

Baptist Testimony

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The Word Has It

Ken Floyd
MARBC State Representative

“Strengthen me according to Your word,”

— Psalm 119:28

APRIL’S WORD:

“Wash”

An old Hebrew proverb declares that “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” In his classic book, “Great Expectations,” Charles Dickens describes the meticulous work of Mrs. Joe as she prepared for her family’s Christmas gathering. From the new linens that replaced the worn versions to the scrumptious feast to be served at dinner, her goal was a perfect dining experience for the holiday. In summarizing her compulsive behavior, Dickens shares that Mrs. Joe was a very clean housekeeper who was obsessed by the motto “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

Living in today’s “germophobic” society, it is hard to believe that there once was a time when germs and contamination were not taken seriously. Consider, for example, the commentary of Boyce Mouton regarding one man’s futile efforts to combat the poor medical practices of early nineteenth century clinics:

“In 1818, Ignaz Phillip Semmelweis was born into a world of dying women. The finest hospitals lost one out of six young mothers to the scourge of “Childbed Fever.” One out of every six! Typically, every doctor’s daily routine began in the dissecting room where he performed autopsies. Regularly participation in this procedure helped to train and educate the practicing physicians. From the dissecting room, the doctor would make his way to the hospital to examine expectant mothers. However, the doctor would move into the examinations without ever pausing to wash his hands.”

“Dr. Semmelweis was the first man in history to associate these two routine aspects of doctors’ daily rounds with the resultant infection and death. His personal practice was transformed by this knowledge. His regular routine was to

wash with a chlorine solution after each individual procedure. After eleven years and the delivery of 8,537 babies, he lost only 184 mothers -- about one in fifty. This was a staggering contrast to the rest of his cohorts.”

“Dr. Semmelweis vigorously spent the rest of his life lecturing and debating with his colleagues. Once he argued, “Puerperal fever is caused by decomposed material conveyed to a wound. I have shown how it can be prevented. I have proved all that I have said. But while we talk, talk, talk, gentlemen - women are dying. I am not asking anything world shaking. I am asking you only to wash . . . [Please], wash your hands.” But virtually no one believed him. Doctors and midwives had been delivering babies for thousands of years without washing, and no outspoken Hungarian was going to change them now! Sadly, Semmelweis died insane at the age of 47, his washbasins discarded, his colleagues laughing in his face, and the death rattle of a thousand women ringing in his ears.”

Even greater than the anguish that Dr. Semmelweis suffered in recognition of the need for physical cleanliness is the distress that each person endures in recognizing the need for spiritual cleanness. The critical issue of being clean in order to be holy has long been recognized. Francis Bacon wrote in his work, “Advancement of Learning” (1605): “Cleanness of body was ever deemed to proceed from a due reverence to God.” Similarly, almost two centuries later John Wesley observed in one of his sermons (1791) “Slovenliness is no part of religion. Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness.”

The spiritual burden that every person faces regarding spiritual cleanliness is summarized in the anguished prayer of King David shared in *Psalm 51:2* - “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Without being washed clean, every person will die spiritually from the contamination of sin. God makes it clear that cleansing is an absolute

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May 1-3, 2008 – Annual MARBC Men’s Retreat

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MARBC NEWS & NOTES

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

West Cannon Baptist Church hosted their annual Bible Conference and Pastors' Seminar on February 25-27. The theme of this year's conference was "The Living Word." Speakers at the conference included Dr. Walter Kaiser, from Gordon-Conwell Seminary; Dr. Steve Lawson, from Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama; and Dr. James Grier, from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. To complement this year's conference, Jeannie Vogel, from the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, and the Women's Ministry of West Cannon conducted seminars for pastors' wives. The conference also included times of wonderful singing and worship, as well as Scripture recitations from Jason Nightingale. For audio from the conference messages, visit www.westcannon.org/thelivingword.



Dr. Walt Kaiser



Jason Nightingale shares Scripture



Dr. Steve Lawson



Dr. James Grier

EMARBC, "MEN MODELING THE MASTER" SEMINAR –

On March 1, over 200 men gathered at Emmanuel Baptist in Flint for the "Men Modeling the Master" Creation Seminar given by Mike Riddle of Answers in Genesis. It was a good presentation that gave all attendees material to use in standing for the truth of the Word of God. Creation is a factual truth, proven by both the Bible and scientific evidence that needs to be proclaimed with boldness and clarity. The men returned to their homes with many resources, which they were able to purchase at the conference.

FLINT, EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR HAROLD CONSTANT) –

Emmanuel Baptist served 500 guests at a Men's Wild Game Dinner on February 19. Dean Johnson, a spring training chaplain for the Cleveland Indians, was the guest speaker. Eight men and boys responded to an invitation to receive Christ as Savior. The dinner served as a great time of outreach for the church.

FLINT, SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH –

Pastor Will Payne and South Baptist Church, Flint, have received a community award from Priority Children, a Genesee County, Michigan social services organization. The church was presented with the Children's Champion Award, designed to recognize and thank individuals, businesses and organizations for their tremendous contributions toward improving the lives of children in the community.

Under Pastor Payne's direction, South Baptist has been involved in the Carmen Ainsworth school district by giving away backpacks to underprivileged children, establishing ongoing mentoring and tutoring programs in the elementary schools and teaching parenting classes for interested people after school hours. Cindy Johns and Joyce Dunckel, members of South Baptist, wrote an etiquette training program called Girl Power which they



South Baptist Church receives award

taught in the elementary school. Pastor Payne also serves as the chaplain for Carman's basketball team, giving devotionals before the game.

South Baptist just completed their third year of Upwards Basketball, an outreach program that teaches basketball fundamentals and character to young children. This year the program hosted more than 200 children whose family and friends heard a ten-minute Bible message at the half time of every game. South Baptist Church takes seriously Jesus' instructions about ministering to children—and the community has taken notice.

GRARBC, "CHURCH MINISTRIES CONFERENCE" –

"Masterfully Motivated" was the theme of the Church Ministries Conference held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on March 7-8. The conference is an annual event sponsored by the Grand Rapids Association of Regular Baptist Churches, a regional fellowship of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Calvary Baptist Church of Grand Rapids served as the conference host.



Pastor Chad Vitarelli, Calvary Baptist, Grand Rapids, leads a worship session

The conference is attended annually by approximately 1,000 pastors, church leaders, workers, and teachers. Over 125 churches from both city and rural settings are represented at the conference. Over 75 workshops covering a variety of instructional and practical topics were offered during the conference. More than two dozen exhibitors offered ministry information and tools during the conference.

Sally Lillibrige, a member of Berlin Baptist Church in Marne, Michigan, was honored as the Christian Worker of the Year. Her pastor, Jeff Gunderman, presented her with a special plaque in recognition of her faithful ministry with 2-3 year olds for over 48 years.



Sally Lillibrige is honored as Christian Worker of the Year

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BAPTIST TESTIMONY

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NEWS & NOTES *(continued)*

The three main sessions included worship led by Chad Vitarelli, worship pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, and featured Calvary Baptist singers and musicians. The keynote speaker for the conference was Ken Floyd, Representative of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Ken's three messages focused on "Master Motivators" that are shared by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5. These include, the certainty of life beyond earthly circumstances (5:1-9); the fear of the Lord (5:10-13); and the love of Christ (5:14-21).



Ken Floyd shares principles about Master Motivation

Next year's conference will be held on March 13-14, 2009. Dr. Michael Loftis, President of ABWE, will be the keynote speaker.

GRARBC, WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION SPRING RALLY – Be sure to save the date of Tuesday, April 15 to attend the 78th Annual Women's Mission Spring Rally at Grandville Baptist Church, 4325 40th Street SW in Grandville, Michigan. The rally will include missionary speakers who will share challenges and information regarding important fields of ministry. Coffee and snacks will be served at 8:45 a.m. and the main session begins at 9:15 a.m. Lunch will be served at noon and costs \$4.00. Missionaries and children eat free. Child care is available up to 5 years old.

A care shower for the Baptist Children's Home in St. Louis, Michigan, will be an important part of the rally. Shower items needed include twin size percale sheets, bath towels (neutral colors), laundry and dishwasher detergent, canned fruit (peaches, pears, chunk pineapple), canned soups (any size and variety), canned beans (except green beans), butter crackers (i.e., Ritz or Club), sweetened condensed milk, garbage and Ziploc bags (all sizes), paper goods, Little Debbie Snacks, and 100% juice boxes or bottles.

LANSING, CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR DON GOMMESON) – Calvary Baptist Church welcomed its new senior pastor, Dr. Don R. Gommesen, with a special installation service on Sunday, March 9. Don, his wife Kathy, and son David moved to the area from Enfield,

Connecticut. Remaining in Connecticut are three daughters, two sons-in-law, and two grandchildren. Brother Gommesen attended Michigan State University, Moody Bible Institute and Grand Rapids Bible College. He received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Luther Rice Seminary and earned his doctor of philosophy degree from Greenwich University. He and his wife, Kathleen, met at Calvary Baptist while they were students at MSU and were married there in 1974. The service included a video charge to the church from Pastor Glen Dundore, who served as Calvary's interim pastor for 18 months. An additional challenge and reflections regarding the church's history and the Gommeseons were shared by pastor emeritus Tad Jamieson. MARBC State Representative Ken Floyd shared the challenge to the pastor. A fellowship luncheon was held following the service.



Pastor Don and Kathy Gommesen (center) and their extended family

THE WORD HAS IT *(continued)*

necessity for the forgiveness of sins, a right relationship with God, and the possibility of personal fellowship with Him. God shares often in His Word, "Be holy, for I am holy" (i.e., Leviticus 11:44-45; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:14-16). During His "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus declared, "Be you, therefore, perfect, even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

The great news is that God's Word declares the wonderful truth that Jesus "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5). This truth is expanded upon in Titus 3:4-6: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

If you have not yet personally applied this important truth, borrowing the plea of Dr. Semmelweis, "Wash!" You can have the same assurance and confidence that David did when he prayed to God, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," Psalm 51:7.

You have His Word on it! (KEF)

"THE CPR INITIATIVE"



Churches and individuals interested in participating in summer CPR projects should contact the MARBC office ASAP! marbcken@aol.com / 616.364.5688.

(Be sure to read the three articles regarding the MARBC's new initiative called "CPR" – Church Partnering Relationships in the January-March 2008 issues of the Baptist Testimony. These issues are available to download in a PDF format, along with a brochure detailing this ministry and Ken Floyd's message regarding "CPR" at www.marbc.net.)

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

HELP LINCOLN LAKE BAPTIST CAMP WITH A CRITICAL NEED:

We thank God for the fine camp ministries that we are blessed with in our state. One of them, Lincoln Lake, faces an urgent need due to the continuing increase of campers each season. The volume of attendance has overtaxed the camp's septic system. Due to this situation, the health department has given the camp until May 15 to upgrade the system or the camp will not be allowed to run its summer camping program. A special project fund has been started to construct a new drain field and septic system. The cost of the project is approximately \$25,000. At a banquet held on March 13, over \$19,000 was committed to the project. Will you prayerfully consider your involvement in this critical need so that the camp can continue to be used of God to spiritually impact campers of all ages? To send a donation or for further information on how to help, contact the camp office: 15113 Lincoln Lake Ave., Gowen, MI 49326; Phone: 616.984.2125; Email: office@lincolnlake.com. Be sure to designate your gift for the "Drainage Project."



BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY:

Calvary Baptist Church in Evart is hosting its 6th annual Summer Sizzler 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on May 24th, Memorial Weekend. There are divisions for ages 10-19 and there will be kid's games for the younger ones. A gospel presentation will be included during the day's events. You may get additional information and register online at www.realifyouth.org or contact Pastor Layton Dutton (231.734.2464; nascarpastor@hotmail.com). Half of the proceeds of the event will go to The Springs Camp in Gladwin.

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KEN'S ROAD REPORT

- Apr 6 Hesperia Baptist Church, Hesperia
Apr 8 "Interpas" meeting, West Cannon Baptist, Belmont
Apr 13 Victory Baptist Church, Sand Lake
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
Apr 26 Closed Door Ministries board meeting, Grand Rapids
May 1-3 MARBC Men's Retreat, Lake Ann Baptist Camp
May 4 Kent City Baptist Church building dedication, a.m. service
May 4 Grandville Baptist Church, Grandville, pastor's installation service
May 7-9 Baptist Bible College and Seminary Trustee Board meetings
May 11 Highland Hills Baptist Church
May 14-15 Baptist Bible College and Seminary event
May 18 OPEN
May 29 West Michigan Missions Consortium meeting, First Baptist, Lowell

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

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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



May 1-3, 2008

Annual MARBC Men's Retreat

Lake Ann Baptist Camp

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



APRIL 2008

ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 2 - Pastor & Mrs. Jerry Foster, Riverdale Baptist, Flint
- 3 - Pastor & Mrs. Wayne Haines, First Baptist, Lowell
- 6 - Pastor & Mrs. Brett Boomsma, Trinity Baptist, Grand Rapids
- 17 - Pastor & Mrs. Ralph Cass, Faith Bible Baptist, Bay Port
- 24 - Pastor & Mrs. Bud Armstrong, Galilean Baptist, Pinckney

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