

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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NO. 4

CORONAVIRUS SPREADS AROUND THE WORLD

By GREG GAY

Long ago, Jesus and his followers came to the house of Peter and Andrew. Upon arrival, they were told that Peter’s mother-in-law was ill with what Physician Luke diagnoses as a “high fever.” Matthew records, “Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, He saw his wife’s mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them” (Matthew 8:14-15 NKJV). We are not told the underlying cause for her fever, only that it was disabling to the point she was not able to function prior to Jesus’ healing touch. Her fever could have been caused by many things, including the flu, which has been around for many centuries.

The editors of History.com report, “Influenza [flu, which is caused by viruses] has likely been around for millennia, though its cause was only identified relatively recently. One of the earliest reports of an influenza-like illness comes from Hippocrates, who described a highly contagious disease from northern Greece (ca. 410 B.C.)” (<https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/flu>).

Mayo Clinic’s site lists multiple causes of fever today with the top two being “virus and bacteria.” The flu is caused by various viruses. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) describes the flu as “a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year” (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>).

Today, fear of a new type of flu caused by the Coronavirus appears to be rapidly spreading around the world. As I write these words (March 9, 2020), more than 112,000 individuals in 90 nations have tested positive for a new

variety of the Coronavirus, including in the United States, where one or more individuals have tested positive in 34 of our 50 states. President Trump has just signed an authorization for \$8.3 Billion for research, testing, and treatment to stop the spread as quickly as possible and to minimize illness and loss of life in the future from this virus. It is anticipated a vaccine will be successfully developed in coming months.

The Coronavirus is so named because of the appearance of crown-like spikes when magnified. Corona is Latin for crown. Coronavirus is a large family of viruses, mostly found in animals, with several variations that have crossed into humans, including the new variation that is in the news. The new variation, according to the CDC, causes “severe acute respiratory syndrome” (SARS) and “has been named “SARS-CoV-2.” The disease it causes has been named “Coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “Covid-19”).

Individuals who are exposed to the new disease are being asked to self-quarantine for at least two weeks to see what develops. If the disease develops, there is currently not much that can be done to help except treat symptoms as they occur and wait and see if the patient’s body is strong enough to survive. Thankfully, the vast majority do survive, most with little more than discomfort, but sadly, the number of fatalities recorded thus far is near 4,000 worldwide.

According to the CDC, those most at risk predictably include older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) website recommends the following for prevention: “regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.”

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Editorial

OUR DAY AND TIME

By DON L. KING

We live in a time of danger and uncertainty. Violence is on every hand. School shootings have become all too familiar and violence is seemingly increasing. Just recently, during a communion service of a church, not associated with us, a man began shooting. A security guard hired by the church immediately shot and killed the shooter. Reportedly, security had noticed something strange and wondered why he was wearing a fake beard so they were watching him. News coverage has been complimentary of the security guard and credits him with saving perhaps many lives, which is possibly true.

We are familiar with such actions taken by law enforcement in other places. We read or hear about it fairly often. However, during a worship service? What a shame to know of such in our day and time. Could anything have been done otherwise? We will never know. Possibly, if the police had been called as soon as the offender had been seen the event might have been averted, no one knows. Obviously, to have some way avoided the incident would have been better. Some suggested the doors might have been locked when the service began, but that would likely have also locked out some who were habitually late, if our services are any example.

Whatever the solution might have been, it is well for Christians to remember what the Bible teaches. God’s people are taught not to retaliate. In Hebrews 10:30, where the apostle seems to quote from Deuteronomy 32:34, It says “For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence sayeth the Lord.” In Matthew 5:39 where Jesus said we are not to resist evil, that can’t be made to say we may shoot and kill the offender. No, some other path has to be found. In 1 Peter 3:9, “Peter wrote: “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” Paul also taught similar things in Romans 12:17-21.

Even as Stephen was dying (Acts 7) from being stoned, he prayed for his murderers. Jesus prayed for those who crucified him even as they were nailing Him to the cross. (Luke 23:34; John 15:13) David refrained

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DEFRANCE

Question 1- Is there a problem with a congregation wiping the rim of the cup between each communicant?

Answer: Since the “germ craze” of the late 19th Century, wiping the rim of the cup (even with a simple cloth napkin) became a fairly common practice in certain churches that continued to use a common cup in the Lord’s Supper. Travelers may have encountered this practice in British and African congregations even at the present day. In James Orten’s tract, *Sanitation in Communion*, he reported that the Hobbs, Knowlden, and White Study (1967), found that wiping the cup in this manner “reduced the number of organisms present by about 90 percent.” For many worshipers, this was a satisfactory way to meet sanitation concerns, while at the same time maintaining the Biblical pattern for the observance of the Lord’s Supper.

It does not seem that wiping the cup has any necessarily negative effect on one’s adherence to the Biblical pattern, however a few cautions are in order: 1) we must be very careful that we do not formulate personal conditions for our obedience to God. In other words, if the only reason we are willing to obey God is because we have found a solution to personal discomfort, we have a serious problem. If a congregation began wiping the rim of the cup, would the members then refuse to commune at congregations that did not do the same? This would be a serious problem. 2) we must be careful to not blur the lines between that which is customary and that which is commanded. In modern American congregations, it is common to use a silver chalice in the Lord’s Supper. Often, people argue that this makes the Lord’s Supper more sanitary - but in some cases people have ignorantly concluded that only a silver chalice is acceptable! This is a tragic misconception. Throughout history, and even throughout the modern world, most congregations have not used a silver drinking vessel - but rather a simple vessel of glass, pewter, plastic, or some other substance with no special sanitary feature.

Whatever decisions congregations make, we must remember the pattern: Jesus took a single loaf of unleavened bread, blessed and broke from it, gave it to

the disciples and told them to share it. He took a single cup (some kind of drinking vessel) containing the fruit of the vine, blessed and drank from it, gave it to the disciples and told them to all drink from it. If this pattern is altered, whatever is done is no longer the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11.20). We must also remember that 1 Corinthians 11 stresses that our minds be focused on Christ during the Supper. If we are consumed with concern for personal discomfort, we may well eat and drink damnation to our own souls.

Our primary concerns when observing the Lord’s Supper must always be: 1) are we obeying Christ; 2) are we remembering and honoring Christ. Without these, our actions - however sanitary - are in vain.

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REMEMBERING RONNY

BY IRVIN BARNES

Ronny's special speaking ability was the catalyst that moved me to gospel obedience. In June of 1961, Ronny came to Clio, Missouri for a meeting. My family worshipped at Hale, Arkansas, 40 miles south of Clio. We attended 3 nights of Ronny's meeting. I was 16 years old and deeply involved at school in public speaking, debate, and school government. I hadn't listened very well to the preachers that came to Hale. I found most of their sermons confusing and often boring. The first night I was fascinated by Ronny's lesson. It was well constructed and delivered in a way that made it easy to remember. The second night we attended the meeting, the sermon seemed even clearer and more powerful.

When Sunday rolled around during lunch, Dad remarked, "I wanted to go back to Clio and hear that young man from Texas, preach again." I replied, "Me too." That settled the matter, we were going!

Ronny knew little about me. However, when he started preaching it was as if every word applied to me. When the invitation song was sung, I went forward, confessed Christ, and Ronny baptized me in Flat Creek, near Jenkins, Mo.

With the encouragement of my parents, Miles King, and Ronny, I began giving lessons and holding a few weekend meetings. In 1963, Ronny invited me to meet him at the Sulphur meeting and go with him to Marion, La., and Strong, Arkansas. This trip was the beginning of a 50 year journey that Ronny and I, in many ways and many places, traveled together. Other than my parents and my wife no one has done more to encourage me in the preaching of the gospel. I had several debates and discussions with bread breakers, cups and class people, and one Sabbatarian. Ronny spent money out of his own pocket and took the time to drive long distances to help me with these discussions. We debated together, preached together, in the pulpit, on TV, and at funerals. We ran TV leads and had home studies with interested individuals. We prayed together. We often laughed together. We wept together, especially when death reached into our homes and took our children. The incidents both serious and humorous would fill pages and pages of copy. Please allow me to relate an incident or two.

I sat in awe of Ronny's preaching. He asked me to read

his text. The first 3 nights he had me read the same scripture. Gal. 1:6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:" Ronny preached 3 sermons from this verse and never crossed the same ground twice.

Ronny taught me about observing the crowd and choosing subjects that matched the occasion. At Marion, there was a man whose wife was a member. Ronny had learned that her husband was not a Christian. He also learned the fellow worked on a drill rig. The well drilling, disobedient, husband attended every night of the meeting. In one of his sermons Ronny told about a well driller who had been attending services with his wife and telling her that he fully intended to be baptized. Before he got around to obeying the gospel, one day while he was working on the drill rig, a large pulley fell from a crane, hit the man in the head and killed him instantly. At the end of Ronny's sermon as soon as the invitation song was started the oil man at Marion, all but ran down the aisle.

When tape recorders first became available an older brother in one congregation was completely fascinated with his rather large reel to reel tape recorder. He had the recorder sitting in the amen corner as close to the podium as he could get it. He successfully recorded Ronny's sermons for several nights. Then one fateful night, Ronny started his lesson and the old brother reached over to turn his recorder on. He hit play instead of record. An individual sounded forth in a loud "opera like" rendition of the Star Spangled Banner! The brother became so flustered he couldn't find the right switch to turn it off. He finally pulled the plug from the wall and stopped the commotion!

One night during the meeting at Marion we stopped at a General Store to get gas. When we went inside to pay, there was a T.V. set on, playing a western in LIVING COLOR! Neither of us had ever seen a color T.V. I had seen very little TV in black and white! Color TV was quite a fascination. We watched for several minutes, Ronny looked at his watch and exclaimed, "If we don't get away from this TV set we are going to be late for services!"

Ronny loved purple hull peas. When Barbara and I made garden we always tried to plant enough peas for Ronny and Alfreda. When they were ready, Ronny would come and help pick peas. We would bring the peas inside and visit, while we shelled peas and got them ready for the freezer. We cherish the memory of those pea shelling visits.

The sense of loss in Ronny's passing cannot be measured. I could write for hours and still fall short of recalling all the good that Ronny has done for me and my family. Yet, we are just a small part of the hundreds of people that Ronny has helped as a gospel preacher and as a Christian.

Our deepest love and sympathy is extended to Alfreda and the rest of the family. Special thanks to Alfreda for sharing Ronny with so many of us for so many years. No one can fill Ronny's shoes nor take his place. We must all resolve to carry on in the truth of the gospel, emulating Ronny, the best we can, as he indeed followed Christ.

JUST RONNY
By AUSTIN McCONNELL

I've struggled to find adequate words to express my feelings about Ronny's passing. How can I even begin to pay tribute to a man who so profoundly impacted my life? Without Ronny, I wouldn't be a Christian. I wouldn't be a preacher. I wouldn't be married to Rachel, and I quite possibly wouldn't even be alive.

Ronny was the biggest light in an awfully dark childhood. Going to church on Sunday was generally the only reprieve I had from turmoil at home, and I spent those mornings at the feet of an unspeakably positive influence. I grew up listening in awe to Ronny Wade's preaching, and considered him my hero.

Though other adults in my life rarely lived up to virtue and dependability, Ronny did. His firm character and dedication to the truth was an inspiration for a young man in desperate need of a positive influence. As I went through my teenage years, Ronny helped me navigate difficult situations and adversity. He gave me more than advice - he offered me encouragement to stand for what I knew to be right, regardless of the consequences.

One afternoon when I was around 15, he called and asked if I would be willing to meet with him at the church building to work together on a short lesson. I had enrolled in public speaking at school, but had yet to work up the courage (or maturity) for a sermon. I agreed to meet, and over the course of the next few weeks, Ronny began to teach me a few "best practices" for public teaching, and I eventually gave my first talk. Afterward, Ronny urged me to consider speaking at a few young people's meetings, and eventually to travel with Doug Hawkins for a summer to gain more opportunities and experience in the pulpit.

During the months I traveled, things at home became dire, and my parents' divorce was imminent. Part of me still thinks Ronny sent me off that summer so I could avoid such an unsafe and destructive environment, which very well might have stolen my faith. Instead, I spent those months studying the scripture and learning how to improve in speaking. That summer cemented a desire in my mind to preach the gospel.

By the time I reached my twenties, I was teaching each Sunday on a local circuit and holding meetings every couple of months - but felt immensely dissatisfied. I saw plenty of small/dying congregations willing to have me for a weekend meeting, but none of them were interested in working together in the long-term. Either they didn't see the need for an evangelist, or they didn't think I could be one. Again, Ronny offered some much needed wisdom.

When I was young, I had to move out of the state and find my own work before the brethren would take me seriously as a preacher. No one meant any harm by it, of course, but to them, I was always going to be Just Austin. They couldn't see me as an evangelist. Let's see if we can find work away from the brethren around here where you can get your toes wet. Until then, I think many of them will only see you as Just Austin.

Eventually the work surfaced, and I moved. Those 2+ years taught me more than the previous ten combined, and I leaned heavily upon Ronny for encouragement and guidance. He now offered a new kind of instruction: not in how to preach a sermon, but in how to work with people and grow the church.

Here, I learned the work of a real gospel preacher wasn't in holding meetings and eating endless free home cooked meals. It was slow and often fruitless labor. It was knocking on doors, holding home studies with halfhearted community members, tracking down leads in the middle of nowhere, doing your best to help wayward members solve their family or marital problems, and often learning to cope with your own failures and missteps along the way. Some weeks I'd feel like I could convert the whole town, and some weeks I worried if the congregation's own membership would even show up to services. The one thing I was certain of was that Ronny Wade was praying for me - and would always be a phone call away.

The best memory I have of that time was Ronny coming to visit and holding a meeting for us. His preaching was a much-needed taste of home. That Friday night, we had

a packed house - with more visitors than members! That weekend, Ronny and Alfreda Wade lifted my spirit, and I was reminded what a winning combination a preacher and a preacher's wife can be.

Before long, Rachel and I married, and I came back home to Missouri. Ronny's health was declining, and we all knew our time with him was drawing short. My conversations and visits with him became deeper and more meaningful. Ronny now offered me his wisdom on being a husband and building a home. Despite the adversity that life would bring, and the various subtle ways in which Satan would present himself, Ronny cautioned me never to let it ruin my marriage. "She is your priority. No one and nothing on earth comes between you and her. Finish your race together."

As the final days drew near and he could no longer leave home, Ronny called me to come over one last time. I could tell by his tearful voice over the telephone that this time would be different as he explained, "There are some last things I want to tell you before I go."

Last Saturday, in the midst of a bitter cold wind and freezing rain, I helped carry Ronny's casket to its final resting place. His spirit has left this world - and one day, the Lord he spent a lifetime proclaiming promises to break the eastern sky, and will, with that coming, raise him again.

With those thoughts on my heart, I let go of Ronny and joined the assembly at that frozen gravesite. I then did the only thing I knew to do: I found my wife in the crowd, wrapped my arms around her, and held her tight as the icy rain beat against us.

Ronny Wade taught me how to live, yes, but more than that - he taught me how to die. He left this life with his fight finished, his race run, and his faith intact. For over 65 years, God blessed us with a powerful preacher who left a profound impact that can never truly be measured. He was Just Ronny, but he was just what we needed.

With his passing, I feel I've lost the father figure who made me into much of what (and who) I am today. But with this loss, I also feel a deep and profound hope. The recent years have introduced me to many young men and women who possess a powerful faith and a stubborn determination to ask for and walk only in the old paths. These men and women hold the promise of a bright and happy tomorrow. The watch hasn't ended - the guard is simply changing - and several will be there to meet the challenge.

CORONAVIRUS....continued from page one

Those precautions should sound familiar since they are very similar to the suggestions we hear every year to avoid getting the flu or catching a cold.

A little more than a century ago a pandemic commonly called "the Spanish flu" swept around the world and took millions of lives. The CDC reports, "The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919...It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States" (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>).

Today, there is much being said about this new variation of the Coronavirus being the next pandemic to encircle the globe with sickness and death. In an attempt to limit the spread of the virus, nations are limiting travel and closing borders, airlines are canceling flights in and out of some cities, some schools are closed till further notice, businesses are asking employees to work from home or to stay home, and major public events are being canceled, all at a cost of Billions of \$'s.

It is presumed that the Coronavirus death rate is higher than the "usual" flu that invades the world every year, but that may not be the case once more testing is done. The annual flu is far more deadly than most realize. The CDC estimates so far this flu season there have been at least "34 million flu illnesses, 350,000 hospitalizations and 20,000 deaths" from flu in the United States (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>). Influenza (flu) related deaths are in the top ten leading causes of death in the United States year after year. Influenza was the eighth leading cause of death in 2017.

Amid the chaos created by a new Coronavirus illness, it should not surprise us that some religions have reacted by making changes in how they observe what they call communion.

USA Today reports March 6, 2020, "Religious leaders in the U.S. and around the world are joining a growing movement to change the way communion is delivered during the coronavirus scare, with several major

churches issuing directives this week. Some of the changes include giving communion wafers in the hand and not on the tongue, forbidding handshakes, and temporary restrictions on drinking of wine. Among the places where religious leaders directed new communion policies or guidelines: San Francisco; Los Angeles; and Olympia, Washington. And it's not just in the U.S.: The Catholic Church of Scotland banned communion wine Thursday and is draining holy water from fonts. A Catholic bishop in Perth, Australia took similar measures. Catholic authorities in Jerusalem, Singapore, and the Philippines have issued similar guidelines or orders that favor giving Communion in the hand. Mexican Episcopate officials on Thursday banned reception of communion on the tongue. "As we learn more about the threat, I have decided that additional measures are necessary," wrote John Harvey Taylor of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. "I hereby inform all our lay and ordained leaders that communion wine may not be offered in our churches, either for sipping or by intinction, until we can be confident that the danger of mass COVID-19 infections has abated." (https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/03/06/coronavirus-live-updates-us-states-infectedchurches-schools-prepare/4965546002/).

While such reactions are predictable, they are not necessary.

The Journal of Infection of January 1988 reports, "No episode of disease attributable to the shared communion cup has ever been reported. Currently available data do not provide any support for suggesting that the practice of sharing a common communion cup should be abandoned because it might spread infection" (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3284951).

A report from the American Journal of Infection Control October 1998 states, in part, "Within the CDC, the consensus of the National Center for Infectious Diseases and the National Center for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Tuberculosis is that a theoretic risk of transmitting infectious diseases by using a common communion cup exists, but that the risk is so small that it is undetectable...[A] recent study of 681 persons found that people who receive Communion as often as daily are not at higher risk of infection compared with persons who do not receive communion or persons who do not attend Christian church services at all" (https://www.ntnl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Common-Cup-CDC.pdf).

"Anne LaGrange Loving, a New Jersey microbiologist

who has conducted a study on the subject, stated in a Los Angeles Times article Jan. 1, 2005, that "people who sip from the Communion cup don't get sick more often than anyone else" and that "it isn't any riskier than standing in line at the movies" (https://catholicphilly.com/2019/08/catholic-spirituality/risks-are-minimal-when-drinking-from-common-chalice/).

Barak Wright in The Pulse, from Nov 17, 2017, writes about the risk of sharing a communion cup where the cup is wiped with a cloth after each participant. "Even though a person may be ill, and put some virus on there," said Charles Gerba, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Arizona, "in the process of wiping it off, and maybe some of the anti-microbial activity of the silver in these cups, that seems to largely reduce the risk." In other words, you're more likely to contract germs on the door handle leading into church or shaking someone's hand after the service than on the lip of a Communion cup" (https://www.sideeffectspublicmedia.org/post/debunking-communion-cup-myth).

As this pertains to us, some may question how we observe the Lord's Supper and wonder if we should continue to observe the Lord's Supper as we do, with one common loaf and one common drinking vessel?

What are we to do in our congregations in this time of a new flu? I believe we need to use the same basic precautions we are usually expected to use during cold and flu season which includes staying home if we are ill, especially if we have a fever.

What we will not and cannot do is change or compromise the Lord's Supper. We can trust God will sustain us in this time of need, just as he always has, and that we will be OK. Paul wrote our brethren at Corinth, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26 NKJV).

As Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and commanded "This do," we will continue to obey in faith and practice. Each participant breaks off and eats a piece of the unleavened loaf of bread that represents Christ's

body followed by each participant taking a sip of grape juice that represents the blood of Christ from a common cup that represents the New Testament. 3816 Tambos Tri, Edmond, OK 73034, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787 Note: "Amen" DLK

OUR DAY AND TIME...continued from page two

from killing Saul though Saul had treated him wrongly and sought his life, (1 Samuel 23:15). We can read of David's kindly behavior toward Saul in 1 Samuel 24. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers who probably assumed he would eventually be killed by the Egyptians where he was taken. However, perhaps 20 years later Joseph made the magnanimous statement found in Genesis 50:19-21: "And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

At this present time, we are experiencing quite a lot of anxiety with the Corona virus. The world is turned upside down with worry. Everyone is afraid. Virtually everything has come to a stop. Travel is halted to many places, and even preachers trying to hold meetings may be affected. No one quite knows what to expect. It is now named a "pandemic," which means it is global. These times are frightening and were it not for the sure knowledge that the Lord is in control, we would be much more concerned than we are at this time. We are also living during times of wars, and attacks, which seem endless in our day and time. Events take place we don't really understand, but we must take courage, and remember that God is still on His throne and will see to the welfare of His people. We pray and believe He will do exactly that. We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. God's power has never been diminished. He sees the end from the very beginning. Perhaps now as never before we must trust Him. No matter what happens, it will be all right anyway. We do not have to live in a world of gloom and doom.

We recall a story about a young boy who worked all day in order to gain free admission into the circus. At first, it seemed the little fellow might lose out because the fellow taking the tickets at the gate knew nothing about the agreement the boy had with the owner. Finally, the owner came. He saw the little boy sitting dejectedly to

one side and said, "Ed, this boy has worked all day for me. Let him in, will you? Let's remember who we are. We belong to the Lord and our faith must be strong.

Think on these things. DLK

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY ELMORE

By DUANE PERMENTER

About 1970 Brother Johnny came to Lodi, California and held a week singing school. I shall never forget his work during that week to train and teach us. It was my first experience with song training in a group. I appreciate all that our brother contributed through the years. He has mentored many of us and helped us along the way. I appreciate the advice he gave me upon many occasions, and may God bless him for all his life in Christ Jesus. His song leading the end of each year at the Oklahoma New Year's meeting will long live in my heart. Certainly, a great Prince in Israel has died, and I so look forward to seeing him on the other side. What a great reunion that will be! Duane Permenter pdpermenter@outlook.com

Note: Somehow, this didn't get in the special issue for Johnny. My sincere apologies. DLK

Announcement

NATIONAL SCHOOL OF MUSIC - The time is drawing near...The dates for the National School of Music singing schools are set for 2020. The dates for the school in Pulaski, TN is set for June 15-19. The dates for the school in Wichita Falls, TX is set for July 13-17. The staff at the National School of Music is doing all we can to improve the singing in all of the congregations presently as well as in generations to come. Any and all help that you can provide in this effort will be greatly appreciated. May the Lord bless each congregation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

In HIS service
Phillip Prince

Our Departed

KEMP - Sister Dorothy Kemp (January 17, 1934 - January 19, 2020) was among my best friends. She brought out the best in me and many others. She

survived growing up in a rural region of the Ozarks in the 30s and 40s when and where the only two classes were poor and very poor. She overcame considerable adversity as a mother of five (Rick, Mike, Mark, Matt, and Tammy) and the wife of Albert Kemp who was away for days at a time as a railroad man who did not obey the gospel for decades. Dorothy and Big Al passed on to their children an exceptional work ethic and a uniquely contagious laughter. Dorothy wielded a great positive influence on the church at Mountain Home, AR, where she worshiped many years. One preacher who knew the congregation very well said that in the darkest days, "If it wasn't for Dorothy the congregation wouldn't have survived." I think "influence" when I think of Dorothy. She influenced many people for the Lord and will continue to do so for years to come. Dorothy held tenaciously to Jesus and her faith. She was tenacious about Bible reading, Bible study, and talking Bible. She didn't have much but she had Jesus and knew if she would be faithful, she would win the biggest prize of all - eternal life. Dorothy loved nothing more than influencing family, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers for Christ. Nothing pleased her more than seeing someone obey the gospel and turn their life over or back over to Jesus. Dorothy gave her loved ones her heart, her love, but, more importantly, she gave her family the greatest of all comforts. She showed them how to die. May the Lord bless us with more godly women like her. —Brett Hickey

THRASH - Janice Marie Thrash was born January 14, 1943 in Mena, Arkansas to Nelson and Willa Hoover and died in Texarkana, Texas December 18, 2019. Janice is survived by her husband of 52 years, Gordy Thrash; two sons Joe and Tim; one brother Bruce Hoover; and four grandchildren, Nelson, Grace, Jared, and Abigail. Janice was a longtime member of Eylau church of Christ, where she was a pillar of the congregation. She was the glue that helped hold the congregation together during some lean years. As her daughter in law Sarah aptly stated, she was the epitome of a servant, always caring for others. She took care of her aged mother in her own home until her death at age 98. Most recently her husband Gordy has been dealing with dementia and she took care of him until her own health began to fail. She was a great cook and will certainly be missed at our monthly church lunches! She was an avid Bible student and always had perceptive comments and questions about my sermons. I looked through her Bible while we visited her bedside shortly before she passed and was amazed at the notes she had inside. She had the plan of salvation scriptures, notes on the items of worship, the names of the twelve apostles, notes about the words careful, carefully, and carefulness, as used in the Bible.

Also, she had a Bible reading chart and she had carefully recorded the dates she had read the passages, reading through the Bible every year. I met Janice and her family when we moved to Texarkana 14 years ago. It is difficult to think of the church in Texarkana without her ever present encouraging smile, wonderful alto voice, and solid support for me and the church. Her influence lives on, however, in her family, and the Eylau church she loved so much. We laid her to rest beside her mother and father on a beautiful hillside cemetery just outside of Mena, Arkansas where she grew up. There she awaits the resurrection of the just at the coming of our Lord. —Jerry Dickinson

VERNER - Eleanore Christine Verner was born April 12, 1940 and passed away January 10, 2020. Christine was born in Norman, Oklahoma to Edward and Naomi Brown and passed away in McAlester, Oklahoma. She married Bill Verner January 31, 1959. Bill and Christine were married for almost 61 years. Her grandparents, Brother and Sister Helterbrand along with Brother and Sister Williams started the C and Tyler Church of Christ in their homes. She was raised in the church and after she and Bill married, Bill obeyed the gospel. I first met Bill and Christine when we moved to McAlester in 1973 to work with the church. It's hard to believe that Judy and I have been close friends with Bill and Christine for almost 50 years! Christine was an exceptional artist and Bill built her an art studio they called "The Art Barn" where Christine taught and mentored art students. She painted a mural that hangs behind the baptistery in the McAlester church building. One of her former students gave a moving tribute at the funeral. She was also a master gardener and a great cook. She is survived by her husband Bill, three sons, Stephen, David, and Mike; four daughter, Vikki, Chrystie, Melissa, and Elizabeth. Also surviving are sisters Mary Davis and Jo Etta Stachmus and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren and other family members. There was a very large crowd at the funeral, estimated at 500 or more. The crowd was so large that the funeral was conducted at the Expo Center. Randy Tidmore led the beautiful congregational singing and read the obituary. As I believe she would have wanted, I spoke words of comfort, exhortation, and warning from God's word to all assembled. Bill told me that Christine, before she passed, constantly admonished her children and grandchildren to make sure they were serving the Lord and going to church. I told them all that the greatest tribute they can pay to their mother, grandmother, and great grandmother is to work for Jesus and His church. Bill and Christine have a guest room in their house where I have stayed many times they designated, "the preacher's room". I anticipate staying there many more

times in the future, Lord willing, but will miss Christine and her hospitality. God Bless Bill and all the family, and the C and Tyler church of Christ. —Jerry Dickinson

THRASH - Bobby Gordy Thrash was born August 4, 1938 in Fort Worth, Texas and passed away in Texarkana, Texas February 3, 2020. His wife of 52 years, Janice passed just a few weeks before him. The loss of this wonderful couple has been difficult for the congregation in Texarkana where they had been faithful members for so long. Their empty seats are just behind Judy and I and they are sorely missed. Gordy is survived by his son Tim and his two children Jared and Abigail, and by his son Joe and his wife Sarah and their two children Nelson and Grace. He is also survived by two sisters, Betty Monroe-Martinez and Debbie Gardner. Gordy was a retired salesman and he had a tremendous work ethic, often working two jobs to provide for his family. Gordy had a gift for gab and never met a stranger. I was amazed how often we would be out with he and Janice and people would come up and start talking to Gordy. It seemed he knew everybody in Texarkana! He was generous with his time and energy, and if anything needed to be done at the church building all you had to do was mention it to him and he got it done. He loved to fish and I mentioned to him that I had never learned to fly fish so he took me out in his boat and showed me the fundamentals. I learned how to cast but the reeling in the line with your fingers was more difficult. We had a great time and drank a whole thermos of coffee while fishing and talking. Janice, his wife, would go out with him and she would read a book in the boat while he fished and drank his coffee. He was a great father and grandfather and loved spending time with his family. We had a graveside service at the little Highland Cemetery in the hills of Arkansas just outside of Mena where his wife Janice grew up and is buried alongside her parents. I quipped at the graveside that it seemed strange that a boy who was born in Fort Worth and grew up later in Dallas, Texas was being buried in the hills of Arkansas. But he was a country boy at heart and he and Janice lie by each other in those hills awaiting the great resurrection at the coming of the Lord.

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, March 13, 2020. Since last report I have been preaching locally here at home and at Stockton. I am grateful my speech and health seem to be fine now with no problems for quite a while. Our Brotherhood has lost some great men recently. We will miss them for a long time indeed. We appreciate the increase in subscriptions and renewals for the paper

by so many of you. Let's keep it up. Check the date on your paper and if it is soon to expire, please renew promptly whether for the on line issues or the hard copy. The price remains at \$15 per year for either one. Also, please consider a gift subscription to a friend or perhaps someone you are studying with. Send all subscriptions to David Griffin, c/o P.O. Box 1038, Lebanon, MO 65536. You can also subscribe at www.oldpathsadvocate.org for paper copies or online copies. For the online issues send your subscriptions to Rick Martin at www.oldpathsadvocate.org or 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189. Keep in mind that our labor is voluntary and no one is paid for the work they do. However, printing and postage is expensive. We look forward to a great year in the Lord's work. We realize the Corona virus has caused much disruption worldwide but Lord willing, we'll get through it. Lord bless the faithful.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, March 14. Our 44th annual March meeting was wonderful. Matt Trent did an excellent job organizing, conducting, and preaching at the four services. Bailey Stephens preached with Matt on Friday night, Carter Stephens spoke with him on Saturday night, and Jacob McKinney spoke with him Sunday afternoon. Each of the speakers focused his remarks upon the theme of "Characters of Courage." The sermons were outstanding. They were well-prepared, well-presented, and very appropriate for the large number of young people in attendance. The singing seemed to be especially beautiful this year too. Saturday night's crowd was estimated at well over 300 people. Phyllis and I are getting ready to begin our meetings schedule for 2020. My schedule for the next several months includes: Kansas City [Stoney Point], KS (Mar. 20-22), Fieldstone, MO (Apr. 5-8), Norman, OK (Apr. 24-26), Greenville, PA (June 10-14), Indiana, PA (June 17-21), Killbuck, OH (June 25-28), Temple, GA (July 19-26), Dothan, AL (July 19-Aug. 2), Joplin, MO [Leawood Village] (Sept. 29-Aug. 2), Wichita Falls, TX (Sept. 23-27), Columbia, MO (Oct. 7-11), Lodi, CA (Oct./Nov.?), Longwood, FL (Nov. 12-15). Jerry Dickinson is scheduled for our spring meeting in Ada and Greg Gay is scheduled for our fall meeting. We ask your sincere prayers that God will bless us all in these endeavors.

Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, teacherrmartin@gmail.com. I recently closed a meeting at Grapevine, TX. I am glad Jane was able to travel with me. She has recently had some back and leg issues. I enjoyed the meeting very much. Of course, the DFW area has several congregations and the support from the various congregations was

excellent. Several preachers attended the meeting and I am grateful for their presence. The singing during the meeting was outstanding. I appreciate the support of the congregation and the confidence they had in me in holding the meeting. I pray that the congregation was edified and strengthened. Lyndon and Lynne Cox were our gracious hosts. We could not have been treated any better. It was good to get to know them. Lord willing my next meeting will be in Sharonville, OH, April 22-26. The congregation at Marietta continues to air "Let the Bible Speak", with Kevin Presley. Several people are enrolled in the Bible correspondence course. Please pray for the brotherhood.

Cullen Smith, cullensmith@hotmail.com. It does not seem possible it is 2020. We had a good meeting at Hwy 84 in Brookhaven, MS where Al Felder works. The congregation is at peace and growing. They always have visitors, and I am thankful for the area congregations supporting the meeting. The first half of the year we look forward to being with brother Melvin Blalock at Cleburne, TX Feb 28-Mar 1, Park Church of Christ in Farmerville with Elias Rodriguez March 11-15, Robertsdale, AL Mar 27-29, Huntsville, AR April 1-5, Houston, TX April 10-12, Wichita Falls, TX April 26-28, McAlester, OK May 15-17, Cable Ridge, MO June 5-7, Harrison, AR April 12-14, Bedford, IN June 19-21, and Muskogee, OK June 26-28. May God bless the brotherhood.

Greg Gay, 3816 Tambos Tri, Edmond, OK 73034, papagreg@aol.com, 916-804-3787. February 29, 2020. In November I flew to South Africa to work with Alan Bonifay, Richard Bunner, and Mike Miller among the congregations at Cape Town and Durban. We were well received by the four congregations we visited and were kept busy conducting meetings and studies, visiting with brethren, and inviting people to worship. In December, I presented the topic of Free Will at the Grapevine, TX Preacher's Study and was able to attend all the sessions. At the end of the year, since we now live in Edmond, we were able to attend all the services of the New Year's Meeting, ably hosted by the 21st. St. congregation. In January, Cassie and I met our oldest grandson, Hayden, in Washington, DC for some days of sightseeing. We worshiped with the brethren at Rockville, MD and enjoyed getting to know them better. Then, we traveled to Lubbock, TX for an eight-day meeting, our first meeting there. We had the pleasure of meeting and staying with DJ and Kathy Hastings. They were wonderful hosts. Kathy's parents are there, George and Louva Hogland, who have known my family since before I was born. I was glad to spend time with Eric Stone who works with the congregation. We

had visitors from area congregations including Morgan Stripling plus several outside visitors thanks to the hard work of the members preparing for the meeting. In February, Cassie, Tye, and I drove to California for an eight-day meeting at Lodi. We were kept busy with the hospitality of members and enjoyed the extra time to visit with friends from other congregations who were invited to homes for meals before the services. We stayed with dear friends Alan and Tonya Bonifay and enjoyed being with them very much. The time I spent with Alan included many scripture discussions, visiting the sick, and sitting in on a study he has with young men who are wanting to become preachers. The crowds grew from service to service and included visitors from at least ten area congregations plus preaching brethren Richard DeGough, Greg Cardosa, Jimmy Gating, Greg Branch, and Aaron Newman who attended one or more times. We stayed after the meeting for a few days to visit and to preach at Fair Oaks and 64th. St (Sacramento) at their mid-week services. It was so good to see everyone! Our work continues with the West View congregation at Piedmont, OK. Most in the congregation are actively studying to "grow in knowledge" as all of us are commanded to do.

Melvin Blalock, 214 Pearl St., Cleburne, TX 76031, March 9, 2020. We continue to enjoy our association with the churches in the North Texas area. I preach for several of these congregations on a regular basis. I am also kept busy writing weekly articles for several area newspapers. These articles are also published on Facebook each week. There are several requests for correspondence courses locally, and many other places in the U.S. We are thankful that there are various means by which we can continue to sow the seed of the kingdom. We are blessed to have the TV program with Brother Brett Hickey as the speaker in this area. The church in Cleburne and Weatherford continues to help support this effort. We were gratified to see Brother Ronny Wade's picture in Cleburne by our church building in the previous O.P.A. Ronny had a special connection with our congregation, and the old building where we meet. He fondly remembered it as the first church he ever attended as a child. Like so many, we greatly miss Ronny and his great preaching. We recently concluded a great gospel meeting at Cleburne with Brother Cullen Smith, with overflowing crowds. None of us can remember a crowd equaling the number we had on Saturday night of the meeting, probably exceeding one hundred forty. The Lord's work in this area continues to prosper. I am looking forward to being with the church in San Angelo, TX., the fifth Sunday in March, and the church in McGregor, TX., the fifth Sunday in May. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless this great brotherhood.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

HOW? HOW? HOW? HOW?

By JERRY DICKINSON

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:13-17)

Paul gives the gospel plan of salvation in reverse, using the word “how” four times. People are saved by calling on the name of the Lord, but how can they call on the Lord’s name without faith? How can someone have faith in Jesus without knowing who Jesus is? How, moreover, can a person know who Jesus is if he has never even heard of Jesus? There has to be a preacher to tell people about Jesus and preachers have to be sent and supported. The Apostle Paul’s ministry is the perfect example of this. The church at Antioch sent out Paul and his companions on three missionary journeys and throughout the Roman world sinners called on the name of the Lord, were saved, and churches were established.

But, what does it mean to call on the name of the Lord? It certainly cannot mean just say the words, “Lord save me!” We know this because Jesus himself said, “Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21) Paul avers that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, but Jesus declares that “not” everyone who says Lord, Lord will be saved. Obviously then, to call on the name of the Lord is more than just saying, “Lord save me!”

What it means to call on the name of the Lord is clearly demonstrated in the conversion of Lydia in Acts 16. The church at Antioch, as already pointed out had sent out Paul and his cohorts to preach the gospel. In Troas Paul had a vision in which he received a “Macedonian Call” and he and his company sailed to Europe in response. They found some women having a prayer meeting by the river and Paul preached Jesus to these women. Luke tells us that one woman, Lydia, was responsive to Paul’s message. Listen to Luke’s careful detailing of her response:

“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized...” (Acts 16:14,15)

Note the order: 1. Paul was sent to preach. 2. He preached the gospel message of salvation through Jesus Christ. 3. Lydia heard the message preached. 4. Her heart was opened by the preaching of the gospel. 5. She gave heed to what was spoken, which obviously means she believed what she had heard. 6. She, along with all in her house who also believed, were baptized. But Paul declared that those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Did Lydia do that? Certainly! To believe and be baptized is what it means to call on the name of the Lord! Paul was following the commission of Jesus himself. Jesus declared, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” (Mark 16:15,16)

To call on the name of the Lord is to believe in Jesus, repent, confess Jesus, and be baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. In Acts 22:16 a preacher named Ananias was sent by Jesus to tell Saul, who would later become the Apostle Paul, what he needed to do to be saved. Interestingly, he was told not only to call on the name of the Lord but exactly how to do that. He was commanded, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Paul, like every convert, heard the gospel proclaimed, believed, and called on the name of the Lord. No, he did not recite the so called sinner’s prayer. He did not ask the Lord to come into his heart. He did not say, “Lord Jesus come into my heart and save me.” Of course not! He was immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. That is the gospel plan of salvation.

Please note back in Romans 10:16 Paul equates calling on the name of the Lord with obeying the gospel. To say that everyone has not obeyed the gospel is to say that everyone has not called on the name of the Lord. In other words, everyone has not been baptized into Jesus Christ. What about you dear reader? Have you called on the name of the Lord? Let God’s word open your heart (Hebrews 4:12) for whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved!