

# Baptist Testimony

VOLUME 54 NUMBER 5 MAY 2008



## The Word Has It

Ken Floyd  
MARBC State Representative

*“Strengthen me according to Your word,”*

— Psalm 119:28

### MAY’S WORD:

## “Care”

As a young boy I was fascinated by the infant endeavors of the NASA space program. I would sit mesmerized in front of our black and white television watching the grainy images of the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs as scientists and adventurers sought to learn as much as they could about the “final frontier.” In its early days, the space program and America’s participation in the “space race” with the Soviet Union captured our nation’s attention. It was not unusual for hours of network coverage (which was the only TV coverage in those days) to be devoted to the preparations of launching astronauts into space, sharing elementary simulated depictions of what might be happening in space, and speculating upon the successful return of the space capsule and its human occupants.

Among the reasons that space flight has fascinated so many is the acknowledged risks and dealing with the unknown. Because of this the first group of astronauts selected, known as the Mercury 7, consisted of a group of proven fighter pilots who were willing to face the perils of space. When Mercury Commander Scott Carpenter returned from his orbits of the earth, he was met with all of the pomp that was offered to each heroic man willing to risk his life for space exploration. Amidst the homage that a whole nation heaped upon him, his five-year-old daughter, Candace, rushed up to show her father a sore she had acquired on her right elbow during his absence. This was the matter of supreme interest to her. She knew her father would be interested, too; and amid all the excitement and busyness of that moment her father did take time to show interest in his daughter’s elbow!

In a touching way the interaction by Carpenter with his young daughter paints an appropriate illustration of our heavenly Father’s care for His children. Running the universe is much more complex than even the plans and machinery of a space program. Yet God’s infinite care and concern for His own children extend to the minutest particle and the tiniest detail of our existence. Nothing is permitted to escape His infinite knowledge and control.

Jesus illustrated how personally God cares for each one of us in a story shared in Matthew 19:13-14. We are told that “little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” This story of the Creator of the Universe’s desire to give attention even to the simple needs of young children shows us His desire to be personally involved in each of our lives.

Jesus encourages us to come to Him with all our needs. He encourages, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-38) In Matthew 11:28 He urges, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” God is never too busy or too distracted to care for each need that is sincerely brought to Him.

This issue of the Baptist Testimony includes several stories about friends in the MARBC network who seek to share care and or who are in need of encouragement while facing special challenges. I would invite you to join me in upholding these friends in prayer, sending a note of encouragement, or taking advantage of the special resources being described.

Are you carrying a heavy load? Do you simply need encouragement from the One Who knows you and your needs better than anyone else? Acknowledge God’s frequent invitations to you from His Word, and, “[Cast] all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Even in the midst of overseeing the

complexities of the universe, He has the resources to care for even the smallest of your needs – including a skinned elbow.

You have His Word on it! (KEF)

### CARING FOR THOSE WHO HURT ‘CELEBRATE RECOVERY’ - A MINISTRY AND A MISSION

*Editor’s note:* In the past year, Sharon and I had the joy of sharing at the Annual Missions Conference at Standale Baptist Church in Grand Rapids. While we were there, we became aware of a special ministry being offered by the church for those in need of recovery assistance with substance abuse. Standale member Mike Richman has worked closely with Dr. John Watson, Standale’s pastor, in implementing the program “Celebrate Recovery.” The ministry was launched this past January. Mike serves as the Ministry Leader. The following article was written by Mike for Standale Baptist’s monthly newsletter, “The Standard.” The article has been edited for inclusion in the Baptist Testimony.

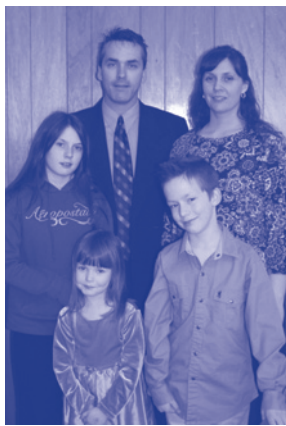
“If you build it, they will come.” This we were promised in a classic movie several years ago. Sounds simple enough, but in the world of reality, this promise takes on a variety of results. “Celebrate Recovery” is a program that is designed to give comfort, education, and spiritual support, for people’s hurts, habits and hang-ups. It addresses life issues, of those afflicted and most importantly, those affected. The program is Christ centered, Bible based, and is based upon 8 principles taken from the Beatitudes in the Book of Matthew. The 8 principles incorporate within them the classic 12 steps of recovery that virtually every secular program adheres to.

The major difference in “Celebrate Recovery’s” doctrine is the ‘big book of recovery.’ The original recovery manual is the Bible. Jesus Christ, without question, is the one and only “Higher Power.” The program also promotes teaching and discussion of Christ and Scripture, which are typically discouraged in secular 12

(continued on page 3)

# MARBC NEWS & NOTES

**CURTIS, CURTIS BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR MIKE STARK)** – Curtis Baptist Church rejoices in the calling of Mike Stark as their new pastor. An installation service was held on April 6. At the installation service Interim Pastor Dave Chambers challenged Pastor Stark with the responsibilities of the church, and he briefly challenged the church with their responses to the pastor's shepherding ministry. Mike and his wife, Sharla, have been married fourteen years. They have three children, Elizabeth (11), Dylan (9) and Sierra (5). A fourth child is due in the fall. The Starks served for 8 years as missionaries in South Africa. They move to Curtis from Richmond, Kentucky, where Mike served as a pastoral assistant. Both Mike and Darla have experience in writing. They have written several articles for the website "faithwriters.com." Praise God for His goodness and guidance in providing godly leadership at Curtis. This includes the excellent spirit of former Pastor Greg Carlson in his transition after ministering at Curtis for 18 years, to Pastor Dave Chambers wonderful ministry as interim pastor, to the full unity of the church in the calling of Pastor Stark.



*The Stark family joins Curtis Baptist Church*

**NEWBERRY, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR ANDREW MANWARREN)** – On Sunday, March 16, 2008, First Baptist Church of Newberry installed Andrew Manwarren as their pastor. The installation service was led by Pastor Benjamin Pent. Andrew is joined by his wife Valerie and daughter Alexis. Andrew and Valerie both graduated from Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, PA. For the past eight years, Andrew and his family served at Wayside Gospel Chapel in Greentown, PA. Andrew was ordained by Wayside Gospel Chapel on March 9, 2008. Pastor John Jeffery and his wife Billie traveled with the Manwarrens and were present for the installation service.



*Andrew, Valerie, and Alexis Manwarren*

**PORTAGE, BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR MIKE ELEVELD)** – Berean Baptist Church of Portage, Michigan had the privilege of ordaining two of their men to Gospel Ministry. Jon McGinnis, Pastor of Student Ministries at Berean, was ordained on February 17th. Brian Eggert, former Music & Worship Pastor and now a missionary appointee to Australia with ABWE, was ordained a month later on March 16. Both men gave a solid account of



*Brian Eggert Ordination*



*Jon McGinnis Ordination*

their doctrinal positions and were both commended by their respective examination councils.



*Victory Baptist installation prayer*



*Jeff and Dawn England*

**SAND LAKE, VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR JEFF ENGLAND)** – Victory Baptist Church welcomed Jeff England as their new pastor at an installation service held on Sunday, April 13. Pastor England along with his wife Dawn and daughters Michelle and Alethia come from Jenison, Michigan. Pastor David Fath, who served as an interim pastor at Victory and was instrumental in connecting the church with the Englands, gave the charge to the church. MARBC State Representative Ken Floyd gave the charge to the pastor. There were several testimonies shared by church members of all ages regarding their appreciation for God's faithfulness and their appreciation of Pastor England's ministry. Following the service the church held a special dinner fellowship in the Englands honor.

## MARBC EVENTS TO PLACE ON YOUR 2008 CALENDAR

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



### BAPTIST TESTIMONY

Official Organ of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches

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Baptist Testimony is published monthly (bi-monthly June/July), seeking to serve the cause of Regular Baptists in our association & State Fellowship. It will be sent to churches at a cost of 19 cents per copy. Individual subscriptions are \$5.50 per year. Deadline for copy is the last day of the month.

## CARING FOR THOSE WHO HURT *(continued)*

step programs. This is what every one of the over 4,000 churches nationwide participating in the "Celebrate Recovery" ministry has as its focus. What each church builds on top of this foundation is up to each individual church and its leadership.

Standale Baptist Church has been blessed in so many ways with this mission. The support from our Pastor, John Watson Sr. has been tremendous. This ministry is the result of his vision. Our progress, over the past months, has been extremely satisfying, enlightening and also quite different than we had anticipated. We measure the success of this program with an entirely different yardstick than secular groups because we measure by God's standards.

God has brought people, materials, and resources together for this program. The people God sent at first were small in numbers but large in need. He added more people each week in concert with our increased dedication and our ability to care for their individual concerns. God's yardstick was the deep satisfaction of seeing lives changed for the better. We opened the door, by sharing our experiences, strengths, and hopes with one another. We began to experience peace, serenity, joy, and most importantly, a stronger personal relationship with God, with ourselves, and those who attend.

At the time of this progress report, we have had several churches from around the Grand Rapids area contacting us about our program. They are sending their members to attend and others to gain information about how to start their own "Celebrate Recovery Ministry."

Numbers are no longer the important factor for us with the program. Our commitment is to be there for each individual on a personal level. Being there for those who are ready and anxious to accept Christ has become the most important factor. To date we have had a number of these opportunities. We are here to serve those that God brings in the door and not to be served by numbers or personal gratification. We have discovered that God's plan was to teach both student and teacher. In that respect, our mission has had enormous success.

NOTE: "Celebrate Recovery" is NOT just another program for drug and alcohol dependencies. ALL of us have been effected by either family or friends suffering from

## CARING AS CHURCHES – "THE CPR INITIATIVE"

Caring is a key dynamic of "Church Partnering Relationships" (CPR). So far a dozen partnerships involving 24 churches have been arranged for this summer. Remember to uphold these opportunities regularly in prayer in the weeks ahead. Prayerfully consider ways in which you can be personally involved in demonstrating godly care for others this summer.

### CHURCH PARTNERING RELATIONSHIPS WITH 3 PRIMARY GOALS:

- ✓ **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.

(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](http://www.marbc.net). For information about practical ways in which you or your church can be involved, contact the MARBC office.)

serious life issues. i.e. death, weight gain or loss, bitterness, pornography addiction, divorce, depression, gambling, and physical, mental, and sexual abuse. "Celebrate Recovery" is for anyone with the courage and willingness to open their life to healing and change.

"Celebrate Recovery" is a national program, but it is what each individual church does with their program that makes the difference. It is truly a mission field, of enormous size and importance, right here in our own backyard.

As Jesus said in *Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)*, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

For more information regarding "Celebrate Recovery" and Standale Baptist Church's experiences, contact Mike Richman, "Celebrate Recovery" ministry

leader, Standale Baptist Church, 3714 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, Grand Rapids MI 49534-4519; (616) 453-4489 or (616) 785-3469 / E-mail: [mrr316@gmail.com](mailto:mrr316@gmail.com).

### PULPIT SUPPLY INTERIM PASTOR MINISTRY

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## KEN'S ROAD REPORT

- 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 **Grace Baptist Church, Saginaw**
- May 29 West Michigan Missions Consortium meeting, First Baptist, Lowell
- June 8 **First Baptist Church, Fenton**
- June 14 Wedding ceremony of Allison Floyd & Taylor Helmick, West Cannon Baptist Church, Belmont
- June 22 **Oakfield Baptist Church, Rockford (tentative)**
- June 23-27 GARBC Council of 18 meetings and Annual Conference, Cedar Rapids, IA
- June 28- July 9 Vacation

Dates are still available on Ken's speaking calendar for the late summer and fall of 2008.

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

### MARBC

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**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!



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## MAY 2008 ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 3 - Pastor & Mrs. Stan Lightfoot, Whittemore - 67 years!
- 7 - Pastor & Mrs. Rob Schneider, First Bapt., Brooklyn
- 11 - Pastor & Mrs. Clyde Afman, First Bapt., Fremont - 62 years!
- 11 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Roossinck, First Bapt., Vestaburg
- 12 - Pastor & Mrs. Wm. Abrams, Calvary Bapt., Bergland - 35 years!
- 12 - Pastor & Mrs. Tim Shaw, First Baptist, Fremont - 1 year!
- 13 - Pastor & Mrs. Jarrod Bartholomew, Midway Bapt., Watervliet
- 16 - Pastor & Mrs. Scott Florida, Alpine Bapt., Comstock Park
- 16 - Pastor & Mrs. Tom Cooper, Byron Bapt., Byron
- 17 - Pastor & Mrs. David Martin, First Bapt., Portland
- 18 - Pastor & Mrs. Jeff Sheeks, First Bapt., Brooklyn
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Tom Townsend, First Bapt., Rochester - 35 years!
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Louis Konopka, Blytheheld Hills Bapt., Rockford
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Jeff Burr, Forest Hills Bapt., GR
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Doug Stockwell, First Bapt., Prudenville
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Joe Daniels, North Pk. Bapt., GR
- 22 - Pastor & Mrs. Nate Smith, Faith Bapt., Kentwood
- 22 - Pastor & Mrs. Scott Church, Trinity Bapt., Muskegon
- 23 - Pastor & Mrs. Don Jackson, Calvary Bapt., Battle Creek
- 24 - Pastor & Mrs. Greg Bishop, Northeastern Bapt., Kalamazoo
- 24 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Jones, Mason Rd. Bapt., Fowlerville
- 24 - Pastor & Mrs. Joshua Rager, Cloverville Bapt., Fruitport
- 25 - Pastor & Mrs. Josh Gelatt, Indian River Bapt., Indian River
- 26 - Pastor & Mrs. Frank Snyder, Jr., First Bapt., Cheboygan - 1 year!
- 27 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Kirkpatrick, South Bapt., Bay City
- 28 - Pastor & Mrs. Bob McNeil, Shelby Rd. Bapt., Shelby
- 28 - Pastor & Mrs. Steve Worth, Bethel Bapt., Fruitport
- 29 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Holeman, First Bapt., Newaygo - 15 years!
- 29 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Warren, Highland Hills Bapt., GR
- 29 - Pastor & Mrs. John Watson, Standale Bapt., GR
- 29 - Pastor & Mrs. Bob Norris, Ithaca Bapt., Ithaca
- 31 - Pastor & Mrs. Dennis Foley, First Bapt., Hart
- 31 - Pastor & Mrs. Kim Lewis, First Bapt., Essexville
- 31 - Pastor & Mrs. Shawn Rittmiller, First Bapt., Freeland
- 31 - Pastor & Mrs. Luke Rosenberger, Byron Bapt., Byron - 5 years!
- 31 - Pastor & Mrs. Rick Yokel, Tabernacle Bapt., Hazel Park

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

## SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CARE AND SHARE

**WOMEN'S SEMINAR:** Evangel Baptist Church in Taylor, Michigan, is hosting a "Women Get Real!" seminar on Saturday, May 17, from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. The conference is for women ages 16 and older and the cost is \$15 per person. The guest speaker for the event is Ann Conway, featured guest on "Family Life Today" radio and a frequent speaker for outreach programs and women's seminars. She and her husband, Sam, taught and worked with Larry Burkett's ministry for over twenty years. The seminar will focus upon how God has "wired women" and what a trustworthy Heavenly Father He is. A continental breakfast and lunch are included in the seminar. For registration information, contact the church at 734.946.5680 or [evangelbaptist@comcast.net](mailto:evangelbaptist@comcast.net).



**BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY:** Calvary Baptist Church in Ewart 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.reallifeyouth.org](http://www.reallifeyouth.org) or contact Pastor Layton Dutton (231.734.2464; [nascarpastor@hotmail.com](mailto:nascarpastor@hotmail.com)). Half of the proceeds of the event will go to The Springs Camp in Gladwin.

**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](mailto:RNMcNamara@juno.com) or call (540) 825-2170 for an informative brochure.



## CARING FOR THOSE WHO SERVE US MARBC PASTOR INCLUDED IN MILITARY DEPLOYMENT

We encourage the MARBC family to remember Pastor Ron Sischo and his family in prayer. Ron, an associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Saint Johns and a member of the US Navy Reserves, has recently been deployed to Iraq. Ron's wife, Pam, has given us ways in which we can share with Ron and his family during his deployment.

Basic information regarding Ron, Pam and their family can be found on their website, <http://family.websitesforheroes.com/sischofamily> (important: do not use "www" in the address). The password to access the site is "forwardhotel." (The password is secured and does not give anyone the ability to make any changes to the sites, only enables to access the site.) The Sischo family wants you to feel free to access their website and use whatever information you like. You also have their permission to share this website address and password with others who would be interested in Ron's status and are willing to uphold him in prayer.

Pam shares this basic information for your reference as you uphold their family in prayer:

- Ronald J. Sischo - birthdate: August 3, 1956
- Married to Pam on June 19, 1976
- Have five children, a married son and daughter, four grandchildren; three of their daughters still live at home (Kallie-23, Yvonne-15, Cassie-12)
- Ron and Pam were led to the Lord in January 1984 by Pastor Joseph Bower
- Ron has served as senior pastor at three GARBC churches ( Bible Baptist in Oak View, CA, First Baptist in Ducor, CA and Blessed Hope Baptist in Escanaba, MI) prior to his current ministry at the First Baptist Church, St. Johns, MI, where he has served for the past six years as Associate Pastor.
- Pam is a homemaker and a home-schooling mom of 23 years. She has her bachelor's degree in Biblical counseling and is currently pursuing her Masters degree.
- Ron has been in the US Navy Reserves 22 years. Was activated after "911" for six months and served those months at Sawyer Air Force Base in Marquette, MI.
- Ron was a "week-end warrior" at the Lansing Reserve Center, Lansing, MI, awaiting his retirement papers when he was activated in the fall of 2007.
- He is currently serving as a Yeoman First Class in Kuwait at the Coalition Forces Headquarters.
- Scheduled time to return home between November 2008 and January 2009.
- Other than serving his country, Ron's greatest desire is to "redeem this time for the Lord." He has had many opportunities to witness and share his testimony.
- Ron is eagerly seeking out Christian fellowship and is working with GARBC Chaplain John Murdock to find some!



*Pastor Ron Sischo*

The MARBC office will send updates via the MARBC Messenger email ministry with further prayer requests regarding the Sischos. Thank you for partnering with us in prayer.