

# Baptist Testimony

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 1 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010



## The Word Has It

Ken Floyd  
MARBC Executive Director

*“Strengthen me according to Your word,”*  
— Psalm 119:28

### “Pain/Joy”

Alright, I admit that this issue’s column title is actually two words! And two words that seem to be polar opposites. However, I believe that these two words are more closely linked than most people might think.

This was made clear to me during the past year as I listened to my wife and daughter frequently discuss the issues of childbearing. This was a conversation that I conveniently sought to avoid by finding something to do elsewhere, anywhere! But it was a topic that was impossible to avoid while visiting in the hospital room following the birth of our grandson, Connor, on May 28. At one point during our euphoria there were approximately a dozen people in the room, the majority of them female. When the conversation turned towards the trading of “war stories” by the moms in the room, the heroic men began to shuffle for the farthest corner or the nearest exit.



Allison  
&  
Connor  
Helmick

Actually, listening to the conversation from afar made me proud of my daughter-turned-mom. It made me grateful for my wife, who endured her own hardship for the sake of bringing into the world our little girl and only child. And, it made me appreciate again the sacrifice of my mother in order for me to be born. The discussion in that hospital room was of personal interest to

me because of my love for them. Yet, it also brought a sense of bewilderment since I will never be able to fully relate to what they have experienced.

Perhaps a column titled “The Answer Man Tackles Pregnancy” demonstrates why the average male may not be the best one to help an expectant mom with important answers related to her pregnancy.

**Q. Should I have a baby after 35?**

A. No, 35 children are enough.

**Q. I’m two months pregnant now. When will my baby move?**

A. Hopefully, right after he finishes college.

**Q. How will I know if my vomiting is morning sickness or the flu?**

A. If it’s the flu, you’ll get better.

**Q. What is the most common pregnancy craving?**

A. For men to be the ones who get pregnant.

**Q. What is the most reliable method to determine a baby’s sex?**

A. Childbirth.

**Q. My wife is five months pregnant and so moody that sometimes she’s borderline irrational.**

A. So what’s your question?

**Q. My childbirth instructor says it’s not pain I’ll feel during labor, but pressure. Is she right?**

A. Yes, in the same way that a tornado might be called an air current.

**Q. When is the best time to get an epidural?**

A. Right after you find out you’re pregnant. (OK, maybe a woman answered this one!)

**Q. Is there anything I should avoid while recovering from childbirth?**

A. Yes, pregnancy.

**Q. Does pregnancy cause headaches?**

A. Pregnancy causes anything you want to blame it for.

**Q. Our baby was born last week. When will I begin to feel and act normal again?**

A. When the kids are in college.

(from [www.CuddleBaby.com](http://www.CuddleBaby.com))

Pregnancy thoughts have been resurrected as our kids came to our home to celebrate Christmas with us. Besides enjoying our new grandson, we were also anticipating a phone call announcing that our niece, Sarah, had delivered her second baby (Moriah Grace indeed arrived safely.) As the ladies began to “talk shop” this afternoon after the announcement of this new arrival, I sought refuge in my office and am now writing to you. (Blame them if you don’t appreciate this column!)

So what’s my point in dealing with this topic? The oxymoronic joy of childbearing only comes as the result of enduring pain. The Bible uses this analogy to teach us an important spiritual lesson. The Apostle Paul reflects upon this in the Book of Romans, Chapter 8:

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God...For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”*  
(Romans 8:18-19, 22-23)

“Pain,” in the spiritual sense, points us toward the “joy” that awaits the children of God, and all of creation, upon entering the presence of Christ. A mother who is laboring in the throes of birth pangs may feel that the pain will never end. Likewise, you may feel the same way with what you are experiencing right now in your life or in your ministry.

Perhaps that is why there is an implied “joy” in relation to “pain” in the pages of Holy Scripture. Jesus delights in demanding that His followers take up their own crosses to follow Him (Mark

(continued)

# MARBC

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE



*"Real Hope for a Troubled World"* was the theme of the 67th Annual Conference of the MARBC, held

at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Grand Rapids on October 26-27. This well attended conference featured a good cross section of younger and veteran pastoral couples who serve in a variety of pastoral roles. All regions of Michigan were well represented at the conference, including a large contingency from the Upper Peninsula. Several guests were in attendance from other states and non-affiliated Baptist churches. Over 40 displays provided information and resources to the conference attendees.

Dr. Hantz Bernard, Director of Bibles International, shared the significance of "Christ, the Supreme Subject of Hope to a Troubled World" from 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Dr. James Grier, Distinguished Professor of Philosophical Theology at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, shared a two-part Biblical summary from Genesis to Revelation on the topic "Christ is the Hope of a Troubled World." Both speakers shared with great content and passion for the need to keep Jesus Christ as the central focus of the church's proclamation and ministry.



Dr. James Grier

Dr. Hantz Bernard

### BAPTIST TESTIMONY

Official Organ of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches

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Council of Fifteen - MARBC

Baptist Testimony is published bi-monthly, seeking to serve the cause of Regular Baptists in our association & State Fellowship. It will be sent to churches at a cost of 38 cents per copy. Individual subscriptions are \$5.50 per year. Deadline for copy is the 15th day of even-numbered months.

Several workshop tracts were also included in the conference. Mel Walker, president of Vision for Youth ministries, led three sessions dealing with ministry to the next generation. Mel's wife, Peggy, led three sessions related to women's ministries. Dr. David Turner and Dr. George Coon led workshops related to effective sermon preparation. Rev. Bill Crane's workshop shared a Biblical perspective in dealing with personal health issues.

*Peggy Walker makes two points during a women's session*



Dan Currie, pastor at First Baptist Church in Hastings, shared a special testimony regarding God's work and sustaining grace in his life as he dealt with a life threatening health issue over the past sixteen months. Dan gave thanks to God for the many things that he and his wife, Patty, have learned and for the wonderful support of the First Baptist Church family and those in the MARBC who have supported and encouraged them.



*Deanna Miller teaches during a children's session*

Deanna Miller, missionary with Child Evangelism Fellowship of Greater Detroit, was a wonderful leader of the children's sessions during the conference. Children were blessed by Deanna's Biblical teaching and her creative craft sessions.

During the Tuesday morning MARBC family session, reports were presented relating to the MARBC budget, the Executive Director's report, and MARBC Talents for Christ. The new MARBC constitution was unanimously approved by the conference messengers. Mr. Neil Pridgen shared a presentation on behalf of Logos Software. Rev. Del Sanders represented the Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Group and reflected on the special partnership that Brotherhood has shared with the MARBC. Over \$600,000 in special funds have been received by the MARBC because of member churches involved with Brotherhood since this partnership began in the early 1990s.

The election of new MARBC Council of 15 members was also held during the Tuesday

morning session. Greg Carlson (First Baptist, Allegan), Nathan Pierpont (Northeastern Baptist, Kalamazoo), and Tom Townsend (First Baptist, Rochester) were elected to 3-year terms. The new Council of 15 Executive Committee for the coming year was also announced: Chairman, George Coon; Vice-Chairman, Jim Howard; Secretary, Jeff Burr; and Treasurer, Mark Cizauskas. We are grateful for those who serve with the Council of 15 in helping to give direction to the ministries of the MARBC and counsel to the Executive Director.

MARBC Executive Director Ken Floyd, concluded the Tuesday morning session with a message related to the future vision of the MARBC fellowship. Speaking on the topic, "Christ is the Hope for the Troubled State of Michigan," Ken shared several key aspects of the "Church Strategic Initiative" that he had earlier presented to the Council of 15. This initiative will be discussed in detail in the next issue of the Baptist Testimony.



*Ken Floyd shares the MARBC's Ministry Vision*

A luncheon welcoming new MARBC pastors and wives was hosted by the Council of 15 and Ken and Sharon Floyd on Tuesday. Over 70 attended the luncheon and enjoyed hearing testimonies from the group.

The MARBC expresses its sincere gratitude to Pastors Jeff Burr and Craig Perry and the wonderful servants of Forest Hills Baptist Church for their outstanding work in preparing for and hosting this year's conference. The conference messengers were greatly blessed by their efficiency in preparing the facilities and caring for the details of the conference. It was a joy to observe both younger and older members of the Forest Hills family ministering side-by-side during the conference.

Messages from the conference's main sessions and workshops are posted on the MARBC website. You may also access other materials that were distributed at the conference at [www.marbc.net](http://www.marbc.net).

We encourage you to make plans to attend next year's conference which will be held at Evangel Baptist Church in Taylor on Monday and Tuesday, October 25-26, 2010.

# MARBC NEWS & NOTES

## **BELMONT, WEST CANNON BAPTIST CHURCH (DOUG CRAWFORD, PASTOR) –**

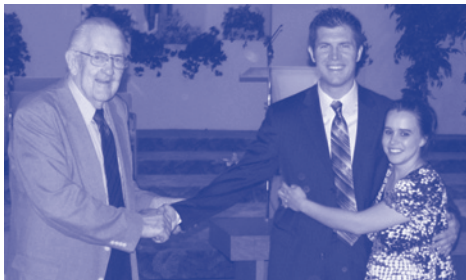
West Cannon Baptist Church of Belmont, Michigan, is pleased to announce the calling of Associate Pastor of Student Ministries, Joshua Butler. Josh grew up as a missionary kid in Australia where his parents served with Baptist Mid-Missions. He received a bachelor's degree from Bob Jones University and a master's degree from Faith Baptist Bible Seminary. Josh and his wife Amy have one son, Jack. West Cannon is happy to welcome Josh and Amy to the pastoral staff, and we look forward to the ways God will use their talents for His glory.



*Pastor Josh and Amy Butler, new youth pastor at West Cannon Baptist Church*

## **FENTON, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (JOSH GATES, PASTOR) –**

Pastor Josh Gates was ordained by First Baptist Church on Sunday, September 6, during a special time of celebration in the morning worship service. This followed an ordination council meeting on September 4. Dr. Joseph Bowers served as moderator of the council. Dr. Bowers has ministered as a mentor to Pastor Gates and also served as



*Dr. Joseph Bowers congratulates Pastor Josh and Andrea Gates*

interim pastor at First Baptist Church prior to Pastor Gates' call as senior pastor. The ordination council unanimously recommended to First Baptist Church that the ordination of Pastor Josh proceed and commended him for his doctrinal ability and gracious demeanor in defending the faith. Prior to his ministry as senior pastor,

Josh served as youth pastor. Josh and his wife, Andrea, have a young son (Thomas) and are expecting a second child (also a son) this spring.

## **GRAND RAPIDS, GOOD NEWS BAPTIST CHURCH (KARL PIKE, PASTOR) –**

Eighteen members of the "ROCK" College and Career class from Good News Baptist Church assisted a new church plant in downtown Chicago on December 4-6. The new church, River North Baptist Church, is a Continental Baptist Missions church plant. This new church is renting a storefront and is offering it as a "safe harbor" for children in a gang-influenced neighborhood of Chicago. The center is appropriately called, "Harbor House." The center will provide shelter, recreation, and mentoring with a heavy emphasis on fundamental Christian evangelization and discipleship. The "Rock" class members spent much of their time cleaning and helping get this ministry off the ground with an anticipated open house on Dec. 12. On Saturday night they spent some time Christmas caroling and handing out flyers on street corners near the church. It was a great weekend of ministry partnership and encouragement for both churches.



*Good News ministry in downtown Chicago*

## **MARBC, LEADERSHIP RETREAT –**

Thirty pastors and deacons enjoyed a two-day Ministry Leadership Retreat sponsored by the MARBC at Gull Lake Conference Center. The retreat featured Biblical teaching related to servant leadership in the local church. Dr. Howard Bixby, Executive Vice President of ChristWay Ministries, was the retreat speaker. Most of the churches represented at the retreat had recently called new pastors to their ministries. It was a joy to observe the interaction between these pastors and deacons as they thoughtfully processed the information from each session. Future leadership retreats are

currently being planned by the MARBC. Information will be shared at [www.marbc.net](http://www.marbc.net) and in future issues of the Baptist Testimony as they are scheduled.

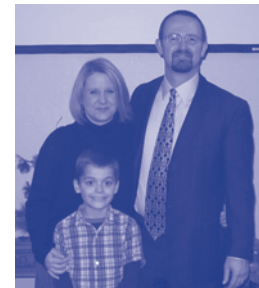
*Dr. Howard Bixby teaches at MARBC Leadership Retreat*



*MARBC Leadership Retreat at Gull Lake*

## **OWOSSO, CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH (DON FIELDS, PASTOR) –**

Calvary Baptist Church rejoices in the calling of a new senior pastor, Don Fields, in November. Don, his wife Traci, and son Tylar come from their previous pastoral ministry in Florida. An installation service and reception was held on December 6. Rev. Bob Fields, pastor of Germantown Hills Baptist Church in Metamora, Illinois, and father of the new pastor, shared the charge to the pastor. Rev. Dewey Moore, a retired pastor from Byron Center, Michigan, and a long time friend of Calvary Baptist, preached the charge to the church.



*The Fields Family is welcomed to Calvary Baptist in Owosso*



*Pastors Bob Fields, Don Fields, and Dewey Moore at Calvary Baptist-Owosso installation service*

*(continued on next page)*

**MARBC NEWS & NOTES** *(continued)*

**PORTAGE,  
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH  
(BILL ABERNATHY, PASTOR) –**

Berean Baptist Church held an Installation Service for their new Lead Pastor, Bill Abernathy, Sunday, September 20. Dr. James Grier, Distinguished Professor of Philosophical Theology at Cornerstone University and Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, was the speaker for this special service. Pastor Abernathy and his wife, Peggy, come to Berean from Immanuel Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio, where he served for 25 years. Berean is located at 7813 S. 12th Street, Portage, MI. For more information about the church, visit the webpage: [www.berean-mi.org](http://www.berean-mi.org).



*Pastor Bill and Peggy Abernathy, Berean Baptist Church, Portage*

**ROCHESTER,  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
(TOM TOWNSEND, PASTOR) –**

Thirty missionaries and their families supported by First Baptist Church attended the annual Missionary Christmas Conference on November 6-8. Ken Floyd, MARBC Executive Director, served as the keynote speaker for the weekend conference that centered on the theme, "Missions: It's a Family Affair!" Also featured were Charles ("Uncle Charlie") Vandermeer and Terri Ritchie from Children's Bible Hour (CBH) in Grand Rapids. The CBH team led the children's sessions that were held in conjunction with the main sessions.

Following an all-church dinner in the family center to start the conference on Friday evening, First Baptist Church members Larry and Melanie Strong shared a presentation regarding a recent short term missions trip that members of First Baptist Church took to Nepal. The team ministered with the Nepalese AWANA ministries.

Saturday's events included a testimony brunch where each missionary shared a key ministry highlight. A dessert fellowship followed the Saturday evening session

which featured the ministry of Children's Bible Hour and a message by Ken Floyd.

On Sunday, church members attended missions workshops featuring some of the missionaries during the Sunday School hour. The conference culminated with the distribution of financial gifts for special missions projects and a gift to all missionaries in attendance during the morning worship service.

The First Baptist Church family is commended for its great encouragement of its missions family at this special event and its strong prayer and financial commitment to missions each year.



*Friday missions dinner in Rochester*



*Uncle Charlie and his friend share in the Saturday evening session*



*Executive Director Terri Ritchie receives a check from Pastor Tom Townsend for the Children's Bible Hour ministry*



*Jeff and Raynah Oswald and the Baptists Children's Home group at the FBC missions conference*



*A portion of the First Baptist Church missionaries recognized at the conference*



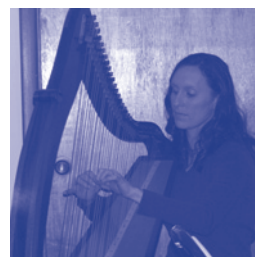
*Larry Strong shares about Nepal missions trip*



*Missionaries Bud and Eunice Johnson share at missions brunch*

**UPPER PENINSULA  
PASTORS & WIVES CHRISTMAS  
DINNER –**

Several ministry couples from churches in the Upper Peninsula gathered at L'Anse Baptist Church in L'Anse for the annual Pastors and Wives Christmas Dinner. Pastor Jerry Bishop and his wife Sarah hosted the dinner on behalf of the L'Anse Baptist Church family. Members of the church prepared the delicious meal and desserts and decorated the fellowship area for the occasion. Ken Floyd shared an update regarding the MARBC ministry. The evening concluded with a "white elephant" gift exchange.



*Beautiful harp music was a part of the Christmas Dinner*



*Randy and Debbie Reed listen as Pastor Jerry Bishop greets the dinner guests*

## CHURCH PARTNERING RELATIONSHIPS

We rejoice in the many CPR Initiatives that took place between sister churches in Michigan last year. The



MARBC office is in the process of *assigning CPR partnerships* for churches interested in *participating in 2010*. If you would like to assist a sister church or would like a church to assist your ministry, *please contact the MARBC as soon as possible*. Many churches and ministries are in the final stages of planning potential summer ministry and mission trips. Be sure to make CPR a major consideration in your planning.

Consider a sister church relationship with a ministry in another part of the state that would emphasize a co-operative partnership.

- ✓ Sharing of ideas, prayer requests, and resources.
- ✓ Form a consortium of sister churches in your area for joint strategy for church planting and/or missions ventures.
- ✓ Send a missions team to help with a building or repair project.
- ✓ Send youth or singles groups to conduct DVBS, canvassing ministries, etc.
- ✓ Share Sunday School and Bible study materials.
- ✓ Share media resource materials.
- ✓ Offer pulpit sharing opportunities for summer vacations.
- ✓ Receive special offerings for the needs of the sister ministry.
- ✓ Conduct a pastoral internship program to help train a sister church's next pastor.
- ✓ Add the sister church to the missions budget of the church.
- ✓ Receive a 5th Sunday offering on behalf of the sister ministry.
- ✓ Support mutual missionaries.
- ✓ Conduct joint mission trips to a foreign field.
- ✓ Offer to transport materials and resources when traveling to another area of the state.

For more information regarding "CPR" and how you can be involved as a church or as an individual, contact the MARBC office ([marbcken@aol.com](mailto:marbcken@aol.com); 616.364.5688) or refer to the information posted on the MARBC website, [www.marbc.net](http://www.marbc.net). Don't delay!

## SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

**BBC INVADES WEST MICHIGAN!!!** – Baptist Bible College is planning a weekend blitz in 2010! Opportunities to re-connect with alumni, or for parents, students, pastors, teachers to make a new connection. Everyone is invited to be part of the fun and fellowship the weekend of September 17-19, 2010! Weekend plans include: Friday, September 17: Golf Tournament at Pilgrim's Run; Saturday, September 18: Michigan vs. Notre Dame game day party. More activities and details to come!

**EMAIL ADDRESS** – Do we have your accurate e-mail address? Many people and organizations change their email addresses from time to time. Does the MARBC have your current address? Why not be sure by sending us an email and including your updated contact information? Send your information to either [marbcksharon@aol.com](mailto:marbcksharon@aol.com) or [marbckcn@aol.com](mailto:marbckcn@aol.com).

**IRS ANNOUNCES 2010 STANDARD MILEAGE RATES** – The 2010 standard mileage rates for business purposes, and medical and moving purposes are reduced from 2009 levels, as anticipated.

Beginning on January 1, 2010, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be: 50 cents per mile for business miles driven, 16.5 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

In 2009, the standard mileage rates were: 55 cents per mile for business purposes, 24 cents per mile for medical or moving purposes, and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations. (Source: *Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, ECFA Newsletter, December 2009*)

## WITH THE LORD

**TOM HAMMOND** – Tom Hammond, chaplain with Forgotten Man Ministries and former MARBC pastor, was ushered into the presence of his Lord and Savior after being involved in a two-car crash on Friday, November 13, 2009, at the age of 61. He accepted Christ at the age of 8 at vacation Bible school. Tom was a



*Tom Hammond*

graduate of Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music and Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. He met his wife June in college. The Hammonds celebrated their fortieth anniversary this past June. He is also survived by his four children and eight grandchildren. He started his ministry as a youth pastor and served in this capacity at several churches. Later he served at Cedar Heights Baptist Church where he worked with Campus Bible Fellowship at the University of Northern Iowa. He served as the senior pastor of Kent City Baptist Church in Kent City, MI, for 14 years. For the past five years he served as Chaplain of the Newaygo County Correctional Facility with Forgotten Man Ministries. Tom was passionate about God and was a winsome, gifted, Christ-centered disciple-maker.

## THE WORD HAS IT *(continued)*

8:34). Paul takes pleasure in facing headlong infirmities, reproaches, needs, persecutions, and distresses because they are for Christ's sake and produce strength in the midst of weakness (*2 Corinthians 12:9-10*). James challenges Christians to count it all joy when they deal with various types of trials (*James 1:2*). Peter revels in the living hope of Christ that keeps the child of God secure so that he can rejoice even while being grieved by various trials (*1 Peter 1:3-6*). John emphasizes the joy for Christians because God's love abides in them and casts out fear (*1 John 4:16-18*). Jude declares in his stirring benediction that the One who keeps Christians from stumbling and presents them faultless does this with exceeding joy (*Jude 24*).

Those who are enduring any type of pain should be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls." (*Hebrew 12:2-3*) Jesus declared, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (*John 16:33*). You will be blessed by God's labor of love.

– You have His Word on it! (KEF)

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## ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### January

- 1 - Pastor & Mrs. Joe Balbach, retired, Berean Bapt., Grand Rapids
- 2 - Pastor & Mrs. Jeff Malin, Bethel Bapt., South Haven
- 3 - Pastor & Mrs. Charles Hewlett, Hillside Bapt., Big Rapids
- 4 - Pastor & Mrs. Richard Liverance, Kentwood Bapt., Kentwood
- 4 - Pastor & Mrs. Steve Rodenburg, White Lake Bapt., Montague
- 17 - Pastor & Mrs. Clifford Lones, retired, Trinity Bapt., Muskegon
- 30 - Pastor & Mrs. Duane Cross, First Bapt., Weston
- 30 - Pastor & Mrs. Dan VanderVelde, Trinity Bapt., Muskegon

### December

- 14 - Pastor & Mrs. Richard Halfman, Plymouth Bapt., Plymouth – 35 years!
- 22 - Pastor & Mrs. Burt Wachter, Wolf Lake Bapt., Muskegon
- 23 - Pastor & Mrs. Charles Richardson, Chippewa Hills Bapt., Remus

*May your marriage and ministry be marked by God's guidance and blessing!*

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## KEN'S ROAD REPORT

- Jan. 9 Appreciation dinner gathering in Detroit
- Jan. 10 First Baptist Church in Freeland**
- Jan. 10 Search Committee meeting, First Baptist Church, Freeland
- Jan. 13 GRARBC Breakpoint meeting, Good News Baptist Church, Grand Rapids
- Jan. 13 Friendship Club, North Park Baptist Church, Grand Rapids
- Jan. 16 Pastors consultations in west Michigan
- Jan. 17 Calvary Baptist Church, Kalkaska**
- Jan. 18 Pastor's consultation
- Jan. 19 Missions consultation
- Jan. 24 Fellowship Baptist Church, East China**
- Jan. 25-26 Baptist Bible College & Seminary Trustee Board meetings, Clarks Summit, PA
- Jan. 31 Fellowship Baptist Church, East China**
- Feb. 7 OPEN**
- Feb. 9 CMARBC Quarterly Meeting, First Baptist Church, St. Louis
- Feb. 14 OPEN**
- Feb. 21 South Baptist Church, Bay City, missions conference**

Contact Ken if you would like him to speak or minister in your church in 2010.

Please send all support checks, correspondence, church bulletins, newsletters and requests for speaking engagements to:

MARBC

830 Russwood St., NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
Phone: (616)364-5688

MARBCken@aol.com / MARBCSharon@aol.com  
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