

Baptist Testimony

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The Word Has It

Ken Floyd
MARBC State Representative

“Strengthen me according to Your word,”

— Psalm 119:28

MARCH'S WORD:

“Relationship”

Recently, while accompanying my wife Sharon and daughter Allison on a shopping expedition in preparation for Allison's upcoming June wedding, I stopped in a book store and did some browsing. On this particular visit I spent most of my time in the historical section and focused upon volumes dealing with wartime events. I left the bookstore once again captivated by the several stories of raw courage and human drama.

Some of the most gripping accounts that come out of wartime experiences are the stories that take place in prison camps. Those who are thrown into the survival mode demanded by these tough conditions find themselves making critical decisions in order to proceed toward eventual liberation. In my bookstore browsing I was once again reminded of the story of one group of soldiers who were in bondage in a Nazi prison camp during World War II. Their story became the basis for a film in 1963 with the title, “The Great Escape.”

“The Great Escape” is based on the true story, written by Paul Brickhill, of a group of Allied prisoners of war who managed to escape from an allegedly impenetrable Nazi prison camp during World War II. At the beginning of the film, the Nazis gather all their most devious and troublesome

POWs and place them at a new prison camp, which was designed to be impervious to escapes.

The prisoners in this particular camp were not content to let the enemy set the agenda or to determine their destinies. They had a decision to make. They recognized that individually a few might find success and secure freedom, but the vast majority would be left behind and face certain destruction. With this acknowledgement, they determined to develop a relationship with one another that would take advantage of the skills that each possessed in order to pull off a great escape that would benefit them all.

Immediately, the prisoners develop a scheme where they will leave the camp by building three separate escape tunnels. A British soldier masterminds the whole plan and commands his patchwork squad which includes a Polish trench-digging expert, an American thief, an American master forger, and an American rebel.

With steely determination, each POW accepted his responsibility and aggressively fulfilled his part of the team plan. Some helped design and engineer the strategy. Others helped to dig tunnels, using the wooden supports that others provided from their carefully altered bunks. Many helped to discreetly dispose of the dirt that was carried from the tunnels as they were dug. Several served on shifts to operate the bellows that pumped air into the tunnels so that the workers had enough oxygen to survive. And some helped rig lighting so that the tunnels were adequately lit and the way of escape more easily illuminated.

In conjunction with this manual labor, other members of the escape team

had to prepare for the aftermath of the escape. They had to secure civilian clothing, homemade compasses and maps of the region, German papers of authenticity, and enough food to survive the first days of their liberation. Some of the POWs even trained in techniques of diversion so that their German captors would be distracted while their plan continued to be implemented.

John Sturges, director of the film account, observed: “Never has the human capacity been stretched to such incredible lengths or shown such determination and such courage. It demanded the concentrated devotion and vigilance of more than 600 men – every single one of them, every minute, every hour, every day and every night for more than one year.”

In reviewing not only the ultimate success of the project but also the implementation of it, there seem to be two keys that unlocked the success of their incredible mission. The **first key** was **agreement**: there was an agreement by all to be personally invested in the plan. The **second key** was **aggression**: there was an aggressive implementation of that which was agreed upon.

While reflecting on this unique and inspiring group of committed prisoners I was struck with a compelling thought. This group was comprised of men from diverse backgrounds and with questionable motives and character. If they could accomplish such a great feat, based primarily upon human determination – why couldn't the church of Jesus Christ, an army comprised of blood bought Christian soldiers, instructed by the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, accomplish far more?

As I related in February's column, I have often been asked if church associations are relevant in today's ecclesiastical world. My answer is, “Absolutely!” Indeed I believe that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, not only endorses such relationships but emphasizes them. The Book of Acts shares the historical record of churches of various locations, backgrounds, and capabilities involved in a strategic network of evangelism and church

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BAPTIST TESTIMONY
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830 Russwood St., NE
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MARBC NEWS & NOTES

BELMONT, WEST CANNON BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR DOUG CRAWFORD) – West Cannon Baptist Church of Belmont, Michigan, is excited to announce the calling of Tim Sommers to the position of Pastor of Outreach and Discipleship. Prior to accepting this call, Tim and his wife Robin along with their two daughters, Michele and Nicole, were missionaries to Brazil with Baptist Mid-Missions. God has given Tim a passion for reaching the lost and disciplining believers, as well as the ability to teach and encourage people to reach out to their communities and share the love of Christ. The staff and church family at West Cannon are thrilled to have Tim and Robin join our pastoral staff.



Tim and Robin Sommers, West Cannon Baptist Church

FRUITPORT, CLOVERVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR JOSHUA RAGER) – (This information is corrected from the February issue) Cloverville Baptist Church held a 50th anniversary celebration in October with 144 in attendance. Speakers for the day were former pastors Mark Jochen, Richard Wahl, and Johnathan Rager. There were three Charter Members in attendance who were recognized during the service. Two of the members appear in the picture with Pastor Joshua Rager: Virginia Mackenzie and Delores Osterhart. The third member, Herb Mackenzie, had to leave before the picture was taken. The church rejoices that in November eight individuals

were added as members, including four through baptism. The church concluded their “Year of Jubilee” in December with a Christmas Concert and Drama.



Cloverdale Baptist Church 50th Anniversary

“YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU DECIDE TO ACCEPT IT...”

Mark Sigmon, Global Impact Services

“Mission Impossible”, a popular TV series in the late 1960’s and early ’70’s, sent Mr. Phelps and his team on assignments of international importance. Without fail, they saved the world in one hour (minus the commercials). You too have an assignment of global consequence...

THE MISSION DEFINED

The Great Commission is our greatest mission! But what *exactly* does our Lord call us to do? The command to “make disciples” (Mt. 28:19) is like saying “eat”: without further instruction we don’t know whether to consume this piece of paper or that delicious steak. The *full* command - God’s ultimate plan - is “make disciples of *all nations*” because the goal is *full* access: the church in every region and nation (literally, “ethnic people group”) so the Gospel can reach every person. This is not our only duty but it is our highest priority. You and I could spend our entire life witnessing just to those in our own community, but God calls us all to so much more. The journey begins in our own Jerusalem, but our destination is always the ends of the earth.

THE MISSION APPLIED

How are we doing? Of the world’s six and a half billion people, roughly one third claim to be Christians (at best only half of them are born again), one third have heard the claims of Jesus but reject Him, and the remaining third have never even heard the name of Jesus. Although we have made great progress, the mission is far from accomplished. *What are we doing?* We are only scratching the surface of our

potential! While we continue to give significant personnel and finances to Christian ministry, the portion allotted to *global* ministry continues to decline. But the answer is not just more missionaries or money – *its better strategy*. In this post-9/11, post-modern, post-Christian era, the world has changed and so must the way we do missions.

Matthew 28 compels us all to respond because we are not called just to glorify God where we are: we are driven to see Him glorified where the church is not. This is truly more than we could imagine, that we could make such a difference in all the earth. Bring your life and your church together in a cause greater than self. Let your unbridled passion be for God’s glory to all nations so He receives glory from all nations.

Will you accept this mission?

Note: Do you want to take your global outreach to the next level? Global Impact Services offers:

- *Consultation*. With ten years of church ministry and fifteen years of international ministry, Mark will help evaluate where you are, where you could go, and how to get there.
- *The Global Impact Manual*. This 90-page resource is the essential roadmap for your mission to the nations. Here you will find motivation, information, and evaluation to advance eighteen critical areas of cross-cultural ministry.
- *The Global Insight Series*. In future issues of the MARBC newsletter, watch for brief articles with practical insights and fresh ideas to get beyond “missions as usual”.



Insights and Information For Your Mission To The Nations

www.globalimpactservices.org
616.821.7117
mark@globalimpactservices.org

MARBC MESSENGER – The Messenger is a regular email communication from the MARBC office to our pastors and churches. Several MARBC Messengers are sent out each month from the MARBC office. If you have not received MARBC emails recently, be sure to contact marbcken@aol.com or marbcsharon@aol.com to be placed on the email list. Thank you!

BAPTIST TESTIMONY

Official Organ of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches

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Council of Fifteen - MARBC

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THE WORD HAS IT *(continued)*

planting. Many of the New Testament letters were addressed to groups of churches. A survey of the New Testament church reveals the two keys that I mentioned earlier in this column. There was an agreement to be personally invested in the plan Christ commanded. And that agreement led to an aggressive implementation of that plan in a way that impacted the world.

Jesus Christ, our Commander-in-Chief shares the plan we are to focus upon in *Matthew 28:19* – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Later, in His last statement prior to ascending into heaven, Jesus gives the directive: “... You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (*Acts 1:8b*). As I noted in my January column, “Judea” for the churches in fellowship with the MARBC is the **State of Michigan**. It is critical for our churches to effectively reach and cultivate our “Judea.” This is accomplished in two important ways. First, the churches that are currently a part of the MARBC must be effectively strengthened and encouraged. Second, a strategic plan for church planting throughout Michigan must be designed and implemented.



“They glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men.” 2 Corinthians 9:13

“THE CPR INITIATIVE”

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

A new paradigm of ministry for the MARBC

The New Testament model for the church clearly encourages and endorses the partnering of churches for missional and regional objectives.

One particular case study that illustrates the importance of church partnerships is found in *2 Corinthians 8-9*. In this passage, the Apostle Paul addresses the critical financial need of the churches in Judea. He shares the heartwarming story of the churches of Macedonia, who in many ways were even poorer than the churches for which the offering was being collected. Their work was noted as being –

- gracious (8:1),
- liberal (8:2),
- over abounding (8:3),
- given with urgency (8:4),
- involved a gift and fellowship (8:5),
- and was personal (8:6).

Paul later notes (*2 Corinthians 9:1-4*) that the Macedonians, among others, were personally involved in the collection and distribution of the gift being received. Paul uses the Macedonians’ example, among others, to challenge the larger and more affluent Corinthian church regarding the extent of their participation. **In this story we find churches of all sizes and locations joining together in a partnering relationship.**

It is in the same spirit exemplified by the Macedonian churches and the encouragement of the Corinthian church by the Apostle Paul to be emboldened by their example that we call upon this generation of MARBC churches and pastors. We encourage the pastors and members of each partnering church to reflect the glory and grace of Jesus through practical expressions of unity, partnership, and enrichment.

CHURCH PARTNERING RELATIONSHIPS (CPR) CONTAIN 3 BASIC QUALITIES:

- ✓ **Caring:** a proactive vision towards mutual edification
- ✓ **Praying:** regular sharing of requests and initiatives that promote mutual prayer
- ✓ **Resourcing:** embracing the mission of practical encouragement by outsourcing materials and personnel

CHURCH PARTNERING RELATIONSHIPS (CPR) OFFER A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES:

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.

God challenges Christians and churches to be involved in meaningful, purposeful relationships. *Romans 12:10, 13* teaches, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another ... distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.” May these qualities mark us as an association of churches. Will you join me in prayer asking God that the MARBC network will cultivate a special, practical relationship with one another that will bring glory to the name of Christ?

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:8)

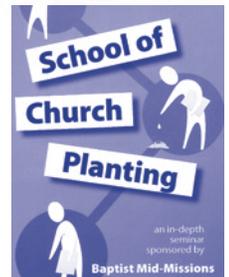
You have His Word on it! (KEF)

(This is the third of three articles regarding the MARBC’s new initiative called “CPR” – Church Partnering Relationships. A brochure detailing this ministry and Ken Floyd’s message regarding “CPR” is available to download at www.marbc.net.)

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

23RD ANNUAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH PLANTING:

The 23rd Annual School of Church Planting will be held June 16-19, 2008. This 4-day seminar is taught by experienced church planters from Baptist Mid-Missions and will be held at the First Baptist Church in Medina, Ohio. The cost is just \$250 per person/\$275 per couple. E-mail RNMcNamara@juno.com or call (540) 825-2170 for an informative brochure.



SPECIAL PASTORS AND WIVES DISCOUNT:

the Best Western Scenic Hill Resort in Beulah, Michigan, is once again this year offering a special getaway for pastors and wives of the MARBC at their hotel. The special rate is \$50 per night, plus tax, and includes a full hot breakfast. This rate is available through May 23 (based on availability). They also offer a discount of 20% off all Spa services. Contact Dave Easter, 1.800.439.7080, for more information and reservations.

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KEN'S ROAD REPORT

- Mar 7-8 GRARBC Church Ministries Conference, Grand Rapids, general sessions speaker
- Mar 13 Baptists for Life Banquet, Grand Rapids
- Mar 13 Lincoln Lake Baptist Camp banquet speaker, West Cannon B. C., Belmont
- Mar 14-15 Northern Outreach Conference, Faith Baptist, Cheboygan
- Mar 16 Evangel Baptist Church, Houghton
Mar 23 Resurrection Sunday - John 11:25!
Mar 30 First Baptist Church, North Adams
Apr 6 Hesperia Baptist Church, Hesperia
Apr 8 "Interpas" meeting, West Cannon Baptist, Belmont
- Apr 13 OPEN
Apr 15 Council of 15 meeting, First Baptist, Allegan
- Apr 17 Continental Baptist Mission Banquet speaker, Calvary Baptist, Grand Rapids
- Apr 19 MARBC Talents for Christ competition, South Baptist, Flint
- Apr 20 Trinity Baptist Church, Muskegon
Special note: Dates are still available on Ken's speaking calendar for 2008.

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

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MARCH 2008

ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 21 - Pastor & Mrs. Scott Parmenter, Berean Baptist, Grand Rapids
- 31 - Rev. & Mrs. Fred Slagle, Victory Baptist, Manchester

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MARBC EVENTS TO PLACE ON YOUR 2008 CALENDAR

Saturday, April 19, 2008

MARBC Talents for Christ Competition
South Baptist Church, Flint
Ken Pyne, Director
Early registration deadline: February 15



May 1-3, 2008

Annual MARBC Men's Retreat
Lake Ann Baptist Camp
"Being Men of Valor: How to Develop the Character of a Conqueror"



Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Bill Jenkin
President, Continental Baptist Mission
No price increase for 2008!!!

2 nights, 6 meals \$105 / 1 night, 5 meals \$77 / Friday only, 3 meals \$41.
\$40 non-refundable registration fee
Pastors receive a 50% discount with an overnight stay
Brochures and registration will be available soon by mail, fax, and online at www.lakeanncamp.com

September 28, 2008
MARBC Annual Day of Prayer

October 27-28, 2008
66th Annual
MARBC Conference

First Baptist Church,
Rochester, Michigan
Dr. Jim Jeffery
President, Baptist Bible College, Graduate School, and Seminary



WITH THE LORD

Pastor Irvin L. Piell was welcomed home by his Lord and Savior on January 17, 2008. He leaves behind his wife, Dorothy, with whom he had been married 65 years, and four children. All of Irvin's pastorates were in the state of Michigan: Daggett Baptist Church, Daggett (1949-55); Algoma Baptist Church, Algoma (1955-79); and Newhall Baptist, Wyoming (1979-87). He was named Pastor Emeritus at Newhall upon his retirement. He continued to serve the Lord as an interim pastor and providing pulpit supply. The Lord used Pastor Piell's ministry to lead several young people to Christ and to encourage many of them to enter pastoral and missionary ministry. A memorial service was held at Algoma Baptist Church and was officiated by Irvin's son, Pastor David Piell; Pastor Steve Holman (Newhall Baptist Church, Wyoming); and Pastor Mike Eleveld (Berean Baptist Church, Portage).