

Baptist Testimony

VOLUME 54 NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2008



The Word Has It

Ken Floyd
MARBC State Representative

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

SEPTEMBER’S WORD: “Eyes”

One of the most marvelous organs of the human body is the eye. The eye serves as a window that opens up the world to us. Here are some amazing facts about this God-created window into the world:



• Eyes are the most complex organs you possess in your body, except for your brain.

- They are composed of more than two million working parts.
- Eyes process 36,000 bits of information every hour.
- Under the right conditions, eyes can discern the light of a candle at a distance of 14 miles.
- Eyes contribute towards 85% of your total knowledge.
- Additionally, eyes utilize 65% of all the pathways to the brain.
- Eyes can instantaneously set in motion hundreds of muscles and organs in your body.
- In a normal life-span, your eyes will bring you almost 24 million images of the world around you.
- The external muscles that move the eyes are the strongest muscles in the human body for the job that they have to do. They are 100 times more powerful than they need to be.

Eyesight may indeed be the most precious of the five senses for most people. While physical eyesight is extremely important, the Word of God places an even stronger significance upon a person’s spiritual eyesight. The Bible often uses the eyes as an illustration related to spiritual wisdom. There are over 500 references to the eyes in Scripture, many of them in the Old Testament wisdom literature of Psalms and Proverbs.

For example, Psalm 25:15 shares, “My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.” David, the “man after God’s own heart,” prays in Psalm 119:18, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.” An important visual instruction for practical daily living was quoted by Israel from the Psalm of Ascents, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills— from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.” (Psalms 121:1-2)

In the New Testament, the writer to the Hebrew Christians reminds us of the importance of our spiritual eyesight – “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.” (Hebrews 12:2-3)

Similarly, God’s Word comforts us with the truth that God’s omnipresent eyes are constantly focused upon His children. Psalms 33:18 reassures us that “the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in His mercy.” Psalms 34:15 reinforces us with the fact that “the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.”

We should never take for granted the importance and precious value of good eyesight. It is critical to proper functioning in the physical realm. More than that, it is eternally significant in the spiritual realm. This is why Paul prayed on behalf of the Christians in Ephesus: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.” (Ephesians 1:17-19)

Today would be a good day to evaluate the strength and the focus of your spiritual eyesight to be sure that it is properly focused. God promises to give spiritual clarity of sight to those who will look to Him for direction.

— You have His Word on it! (KEF)

THE SECOND ANNUAL MARBC DAY OF “ONE ACCORD” PRAYER

“They raised their voice to God in one accord” Acts 4:24
September 28, 2008

Purpose: a day for MARBC churches to devote their attention to prayer for our churches, pastors, camps, ministries, missionaries, and special needs.

Ideas for Participation:

- **Preach and teach on the topic of prayer** in worship services, Sunday School, ABFs, and small groups. Consider doing a study of the Disciple’s Prayer in Matthew 5; prayers recorded in the Bible, the qualities of prayer, hindrances to prayer, etc.
- **Plan a 24-hour prayer marathon or other prayer event** leading up to Sunday. Last year some churches conducted a season of prayer on Saturday in anticipation of the Day of Prayer. Materials on planning a prayer marathon and other prayer events are available from the MARBC office.
- **Join with a sister church or churches in your area** for a Sunday evening prayer service and/or “concert of prayer.” I.e., Last year, a few MARBC regional fellowships and some churches in the same area combined for this type of service.
- **Take a moment during the morning worship service to pray** for the churches, pastors, camps, missionaries, and ministries of the MARBC. Pray also for sister churches in your area. Every church in the MARBC fellowship is encouraged to pause at the 11:00 a.m. hour on September 28 to come before the Lord praying in “one accord.” While worship and service times vary in our churches, most of our churches are assembled in some ministry setting at the 11:00 a.m. hour. This would also be a good time for deacons and/or other church members to pray on behalf of their pastors in anticipation of Clergy Appreciation Month in October. If you cannot pray as a group at 11:00 a.m., pray at a time that would be most appropriate for your setting.
- **Use the special Day of Prayer to focus upon the ministries of the MARBC.** Bulletin inserts, prayer cards and other literature are available by contacting the MARBC office.
- **Receive a special love offering on behalf of the MARBC.** The MARBC ministry and the Floyds are supported by the love gifts from churches in the fellowship.
- **Contact the MARBC office** for additional information and/or materials regarding prayer initiatives for your church. Email: marbcken@aol.com

“EFFECTIVE BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP”

66TH MARBC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dr. Jim Jeffery
Baptist Bible College and Seminary,
Keynote Speaker

**Monday-Tuesday,
October 27-28, 2008**

**First Baptist Church,
Rochester Hills, Michigan**

*Sweet Fellowship / Challenging Messages
The CPR Initiative / Children's Meetings*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27

- 9:00- **Registration and**
- 10:30 a.m. **Refreshments**
- 10:30 a.m. **General Session** – Jim Jeffery
- 11:30 a.m. **Lunch** in local restaurants
- 1:15 p.m. **General Session** – Ken Floyd
- 2:30 p.m. **Super Seminar #1** – Randy Gilmore
Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 1
“The Process for Biblical Same Mindedness”
Ladies Seminar #1 – First Baptist, Rochester ladies
- 3:40 p.m. **Super Seminar #2** – Panel Discussion on Church Leadership Issues (Jim Jeffery, Randy Gilmore, Bob McNeil – moderated by Ken Floyd)
(Ladies Seminar continues)
- 4:45 p.m. **Dinner** in local restaurants
- 7:00 p.m. **General Session** – Jim Jeffery
- 8:15 p.m. **Reception** – immediately after the conclusion of the General Session (Baptist Bible College and Seminary Reception, including MARBC New Pastors and Wives Fellowship)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

- 9:00 a.m. **Season of Prayer**
- 9:30 a.m. **General Session** – Jim Jeffery
- 10:30 a.m. **MARBC Hour**
- 11:30 a.m. **Lunch** in local restaurants
- 1:15 p.m. **Super Seminar #3** – Randy Gilmore
Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 2
“The Dynamics for Change”
Ladies Seminar #2 – First Baptist, Rochester ladies
- 2:30 p.m. **General Session** – Jim Jeffery

This year's conference speaker is Dr. Jim Jeffery, president of Baptist Bible College and Seminary and an MARBC alumnus. In addition, Pastor Randy Gilmore (Hamilton Hills Baptist Church, Fishers, Indiana) will be sharing in 2 super seminar sessions on

the topic of “Church Conflict Resolution.” A third super seminar on Monday afternoon will be a panel discussion pertaining to leadership issues in ministry. This session will include a question and answer forum. A special interactive Tuesday morning session will be led by Ken Floyd regarding the mission of the MARBC fellowship. Conference packets with information, recommended lodging, and registration forms should be in your mailbox by early September. Information will also be posted on the MARBC website (www.marbc.net).



Dr. Jim Jeffery



Pastor Randy Gilmore



MARBC NEWS & NOTES

WEIDMAN, WEIDMAN BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR DEAN WILLARD) –

Weidman Baptist Church celebrated its 50th Anniversary on June 22nd. There were 182 in attendance. The church has a normal attendance of 70 on Sunday mornings. The theme for the day was “A Passion to Make Christ Known”. Pastor Marvin & Jeanie Eldridge were used of the



Pastor Dean and Deb Willard and family

Lord to start the church and Marvin pastored for 37 years before retiring. The church started as a Galilean Baptist Missions church. Pastor Dean & Deb Willard have been at the church for the last 13 years. Brian Eldridge brought special music along with Dennis Daryl Carr. Other music was brought by Hosey Humphrey (Hastings) and Bob & Becky Ministries (Lansing). A church history and power point presentation were made available by Denise Livermore. Lunch was served on the grounds. The children were able to release helium filled balloons directed by Russ Alwood. The oldest member in attendance was Ruth Yerke who turned 99 on July 5th. There was a display of 10 scrapbooks filled

with memories from the past 50 years put together by Nancy Bywater and Deb Willard. The church people were encouraged greatly during the day and grateful to the Lord for all He has done through them over the past 50 years.

BAY CITY, SOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH (PASTOR MARK KIRKPATRICK) –

South Baptist Church in Bay City will be celebrating its 115th Anniversary on September 13-14. A Gospel Concert will be held on Saturday evening, September 13, at 7:00 p.m., with guest artist, David Thomson. David Thomson is an accomplished trumpet soloist and singer. There will be no admission cost for this concert. A free-will love offering will be received. On Sunday morning a special Anniversary Worship Service at 10:45 in which there will be a recognition of guests, city officials, former pastors, missionaries and friends of the church. A catered lunch will follow the service in the church facilities.

Pastor Kirkpatrick shares: “In Luke 5:4, Jesus told His disciples to ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.’ It is in the deep waters that we learn to trust God to provide for our every need. God has blessed this church with a great and long heritage, and it is my desire to see South Baptist Church continue to trust the Lord for guidance and provision as we serve Him here in the south end of Bay City. We also are trusting God to provide a draught of ‘fish’ for His church.”

BAPTIST TESTIMONY

Official Organ of the Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches

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Council of Fifteen - MARBC

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.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES



FIRST ANNUAL LIFT CAREGIVING SUMMIT.

Baptists for Life is sponsoring the First Annual LIFT Caregiving Summit on Saturday, September 20, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Grandville Bible Church, in Grandville, Michigan.

LIFT (“Loving Individuals in Final Transition”) is a respite care ministry developed by BFL in 1991 to aid churches in caring for the needs of those who are chronically and terminally ill and their families. The need for this type of ministry is great in today’s society. As one pastor comments, “I am troubled that [local churches] spend an enormous amount of money, time, and resources ministering to our youth (who typically make up less than 25% of our congregations) and yet allocate little if anything toward our ‘Senior Saints’ who often comprise over 50% of our memberships.”

The goal of the summit is to bring together those individuals involved in care giving ministries for a day of encouragement, education, networking, worship, and praise. The Summit is for those who currently are or will soon be providing care to an aging parent or spouse, to special needs children, those involved in shut-in ministry, and those in the health care profession.

Special speaker at the summit is Shelly Beach, author of the ECPA Book Award-nominated “Precious Lord, Take My Hand: Meditations for Caregivers.” Workshops at the Summit include, “Soul Care for the Caregiver” (Ray Paget) and “Dementia, Alzheimer’s and Confusion: It’s Impact on Caregivers and their Church Community” (Jennifer Comegys). The cost is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple and will include lunch and materials. For more information and registration forms, contact LIFT coordinator Lisa Haan at lisa@bfl.org or 800.968.6086.

HAMILTON BIBLE INSTITUTE, a ministry of Hamilton Baptist Church (Pastor Jim Ruse) –

Last summer, Hamilton Baptist Church voted to take over The Fundamental Bible Institute which had been for many years sponsored by First Baptist of Holland. They are continuing this community program for the benefit of God’s people in the Western Michigan area. The church kept the Institute’s curriculum but changed the three year format from semesters to modules and began the ministry of Hamilton Bible Institute last fall. The Institute is open to any students desiring to deepen their understanding of God’s Word, those desiring to be more

effective in their present ministries, those contemplating a future ministry, and those seeking a closer personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The modules meet weekly on Monday evenings, 7:00-9:30 p.m. Fall modules on Old Testament are September 8-October 6; New Testament, October 13-November 10; and Theology, November 17-December 15. Spring modules are – Old Testament, January 12-February 9; New Testament, February 16-March 16; and Theology, March 23-April 27. The cost is \$35 per module, or \$105 per semester. There is an additional one-time cost of \$70- for books.

For a brochure and more information, you may contact Pastor Jim Ruse at Hamilton Baptist Church – 269.751.8596; Hamilton Baptist Church, 3690 M-40, Hamilton, MI 49419; email, hbaptc@macatawa.org

SEMINARS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR CHURCH –

Rev. Tim Hoganson, an 18 year veteran church planter who ministered in Brazil, offers seminars to churches on the following three subjects: personal evangelism, stewardship, and formation/reinforcement of the church missions committee. The Hogansons can present these seminars in any one of three languages: English, Portuguese and Spanish.

Tim, and his wife Joann, who ably participates with Tim in ministering these seminars, served from 1991 to 2007 as missionaries with the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. The Hogansons are now embarking on a new church planting endeavor in Fennville, MI. This is a Spanish language Baptist church of G.A.R.B.C. doctrine.

Rev. Hoganson, his wife and his family are members of Alpine Baptist Church in Comstock Park, MI, a church in fellowship with the G.A.R.B.C. Having traveled to a few hundred Baptist churches over the last 30+ years Tim and Joann have observed a critical weakness in many churches of the G.A.R.B.C., and similar ones: personal evangelism is not adequately taught or emphasized beyond the AWANA programs. Another area of weakness that hinders many churches is the tithing commitment. Pastors, missionaries, church projects and more are slowed or frustrated by this deficiency in today’s Christians. The churches of the G.A.R.B.C. deserve an “A” in areas such as supporting missionaries, funding them, praying for them and honoring them. Still the Hogansons believe they can enhance the knowledge base and ministry of churches’ missions committees, in part because of their long-term, rich knowledge of the field.

They look forward to offering a seminar in your church, should you think such to be a blessing to your congregation. The Hogansons’

phone numbers are (616)-608-3773 and (616)-516-9642 (cell). They can also be reached at timandjoann@hotmail.com

HELP NEEDED: Full or part-time work to assist a retired missionary couple in the greater Grand Rapids area (Belmont). Work includes some carpentry, wood cutting, small trees to plant, and general handy work. Can pay \$10-\$12 per hour. Contact 616.866.1887.

PASTORS, CHURCHES AND POLITICS

What May Pastors and Churches Do?

by Mathew D. Staver, Esq.

Liberty Counsel, a nationwide public interest religious civil liberties law firm
<http://www.lc.org/>

EXCERPT: It is important to understand the critical difference between an IRS tax-exempt letter ruling and tax-exempt status of churches. Every organization, whether a 501(c)(4) (a nonprofit group that primarily lobbies) or a 501(c)(3) (a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization), must file an application with the IRS to be recognized as a nonprofit organization for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code. The IRS then issues a letter ruling specific for the organization, in which the IRS acknowledges that the organization will be recognized as a nonprofit organization, and in the case of a 501(c)(3), that contributions to the organization will be tax-deductible.

Unlike virtually every other nonprofit or tax-exempt organization, churches are not required to obtain an IRS letter ruling. Some churches have an IRS letter and some do not. What is the advantage of a church having a letter ruling as opposed to a church that does not have one? There is no substantive difference. The only difference is one of convenience. If a donor is ever audited and the IRS questioned the contributions to the church, the donor can point the agent to the letter ruling on file with the IRS. However, if a church doesn’t have a letter ruling, the church can merely produce an affidavit by the pastor, or present the church bylaws or other evidence to validate that the assembly is a church. Other than mere convenience, there is no substantive difference, as a church with or without a tax-exempt letter ruling is still tax-exempt.

So long as a church is operating and functioning as an organized church body, it is automatically tax-exempt and does not have to apply to the IRS for this determination. . . .

Outside of express endorsement or opposition to candidates for political offices, pastors and churches may engage in many other permissible activities. Churches may host voter registration drives, be a host site for balloting, or host a forum where candidates address the congregation or answer questions from a moderator. Candidates visiting the church may be introduced, and political candidates may even preach in the pulpit so long as the pulpit is not used as a political forum to urge the members to vote in favor of

(continued on back page)

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SEPTEMBER 2008 ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 3 - Pastor & Mrs. Andy Burak, First Bapt., Lapeer
- 5 - Pastor & Mrs. James Barrett, First Bapt., Carson City
- 6 - Pastor & Mrs. David Somers, First Bapt., Vassar
- 7 - Pastor & Mrs. David Henriksen, West Cannon Bapt., Belmont
- 7 - Pastor & Mrs. Matt Moser, Calvary Bapt., Kalkaska
- 7 - Pastor & Mrs. David Oberst, Lansing Ave. Bapt., Jackson
- 8 - Pastor & Mrs. Ken Pierpont, Jr., Evangel Bapt., Taylor – Welcome!
- 10 - Rev. & Mrs. Brian Knight, Bethany Bapt., Dollar Bay
- 12 - Pastor & Mrs. Mark Sterken, Shelby Rd. Bapt., Shelby
- 12 - Rev. & Mrs. Greg Carlson, First Bapt., Allegan
- 12 - Rev. & Mrs. Robert DeWitt, Village Bapt., Chesaning
- 12 - Rev. & Mrs. Eric Sass, First Bapt., North Adams – 10 years!
- 13 - Pastor & Mrs. William Payne, South Bapt., Flint
- 16 - Pastor & Mrs. Michael Green, First Bapt., Holland
- 17 - Pastor & Mrs. Tim Vine, First Bapt., Middleville
- 18 - Pastor & Mrs. Chad Vitarelli, Calvary Bapt., G.R.
- 20 - Pastor & Mrs. Steve Nichols, Berean Bapt., Portage – 20 years!
- 21 - Pastor & Mrs. Ken Vanderwest, Kent City Bapt., Kent City

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marked by God's guidance and blessing!*

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NEXT MONTH:

Coming in next month's "Baptist Testimony" – reports and testimonies regarding CPR Initiatives that took place over the summer! Send your pictures and reports of CPR (Church Partnering Relationships) activities to the MARBC office (marbcken@aol.com) by September 19 for inclusion in next month's issue.

KEN'S ROAD REPORT

- Sept. 5-6 Faith Baptist Church, Cheboygan (Leaders' Retreat)
- Sept. 7 **Faith Baptist Church, Cheboygan**
- Sept. 9 Council of 15 meeting, Calvary Baptist Church, Lansing
- Sept. 10 Breakpoint GRARBC Pastors' luncheon, Grand Rapids
- Sept. 14 **Berean Baptist Church, Portage**
- Sept. 20 Joint Missions Conference, Ensley Baptist Church, Sand Lake
- Sept. 21 **North Casnovia Baptist Church, Bailey**
- Sept. 22 Joint Missions Conference, Rice Lake Baptist Church, Rice Lake
- Sept. 23 Joint Missions Conference, First Baptist Church, Newaygo
- Sept. 25 West Michigan Missions Consortium meeting, Grand Rapids
- Sept. 28 **MARBC Day of Prayer**
- Sept. 29 Baptist Bible College and Seminary Trustee Board Meetings, Clarks Summit, PA
- Oct. 3-5 **Northern Michigan Missions Consortium missions conference, St. Ignace**
- Oct. 7 Interpas board meeting, West Cannon Baptist Church, Belmont
- Oct. 12 **OPEN**
- Oct. 18 Closed Door Ministries board meeting, Grand Rapids
- Oct. 19 **OPEN**
- Oct. 25 Baptist Bible College and Seminary regional gathering, Grand Rapids
- Oct. 27 MARBC Annual Conference, First Baptist Church, Rochester Hills
- 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
www.MARBC.net

PASTORS, CHURCHES AND POLITICS (con't.)

the candidate. Churches may also distribute objective voter guides that address the candidates' views on a broad range of issues.

Pastors can preach on biblical, moral and social issues such as homosexuality and abortion. Pastors can urge the congregation to become involved in the political process, urge them to register and vote. Pastors can acknowledge visiting candidates. Pastors can personally endorse or oppose political candidates, personally work for political candidates, and personally contribute to them. Also, a pastor's name may appear in a published ad or letter signifying the pastor's endorsement of the candidate, and the pastor's title and affiliation with the church can also be listed with the notation, "Title and affiliation for identification purposes."

(We thank Baptists for Life (www.bfl.org) for sharing this important information with us.)