

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

# OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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## THE COMMUNITY CHURCH

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

We live in a world that is ever changing and constantly evolving around us, but that is not only true in the material world, it is also true in so-called Christendom. Since denominationalism is inherently a departure from “the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27), we should not be surprised when man-made churches do not hesitate to change with the times. However, the gospel of Jesus Christ is everlasting and unchanging, involving a message and a system that meets the needs of dying humanity, and that’s why we should “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3/ASV). This is an important difference between the Lord’s church (which is contending for the “one faith” and “one body” of Eph. 4:4-5) and a denominational system (which allows for many faiths and joining the church of your choice).

A growing and interesting phenomenon that has taken root in the religious world has to do with the “Community Church.” We need to be aware that as we do our best to persuade people to obey the gospel and become members of the Lord’s church (Matt. 16:18), more and more this is what we are up against and what many find appealing. However, don’t be deceived into thinking that this is something new. To the contrary, the modern-day Community Church involves a mindset which is nothing more than old-time denominationalism to the core! After all, it is the willingness to water down the truth in order to pacify the world, an attempt to change the gospel to conform it to worldly concepts and a failure to appreciate that God’s desire is for the sinner to make a change and “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). Indeed, it isn’t the gospel that needs to undergo a transformation of some kind, but it’s the sinner who needs to become that new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Why would a congregation that identified itself with the churches of Christ now have a desire to change course and be known as a “Community Church”?

I’m talking about a local church whom brethren once admired because they worshiped God according to the Bible pattern, but now they see themselves as just another denomination in their community. What are they hoping to gain by such behavior? The answer lies in understanding the mentality behind it all, but one thing is certain, it is nothing more than old-time denominationalism disguised with a different face and a new twist.

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The reason the Community Church has the potential for fast growth in membership is because doctrinal differences are downplayed. Make no mistake about it, this is “unity in diversity” gone to seed! They offer a generic brand of religion, crossing all sectarian and religious lines, because they don’t believe that doctrinal differences matter that much (certainly not as far as salvation is concerned). When you think about it, that appeals to a lot of people because they are looking for a church that will allow them to believe anything they want to believe without it affecting their good standing with the congregation. However, this goes against the grain of what Paul wrote in I Tim. 4:16-- “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

The distinguishing feature of denominationalism has always been that one faith is as good as another, so the Community Church mentality naturally leads to open membership. Not wanting to limit their growth and drive people away, they cannot afford to require of people what the Bible requires. That is especially true in regard to baptism “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38) and, since they are prone to relegate its importance to a non-essential anyway, they will accept your baptism even if it was for an unscriptural reason. Certainly when someone was baptized merely to comply to a church ordinance in order to join a denomination, that is something that has no connection to the gospel of Jesus Christ! However, their claim and boast is that they will accept you no matter where you are on your spiritual

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**Editorial**

**LET'S BE CAREFUL!**

*By DON L. KING*

Years ago, it was quite common to use a passage to encourage folks to obey the Gospel. It is found in 1 Peter 4:17,18: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Of course, no one who used the above passages intended to incorrectly apply the scripture. However, a study of 2 Peter 1:5-11 proves conclusively that 1 Peter 4:17,18 cannot refer to the end of time.

Notice the reading of the passage in 2 Peter 1:11. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Now, compare this with 1 Peter 4: 17,18. Notice in this passage the apostle plainly says...the righteous shall scarcely be saved." In 2 Peter 1:11 we are told our entrance in the "everlasting kingdom," obviously heaven, will be abundant. Anyone can see the difference in the two writings. Why the difference? Because, the apostle is speaking of two different things. (In 1 Peter 4:7-18, Peter is likely speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem which brought to a close the Jewish way of life.) In 2 Peter 1:11 there can be no doubt that Peter is referring to the end of time; and that all of the saved will receive an abundant, or rich, entrance into the eternal kingdom or Heaven. The conditions are shown in verses 5-10. Notice that Peter says "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (verse 10) Is Peter telling us we cannot be lost after we have been saved? Of course not. However, he is telling us that if we are developing the graces mentioned in verses 5-10 we shall "never fall." One doesn't fall as long as he is developing virtue, (courage) knowledge, (continuation of our studies) temperance, (self-control) patience, (endurance) godliness, (honoring God) brotherly kindness, (love of brethren) and love, (Agape love). This last grace is the sort of love that will prompt us to do all we can to help someone go to Heaven though we may not particularly care for their personality, etc. It is not the sort of love a mother has for her children, etc. Each of these things mentioned by Peter help us, as we develop them, to develop the others. Obviously, we won't fall as long as we are developing those things. This isn't to say we won't make mistakes along the way, but we won't leave the church and return to a life of sin.

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## QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

In my readings, the Lord's Supper is always observed at night. Furthermore, it is called a supper, not a breakfast or lunch. Why then do most churches take the communion on Sunday morning? (ME, MS, TX)

Response: In 1 Corinthians 11.23, the Apostle Paul writes, "that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread..." In Acts 20.7-11, the Bible says, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed..." Many suppose this passage shows the church taking the Lord's Supper in the middle of the night, even after midnight. However, both of these scriptures fail to prove that the Church must take communion after sundown.

There is no doubt that Jesus and the disciples first observed the Supper in the evening, after eating the Passover - which would have been on a Thursday. However, that does not mean that the church should take the Lord's Supper at night any more than it means Christians take it on a Thursday or eat the Passover meal before communion. There is no record, in sacred or profane history, that the ancient Christians ever observed the Lord's Supper on Thursday. In 1 Corinthians 11.23-26, Paul is very clear what parts of that first Institution should be repeated by the church "until Jesus comes again," namely: "we are to eat the loaf and drink the cup." The time of observance for Christians is very different from the initial observance by Jesus and the Apostles. Both the Bible and all other historical sources tell us that the ancient Christians (under apostolic direction) came together on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's Supper (Acts 20.7).

Let us now consider Acts 20.7. Some Bible readers interpret the events of Acts 20.7-12 as follows: the disciples came together to break bread (eat the Lord's Supper) at some time on the first day of the week, but they did not get right to it. Instead, Paul preached to them until midnight, then the young man fell out of the window and had to be raised from the dead. After that, the teaching service was broken up, so they came back

up into the room, observed communion (supposedly the meaning of the words, "Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten...") then they continued talking until daybreak. This understanding of the passage (though widely accepted) is unnecessary and unreasonable.

The scripture says that the disciples came together at some time on Sunday to eat the Lord's Supper. We reasonably conclude they ate the Lord's Supper and attended to the other aspects of worship for the Lord's Day assembly. We do not know what time they came together to do this - only that it was on Sunday. Afterward, Paul began to discourse with them and their study continued long into the evening. After the death and resuscitation of Eutychus, Paul as an individual "broke bread and ate."

The language "break bread" can refer to the Lord's Supper or to a common meal, and in this context - with only one man doing it and with the adjoining verb "ate" - it is certain that Paul simply ate food because he was hungry, then he continued to talk with the Christians and left the next day at dawn. The language of Acts 20.7 gives no clear indication as to what time of the day the church in Troas assembled for worship, only that they did so on the first day of the week.

The second contention for evening communion comes from the use of the word supper in 1 Corinthians 11.20. This is the only occasion where the Bible calls the communion "the Lord's Supper." The questioner notes that Paul did not say "the Lord's Breakfast" or "the Lord's Lunch," but the Lord's Supper, so it ought to be eaten at supper time! Of course, if our listeners are well travelled, you realize that supper has a colloquial meaning that changes depending on where you are. In some parts of the United States supper speaks of an evening meal, while in other regions it speaks of a mid-day meal, and still in others (if the word is used at all) it speaks of a meal in general. The Greek word rendered supper is *deipnon*, and according to most Greek Lexicons, the word simply means "an important meal." The authorities say that the word has no reference to the time of day. It is used in several examples of extra-biblical literature to speak of breakfast, mid-day, and evening meals. Of the 16 times it is used in the Bible it is most often translated banquet and rarely if ever refers to a meal necessarily taken in the evening. Thus, when Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper he is simply meaning that this is an important meal taken in honor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Based on the aforementioned facts, it is altogether inappropriate to bind an evening observance of the Lord's Supper. The example of ancient Christians was to eat the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day - the first day of every week. This is what we should do": the time of assembly is a liberty of the local church, not legislated in scripture.

### A DEDICATED LIFE

By RICK MARTIN

As parents, we encouraged our children to commit or dedicate themselves to getting a good education. We urge them to be careful who they keep company with. As they get older we want them to pick certain goals, commit to these goals and pursue them.

Just as we desire our children to be dedicated, God wants the same from his children. We must personally dedicate ourselves to God.

A committed, dedicated life begins with a primary decision. If one chooses to dedicate his life to any field, regardless of the field of endeavor, a primary decision must be made. Joshua told the people of his day “choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell. And the people said unto Joshua, the Lord our God we will serve and his voice we will obey” (Joshua 24:15 & 24).

We find Jews and Gentiles alike in the New Testament beginning the Christian walk with a primary decision to obey the Gospel. To obey the Gospel, one must Believe, Repent, Confess, and be Baptized.

Moses sanctified the book, people, tabernacle, and vessels (Heb 9:9-23). It was for dedicating, committing or sanctifying ... set them apart to a holy calling. When that primary decision is made, at that time one has set himself apart for a particular service.

In this article I would like to talk about 4 things that Personal dedication requires:

(1). Determination - Paul said of the Macedonians: “And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God” (2 Cor 8:5). The Macedonians gave themselves to the Lord. You can see determination in the life of Paul from what he says in (Phil: 4:13). “Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before.”

There must be a determination to give the Lord priority. The Lord demands first place in the hearts and lives of those who would be his followers. The Lord is satisfied with nothing less than top priority. To put him first means simply that if we have two places to go, one involving our own interest, the other His...we must make

the Lord’s trip first. If we have two tasks to perform, one the Lord’s and other our own, we must take care of the Lord’s business first. Christianity should be our vocation and our livelihoods should be our avocations. We should give primary concern to spiritual things and secondary attention to the means by which we sustain our lives.

To be a genuine disciple of the Lord, one must not only be willing to put the Lord first in all things, one must have done so. A mere profession is far from enough. If people are determined to put the Lord first they will. People usually do what they are determined to do.

(2). Discipline. We see very little self-discipline today. Many people do not have the self-discipline to carry through on tasks they should perform. We have people who want to be educated, but they don’t have the discipline to study. We have people who want to be athletes, but they are not disciplined enough to put in the long hard hours in training that are necessary.

It requires discipline to study God’s word, attend Church and put the Lord first. It requires discipline to avoid sins of the flesh that cause so many to fall. One who is dedicated and committed will have the discipline to following through.

(3) Devotion to God. The deepest yearning of our heart should be to grow into the kind of person that God would have us be. We do not always remember this because we live in a world which involves many kinds of pressures.

For too many people, Christ is not very real, and Christianity is not very meaningful. It is only skin deep. It is largely a habit. Some are like Peter and follow the Lord from “afar off”. For many, Christianity is not a new way of living. It has not been a higher set of values to live by, a life of service to one’s fellowmen and hours of meaningful worship to God (Rom 12:1) “I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable until God, which is your reasonable service.” (2 Cor 5:17) “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are new.”

(4) Discrimination. Joshua told the people to “choose you this day whom you will serve.” We must grow in order that we may be able to discern between good and evil. (Heb 5:14) “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their sins exercised to discern both good and evil.” Christians must set their minds on things above. A

Christian is one who has been set apart. He is not of the world though he is still in the world. The ship is in the ocean, but when you get the ocean in the ship, you have a problem. Christians must not see how close they can live to the world and yet not sin.

In closing, I ask you are you living a dedicated life? Please consider the four things that I have mentioned in this article and become the dedicated Christian that you should be.

*COMMUNITY CHURCH....continued from page one*

journey. While that appears to represent a loving attitude, what they really mean is that all the doctrinal differences in the world does not matter as long as you are willing to agree to disagree. You, of course, must be willing to extend that same right to them.

Please don't misunderstand the point that's being made here: It is undeniable that as the church we must be willing to deal with sinners and help them find salvation. If we take the attitude, "We're not going to have anything to do with sinners," we're not going to have anyone to preach to. But the point is that we are not encouraging sinners to come into the church to stay sinners. Our attitude must not be, "Come as you are with all your sins and false doctrines and we will accept you in that condition forever." Yes, we realize there must be a period of growth for babes in Christ, but it is our responsibility as the church to help them grow by instructing them in the way of righteousness and truth. When sinners are not called to repentance and people are not rescued from error by teaching them the truth, we have failed in our responsibility as the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

Incidentally, the reason the Community Church wears a name that is generic is by design, purposefully giving no clue as to how they stand doctrinally and revealing no affiliation with any other group. The Community Church mentality is not undenominational (like the New Testament church is), but it is actually all-denominational. This is conducive to growth because it opens the door to anyone and everything!

**LARGE NUMBERS**

The driving force behind the Community Church mentality is the desire for numbers by creating as large a following as possible. All you have to do is consider their programs and worship services to see how this is true. Their main concern is not, "Is it scriptural? Is it pleasing to God? What has He revealed in His word?" No, it's all about what the people want and what will

bring in the biggest crowds. We know that political decisions are poll driven, but would you believe that religion is now poll driven? Today some churches are actually engaging in marketing techniques and surveys to find out what their communities want. Once they discover what it is, they provide those services in order to reach the masses (including things like sign language classes, day care facilities, citizenship classes and other things).

Surely we realize that religious truth cannot be determined by polls, but a variety of worship services are being orchestrated for the purpose of accommodating the "needs" (likes and dislikes) of their members. The Community Church mentality involves worship that is man-centered instead of God-centered (where we are more interested in what God wants instead of what man likes). Paul condemned what he called "will worship" in Col. 2:23 -- worship that is according to "the commandments and doctrines of men" (verse 22). When the church takes on a "poll driven" mentality, you know that apostasy has gained the upper hand. Did Jesus take a poll to find out what was popular with men? Did the apostles take a poll to discover what the early disciples (much less the world) wanted to believe and practice? No, Jesus came to reveal the will of His Father and the apostles revealed the doctrine of Christ. It is still our duty today to be like those early disciples who "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42).

**AN UNSCRIPTURAL ATTITUDE**

May the Lord help us to realize that people of the world will never be made spiritual or brought closer to God by pandering to their base desires and worldly concepts. We cannot lower the standards of God's word for the sake of numbers. We dare not compromise a principle of truth for a bigger following. God's word is clear that largeness in and of itself is not the most important thing (Matt. 7:13-14). While some claim that the reason they've made all these changes is for the purpose of saving souls and drawing bigger crowds, it's obvious that they themselves demand those changes in order to be satisfied and entertained. The Community Church mentality involves an unscriptural attitude from the beginning to the end.

*LET'S BE CAREFUL....continued from page two*

One thing we can know if we decide to leave the Lord and live in sin, is that we have not developed, as Peter says we must, if we are to receive the abundant entrance into Heaven. There is only one way to get down from the progression of righteousness Peter shows us, and

that is to fall down. if we don't want to fall down, we must keep on climbing toward our goal.

In Revelation 2:5 the Ephesians were told to repent and do the "first works." In verse 4 they were told that they had left their first love. Obviously, first works are accomplished under the influence of first love. In other words, they were told to go back to living and doing as they did when they were new and so fervent in living the Christian life. This is a common problem even today. A person obeys the gospel and is determined to live right. However, as time goes by his attention is diverted to other things; and one of the first things he is likely to do is stop attending all the services of the church. Be careful! You may be forgetting your first love, and it is probable you will also soon stop developing the Christian graces spoken of by Peter in 2 Peter 1:5-11. When that takes place, your fall from the Lord may not be far off.

It is distressing to see young converts begin to lose their fervency and the church take second place to whatever their fancy may be at the time. Whatever you do, don't stop developing those Christian graces. That will help all of us remain active in doing the first works so important to the Lord. Our ultimate goal is that abundant entrance into Heaven. We must not miss it.

Think on these things. —DLK

### TEN THINGS I WANT MY CHILDREN TO KNOW

By DAVID MACKEY

#### THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY - GUEST ARTICLE

*Editor's Note: Brother David Mackey of the Covina, CA congregation, son of the late preacher Paul Mackey, was a recent guest speaker at 64th. St. in Sacramento where we work and where his son Kevin and wife Haley call home. I was honored to be there that day and asked David for a copy of his sermon to share with O.P.A. readers. —Greg Gay*

The Apostle Paul placed before every father a great challenge when he wrote these compelling words: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

I have been blessed by having a father and mother who labored diligently to instill in me spiritual guidance. The most important things that they left my brothers and me are not houses, money, or worldly possessions; but an unyielding, unwavering, unquestioning faith in God. I could never hope to ask for anything more.

Solomon offered this advice: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:20-23).

There are things every parent wants their children to know. I am no exception. Here are ten things I want my children to know:

1. God is most important in their lives: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). I believe this to be the foundational principle of a happy life. A faith centered life will bring peace and happiness. God, the church, righteous living and a balanced life of service to God and others will delight them and their whole family in youth as well as old age.

More than anything else I want them to personally welcome and accept the things of God: His leading, His tests, His reproofs, His will, His wisdom. I really do fear that many of our young people and young families have lost sight of what the most important things are in life.

An unknown author once said, "We are shaped and fashioned by what we love." Jesus said, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30).

I want my children to know that the most important thing in their life is to love God. This will shape the ultimate outcome of their life.

It will shape their relationship to their friends, their spouses, and their co-workers, but most important, it will shape how they view themselves. After stating this was the first commandment, Jesus pointed out the second: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31). Learning to love God and put God first will indeed shape our lives to be productive, prayerful and peaceful.

I do not want God and the church to be an after-thought in my children's lives. I want them to know nothing is more loved by God than His church. I can love what God loves by loving the Church. I can honor what God honors by honoring the Church. I can serve what God has saved, by serving the Church. Before myself, before my job, before my family, before my pleasure, God is

first.

2. Family is important: Family activities strengthen the emotional and spiritual well-being of children and adults. I want them to know that I love their mother. And that while I certainly have not been the “role model” husband or father - the fact of my frailties or failures does not diminish the truth of what I say.

I want them to know that marriage is for life and divorce is not the option God chooses to fix problems in a marriage. The Lord placed the divine viewpoint on this problem when He said, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:6-9).

We live in a world of throwaway families and throwaway marriages. I want my children to know that their mother and I made a promise to God. We must honor that promise. That means that we must endure the difficult times. Marriage is for life and is a constant learning and growing relationship.

I also want my children to know that I loved my wife’s parents as she loved my mother. Dad had passed away before Teresa met him. Yet, she knows my Dad. She has been told about my Dad by my mother, by me, my family, and all who knew him. We are all part of an extended family. I valued her parents as I valued my own parent.

After the Lord and the Church, nothing in this world is more important than family. I want my children’s families to be their highest earthly priority.

3. Integrity is essential: “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22: 1). Keeping one’s word and maintaining respect for truth are traits I want my children to continue to honor and develop. I want them to keep their promises even if it hurts. They will never buy integrity. Integrity will be a product of delivering on their word. Respect is always given to men of integrity. One man wrote, “Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your

habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.”

I want my children to speak the truth, even when it is painful. Abraham Lincoln said, “I am nothing, but truth is everything.” Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). This is the truth that will allow them to stand upon their convictions. I want them to be known as men and women who, when they say, “Yes,” they mean “Yes,” and when they say, “No,” they mean “No.” Integrity means that we are known for being honest in our dealings with family, with brethren, with neighbors, in business, and where our life’s path may lead.

An author wrote, “Resolved: never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.” I want my children to know that men and women of integrity live with few regrets and die with dignity and respect.

4. A good work ethic will serve them well: The Apostle Paul wrote: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). It seems to me that the happiest men I know love to work. They know how to balance their lives between work, family, God, and play. They know how to receive the maximum benefit from each.

We have always stressed to our children the importance of work. What we do on our jobs is a reflection of our character. Paul said, “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Ephesians 6:7-8).

Mankind benefits from work and industriousness. I want my children to know that work is a privilege, a challenge to indolence, an answer to boredom, and a place to invest one’s energy - not to mention providing for one’s own physical need and for one’s family.

Work is also part of a spiritual persons make up. Throughout the Bible we are encouraged to be industrious, to be people of diligence, committed to the tasks in life that need to be accomplished. Diligence and industry are qualities that make projects successful. Work is the slayer of procrastination. Work enables us to fully comprehend and fulfill the Bible axiom, “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). I want my children to know that if they are physically and mentally capable of



working it is a moral, spiritual responsibility.

A lack of work destroys self-reliance, pride and confidence. Work builds all three. If you are an employee you owe your employer your best. A lazy employee doesn't simply hold a company back, he destroys its motivation and drive. A lazy athlete doesn't just weaken the team, he destroys its spirit and diminishes its will to win.

I don't want my children to dread work. I want them to thank God they are living in a country where they can provide for themselves and their families. Millions this day are desperate for such an opportunity. It is an honor to work, to be of sound body and mind that we can work. It has been said that "recession is when the man next door loses his job, depression is when you lose your job, and panic is when your wife loses her job."

5. Learn how to manage money: There are many important rules about managing money, but first and most important is simple: God first.

One man said there are 5 things that you can do with money: Give it, Save it, Invest it, Lend it, and Spend it. Notice where spending comes in on this list: Last.

You can tell much more about an individual's dedication to God by looking at that person's checkbook than by looking at his/her Bible. I am not talking about the checkbook balance. I am talking about where does our money go? Solomon said, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10). "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). "Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed" (Proverbs 13:21).

I want my children to faithfully honor the Lord's command to give: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

If someone has to be shortchanged, I do not want it to be the Lord. I want my children to know that we give to the Lord first. And we give the very best we have to offer. My grandmother once said, "If you can't afford it, don't buy it."

Money of itself is a tool. It is not good or bad. In our hands it will become one or the other. I will be proud of my children, not because of what they buy, but because

of what they can do with their money. The Apostle Paul said, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

I want my children to know it is a great honor to God to use their money unselfishly, and responsibly, without bragging and boasting. Remember, the Bible says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). -To be continued next month. DLK

## Announcement

MOORE, OK - The congregation at Moore, OK has changed their afternoon services to 2:00 PM. Please make note.

A NOTE OF THANKS - Brother Charles Mountain of San Antonio, Texas sends this note of thanks to all who contributed to his recent medical procedure to correct problems with his heart. The procedure brought almost immediate results and was considered a total success. I am now gaining strength daily. To all those who sent money individually and all the congregations who helped, I can never thank you enough. May God bless you all. Charles Mountain, 5927 Lake Champlain, An Antonio, TX 78233

WORDS OF LOVE, VOLUME TWO - I am happy to announce that we have published the "Words of Love" - Volume Two by J. Wayne McKamie. This volume contains 43 radio sermons across numerous Bible subjects. The Words of Love radio program has been aired on a Lubbock, TX radio station for some 41 years. We still have copies of "Words of Love" - Volume One available also.

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In Him, Gary Robinson

## Our Departed

**HOLTON** - Louise Holton age 96 departed this life August 26, 2018. She leaves behind two daughters and a host of brothers and sisters in Christ. She grew up in Healdton, OK where she heard the gospel that would direct the rest of her life. She was a faithful member of the Third St. Church of Christ for 68 years, in Lubbock, Texas. A grave side service was conducted on August 26, 2018 to pay respect to her memory and faithful life to Jesus Christ. She will be missed by all who loved and respected her. — John Stephens

**DEGOUGH** - Everett Ray DeGough passed from this life on July 22, 2018. He was born on January 14, 1943 in Bakersfield California. Everett was preceded in death by his father Carl (Snooks) DeGough, and mother Leslie (Pat) DeGough. He is survived by his loving wife of 32 years Judy, brothers Wayne and Richard, Sister Gail Brewer, grandson Dyllan, and numerous other grand and great-grand children. Everett was a very generous and hospitable man that never knew a stranger. And as Judy said, "If Everett was your friend, he was your friend for life." He enjoyed the outdoors, and loved to hunt and fish with his family and friends. In 2004 after Everett was diagnosed with a rare form of thymus cancer, he and Judy obeyed the Gospel. With God's help, Everett beat his illness and lived a faithful Christian life until his passing. He will certainly be missed, as he was a valuable member of the Lord's church on Planz Rd in Bakersfield. I considered it a great honor to speak words of remembrance and comfort at his funeral. Everett was laid to rest at Hillcrest Cemetery in Bakersfield CA on July 30, 2018 to await the resurrection. — Frank Brancato

**BAKER** - Marty Ervin was born in Houston, Missouri on September 7, 1955 to Ervin and Mary (Poor) Baker. He passed away on August 20, 2018 at home at the age of 62 years, 11 months and 13 days. He was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Baker; a baby brother, Kelvin; grandparents, James Aaron and Susan Anna (Edwards) Baker and William and Mary Caroline (Pelican) Poor. Marty is survived by his wife Jeri Lynn of the home; daughter, Jacinda Paulson and husband Joshua of Redondo Beach, CA; son, Caleb Baker of Houston, MO; his dad, Ervin Baker of Houston, MO; a sister, Cassie

Gay and husband Greg of Fair Oaks, CA; a brother, Wyn Baker and wife Michelle of Lavallette, WV; his mother-in-law, Delma Haney Preissle and brother-in-law Rob Haney and wife Sandra of Houston, MO and several nieces and nephews. Marty was a faithful member of the Church of Christ, he worshipped at the Highway 17 Church of Christ where he had served as an Elder since May 2012. He was an exceptional singer and song leader with a rich and ringing bass voice. He was united in marriage to Jeri Lynn Haney on April 4, 1981. They were blessed with two children, Jacinda Lynn and Caleb Aaron. Marty lived his entire life in the Houston area and never desired to leave the county. After having children, he coached toss ball, tee ball and mighty mite football. He was big on teamwork and teaching kids the importance of a team. Hundreds of people from near and far attended the visitation and funeral services for Marty. Funeral Services were conducted by the Evans Funeral Home of Houston, Missouri with Gary Gentry and Todd Richardson of the Houston congregation officiating. Congregational singing was led by Greg Gay. Marty was a wonderful husband, dad, son and brother. He was also a compassionate and caring brother in Christ. He will be missed by all who knew him. Todd Richardson

Editor's note: The middle-of-the night call no one ever wants came to tell us the news of Marty's passing. The outpouring of love and support from the congregation and community was overwhelming as people stood in line at the Thursday evening Visitation for three hours or more to pay their respects. The words spoken by Gary and Todd to the overflowing crowd at the funeral were very comforting to the family in a great time of sorrow. — Greg Gay

## Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 14352, Springfield, MO 65814 or [rwwade36@gmail.com](mailto:rwwade36@gmail.com), Oct. 9, 2018. We were privileged to attend the Texas Labor Day meeting again this year, under the direction of the Fossil Creek congregation and Kevin Presley. Large crowds were in attendance at every service. We have just closed meetings at Brooksville, FL with good crowds each service and three baptisms, and LaGrange, GA with one baptism and one confession of fault. At LaGrange we met in their new building for the first time. What a beautiful building it is, and in an excellent location. Good crowds greeted us at each service with a number of congregations and preachers present. Lord willing we look forward to meetings in Hamilton, Ohio September 19-23, London, KY Sept. 25-30, Council Hill, OK Oct. 19-21. May God's blessings attend the faithful everywhere.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Sept. 4. We are now past Labor Day, meaning that Fall will soon be here, and the Missouri Labor Day Meeting was hosted by the congregation in Bolivar. It was my privilege to be one of the speakers, along with six other preachers, and the meeting left us all on a spiritual high. The brethren at Bolivar are an energetic group of Christians who are working hard to evangelize their community. The preparations they made for this meeting was the reason for its success. My meeting at Claxton, MO in July ended with the baptism of a young man, Isaac Hillhouse, to which we give God the glory. I look forward to returning in 2022. It was great to have Ronny Wade ride with me to a service one night, someone whose association with Claxton goes back many years, and his presence certainly aided our efforts. Then in August Jerry and I held a meeting together at Hoyte, TX, something we had done once before, and what a wonderful week it was. Our association with them goes back to the early 70's and it is always an enjoyable time when we get together. Many thanks to the Baker family for their hospitality and, believe it or not, we went to someone's house after every service to visit and eat a meal. They know how to make you feel at home! I will next be at Grapevine, TX on Sept. 19-23 and Edmond, OK on Oct. 5-7. Also, we are anticipating a great weekend meeting here at Jamesville with Randy Tidmore on the dates of Sept. 14-16. Lord willing, I plan to end the year on a good note by attending the Oklahoma New Year's Meeting.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, email: oldpaths@juno.com, September 13, oldpaths@juno.com. Since last report it has been my pleasure and privilege to preach several times. My strength is coming back. The 2018 California Labor Day meeting is now history and it was a good one. The Livermore congregation hosted it and Brother Carl Johnson did a great job preaching. Crowds were gratifying with visitors from many places and all had a wonderful attitude. Last Lord's Day it was my pleasure to preach at Yuba City for the first time in quite some time due to my illness. We are scheduled to speak at home this coming Sunday. I am looking forward to holding some meetings next year, Lord willing, and also look forward to making the yearly trip to the Philippines in 2019. Preachers, we need your reports and articles in order to keep the paper going. Try to get them to us no later than the 15th of every month. May God bless His people everywhere.

Frank Brancato, 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312, September 12, 2018, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. Since last reporting, I had the pleasure of holding meetings in Brookhaven MS (Hwy 84), and Strong AR. Both meetings were well attended, and

we pray that much good was accomplished. While in Brookhaven, I stayed with Gary and Angela Thornton and I enjoyed their hospitality very much. We had very large crowds with visitors every service. There were no visible results during the meeting, but a young lady was baptized the next day. That was wonderful news, and we give God all of the glory. I also had the privilege of holding another meeting in Strong AR. We enjoyed good crowds with visitors as well, and after the final service one young man was baptized into Christ. I also enjoyed staying with Cullen and Julie Smith very much. Cullen and Julie are very hospitable people, and I always enjoy being in their home. Cullen is also one of my dearest friends, and I appreciate all that he does for the cause of Christ. The work here at home continues to move forward in a positive direction. We are still having visitors almost every Sunday, and we pray that the seed of the Gospel is being planted in good and honest hearts. I continue to have private bible studies every week, and yesterday 6 more prospects started the Bible correspondence course. If the Lord wills my upcoming speaking schedule will be as follows: Oakdale CA (September 16th, and also October 21 st), Kansas City MO (October 31 - November 4), and Arlington Texas (November 28 - December 2). May God continue to bless His faithful everywhere!

Darrell Crawford, 208 E Baldwin Rs Unit S, Panama City FL 32405, bugz1955@hotmail.com. It has been quite some time since I sent in a report to the OPA. I will try to do better in the future. The work here in the Florida panhandle continues to grow, albeit very slowly. A couple of weeks ago, we lost a member to death, Cyrus Thompson had held the church together for several years prior to us moving here. He will be missed by all who are here. I have an online study going with a digressive preacher in another state. I also have had a local man agree to a study here, hopefully that will result in a baptism. We are busy preparing for a meeting the first of October with Brother Art Lynch of Glendale, Az. He always does a great job of presenting the gospel in a very loving way. This is an annual meeting we are trying to have the first part of October each year. Not long after that, we are anticipating the annual New Year Meeting in Dothan, AL. If you can, please try to attend this great meeting. We still are having visitors on occasion from the brotherhood which we deeply appreciate, we had two couples recently from the Jericho congregation in Brookhaven, Ms. We still have visitors from the community as well, we had a young lady and her daughter stop by on Wed. night. She said she lives nearby and had noticed the church and had been planning to come visit, she said she would come back again. also, recently we were able to go to Jonesboro, Ga. to hear William St John preach. He always does a great job preaching. Please keep the

work here in your prayers, come visit if you can. May the Lord bless His church everywhere, and may we all stick to the Old Paths.

P. Duane Permenter, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797, duane@churchofchristhawaii.org. The church in Hawaii sends forth a greeting to all. We are at peace and the church is growing spiritually. Our work is blessed by many visits and kind words from many different places. We appreciate everything you do for the cause of Jesus Christ. Especially, from our hearts we thank you for your continued support both morally and financially. Our work is better because of what you do for us. Our prayer is God will bless you. Since the last letter, we completed a wonderful week with Phillip and Tammy Prince learning rudiments of music and hearing brother Phillip preach the gospel. We are the better for them spending time with us. We plan to do this again next year. The singing and learning was good and our singing is better than ever. Our granddaughter Alivia Permenter was so excited about the singing school and the possibilities she wrote a song. We are very happy about the enthusiasm of all our children. All eight of our children between four and ten attended every session. It was exciting to see and hear the growth in this most important part of our service to Almighty God. We continue with our weekly studies and work. We have now used the radio an hour every week for a year; however, we are planning to stop the program at the end of June. Although we have had some contacts, we feel that the results were not enough to validate the cost of the program. Our real success has come from friends and family since moving here January 2017. We continue to have twenty-three each Sunday morning and evening. Wednesday night we had twenty people. In addition we are blessed with visitors from the mainland often. Frank Bedford spoke for us Wednesday night and did an excellent job on the chapter study. His turn involved some research about Antioch of Syria in Acts chapter 11. Frank is a good mechanic and a good common sense fella. Frank works twelve hours a day; however he never fails his spiritual job. Everyone is doing all he or she can to build the work and God is blessing us.

Michael Bolton, Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 12, 2018. The work in Bangladesh for us is drawing to a close. And we are sad, but happy all at the same time. We have experienced several firsts. Bringing April and will with me has been a blessing. It is miserable hot and the mosquitoes are fierce. But the landscape is beautiful and the people are wonderful. We love and are loved greatly. We baptized four yesterday. We spent the night in a tiny village in Northern Bangladesh near Dhobaura. This is where gospel preacher Denish Mankim is from much

of his family is there. I think I am the first American to ever preach the gospel there. Denish stayed behind to instruct the new Christian. In all over the last 10 days we have preached 16 times, and in 9 different places. John Gain's home village of Barisal has called him and asked him to return soon to baptize 6. We pray that they remain strong and safe until John can get there later next week. Peter Baroi's home village, Banianchor has asked for more studies. And the tiny village we had to take a boat across the river to in Gopalganj has expressed earnest interest. The gospel preachers here will have a difficult time following all these leads. And as new members are added the load will continue to grow in its work. I have been informed that the multi-cup churches here are almost nonexistent after this group took its stand for true worship. Khulna preaching school has had only 1 enrollee in the last two years. The documents used to register the church with the government here were greatly falsified. Those documents claim 1000 churches of Christ with a membership of 30,000 people. And a enrollment in the preaching school of 16-20. These things, beside the pervasive false doctrine, taught by the denominations is as always destructive to the Lord's church. We have had to spend time preaching to the non believer, that we are not here for money. We are not about power or prestige. But rather we are here in the interest of eternity. The acceptance of the gospel seems to be greater when we teach that the Lord's church is not about what someone in a westernized country says, but about what the Bible says. The people are particularly intrigued that they can be "BIBLE CHRISTIANS" without the influence of America. Not that American preachers are unwelcome. But the concept that one can be a "bible christian" without the "leadership" of a foreign organization seemed liberating. We have taught that the denominations which enslave new believers to a man-made system and destroys their dignity and self-governance, is wrong and anti-biblical. But the purpose of the gospel is to restore man's dignity, not to bring electricity, clean water, or provide college. People want these things but their pride and dignity is wrecked when these things are handed to them. The folks in Denish Makim's village are very poor, and they know they are. But they are very clean and dignified. I was impressed with the care that was always taken to clean, clean, clean. My stomach is not ready to handle their well-water solely just yet. But the cleanliness was an attribute that cannot be missed. For me or anyone else to come in and teach them how to clean like we do in America, or some other western cultural concept would destroy their pride, and spirit. But when I teach about sin, and its impact, and then teach about Jesus and His power to save, and then teach about the Lord's church that it is local and autonomous, then people listened. They are hungry for more.

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## WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

### NEAR YOU!

By JERRY DICKINSON

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.” (Genesis 23:1-2) The Bible does not tell us how long Abraham and Sarah were married but it had to be a long time. Sarah was 65 when she followed her husband Abraham out of Mesopotamia as they began their journey and sojourn in the land of Canaan. She died at the age of 127 so that means they were married at least 62 years! Of course, it seems likely they had been married some time before they left for their sojourn, maybe a long time before as a matter of fact. So they had been married 70 or 80 (or more) years before Sarah’s death. That is a long time! What was the secret of their long marriage together?

My mom and dad will celebrate their 70th anniversary October 10 this year. What a milestone! I told them awhile back that it is remarkable to be married 70 years. You have to have done something right to make that many years together. Whenever I mention their long marriage to my mother she always replies, “In all those years we have never been separated.” She does not mean by that they have never spent any time apart, but that they have never separated with a view to dissolve the marriage. They have had problems and disagreements and arguments, like all marriages, but they never separated to contemplate a dissolution of their marriage or a divorce. It is interesting that “their song” when they were dating and first married was a song called “Near You” written and sung by Francis Craig in 1947. It was such a popular song that it was number one for 17 consecutive weeks!

There’s just one place for me, Near You;  
It’s like heaven to be, Near You.  
Times when we’re apart and I can’t face my heart;  
Say you’ll never stray more than just two lips away;  
If my hours could be spent, Near You;  
I’d be more than content, Near You.

I do not know, of course, if Abraham and Sarah had a special song but the words of mom and dad’s song certainly help explain how to sustain a long lasting marriage. Sarah was always content to be near Abraham. She followed him when God called him to leave Ur and go out on a journey to a strange land. I cannot overemphasize the fact that Sarah went with her husband on this perilous sojourn. She lived in a tent for 62 years! Sarah and Abraham, in my mother’s words, were never separated. Of course, they were physically separated on two occasions when Sarah was taken by foreign Chieftans who thought she was Abraham’s sister but Sarah and Abraham never intended to dissolve their marriage. They were never separated! She followed Abraham’s leadership and according to Peter, Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. Peter encourages women today to follow Sarah’s example with the words, “Whose daughter’s you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.” (1 Peter 3:6)

What does Peter mean when he says Sarah was not afraid with any terror or amazement? I believe he means she was fearless in following Abraham to a strange land. She was not afraid to dwell in a tent for 62 years. I do not believe she was afraid even when Abraham, who was afraid, asked her to conceal the fact that they were married - twice - so that he would not be killed. She went along with his dissemblance, but apparently was unafraid, and trusted that God would intervene and protect her, which of course He did. The key to their long and strong marriage was that they were never separated in their love and devotion for each other and their mutual devotion to obeying God no matter what He asked of them. My mother and father have been devoted to each other and to God and have never been separated from that devotion. May the Lord help us learn from those who have weathered the storms of life together and have never been separated.

Make my life worthwhile by telling me that I’ll  
Spend the rest of my days, Near you!