



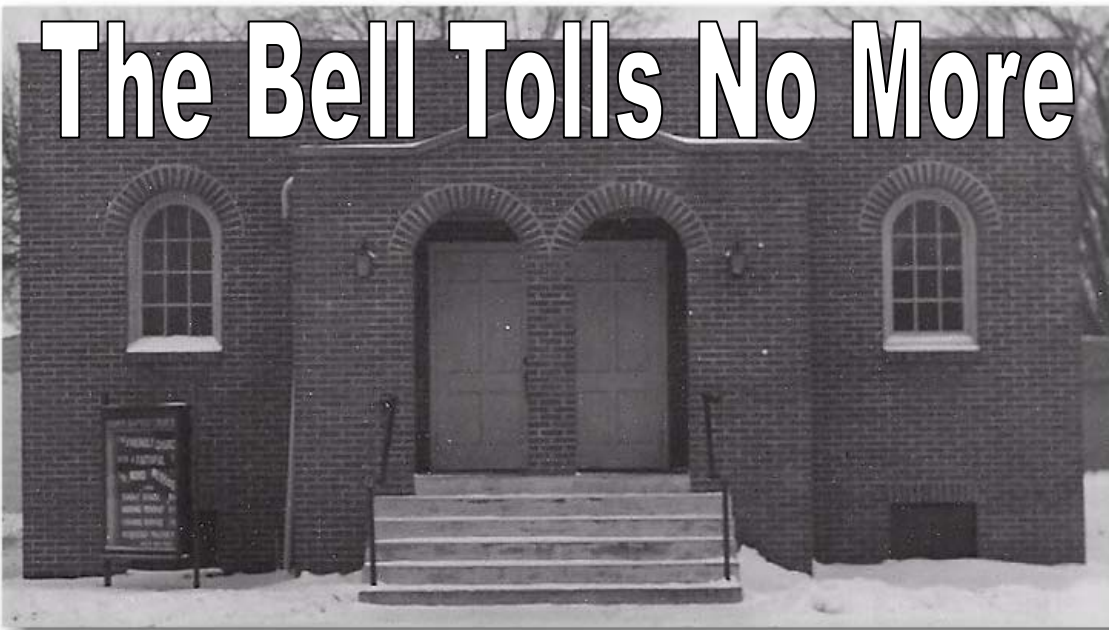
maplelawn mapleleaf

MAPLELAWN BAPTIST CHURCH
124 Maplelawn S.W.
Wyoming, MI 49548

A Publication of
Maplelawn Baptist Church
Editor: Jim Crame, (616) 530-1966
E-mail: jimcrame@yahoo.com

Pastor Andrew Willis ● Church Phone (616) 532-5990 ● February, 2008





with the excitement that, for those that entered its doors, lives would be changed for evermore.

In 1933 non-profit papers were filed with the State of Michigan. In the blank that asked for the “purpose”, it was written: “To provide an undenominational church in the community of Godwin Heights for evangelistic Christian worship without denominational affiliation, governed according to the

The life of a building is much like the life of a human being. When born, there is much excitement and fanfare. People take notice, people watch and observe as they grow up and grow older.

Like people, buildings have their own identity. They are remembered because they look a certain way. Some buildings are large, some are tall, and some are short. Some buildings look inviting while others can look mean and unfriendly.

At a point, long in life, they reach their apex, their apo-gee, the end of their usefulness. As age crawls over them, interest wanes in them and few take notice of them. And then, like everything else created by the hand of man, it returns to the dust from which it arose.

The thread of remembrance grows thin and dim with the passing of the saints who once attended the Godwin Heights Gospel Tabernacle and helped to transition it into Maplelawn Baptist Church. Long gone are those who labored along side Henry and Jenny Koets some 79 years ago, back in 1929, to start a neighborhood Sunday School.

It was November of 1932 when this original building on Coolidge Street was dedicated to the Lord. While it was sacrificially built, with hard to come by money, it was built



rules and by-laws adopted by its members.” Total property value of the church was declared to be \$2,800.

It happens and life marches on. Not many remember and for the few that do, the memory is faint and calloused with resolution that the past is in the past. While my wife Bonnie has mixed feelings about saying that she attended there as a child (because it dates her), she does recollect the small Sunday School classrooms and the dedicated teachers that taught stories from the Bible.

We just happened upon the demolished building that launched our congregation. Bonnie had me stop the car and she walked over to the rubble. She stood there a moment, reflecting upon its history and then stooped to pick up a few bricks to take home – bricks that remind us of the solid foundation on which our faith in Christ is built.

Lincoln Lake Baptist Camp



General Board Meeting (November 27, 2007)

The “Annual” Board meeting of Lincoln Lake Baptist Camp is held in November. It typically begins with a meal and then it gets into the business at hand. Of course at this annual meeting we reflect on the past year both by way of attendance, spiritual decisions, projects accomplished, issues and financial status.

The Allen and Dave Moody team are as always optimistic about the future of the camp and lives that God can touch through its ministry. While Allen directs the show, Dave sets the stage so the show can go on. From docks, to Yurts, to drain fields, fences, furnaces, electrical and dealing with very strict regulatory issues, he presses on. It is just amazing what this team has set out to do and how much they have accomplished in the past few years. God certainly puts the right people in the right place at the right time.

After attending Board meetings for a few years, one cannot help but reflect about how many times we have heard that, “Camp cannot open until this regulatory code has been met.” I smile, because God always pulls it off through the efforts of these men and the show does go on. This year is no exception as camp needs a new drain field. Increased attendance has overwhelmed the existing one and it must be replaced but it comes with a hefty price tag. And, to make matters worse, there is talk about putting a sewer system in that will take care of the residents around the lake in a few years. The camp stands to spend in excess of \$50,000 this year on a drain field and have to turn around and spend more money to hook up to a sewer system. The timing is not good on this one.

There’s lots of excitement in air as camp looks forward to another record busting year in 2008. There’s lots to do around camp if you are inclined to help. Give them a call and volunteer to give a hand with a project or two.

Parking Lot Replacement



Long awaited and much needed, we will be replacing the parking lot come Spring!

Unfortunately the parking lot is in really bad shape with large cracks appearing in it and deteriorating asphalt due to age – it’s beyond repair. All of the existing asphalt will be removed and recycled. The contractor will go over the parking lot to make sure our gravel-base is adequate for a good foundation and drainage. A good base is very important to a long-term installation.

A deteriorating parking lot, from a visitor stand-point, can be a reflection on our Church. The new parking lot will be inviting to our members and visitors for years to come.

Carpet Replacement Is Next



Would we could replace the carpet soon – real soon! It’s over 10 years old and shows signs of wear and tear with stains throughout and frayed edges. Unfortunately, we had to prioritize due to funds and determined that the parking lot had to come first. Next on this list, as soon as funds are available, is the replacement of the carpet.

Pastor's Office Renovated



Before Pastor Willis moved into his office, we wanted to do some renovations. In particular, the original windows needed to be replaced in order to make the room more comfortable and to save on energy costs. Pictured here is the office transitioning to pastor's study. There were also a couple of other windows replaced in the church.

Seniors Enjoy Christmas Party



Back in December the Maranatha Class enjoyed a candlelit dinner followed by some Christmas carols and a video on the birthplace of Christ. The food, program and fellowship were very enjoyable.

Christmas Program



The Church Christmas programs with the children and the choir were combined this past year – not intentionally. A nasty winter storm closed church in the morning and

the choir's musical had to be postponed until evening when the children's program was scheduled. All went off without a hitch and we were treated to a very special service of program and music.



Many thanks to those who orchestrated the programs and to those who participated. The programs just add so much more to the season as we are reminded of the great gift that God gave to us and that Christmas Day gave us Jesus.

Missionary Joyce Rudduck to Retire

It's an old cliché, "*How Time Flies*" but it seems appropriate here. We've been supporting Joyce for 32 of her 34 years of serving the Lord in Bangladesh. The advent of e-mail and it's frequent use for updates these past few years have provided a better appreciation for the spiritual and physical struggles in that part of the world.



Joyce mentions in her retirement announcement that she is humbled to think of churches and individuals who have never missed a month of giving – talk about giving and sacrificing! Ministry isn't easy but it is rewarding. As the "last days" approach, the walk of faith becomes more and more difficult. Joyce not only leaves a legacy of her work behind in Bangladesh, but she leaves a legacy by example of her faithfulness and dedication to the Lord as well. She has led by example and her example of passion for the Lord's work and compassion for others bodes well for those who will follow in her footsteps.

Joyce writes, "It has been a wonderful way to spend my life. I never wanted to do anything else once I got here." She goes on to provide some detail regarding her retirement plans. "I will be leaving Bangladesh the end of April 2008 for my last furlough. I will be visiting my churches along with as many individual supporters as possible during the following nine months or so. I plan to go on official retirement status in January 2009, when I turn 66. I plan to retire in Waterloo, IA, to be near my home church, Walnut Ridge Baptist Church."



One hundred and eighty six Baptist Churches in the State of Michigan are associated with the GARBC – including Maplelawn – and many more in other states as well. Our affiliation with the GARBC these past years has not been as intimate as it was a few decades ago. In our early years as a Church we find the GARBC was mentioned from time to time in our church minutes.

As a new church back in the 30s, the leadership of Maplelawn sought to affiliate us with other Bible believing churches. As is with new Christians, new churches need to be held accountable to doctrine. The title of “Baptist Church” that often follows some other descriptive name, such as “Maplelawn”, denotes a certain doctrinal position. Back in the 1920s, theological liberalism had crept into churches that belonged to an association called the American Baptist Churches. It was clear to many at the time that some of these churches were theologically liberal to the point that they denied the eternal deity of Jesus Christ. And, more importantly, the leadership of ABC did nothing.

The GARBC was not formed as an association of Baptist Churches because there was none; it was formed to distinguish itself from an organization that tolerated apostate churches – churches who had fallen away from the faith once delivered to the saints.

Dr. Robert T. Ketcham wrote a document about why the GARBC was formed. It is called, *The Necessity for the Formation of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches*. I think it’s interesting to note that there was about a decade of , as Dr. Ketcham put it, “...fruitless battling...that left the fundamentals with no recourse but to remove themselves from the association and to form an association, ...free from the presence of modernists and modernism.”

Dr. Ketcham mentions the following in his document:

“And what saith the Scriptures?

In 1 Timothy 6:3–5 Paul instructs Timothy that if any man does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is a certain procedure to be carried out in respect to him. That procedure is found in the closing clause of verse 5: “from such withdraw thyself.” By no stretch of the imagination can this be made to read, “Form an association of Bible-believing Baptists and stay right there in the Convention in fellowship with

them.” There are not enough letters in the word “withdraw” to spell the words “stay in and clean it up!”

In 2 Timothy 2:17–24 Paul is saying that certain modernists by the name of Hymeneus and Philetus have come in and have erred concerning the truth, especially on the doctrine of the resurrection, and by their own error they are overthrowing the faith of some. Timothy is then instructed by the apostle Paul that believers should purge themselves from these false teachers if they want to be indeed vessels unto honor, cleansed, and ready for the Master’s use.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 we read that we are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers; we are to come out from among them and be separate. In Romans 16:17 we are told that we are to mark them who cause doctrinal divisions among us, and that having marked them, we are to avoid them.

Here are plenty of Scriptures that constitute the Biblical command for the believer to separate himself from the unbeliever. He is to withdraw; he is to purge; he is to come out; he is not to be unequally yoked; he is to mark and avoid.”

Today, after some 75 years, the GARBC is not without its critics as well. Critics that claim theological liberalism has crept into churches that affiliate with the association. Critics that criticize decisions and challenge change. Dr. Ketcham’s words are a good reminder as we benchmark our associations with others and be on guard to not be “unequally yoked with unbelievers.” It’s important, however, to not be caught up by the “wave” but to be informed and to discern our understanding against the scriptures.

Mission of the GARBC

The GARBC separates from theological liberalism and compromising accommodation. It embraces a fourfold mission.

1. **Champion Biblical Truth** – The Word of God is inherently powerful to save and equip those who respond in faith to its message (2 Timothy 3:15-17). We are committed to communicating the whole counsel of God in its timeless relevance.
2. **Impact the World for Christ** – The only message that will change the eternal destiny of the lost is the gospel. We are determined to obey the Great Commission instruction of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. **Perpetuate a Baptist Heritage** – Biblical doctrine provides theological parameters that give direction and identity to individuals and churches. We will faithfully promote our Scriptural legacy.
4. **Advance the Association Churches** – The church is God’s operative institution for achieving the purpose of evangelism and edification. We seek to strengthen existing churches and to plant new ministries.

Blessed a Hundredfold!

I John 3:17& 18.... If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children let us not love in words and tongue but with actions and in truth.

George and Bonnie Bladey share their experience as missionaries to a Christian school in Spain.



“In our Christian walk, we have tried our best to obey this command. Christmas was a great time for us to share with others the abundance that the Lord has bestowed upon us. And we are still trying to do just that as much as possible. But this Christmas, the Lord has blessed us a hundred-fold! God has turned the hearts of others to share

with us their abundance, or as we have seen, the lack of their abundance. For this we first give thanks to Our Father in Heaven for providing in ways we would never have seen. And second we want to thank all of you who have seen the need and have fulfilled it.

THE LORD IS OUR PROVIDER! He has given us faithful supporters since we have been here. Thank you! Some have supported us even before we arrived in Spain. Thank you! He has given us offerings from people that we never knew existed, until now. Thank you! He has given us offerings, as we call it, from the widow’s mite. What a humbling experience when we receive a note from our bank or open a Christmas card and find an unexpected check from folks we know are just making ends meet. Thank you! He has added to our support from our home church Maplelawn Baptist, who has seen the need due to the deflated dollar. Thank you! And get this, He is still using the United States Government to meet our needs. We received a cost of living raise in our pension from the Postal Service. Amen, Praise the Lord, hallelujah! How did they know our rent was almost increased by that amount? Thank you Jesus!

The Lord is also providing our needs in other ways too. We have received packages, with much needed and wanted supplies. Thank you! Not only do those packages meet our needs, but they are helping with the needs of the school. We have received surprised packages with things picked out personally for us. Thank you! We have received cards and letters with American postage stamps. We have not had to purchase stamps for our notes home, since we have been here. Thank you! We also have faithful family and friends that stay in contact with us via letters and email.

Thank you! God has provided us with much love and joy through the blessings of HIS people. Thank you!”

Lincoln Lake

Just like Gideon who looked for 300 committed soldiers, Lincoln Lake is looking for 300 people to each raise \$1,000 in pledges by August 23, 2008. By having an army this large, they will be able to conquer all of the investment needed for Phase One.

Renovation Race

Formerly known as the September Pedal, the Renovation Race has grown into something much bigger and better! Camp now offers a one mile family hike, 5k run, 13k run, and a bike ride that is an 8 mile loop around Lincoln Lake. If you are interested in participating, you can obtain a registration form at camp, by mail or download from their website.

Summer Camp Dates



Summer camp dates are now available for Lincoln Lake. The theme this year is “Run the Race”. They have camper programs for every age group including specialty camps for wilderness trips and water sports as well as a family camp. It’s great fun on the

lake followed with great food in the lodge. Check it out!

On the Lighter Side

Here are a few “Bulletin Bloopers” that have cropped up at other churches:



The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

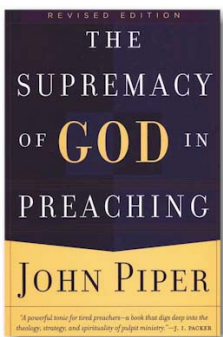
To Understand the Life We Live

Living life can be difficult at times – even a mystery – so many questions and so few answers. Getting answers to our questions or getting answers to questions we didn't even know we had can be an arduous proposition. Sometimes the best approach and often the most recommended approach, is to read a good book by a well versed and respected author.

Enriching our understanding of God by gaining insight from those who are insightful can have a major impact on our stress and anxiety levels. When the mystery of God's expectations for us gives way to understanding, peace, like being wrapped up in a cozy blanket, wraps around us.

Pastor Willis has recommended the following books by authors that won't lead you astray. Please avail yourself of these books and increase your knowledge and understanding of God's plan for our lives.

- The Supremacy of God in Preaching by John Piper
- The Passion of Jesus Christ by John Piper
- Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God
- The Christian Life
- Puritan Evangelism by Joel Beeke
- If I were God I would Make it Clearer
- Interview Your Daughter's Date
- If I were God I would End All the Pain
- Distinctives by Vaughn Roberts



Countless books teach the craft of preaching, but not many discuss its fundamental requirement: the piety of the preacher. In this newly revised classic, author John Piper focuses on Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon as prime examples, noting how their spirituality enabled them to speak the truth with joy and to appeal earnestly for a response. This book is comprised of two parts.

Part I, entitled "The Supremacy of God in Preaching," was originally delivered as part of The Harold John Ockenga Lectures on Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1988.

Part II, entitled "Sweet Sovereignty: The Supremacy of God in the Preaching of Jonathan Edwards," was delivered as part of The Billy Graham Center Lectures on Preaching, Wheaton College, 1984.

Piper asserts that the goal of preaching is for the glory of God in the glad submission of His creation and that the preacher's heart must be broken for the sin of his people. While one would think this book should be read by preachers, it will provide insight into the persuasion to preach.

Communion



First Corinthians 11:24-26 records the following instructions for communion: '...the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; And giving thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He took the cup also, after supping, saying, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood; as often as you drink it, do this in remembrance of Me.' For 'as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show' the Lord's death until He shall come.' This passage gives all the instructions we need to perform the rite of communion and to understand the significance of what we are doing.

The bread which He broke in half represents His body which was broken on the cross for us. The cup represents the blood He shed on our behalf, sealing a covenant between Him and us. Each time we perform the communion ritual, we are not only remembering what He did for us, but we are "showing" it as well to all who watch and all who participate. This is a beautiful and graphic picture of what happened at the cross, what it means, and how it impacts our lives as believers.

It would seem, then, that since we partake of the Lord's Supper to remember Christ's death and shed blood, we should take it fairly often. Some churches have a monthly Lord's Supper service, others do it bi-monthly, others weekly. In the history of the Church its frequency is a subject of controversy.

There should be no controversy, however, with regards to how we prepare our hearts before the Lord. The Lord's Supper should be done with forethought, purpose and humility. We should partake with reverence, love, and a deep sense of gratitude for the Lord Jesus, who was willing to die on the cross to take upon Himself our sins.

Christian Persecution is Real!

George and Bonnie Bladey, missionaries working in a Christian school in Spain share a story of Christian persecution in Iran. This story is a good reminder that the age-old battle between good and evil continues. Complacency is not an option and we must arm ourselves with the armor of God and brace ourselves against these times.



“These past couple of months our lives have been impacted by the struggles of Christians in other countries. We hear often of persecutions and problems that other believers in Jesus Christ suffer. This month we would like to share a story which is on-going concerning a young couple from Iran, Bobi and Roya (not their real names).

This Iranian couple in their 30’s suddenly found themselves questioned by airport police, handcuffed and ushered out of the Madrid airport. They were taken to different prisons in Spain and for 3 months had no idea of the whereabouts of each other and had no contact with anyone outside of the prison. They spoke no Spanish and no one in prison spoke Farsi. How could this happen to a young Christian couple in Spain?

Shortly after their release from prison we heard of their story at our Thursday morning prayer meeting. Their testimony is an amazing story of our Sovereign God’s hand upon them, and it is encouraging to see how God has placed his church (true believers) around the world to pray and support one another.

It turns out that this couple is part of an underground church in Iran. Roya’s best friend was publicly hung before her eyes because she would not deny the name of Christ. Shortly thereafter several of the church members were discovered to be missing and Bobi and Roya heard the police were looking for them. So they went into hiding for 30

days and were able to get out of the country – riding in the back of a semi-trailer for 6 days with only bread and water. They were offered false passports to escape to England by way of Spain.

Here in our airport they were discovered and whisked away even before they had a chance to ask questions or learn of the fate of each other. Feeling like God had abandoned them it seemed like a hopeless situation – stranded in a foreign country where they had no friends, no contacts, no knowledge of the culture or language. They were facing criminal charges or deportment to a country which wanted to kill them, each wondered if they would ever see the other again.

A Missionary friend met Roya through a women’s prison ministry and when she was released (4 months later) she had no money or place to go so our Missionary friend offered her a place to live. Bobi was released the next day in a distant part of Spain and somehow made his way back to Madrid to look for his wife. Bobi found his wife through miraculous circum-

stances and our friends let the couple live with them. They gave them food, shelter and encouraged them in the Lord.

They have applied for political asylum based on their religious persecution. We still do not know what the outcome will be but the first appearance in court was not good. The government of Spain does not want anything to do with them and are leaning on sending them back to Iran which would mean almost certain death.

The story of this couple is a testimony to the body of Christ world-wide working together to give support and encouragement to fellow believers. We are asking you all to pray for Bobi and Roya. Pray that Spain would not bury its head in the sand. Pray that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ would be honored and glorified by the actions of this brave couple. Practically speaking, pray that they would be allowed to live and work in Spain. Pray for courage to face the future.

We are blessed to be living and working for the Lord here in Spain. It is a joy to be working with Missionary children and others from all over the world. However this true life situation of Bobi and Roya has gripped our hearts and consumes our prayer life. Thank you for your prayers for the ministry here. Please add Bobi and Roya to your prayer list and also the spiritual climate here in Spain. Thank you so much...your co-workers in Christ...George and Bonnie Bladey”