

Have you pondered this verse regarding the Chief Shepherd? *“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)* The marks of pain are critical to a life and ministry that is served in the style of Jesus. Dan Allender has perceptively observed that “the best leaders limp.” (*“Leading With A Limp,”* WaterBrook Press, 2006)

A Challenging Season of Ministry. We observed this principle in action as we served Christ and His Church this past year. Much time has been devoted to counseling, consulting, and encouraging discouraged ministry leaders, including several in crisis. We have sought to encourage our ministry servants to value the opportunity to “lead with a limp.” Perhaps the greatest evidence of these special needs is the fact that our mobility increased dramatically this past year. We logged just under 40,000 miles in our travels to over 72 church campuses for speaking, consultations, crisis needs, and special ministry occasions. This is by far the most miles logged in one year by the Director. Due to several urgent needs throughout the summer we did not have the opportunity to visit some of the CPR ministry sites as we typically have been able to do in the past.

While these challenging issues have taken much investment, there are also several positives to rejoice in. Pastors and churches facing the above mentioned difficulties are indeed finding God’s grace to be sufficient for their needs and are experiencing victory. We often utilize the special ministry resource funds, such as the Pastor’s Enrichment Fund, to encourage God’s special servants through books and other ministry resources.

Pastoral Placement. Working in the search process with churches and prospects is a regular part of our ministry. I am glad to report that eleven MARBC churches called new pastors in the past year. Of the almost 200 churches in the MARBC, twelve churches on average were in pastoral transition during the past year. I was involved in 26 consultations with pastoral search committees and conducted several interviews with prospective pastors.

Speaking Ministry. Another reason for the greatly increased mileage was due to a very full year of speaking. We enjoyed sharing in many MARBC churches (48 churches in all), including the opportunity to return to some churches where we had spoken a few years prior. I guess this qualifies us as veterans in this position! I also spoke in 3 conferences, a leadership retreat, and 2 ministry banquets. We developed and led two MARBC Regional Seminars that focused on servant leadership principles for pastors and deacons. This year we are developing regional seminars designed to help encourage ministry couples as they deal with the pressures of ministry.

Church Partnerships. The third year of the *“CPR Initiative” (Church Partnering Relationships)* involved approximately twenty churches in strategic partnerships. This year’s CPR projects provided critical help to church ministries that have struggled due to financial decline as a result of the Michigan recession. We thank everyone who partnered with the MARBC in the CPR Initiative. It would be our privilege to share with your church the importance of the MARBC partnership and participation in CPR. Materials explaining this ministry are available from the MARBC office or at www.marbc.net.

Strategic Initiatives. We presented at the 2009 MARBC Conference a prospectus which I submitted to the Council of 15. My prayer is that this prospectus will provide a solid foundation upon which the MARBC ministry can be developed in the years ahead. Because of the critical needs experienced by several churches and ministry leaders in our state this past year, I was unable to address the goals of the prospectus in the aggressive way that I had intended. It is my desire to carve out a season of time early in 2011 where study and then strategic implementation of this long range plan can be formulated.

A New Pastoral Scholarship! One key aspect of the strategic plan involves the development of future pastoral leadership within the MARBC. I quote from the plan which was presented at the 2009 conference:

*“**Scholarships** are being developed by utilizing current MARBC escrow funds to encourage the next generation of MARBC ministry leaders to pursue quality seminary education. The MARBC will partner with like-minded seminaries in establishing scholarships for young men (typically third year seminarians) who have a desire to pastor in an MARBC church or, better yet, plant a church in the MARBC. The scholarship opportunity will be communicated at state TFC events and through MARBC literature. Sponsoring MARBC churches will be equipped to **conduct internships** in cooperation with the MARBC and the seminary in order to prepare the prospective pastor to launch a church plant. The **church plant** location would be determined through the **joint partnership** of local churches, regional fellowships, and the MARBC.”*

I am pleased to report that one important element of this phase of the strategic plan has been realized. In the spring of 2010, the Council of 15 approved the allocation of over \$35,000 in MARBC invested funds towards this scholarship. These funds were combined with a love gift of approximately \$15,000 given two years ago by a family associated with the MARBC for a pastoral scholarship with Baptist Bible Seminary. This action enabled an endowment of \$50,000 to be established and therefore activate the special scholarship in conjunction with Baptist Bible Seminary, Clarks Summit, PA. Officially titled the *“BBS Michigan Pastoral Studies Endowment,”* this scholarship is being labeled by the Council of 15 as *“The MARBC Future Pastors Legacy Scholarship.”*



MARBC Future Pastors Legacy Scholarship endowment check presented by Ken Floyd to Dr. Jim Jeffery and Dr. Mike Stallard

Since this scholarship is now fully endowed, the MARBC can start awarding scholarships to qualifying seminary students at Baptist Bible Seminary beginning the next school year. Here is the general purpose and criteria for receiving this scholarship:

- The scholarship is for a BBS student who is a member in good standing of an MARBC church for a minimum of 3 years prior to entering seminary. Exceptions to this standard must be evaluated and approved by the MARBC Council of 15.
- The scholarship is for an MARBC-BBS student who will be entering their third (final) year of the Master of Divinity degree program at Baptist Bible Seminary. This final year involves completing an on-site, two semester internship in an MARBC church under the tutelage and supervision of a pastor.
- The MARBC encourages internships to take place, if possible, in a setting where church planting opportunities can be explored by the student and the host church or churches. It is acknowledged that God may lead the student in a different direction upon completion of his degree. However, the student will be encouraged to prayerfully consider a church planting opportunity within the MARBC or a pastoral ministry in an established MARBC church.
- The internship may be fulfilled in a single MARBC church where the pastoral situation is conducive to effectively participating in an internship. It may also be fulfilled with a group of churches in a particular region where the pastors and churches of an agreed upon internship consortium are willing to mentor the intern and prayerfully investigate church planting opportunities in that region.
- The faculty of Baptist Bible Seminary will evaluate MARBC seminary students during their first two years of seminary to determine if there are students that meet the criteria for this scholarship. They will then make annual recommendations to the MARBC Executive Director and MARBC Council of 15 regarding the awarding of a scholarship.
- The Executive Committee of the Council of 15, along with the MARBC Executive Ministry Director, will screen each recommended candidate and share their findings with the full Council of 15 for their approval.
- Scholarship funds will be paid directly to Baptist Bible Seminary for the seminarian's third year of tuition.
- Baptist Bible Seminary is responsible for the official implementation, monitoring, and grading of the internship program.
- The MARBC will monitor the internship with the host church(s) and Baptist Bible Seminary to prayerfully determine potential opportunities for the student upon graduation.

We encourage similar partnerships with other Baptist seminaries that fit the dynamics articulated in the MARBC doctrinal statement and constitution. We desire to be an encouragement to the young men in MARBC churches who sense God's direction in their lives towards pastoral ministry. We encourage MARBC churches to exhort young men to consider God's call to pastoral ministry.

Proactive for the Future. We continue to develop other aspects of the strategic plan, including providing practical help for current pastors seeking online continuing education. We are seeking funding from churches and burdened individuals to help fund this program. We have started receiving donations of computer equipment, technology, and tech support to help train God's servants to utilize this technology. We ask the MARBC constituency to join with us in prayer that God will enable us to effectively engage in Great Commission ministry in the "Jerusalems, Judeas, and Samarias" of our state (*Acts 1:8*).

Ministry Availability and Needs. We are available for speaking ministry, consultations, seminars, and strategic planning. We come by the invitation of the pastor and church. Our services are available to any ministry large or small. Because of this policy, the ministry of the Executive Director and the MARBC fellowship is supported by the love offerings, honorariums, mileage reimbursements, and regular giving of the churches and individual supporters. We sincerely appreciate your prayerful consideration of our personal ministry needs and that of the MARBC. We are grateful for the resource funds made possible by our churches' relationship with Brotherhood Mutual Insurance that helps undergird our ministry and special endeavors. It is the desire of the MARBC leadership that these Brotherhood gifts could be used primarily for special ministry projects like those outlined in the Ministry Prospectus. A letter regarding the special MARBC-Brotherhood Mutual partnership is included in your conference packet and is also available upon request from our office.

Thank You! I want to express my deep appreciation for my wonderful wife, Sharon. She is such a joy to work with and is a wonderful encourager not only to me but also those whom we serve. We enjoy the opportunity to work side by side in this ministry and count it a blessing from God. We thank you for your ongoing ministry partnership and prayerful support as we complete our fourth year of MARBC ministry. Your prayerful support is very meaningful to us as we travel often and seek godly wisdom and we counsel and minister in unique and sometimes challenging situations.



Mamaw and Papaw with Connor Wesley Helmick on his first birthday - a future recipient of the *MARBC Pastors Legacy Scholarship?*

Please remember that the MARBC is probably the only ministry that you support whose sole focus is to impact the State of Michigan with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is something worth embracing!

Partnering with you and praying for you,
Ken and Sharon Floyd

(October 2010)