



MAPLELAWN BAPTIST CHURCH
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Maplelawn Baptist Church
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DECLINE OF DOLLAR HURTS MISSIONS

By Dave Johnson

The weakness of the dollar internationally makes U.S. goods more competitive globally. This is helping many U.S. companies, but it is hurting international missions. This is having a negative impact on almost all of our missionaries and agencies that operate in foreign countries. For example, the dollar has lost 10% on the euro in the last 3 years and 5% in the last year. In Mexico, this last year has seen an almost 8% decline. In Australia, it's even worse, the dollar has lost almost 20% in the last 3 years and 12% over the last year.

We need to understand that all of our missionaries have basically taken a cut in pay. The Mayos, especially, have seen their income decrease by 20%! When is the last time you received a 20% pay cut? The total missions budget of MBC is about \$70,000. The total impact of the loss of the dollar's value to the missions budget is about \$4,000 over the past year and about \$10,000 over the past 2-3 years.

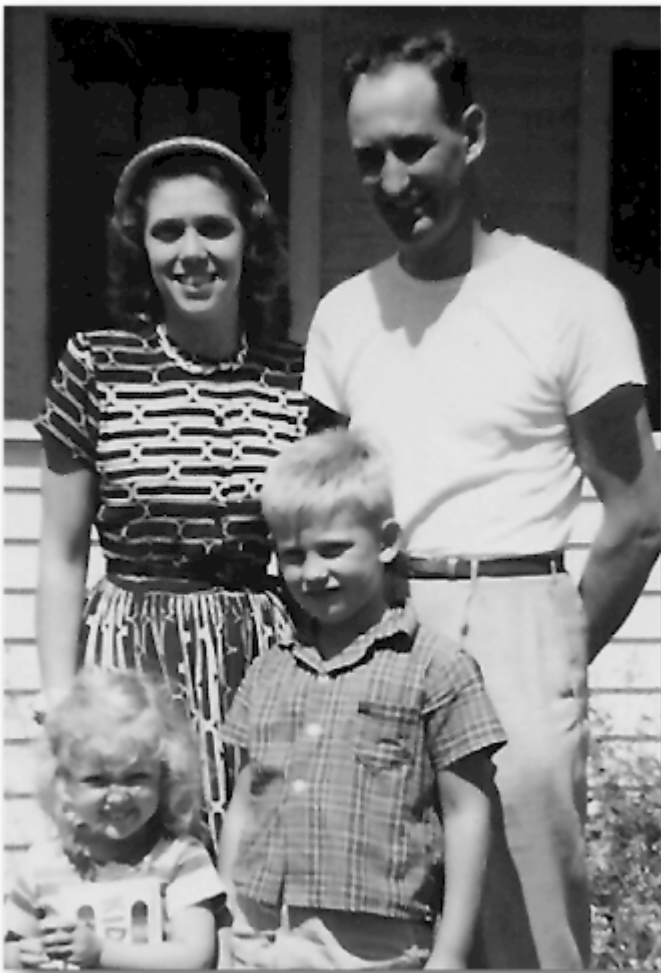
Be thinking of ways you can be generous to our missionaries. Could you send them a note or a gift? Could you slip a little something extra in the offering designated to one of them? When they come home on furlough, how about helping them to buy clothes or other items over here where things are so much cheaper for them?

Most of all, please be in prayer for them. They need strength, encouragement, and perseverance.

Pastor Warren Faber

WARREN FABER, B.A., Th.B., Th.M., Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Studies at Cornerstone University.



In 1946, at the age of 26, the Godwin Baptist Church called Rev. Warren Faber to become their second pastor. Our church, then located on Coolidge Street in Godwin Heights, was still in its infancy but poised to develop and grow.

Pastor Faber was born and raised in the Grand Rapids area. Converted at age eleven, he was baptized and became a member of Calvary Baptist Church. At the age of 20, God called him into the gospel ministry and he enrolled in the Moody Bible Institute.

Graduating from the Pastor's Course he became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Saint Anne, Illinois in 1943. While there, he continued his education at Olivet Nazarene College in Kankakee, Illinois.

After accepting the call to pastor our church in Godwin Heights, he was granted student privileges and, with his pastoral responsibilities, completed his college and seminary degrees at Calvin over an extended period of time.

He and his wife Glennys had three children; James, Marijean, and Ann Elizabeth.

During his ministry the doctrinal basis of our church was formulated and established. It was organized as an independent Baptist Church, known as Godwin Baptist Church, seeking fundamental, separatist, and evangelistic fellowship with other churches of like faith and order.

An affiliation with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches was sought. By doing this the church surrendered none of its privileges as an independent church. It also gained the advantage of organized cooperation in the areas of Missions, Christian Education and representation in the Armed Forces of the United States by fundamental Chaplains.

In 1947 Pastor Faber led the Coolidge Street congregation to raise the chapel building and excavate a full basement underneath it. The building was also extended and bricked to provide the church with needed room for a few more years.

A year later the Church clerk wrote for the Annual Report: "Addition of the basement for Sunday School is a blessing; new song books obtained; completion of the building program; 1 confession of faith; 8 baptisms and; 9 members added to the church. Sunday School averaged 146 with a record attendance of 189."

To provide some perspective on the financial times of the era, the average weekly church offerings were \$92.22 for an annual income of \$4,795.58. Out of that we paid Pastor Faber \$55 a week or \$2,500 annually; Church advertising in the Grand Rapids Press cost \$4 per week; and a janitor was hired for \$7 per week.

In 1948 Pastor Faber wrote in the church's Annual Report: "50 sick calls were made at homes and hospitals; 45 pastoral calls on the congregation; 40 calls upon friends and visitors of the church; 3 Sunday speaking engagements and 6 week night services; 3 weddings and 6 funerals."



The church was growing and the Coolidge Street facility was land-locked with no where to expand. In February of 1950 a Building Committee was formed and in April the four lots on Maplelawn were purchased from Nora Peterson.



History of Our Property

As a historical footnote the Maplelawn lots were part of 440 acres purchased from the Federal Government in 1839 by Thomas Emerson of Boston, Massachusetts. Shortly after the purchase, for a reason lost to history, the land reverted back to the General Land Office of the Surveyor General due to an Act of Congress passed back in 1820 entitled "An Act of Making Further Provision for the Sale of Public Lands." The property changed owners many times and some times briefly. One of the more notable owners was John Ball (of John Ball Park fame). He picked the property up in 1841 as a result of delinquent taxes and sold it 4 months later.

The property was owned by John Stephenson who died in 1906 at the age of 49. His widow Louisa sold off lots 1 through 187 (which included ours) to a company called "Popular Homesites Plats". In 1931, possibly as a result of the depression, Deputy Sheriff, Ed O'Donnell of Kent County foreclosed and sold the property at auction for \$25 a lot to William Gilbert of Grand Rapids.

The property was owned by no less than three railroads. The area under the high tension wires to the east of the building was once a rail line providing transportation needs between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

Resigned In 1951

After six years of serving as Pastor, Rev. Faber resigned in December of 1951. He pursued a call to teach and preach New Testament courses at the Grand Rapids Baptist Theological Seminary and Bible Institute.

Diploma, Moody Bible Institute; B.A., Calvin College; Th.B., Th.M., Calvin Theological Seminary; Graduate Studies in Israel, New York University; Ph.D., Northwestern University. Ministry Experience: Pastoral, 1943-51. Academic Experience: Faculty and Administration, Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, 1952-87.

Called Home, June 9, 2007

At the age of 86, the Lord called Rev. Dr. Warren H. Faber home to Himself. More tidbits of information about his past and accomplishments after leaving Godwin Baptist Church were gleaned from his obituary.

"Dr. Faber was a graduate of Lee High School, Moody Bible Institute, Calvin College and Calvin Seminary, did

graduate studies in Israel and at New York University, and received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University. He pastored St. Anne Baptist Church in St. Anne, IL, **Godwin Baptist Church** and Northland Baptist Church both in Grand Rapids.

From 1952 to 2007, Dr. Faber was associated with Cornerstone University as Professor, Dean, Executive

Vice President and Professor Emeritus. He coined the Cornerstone University motto "Academic Excellence with Christian Commitment" in 1963. In addition, he worked as a translator for Bibles International, a branch of The Bible Society of Baptist Mid-Missions, doing translations for India."

Another Chapter Closes

The chapters of early history for Maplelawn Baptist Church are quietly being closed and sealed as the early Godwin Baptist and Maplelawn Baptist pioneers find their heavenly rewards. While our church has not reached numeric mega-church proportions, it's success appears to be a stepping stone or launching point for many who have gone on to launch their ministry in one form or another. In the moment, or looking into the future, it is hard to understand God's plan for a church. But, sometimes, hindsight or history reveals to us what that plan was. Will this always be our niche in God's plan? Not necessarily!

Junior High (Innerchange)

By Andrea Johnson

The Junior High class (Innerchange) completed their annual display projects and presented them this past June. This year the focus was on the life of Abraham. Teacher, Dave Johnson, spent the months of March and April covering Abraham's life – from early days in Ur to his death. Special emphasis was placed on the covenant between Abraham and Yahweh.

The entire month of May was spent working on the projects during the Sunday School hour. This included not only building and creating the displays, but also writing a one page paper about the aspect of Abraham's life they were showing.

The story of Abraham taking his son Isaac to sacrifice him was done by Katie See, Kailey Gros-pin, Jaime Cross, Merline Bruno and Georgette Seide. Dillon Miklusicak and Michael Ratcliffe created a display showing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Junior High leadership have been directing these projects for the past 8 years. It has been a great way for the young people to interact with the Bible stories in a unique way.

Remembering our Beginnings



In the summer of 2001 an obituary appeared in the Grand Rapids Press for Lavern Morris Koets, aged 83 of Sturgis, Michigan. The significance of this is that Lavern was a son to Henry and Jenny Koets who were the catalysts behind starting Maplelawn Baptist Church.

Maplelawn began with one small, "Yes, Lord" when Henry and Jenny started a small Sunday School program 78 years ago back in 1929. If you do the math, you can calculate that their son Lavern was about 9 or 10 years old at the time.



That Fall, in late October, the stock market crashed, sending the United States into an era that is referred to as the Great Depression. In 1929 the average worker made between \$17 and \$22 per week. These perplexing economic problems caused a host of social problems, including:

- Personal suffering from losing one's job
- Breakdown of families
- Soaring high school dropout rates (2-4 million)
- Homelessness
- Organized protests

Around the country, the homeless built settlements of cardboard and tar-paper shacks, called "Hoovervilles" in sardonic reference to President Hoover.

Farmers armed with guns and pitchforks marched on the local banks to prevent foreclosures.

"The Bonus Expeditionary Force." A group of WWI veterans who had been denied their pensions organized the first march on Washington in protest. In 1932, twenty thousand men set up a tent city, vowing to stay until they got their money. President Hoover panicked and sent in the army (led by future war heroes MacArthur and Eisenhower) to break up this peaceful demonstration.

In addition to the suffering, there were many stereotypical images of the depression, images enforced by the mass media. These include:

- Bread lines
- Hoboes hopping freight trains
- College grads becoming gas station attendants (or enrolling in graduate school in record numbers!)
- Skyrocketing rates of suicide and mental illness
- Former businessmen selling pencils or apples on the street corner
- "Okies"—Oklahoma farmers escaping the dust bowl for migrant farm work in California, most vividly portrayed in John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

These stereotypes, many of which have become romanticized in popular culture, only depict the experience of a small number of the American people. The reality of long-term unemployment, the day-to-day despair, was much less dramatic, and thus more dismal.

Henry and Jenny Koets were able to offer compassion and hope to a "depressed" community. Unlike today, where we have financial resources to draw from, members of the church were rarely better off than the destitute people who sought help. The Koets did, however, have one thing to offer and that was hope. They preached the Gospel and pressed hard to reach the community and bring the people out of their spiritual poverty.

Events such as the Great Depression and September 11 are wakeup calls for both those who proclaim the Gospel and for those who need to repent and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. We must not tire but be rejuvenated in our efforts to reach the unsaved. When the towers fell, so did the confidence that we had in our human power, ability and destiny. That fairly recent event, like so many others in history, shows us that God can comfort our fears and make us stronger if we will but follow Him.

In the days, weeks, months and years ahead, we, as members of Maplelawn Baptist Church, must not forget our heritage and humble beginnings. We must re-focus on what is important – really important – in our lives. Find your peace with, and in, God and then share it with others.

**Come work for the Lord.
The work is hard, the hours are
long and the pay is low. But the
retirement benefits are out of
this world!**

The Word, Not the World

It's not the motives of those who design and adopt dynamic church growth methods; it's the methods themselves that are sometimes at question.

The Word, not the world, should shape and grow a church. Many times it's the unchurched culture of a local community that determines the style of a church. Each community has a culture and that culture tends to become the style of a church with which it tries to reach an unchurched population.

Feel-Good Messages

Feel-good messages are appealing to saint and seeker alike. If an unchurched local culture were such that it would respond to attending services with just feel-good messages preached, a church might be tempted to adopt that culture. However, the Bible commands that the "whole counsel of God" be preached in the church. That means that both the negative as well as the positive must be preached from the pulpit. A "feel-good message" must "contend for the faith" by reproving, rebuking and exhorting. The church must be careful not to try and meet the psychological, emotional and interpersonal relationship needs of the unsaved. This is not a philosophy that can be found in God's Word.

Equipping vs. Growing

Typically a church does not develop a culture that can support both dynamic growth and foster services that equip the saint for service and witness. The unchurched are not spiritually ready for a "style" of message or worship that challenges their service and witness. Conversely, saints must be challenged in their faith and to exercise it through service.

If a church wants dynamic growth, it must choose between the traditional or the inventive, contemporary, user-friendly style of worship. Some would say the latter is wrong while others would say that "traditional" doesn't work anymore.

Deceptive Ambiguities

"All fire is God's fire"; All worship of God is God's worship" or All truth is God's truth.

While these analogies sound deceptively logical, they are full of ambiguity and deceit. They are used by many to

justify a style of worship – a style, defined by them, to be pleasing to them therefore it must be pleasing to God.

Worshiping God is not about us, it's about Him. God's Word should be used as a pattern to develop the methodology of worship in the church.

A Delicate Balance

The challenge is to reach both the unsaved and saved with God's Word. The message should give the unsaved answers to the purpose of their life and the need for salvation while challenging the saint to live a sin-less life of service to the Lord.

Bringing these two audiences together and ministering to both simultaneously is an endless challenge. They require different things (music and messages) and yet they must be led to worship a common God – on His terms. It's not good that they should be separated nor is it good that only one audience be addressed – they need each other. The saints to set the example and the unsaved to follow that example.

Does Being Steadfast Hurt Growth?

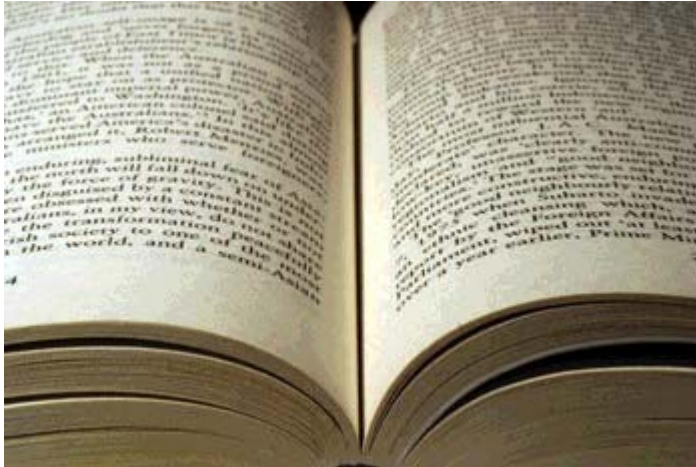
In the eyes of some, being a "steadfast" church can hurt growth. However, being a "steadfast" individual actually helps them grow spiritually.

In the eyes of God, being "steadfast" is a good thing – the right thing to do. Our resolve to worship and serve our God should be "steadfast" on all fronts – at both the individual level and at the corporate level.

As you can probably surmise, the unchurched do not respond to an uncompromising environment in the church. Rather than adopt higher standards they would like to see the church lower it's standards to that of their own.

Being a steadfast church may hurt growth but it does not hurt the church. There are some things that should not be compromised and the message should not be one of them. It's been said, "Never confuse the method with the message. The message must never change, but the methods must change!"

Maplelawn may change it's methods of reaching the lost and edifying it's saints but it must never change it's message!



**Try our Sundays.
They are better than
Baskin-Robbins.**

Let God Speak for Himself



Larry Wilson Managing Editor, ForMinistry

In a recent *Los Angeles Times* column, "A Nation of Faith and Religious Illiterates," Stephen Prothero writes:

"Today it is a rare American who can engage with any sophistication in biblically inflected arguments about gay marriage, abortion or stem cell research. ... Only one out of three U.S. citizens is able to name the most basic of Christian texts, the four Gospels, and 12 percent think Noah's wife was Joan of Arc. That paints a picture of a nation that believes God speaks in Scripture but that can't be bothered to read what He has to say."

Part of the problem, says Garry Milley in a new ForMinistry article "Silence of the Scriptures," is the increasing "neglect of the Bible in worship. This is especially true of those in the nonliturgical tradition. Apart from the sermon text or a Scripture chorus the Word of God is strangely silent."

Or maybe part of the problem is that **we spend more time talking – and arguing – about Scripture than we do listening to what it says.**

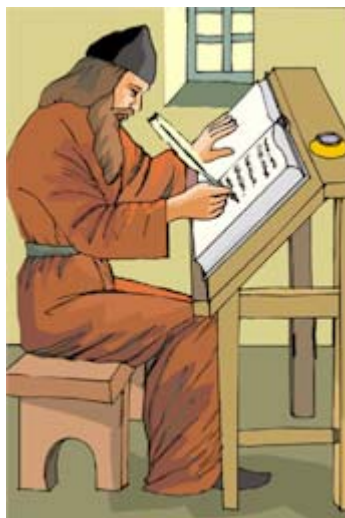
Perhaps it's time we stop dissecting Scripture into microscopic details, like studying frog cells on a slide tray for the sake of being exclusive, and maybe it's time to quit debating for the sake of dividing the body of Christ. Instead, maybe it's high time we just listen to what God has already articulated quite well in his Word.

Read it. Shout it. Sing it. Pray it. But let it speak again, and again – out loud, in our churches, in our homes, and from the mountaintops. Without apology. We don't always have to hammer people with our own personal interpretations of what it says. Instead, maybe we can follow Mark Miller's advice, to "**humbly acknowledge that we do not have all of the answers.** God wants us to stop trusting ourselves and instead trust the biblical text to speak for itself."

How Did the Bible Come to Us?

The American Bible Society

The Bible is more than a single book. The word "Bible" actually comes from the Greek word *biblia*, meaning "books." The Bible is really like a small library that contains many books written by many authors over many, many years. It took well over 1000 years for all of these books to be written down, and it was many more years before the list of books now known as the Bible came together in one large book.



Before anything in the Bible was written down, people told stories about God and God's relationship with the people we read about in the Bible. This stage of passing on stories by word of mouth is known as the "oral tradition."

Eventually, as human societies in the Near East began to develop forms of writing that were easy to learn and use (around 1800 B.C.), people began to write down the stories, songs (psalms), and prophecies that would one day become a part of the Bible. This process took centuries. While some books were being written and collected, others were still being passed on in storytelling fashion.

Peanut Free Facility

From the Deacon Board

Dear Church Family,

You may have noticed recently the posting of signs around the church asking for the safety of our children and visitors with peanut allergies that we are strive to be a peanut-free facility.



As church leaders, we wanted to take a moment and let you know why this request is important. We have several children in our congregation with peanut allergies and have had several visitors (VBS, WNKC, etc) with peanut allergies as well.

This is a serious condition that when exposed can lead to hives, airway blockages, breathing difficulty and even death. Because of the severity of reactions, we would like to be cautious and careful to have a safe environment.

Please refrain from bringing fellowship treats, potluck dishes, personal snacks, food for your children, bake sale items, etc that contain peanuts and/or peanut butter. Some key foods to watch would be cookies, potato chips, granola bars, and candy.

We thank you for your understanding and consideration in this matter. It makes a world of difference for those who deal with this allergy – and makes our church a safer place for them to worship and fellowship.

Thank you.

George & Bonnie in Spain



George and Bonnie Bladey continue to be stretched in their service for the Lord as they serve Him at the Evangelical Christian Academy in Camarma de Esteruelas (Madrid) Spain. While they have gone long past the “settling in stage” they still struggle with the culture and the language.

They arrived in Spain on September 7, 2006 and one of their first goals was to become a “legal alien”. They received their cards in January. Second step was to take language courses and the third (for George), obtain a driver’s license.

Bonnie works from 9 to 4 cataloging books at the Academy library and George works as part-time janitor. George was recently asked if he would be the Academy’s acting Business Manager for at least 6 months as the current manager went on furlough.

In addition, they will be class sponsors for the freshman class next year which means they will be involved in many activities with them. The 11 missionary children hail from places like Argentina, Puerto Rico, Korea, and the US. Bonnie writes, “We hope to help them own their salvation. Just because they have grown up on the mission field and attended Christian school all their lives does not mean that they are Christians.”

Opportunity Knocks

George and Bonnie are faced with an opportunity to help with a “church-plant” in their community. It will be a bi-

lingual international church with over 27 nationalities represented. They will have to leave their Spanish Church to participate in this endeavor and seek God’s will in this area.

Tie by Day, Broom by Night

With school out George is now working 8-10 hours a day, which includes painting and cleaning. He is also training for the new Business Manager position. Bonnie is heavily engaged in re-organizing the library plus preparing for her and George to take on the role as class sponsors.

While the hours are long and the pace is hectic, George and Bonnie do not hesitate to step forth in their service for our Lord. Servitude embodies their lives from sunup to sundown as does taking the opportunity to witness and share the Gospel with cab drivers, language school teachers, driving instructors and Spanish friends.

Castillo Family



Maplelawn voted to support Pastor Andy Castillo and family as missionaries to their home country of Honduras. You will remember that Pastor Andy was pastor of the Iglesia Bautista Hispana (Hispanic Baptist Church) here at Maplelawn for a number of years. As long as they have been married, they felt strongly that the Lord was calling them back home as missionaries to Honduras and set the wheels in motion in late 2006. Due to new immigration rules, their change in status means they have to be back in Honduras by September. While financial support isn’t complete, they have airline tickets purchased and will be leaving September 1st. This final month will take on a hectic pace as they pull all the loose ends together and prepare for their departure. Our prayers for their step of faith that God will meet their needs and be with their new ministry in Honduras will be much appreciated. Maplelawn and IBH will be working together to help Castillos raise the money for outfit and passage.

A commissioning service is being planned for August 26th. Please pray about how you can be involved.

Summer in Transylvania

Andrew and Cristina Vidal along with their young daughter Katherine Joy are missionaries to Livada Orphan Care in Romania. The need is great and their objective is to help nurture the Romanian orphans in the things of the Lord. You can learn more about this organization by visiting their website at www.livada.org.



This summer has been busy with campers, visitors and local travel. For those who are willing to serve, the demands seem to be great but yet not so burdensome. Impacting young lives by teaching them there is a greater purpose in life is a rewarding experience that the Vidal's relish.

Andrew shares this illustration with us:

"A Priceless Moment"



I urged Demeter (center) to take my hand. He hesitated, and then grasped my hand tightly. Demeter, a 14 year old living at a state home in Sarmas, suffers from autism and has crippled legs. He receives relief from hard pressure such as a tight hand shake or pressing his cheek against a shoulder. I've known Demeter for over two years and have seen how that despite his crippled legs he has built up tremendous endurance. I knew that he could climb up the big hill that overlooks the camp site along with the rest of the campers. We made it up to the top of the hill which is a 1/4 mile hike. Down on level ground, he asked me as we

walked toward the tables for lunch, "Do you think that I could get a good set of legs like yours?"

His question took my breath away. But now that I've had a couple days to chew on his words I realize that God is showing me something. God told his closest followers in John 14 that He would not leave them as orphans but would send them a helper, His Spirit to come alongside them. It was a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit as Demeter was helped along this week by a special needs school teacher from Ireland, Romanian volunteers, and American camp staff – priceless!

Lincoln Lake Renovation Race



- August 25, 2007
- Registration/Breakfast 8:00 a.m.
- Start Time: 9:00 a.m.
- Finish Time: 11:00 a.m.

Formerly known as the September Pedal, this event has grown into something much bigger and better! We now offer a one mile Family Run, 5K run, 13K run, a bike ride, or a walk just for fun. You will have two hours to complete the event of your choice. Each event will start at

a different time.

Missionary Tim Miskimen

Tim Miskimen recently taught a class in Korea. He had this to say about his experience.

"Korea is about the size of Virginia and has over 40,000 churches. Christianity has been growing for many years in Korea and they are now second only to the US in number of missionaries they send out to the rest of the world. Word of Life is a Bible institute in NY with branches around the world. Next year they will start a Bible institute in Korea. Believers from Asia can go there to learn the Scriptures to prepare for ministry and missions. Two of our seven students will be professors for that institute. Two more of our Korean students work in Word of Life's English program which uses English instruction to both prepare people for the youth ministry and to attract non-believers. Two more of our students were a Korean husband and wife who are together planting a new church in the southern part of South Korea. Our seventh student had flown to Korea from Hong Kong to continue his studies as he prepares to be a 'tent-making' missionary in Hong Kong. With such a diverse group of students, we had a great class."

Searching for a new look?
Have your faith lifted here.