8 billion people are considered unreached, without ready access to the Gospel.¹ Two billion of them have most likely never heard the name of Jesus.² In 2020, as we considered 100 years of God's faithfulness to and through CMML, we looked to the future and realized that our mission must remain the same: reaching the unreached with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, the means and methods of reaching the unreached 42 percent of the globe will look different from those of the past 100 years. Traditional missionaries are giving way to tentmakers and businesspeople who use their skills and degrees to gain entry into “creative access” countries. The primary mission fields of the last 100 years—Latin America and Africa—are now becoming “sending countries,” and the Lord is mightily using believers sent from these regions. We can now gain digital access to difficult-to-reach countries and thus share the Gospel from virtually anywhere, no visa needed. Translation software enables conversations across language barriers like never before. The world is changing rapidly, and missions work is too. May the Lord help us be equipped to reach our generation and accomplish the task.

The aforementioned song's third line identifies those who renew the solemn pledge as people who rejoice to know God. Do you take delight in knowing a risen Savior? Maybe the Lord has not called you to go to a foreign people group. (Still, now that they live next door to us, it almost seems as if God, in His grace, is saying: “If you won't go, stay, and I will bring them to you.”) As we understand this great task, may it drive us to our knees in prayer, just as that song states. Will you join us this year in praying?

I trust you will get a copy of the 2024 *Missionary Prayer Handbook*. We are sending out a free copy to every 2023 donor. If you have not sent a donation or cannot afford a copy, contact the CMML office, and we will gladly send you one. Please commit to praying through the MPH monthly, remembering those currently serving around the world.

But do not stop there. Each day of the month, the MPH identifies one of the 31 largest unreached people groups in the 10/40 Window. Join us in pleading with the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the field. Pray willingly, though, that the Lord may answer your prayer by sending you—next door, across the street, or around the world. ■

John Peasland, CMML executive director

¹The Joshua Project (website), *Frontier Ventures*, 2023, www.JoshuaProject.net. ²The Joshua Project, “Has Everyone Heard?” *Frontier Ventures*, 2023, JoshuaProject.net/resources/articles/has_everyone_heard.

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COVER PHOTO: Woman in Malawi—Photo by Philip Parsons



Fanning the Flame in MALAWI

A MINISTRY ENCOURAGES HEALTHY CHURCHES AND SPIRITUAL LIVES

BY PHILIP C. PARSONS



Recently, my wife and I spent a week with CMML missionaries Vinoji and Joyce Samuel (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 2) in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. This landlocked country, surrounded by Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique, is often referred to as the Warm Heart of Africa because of its people's kindness, not to mention the picturesque landscape and the beautiful wildlife. In the local language, Chichewa, the country's name means "flame" or "fire"—a description of the sunrises and sunsets over Lake Malawi.

Lake Malawi, Africa's third largest lake, is world-renowned for its crystal-clear water and its variety of fish species—home to the highest number in any lake worldwide. It measures 52 miles across at its widest point and stretches in length for 365 miles, earning the nickname Calendar Lake.

English and Chichewa are widely spoken in Malawi, although English is the official language. Tobacco is Malawi's primary export, but Malawian tea is known across the globe.

IT ALL STARTED WITH A TRACT

According to the CIA World Factbook, 77 percent of the 21 million people living in Malawi are Christian, with slightly less than half of those being Protestant. About 14 percent are Muslim.¹

Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish physician and pioneer missionary with the London Missionary Society, explored the country from 1858 to 1864. He is credited with discovering Lake Malawi, having reached it in 1859, although a Portuguese explorer had reported its existence more than 200 years earlier.

The Brethren movement began in Malawi as a result of a gospel tract published in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1963. The tract traveled almost 2,500 miles before reaching the hands of A. Kasoloko in Malawi's former capital of Zomba. Reading the tract, he became a believer but recognized the need for

help. So he wrote a letter to the Evangelical Missions Trust in South Africa. Crawford Allison, a British missionary who was serving the Lord in Zimbabwe, traveled to Malawi and found several groups of believers. After some teaching from God's Word, three assemblies were established. Today, there are 100 assemblies scattered throughout Malawi.²

A FAMILY JOURNEYS TO MALAWI

Vinoji and Joyce Samuel were born and raised in Christian homes in Kerala, India. As young people, both came to know the Lord as Savior and developed hearts for missions as they grew in their walks with Him. After Vinoji received a biography of Dr. David Livingstone as a prize at a teen camp, reading missionary biographies quickly became his passion. Meanwhile, Joyce committed her life to missions following a challenge given on the final day of a missions conference.

The Lord brought Vinoji's and Joyce's lives together, and they dedicated themselves to full-time ministry in India. But the Lord had other plans: in 2004, the Samuels and their two young children, Joel and Julia, began their missionary service in Kenya, Africa, having been sent by the assemblies in Kerala. They spent a total of nine years there, and they helped start four assemblies.

Beginning in 2009, the family spent more than two years in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and engaged in ministry among the Malawians who were working there. Then, after accepting an invitation to visit Malawi, they transitioned from Kenya to Malawi in 2013. That same year, their parents sponsored them to come to the US, where they settled in Greater Atlanta and quickly found a home assembly, Gwinnett Bible Chapel. While establishing roots in Atlanta, they made frequent visits to Malawi—giving attention to evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. In 2019, their assembly commended them to serve full time in the African nation.

Above (L-R): Children in the local Awana group wave to Phil before the Bible lesson; Conference Sunday draws a crowd of all ages to Interior Missions Church; Phil shares a Bible message with listeners in Mphemvu.

Since 2013, the couple has helped establish 15 assemblies, many of which nationals lead today. Twelve assemblies are located near Lilongwe, while three are about 200 miles from where the Samuels live. Nevertheless, they make regular visits to these assemblies to encourage the believers and help with life in the villages.

Since Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, heavily dependent on subsistence and rain-fed agriculture, food insecurity is a constant threat. So Vinoji and Joyce seek ways to help the believers. Over time, the Samuels have purchased land in the community where they live. The goal is to parcel it out to believers in the community and teach self-sustaining farming techniques.

CMML VISITS THE SAMUELS

My wife, Mary, and I first met the Samuels in 2019, when we visited them, along with their elders, soon after their commendation. Now, four years later, we enjoyed a reunion. The Samuels met us at the airport after our 12-hour flight east from New York to Nairobi, Kenya, and a two-hour connecting flight to Lilongwe. The dry season was evident from the brown foliage and dusty roads.



The Interior Missions Church and compound where the Samuels live is a short 25-minute drive over dirt and asphalt-covered roads. The compound houses their family and the assembly and includes several small accommodations where guests stay when they come for Bible training. There is no electricity where the Samuels live, but a few years ago solar panels were installed, providing enough power to drive a water pump, water heater, and lights.

On the afternoon we arrived, the Samuels' coworkers Paul and Reebe Varghese and their children, Ruth and Ben, conducted the weekly Awana program. More than 70 children who live in the village come week after week to play the games and, more importantly, hear the gospel message.

The following day, Sunday, I was invited to speak at the assembly after the Breaking of Bread. One distinct feature of the Sunday services is congregational singing. The blending of 150 voices in precise harmony, matched with movement and rhythm, is a joy to experience. While the believers sing hymns of praise and worship in English and Chichewa, they are at their best when singing in Chichewa. The Sunday of our visit was a "conference Sunday." Some of the young men whom Vinoji is discipling went to nearby villages and helped transport believers to the conference. After the morning meetings, everyone enjoyed a lunch featuring the Malawian national dish, *nsima*—a thick porridge of maize, often served with beans or small fish.



The next three mornings, I conducted six Bible training sessions for students keen to study God's Word. Each month, about 35 men and women meet for training and to study at the assembly. They have a genuine hunger to learn the truths of Scripture.

After a mid-morning break, Mary and Joyce engaged the group in sword drills. Mary also shared some of our experiences from our time as missionaries in the Philippines.

On Monday afternoon, we went to a nearby village, Mphemvu, where a new assembly is being planted. I was asked to give a gospel message. This meeting was held outdoors, and when the singing began, many in the village gathered to hear the message. The village chief welcomed us, and before we left, Vinoji encouraged everyone to come to the church the following Sunday.



On Tuesday afternoon, we traveled to a remote village and the assembly at Mchoka. Once again, the singing caught the people's



Left column: Phil and Mary (center) enjoy their visit with (L-R) Paul Varghese, Vinoji Samuel, Reebe and Ruth Varghese, and Joyce Samuel. **Right column (from top):** A highlight of the Sunday service is harmonious singing and dancing; Mphemvu's chief welcomes Phil. **Above: (left and middle)** The Samuels' compound includes homes and classrooms, as well as other buildings; **(right)** A woman washes clothing in the river, since this area of Malawi lacks electricity.



attention, and soon, many men, women, and children filled the small chapel building. A special meeting of the women convened on Wednesday afternoon. Mary shared her personal missionary experiences that pointed to God's love, care, and protection.

Our final few days in Malawi afforded us an opportunity to experience the natural beauty of God's creation. Liwonde National Park brought us up close and personal with elephants, hippos, Cape buffalo, lions, monkeys, and antelopes, among other animals. Then, a visit to Malawi is not complete without seeing Lake Malawi, home to the African fish eagle and many species of tropical fish.

PRAY FOR THE WARM HEART OF AFRICA

Praise the Lord for the freedom to preach the Gospel unhindered in Malawi. There is great hunger among the Malawian people to grow in the knowledge of biblical truth. Vиноji and Joyce are praying for others to help them meet this need. The ministry among youth holds great opportunity, since the median age of Malawi's population is 17 and more than one-third of the population is 14 years and below. While most Malawians claim to be Christians, many do not know what it means to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor is there a willingness to surrender their lives to Christ. So discipleship and teaching biblical truth are crucial aspects of the Samuels' ministry. Please pray for the Warm Heart of Africa and the ministry there. ■

Philip C. Parsons, CMML missionary care and security

¹"Malawi," CIA World Factbook (website), Central Intelligence Agency, 1 November 2023, www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/malawi/.

²Frederick A. Tatford, *That the World May Know*, vol. 6 (Bath, UK: Echoes Publications, 1984), 179–182.



Left: The believers start an outdoor meeting in Mphemvu with singing and dancing to praise God and attract the villagers. **Above (from top):** Mchoka is a remote village with an assembly; Inside Mchoka's assembly building, a group gathers to sing, which encourages others to join; Two men share from the Bible during the Sunday morning church service; Mary, with Joyce beside her, prepares to share about her missionary experiences; Lake Malawi is the center of much activity in this landlocked country.



LIGHTS SHINING IN ZAMBIA

Creating a Safe Place for Vulnerable Girls

BY KEITH & GAYLE BAILEY

Around 2005, we were teaching religious education and were involved in administration at the local high school near Chitokoloki Mission in Zambezi, Zambia, when we learned of a great need: orphaned and vulnerable female pupils who lived a long distance away needed a safe place to stay. Many faced abuse, and unwanted pregnancy was all too common.

We realized it would be simple to house and feed those in need, which would also provide a spiritual opportunity to teach Christian values and the Gospel to those in our care. The Lord reminded us of two verses: "For I was hungry, and you fed me. . . . I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home." (Matthew 25:35, NLT) And, "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans." (James 1:27, NLT)

A home built with bricks and love

The local high school was supportive of our plan when we presented the idea and all drawings of the proposed buildings. After we had spent much time in consideration and prayer, the Lord provided a property agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and by the local headman (community leader). The property was close to the school and the road as well as to hospital care.

In 2012, construction on the 12-bedroom home began with gathering handmade bricks and hand-sawed lumber. The home soon took shape through the labor of local workers. We provided the cement, rebar, doors, and windows as well as iron sheets for

the roof. And I (Keith) installed the water tower, plumbing, and wiring with some visiting helpers.

The outbuildings included a kitchen, laundry and shower room, and toilet block. We planned for the home to be self-contained, with its own solar energy system and water supply, and we fenced and gated the compound for privacy and security.

The BBG family

In 2014, we officially opened the home, and our first residents called it "BBG Home," or Baileys' Boarding Girls. Today, two full-time housemothers manage the laundry and cooking, keep order, and offer guidance to young lives. The housemothers are Zambians and



From top: Gayle and two BBG girls enjoy quality time together; Gayle invests in the girls' lives; The BBG girls proudly wear their purple shirts; The 2023 residents gather outside the home; Several girls relax with Gayle after lunch.

committed believers; they are fluent in the local languages, which greatly helps. Over the years, we've welcomed anywhere from 14 to 20 residents, who range from 13 to 18 years old and from 8th to 12th grades. Smaller numbers seem easier to manage, and we can have a greater influence on each student. But we are thankful for every girl who comes through our doors.

Before admission, we interview each student to determine her needs and explain what behavior is expected in this Christian home. Each newcomer is on probation for a month to ensure she fits in with the home's values and shows respect to others. When all agree, we accept the newcomer into the family and give her a purple BBG shirt, which she wears with pride. Our first residents designed the shirts: they chose the color, added the home's name, and selected the verse on the back, Matthew 5:16. Now, "Let your light so shine before men" carries special meaning for our home. We provide our girls with Bibles, research books, bedding, towels, hygiene products, and some clothes.

There is some interaction with the families of the girls who are not orphaned, but due to distance, most of our girls have not had any family members come to the home other than when first interviewed.

Daily routines and special celebrations

A typical day begins with a wake-up call at 6:00 a.m. to prepare for class at 7:00. At 10:20, residents take a 30-minute break to walk back to BBG for a snack. Classes finish at 1:20 p.m. for lunch, but study time in class resumes after, from 3:00 to 4:30.

The housemothers have a hot lunch ready from a fixed menu, although they can adjust it if seasonal, local produce is available. Everyone participates in an evening study time and then devotions and prayer before bedtime.

Each Friday, we hold a Bible study with the girls. We sing, have a quiz, read the Bible, and learn from a lesson. Then, we have time for questions, followed by snacks. We try to blend discipleship and the Gospel to encourage those girls who are saved while reaching any who are not or are unsure of their salvation.

We always celebrate birthdays with a party and gifts. Usually, we group several birthdays together and hold a special celebration every few months.

Leadership opportunities

Each year, the schoolteachers and headmaster report that the BBG girls are well behaved and are good examples to others. For many years, we have had a head girl (a senior prefect) and other leadership roles for our students, including class prefects and captains of extracurricular activities.

It has been a joy and privilege to work with these teens and see many of them grow spiritually and lead in outreaches. One ministry is the Scripture Union group, which we help run at the local school. The Scripture Union group happens during school time and is open to all secondary school students who can come. Each meeting includes singing, prayer, a Bible lesson, and questions before closing in prayer—usually one hour later.

We thank God for each BBG girl who has trusted Christ as her Savior and been baptized and then received into the local assembly fellowship.

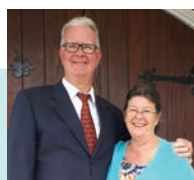


Care today for a brighter tomorrow

We have kept in touch with several of our past students. Some are enrolled in university or college and send us reports and updates on their progress. We offer a financial gift to those who are accepted into further education.

One such former resident, Amy, trusted the Lord as a young girl and was a gem of a person for the five years she spent with us. Now, she is in her third year of a medical program at the University of Zambia in Lusaka, the capital. She regularly communicates with us and continues to attend church meetings. We're thankful that she has some Christian friends, but sadly, her parents have died.

Our prayer is that those in our care will seek to please the Lord with their lives and continue in what we have taught them. ■



Keith and Gayle Bailey are commended from Deer Lake Gospel Hall in Port Sydney, Ontario.

From top: A group of BBG residents chat between meetings at the assembly; The girls participate in prayer time at their school's Scripture Union group; Amy (right), a former BBG resident, now helps with rural health care while in her third year of medical school.

Rome, Italy

The Eternal City Receives the Eternal Message Like Never Before



BY DANNY PASQUALE

A historic event took place in Rome, Italy, over two days late in 2023: the Gospel was preached to a crowd of more than 18,000 people in the city's biggest sports arena. More than 800 churches from all over Italy participated, and of those, 150 from the Rome area were directly involved in months of preparations under the thoughtful, dynamic leadership of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). More than 1,000 people professed faith after the messages preached during the two evenings—a result previously unheard of in Italy.

The road that led to this event was long and unexpected. In 2020, Cremona, a city about 60 miles outside of Milan, became the epicenter of the Italian COVID-19 pandemic. During the late winter, Samaritan's Purse agreed to come and provide a specialized field hospital to treat patients who had contracted the virus. The love that doctors, nurses, and the Italian chaplain Antonio Marino (a Brethren missionary from Germany) lavished on the patients was remarkable. Some patients were physically healed; others were spiritually healed; no one was left alone. The new believers' testimonies caused a stir that begged one question: "Why, when no one in the world came to help us Italians, did you come?" To answer this question, Samaritan's Purse and BGEA organized the Noi Festival in Milan with the evangelical churches in the area (*noi* means "us")—an event that shared about Christ's love. In one evening, a record-breaking crowd for Milan's biggest indoor arena heard the message. Soon after, BGEA started talking to church leaders in Rome, evaluating the possibility of an event there. The answer was a resounding yes!

Evangelical churches participated in months of preparation through the program I Am Andrew. They encouraged believers to invite their friends to come and meet Jesus, just as the apostle Andrew did with his brother Simon. And so, many invited their friends to Rome's Noi Festival.

During the evangelistic event, I stood on the stage and interpreted, while Franklin Graham shared the Gospel. When the organizers first asked me to help, I had to evaluate if I could commit to this intense weekend, which also included interpreting at a press conference of the Italian senate, given my duties as principal at the Italian Evangelical Bible Institute. Very quickly, however, I realized what this invitation meant: I had the opportunity to be a voice to spread the Gospel to thousands. How often I had dreamed of sharing the good news with many Italians. But I had never thought that it would become a reality in this incredible proportion. Many people prayed for me, and praise God, I was calm and focused. The interpretation went smoothly.

My wife, Marti, also helped during the event. She interpreted for a BGEA journalist who interviewed participants. In the end, the journalist also interviewed Marti, giving her an opportunity to discuss her faith and experience as a missionary.

The follow-up with the new believers is underway. We linked every person—who we know made a commitment to the Lord—with a local church that can provide the care these new-born believers need. Pray for much fruit from each person's life. Pray, too, that the unity the body of Christ experienced in this outreach will solidify and all the churches that claim Christ as Lord and the Bible as His authoritative Word will keep the fellowship and pursue more evangelistic efforts together. ■



Danny Pasquale and his wife, Marti, are commended from Littleton Bible Chapel in Littleton, Colorado.

Above (L–R): More than 18,000 people listen to the gospel message; The Pasquales, pictured here at the Noi Festival with their daughter, Lylia, thank the Lord for this evangelistic outreach; Danny interprets as Franklin Graham preaches the Gospel.

7 CMML RESOURCES

BY CRAIG



MISSIONS MAGAZINE

Published 11 times per year, *Missions* features articles and letters from the missionaries included in the MPH. The articles present readers with an in-depth view of the missionaries' ministries and lives on the mission field, while the "Connections" department offers updates from the field, organized by the missionaries' location within the MPH. "Keeping in Touch," the final department in each issue, notifies readers of changes to the MPH, including furloughs, new missionaries, deletions, marriages, births, and home calls. This information helps you pray more knowledgeably for the missionaries as you work through the MPH monthly. If you aren't already a *Missions* subscriber, sign up today—subscriptions are free.



The US Brethren missionary service organizations, including the Vineyard and The Fields, have long published mission magazines commended to cross-cultural missionary service. In the 1950s, publications such as *Voices from the Vineyard* and *The Fields* listed missionaries, homes and chapels, and later, CMML produced a list of missionaries in the first *Missionary Prayer Handbook*.

Today, the MPH lists missionaries by country and includes a brief description, plus info about their country of service. This allows believers can pray for a new group each day of the month.

For decades, the MPH has been a useful tool that enabled missionaries. However, did you know that CMML's other resources flow from the MPH website, the articles you read, the videos you watch, the prayers you receive supplement the MPH. All CMML's resources are connected.

To get the most out of your *Missionary Prayer Handbook*, use these resources (scan each QR code to learn more or see page 13).



"MISSIONS UPDATE" VIDEOS

Once per month, CMML releases a video featuring a missionary listed in the MPH. These three-to-four-minute "Missions Update" videos give you a glimpse into the lives of missionaries around the world and are perfect for sharing online or showing during church services. You may watch the videos on our website or YouTube channel.



CMML UPDATES EMAIL

The CMML Updates email takes enthusiasm for missions to the next level. Through periodic messages, it keeps you up to date with all the new and exciting resources, events, and needs associated with CMML and the missionaries we serve. For example, we'll notify you when the latest "Missions Update" video is available. Visit our website to sign up.



S TO HELP YOU PRAY

FRITCHEY

cluding CMML and our predecessors, Voices from the
nary prayer lists that include individuals and families
the early years, these lists appeared annually in pub-
/ds. Then, prayer calendars were printed to display in
in booklet format. Finally, in 1967, CMML published

cludes their picture, contact information, and ministry
the MPH divides the listed missionaries into 30 days so
onth.

les believers to pray around the world monthly. How-
from the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*? The tools on our
the social media posts you like, and the prayer emails
es are connected.

/book, use it alongside each of the following CMML
age 23 for our contact information).



MISSION PRAYER ITEMS EMAIL

MSC Canada, our sister organiza-
tion, and CMML jointly publish Mission Prayer
Items, an email that MSC sends out weekly.
It features prayer requests from missionaries
listed in the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*. Like
the “Connections” department of *Missions*, the
prayer requests are organized by
the missionaries’ location within
the MPH. You may sign up on our
website.



THE CMML WEBSITE

CMML.us is chock-full of missions
and assembly information, much of
which expands on the MPH and enables you to
interact with missionaries. You can access special
prayer requests, learn about upcoming confer-
ences and missions opportunities, watch videos,
and read a portion of *Missions* magazine. You
can also find missionary profiles for most of the
US-commended missionaries listed in the MPH.
Some choose not to have public profiles for
security reasons. Through our website, you may
donate to every missionary CMML serves, even
if they don’t have a public profile.
Similarly, you can learn about and
give to associated ministries—those
connected to individual missionaries.



SOCIAL MEDIA

A benefit of social media is the ability
to update prayer warriors instantly.
On CMML’s Facebook, Instagram, and X (former-
ly known as Twitter) accounts, we post about
news, prayer requests, and developments as
they occur around the world, as well
as about CMML events and other in-
formation. Follow CMML (@cmmlus)
on your preferred platforms.



Copies of the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*

See the back page of this magazine to learn how you can receive the 2024 MPH.

Craig Fritchey, CMML assembly relations