

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. 8

DRIFTING

By RICK MARTIN

What is your greatest fear? The loss of job or income? Failing health? The death of a loved one? All of these are certainly fearful things, but I believe that one thing that should most alarm us is drifting from our devotion to Jesus Christ. Drifting is a constant spiritual threat that has serious eternal consequences.

So many have become complacent and are content to simply drift. There is great danger in drifting because there is no such thing as drifting for the Lord. Heb.2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. These words were addressed to the Hebrew Christians long ago. The main lesson being taught is that of steadfastness. These Christians at this time were being beset by currents which threatened their hold on Jesus Christ. To prevent their drifting, this warning is given. The writer says they should give heed to the things they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip, or be drifted away from them.

In this article I want to look at two ways we drift from God, and how we can avoid drifting.

1. Drifted in their view of God

Many have drifted when it comes to their view of God. The Scriptures present a balanced view of God. It presents that God is love: 1 John 4: 8, 1 John 4:16. The Bible presents that God is good: Psa. 25:8. Our God is merciful: Psa. 86:5. Therefore, God shows compassion upon man: 2 Kin. 13:23 And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. Because of that love and compassion upon man and

also to demonstrate His love for man, He gave His Son to die upon the cross for us: John 3:16, Rom. 5:8.

We certainly need to remember these characteristics of God. However, the liberal mind set is that God is only good and kind. Some have a perverted view of God. They look at God as some grand-fatherly type being that would never harm or hurt anything. They have eliminated the aspect of God’s nature that would punish the evildoer. They fail to see the other view of God presented by the Scriptures. Yes, our God is a God of love, kindness, compassion, but He is also a God of vengeance: Heb. 10:30-31. While Paul gives us advice, he also shows the nature of God to us: Rom. 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Just as much as the nature of God is love, the writer of Hebrews reveals that His nature is a consuming fire: For our God is a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29.

Those who have drifted away from God have forgotten all the Old Testament examples of God’s punishment of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were cast out of the Garden of Eden and from the presence of God Gen. 3. When Cain killed his brother Abel, God placed a mark on him and he became a fugitive and a vagabond Gen. 4. Man’s evil became so widespread that “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” Gen. 6:5. Because of this God brought a flood upon the earth to destroy man. Illustrations such as these could be multiplied hundreds of times, but the liberal mind-set has eliminated these. Some have gone so far that they believe that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament. They seem to forget that God’s nature does not change: Mal. 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. We observe God’s grace when He spared Noah during the time of the flood: Gen. 6:8 Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

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Editorial

HOW DOES THE RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISION REGARDING “SAME SEX” MARRIAGE AFFECT THE CHURCH?

By Douglas T. Hawkins
PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Having been asked on a couple of occasions about the recent Supreme Court decision regarding the Constitutional rights of same sex marriage and the decision’s legal effects on the Church, I thought it useful to write a brief article about the Church’s legal obligations toward same sex marriage and toward Government and the Church’s spiritual obligations toward same sex marriage and toward God. May I say for the benefit of any who may read this article who are not members of the body of Christ that I hold and advocate no ill toward anyone as to the dignity of their person, being made in the image of Almighty God. I extend only a heart of love and compassion for the salvation of every man’s soul; however, may all who believe that two men or two women can join together as a married couple be kindly warned of the judgment to come (Rom. 1:18-32; Ga.5:19-21; 1 Co.6:9,10). But then again, may all who believe that a man and woman can live together outside of a divinely sanctioned marriage also be kindly warned of the judgment to come.

To answer the question directly, the decision has no direct effect at this point on the Church as to the Church’s legal obligations toward same sex marriage. The Supreme Court’s decision in no way obligates any member of any Church to perform the ceremony of, to sanction the union between, or to acknowledge the validity of same sex marriage in religious or spiritual matters. The Church’s spiritual obligation toward God supersedes its legal obligation toward Government. As the law currently stands, the First Amendment of the Constitution of these United States still protects our Faith and the “free exercise thereof...” Be forewarned; however, that this landmark decision will have a dramatic effect indirectly, (which may of course consequentially bring to bear more direct effects in the future.) Indirectly, the current decision will embolden assaults and attacks, both legally and socially. Don’t be surprised if some of us become targets. Also know, that

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: (1) Is it all right for Christian sisters to pass out fliers (hand bills) advertising a gospel meeting. (2) May women go door to door offering to study the bible with people and inviting them to attend a gospel meeting?

Answer: Both the above questions essentially deal with the same topic, i.e. the role of women in spreading the gospel. The bible is very clear in defining the role of women in the public assemblies of the church. Paul teaches "let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home for it is shameful for women to speak in church" (1Corinthians 14:34-35). These verses make it clear that women may not speak (teach) in church assemblies. In 1Timothy 2:11-12 Paul writes "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." A woman should not put herself in a position where she will violate either of the above passages. Women cannot be evangelists (preachers) of the gospel. They cannot go to the park or on some street corner and began preaching the gospel or explaining some bible passage without violating the above restrictions. She cannot become a door to door evangelist where she teaches those who answer the door by instructing them in the facts of the gospel. She just as well set up at some place in a park and begin preaching to those who will listen. If a woman is walking down the street and happens to meet a friend and invites her to a gospel meeting currently going on in town, in my view she does no wrong. If perchance the woman then asks how are you people different from the Baptists? What is she to do? Can she answer? I personally think she can so long as the conversation is between the two of them and does not attract a crowd. But suppose another woman stops and begins to listen, then another and another. What is she to do? At some

point as the conversation shifts from one on one to one on two or more I believe the woman has to say "we will talk about this at a later time" and graciously dismiss herself. She cannot preach or explain the bible on a street corner to a group of people without violating the scriptures. Now to the above questions: may a woman pass out hand bills advertising a meeting. Under some circumstances I believe she can. For example she may invite her neighbors to attend the meeting by giving them a copy of the circular. There is nothing inherently wrong in passing out an announcement of a gospel meeting. In the process of so doing, however, should she become involved in bible discussions that place her in a role forbidden in the scriptures she should withdraw. It is always far better to avoid questionable situations than to get into them and then have to backtrack. Going door to door seeking bible studies creates even greater problems. The Jehovah Witnesses do this all the time. On numerous occasions two women have come to my door. When I ask them questions, they answer. That's what they are supposed to do. That is exactly what women from the church would be expected to do. My advice is, leave this kind of work to the men of the church. There are ways that women can operate privately and help in the advertisement of meetings and inviting people to church services without overstepping the limitations imposed in the Scriptures. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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HERE AND THERE

By Rick Martin

Several years ago brother Ronny Wade was asked to visit the home of a young mother. It was apparent that she had many problems, but the biggest problem was her lack of knowledge about spiritual things. Ronny talked to her about these things and told her about the matchless Savior Jesus Christ. After their discussion Ronny promised to come back later and tell her more about Jesus.

Ronny returned a few days later and asked her; “if she had thought anymore about their discussion and Jesus”. The young mother replied, “Oh yes and I just can’t get him off my mind.” As a result of this discussion the late Lynwood Smith wrote:

“I Just Can’t Get Him off My Mind”

“I’ve heard so much about the Savior from above, and that He was loving and kind. He would lift the down and out and show them his love, and I can’t get Him off my mind.

He died upon a cross that should have been for me, and there he so humbly resigned; I’ll gladly suffer loss and His ever be, for I can’t get Him off my mind.

There are so many things about Him, the more I think of Him I find; I have been so drawn unto my Lord, I just can’t get Him off my mind.”

M. Lynwood Smith 3/27/1924-10/24/2007

As you go through your future days will you not think more about Jesus?

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 the apostle Paul gives us a tremendous illustration of the body of Christ and how individuals carry out different functions and responsibilities. He shows us that every part of the physical body is important and no part is more important than the other.

What is your function in the body? Are you an exhorter? A teacher? A song-leader? Someone who can work behind the scene? Whatever your function is remember it is important and make sure you do it whole-heartedly.

Ruth was a grateful person. When she married Boaz she showed her gratitude to her mother-in-law, Naomi, in numerous ways. It is the duty and privilege of children to help take care of their parents when they reach an age of helplessness. Ruth proved to be a worthy example of this in regard to her mother-in-law who was no blood kin. This world would be better off with a little more gratitude.

When sin is exposed in the church, we usually expect the cause of Christ to suffer as a result. Such was not the case in the Jerusalem church. After the sins of Ananias and Sapphira were exposed and God struck them dead we read, “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” Acts 5:14. What was the difference? Perhaps it was the way the scandal was handled. If the sins of Ananias and Sapphira had been tolerated and they had remained in fellowship after their sins were made known, the effect of their hypocrisy would have been the reverse of what it was. Today God doesn’t strike liars dead as He did then, but He certainly set a high standard of living and discipline for the church. This should be an example for those who have oversight of the church. If sin exists in the church, swift action should take place.

All generations face problems. Generations in the past faced wars, a worldwide economic depression, drugs, etc. Today’s generation faces not only the problem of terrorism coming into our country, but also the greatest war on the moral fiber of our nation that has ever been waged. It is no surprise that our country is shifting when it comes to moral issues. The recent Supreme ruling on gay marriage was disheartening. According to a new Gallup survey, more Americans are accepting previously controversial relationships like same-sex couples, having a baby outside of marriage, and premarital sex. Gallup also found that people are finding themselves more “socially liberal” now than any time in the past. The dramatic decline in the morals of this world cries out for something to be done. But what? What change is needed? Who can make it, and how will it be accomplished? This can only be accomplished by Christians being what they should be in a dark and sinful world. Matt. 5:13-16 “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be

hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”.

Do you have a brother or sister in Christ that you dislike? May I suggest that you pray for them? Pray fervently for your brethren, especially those whom you dislike. It is hard to remain angry or maintain a strong dislike for someone when you spend time praying for them. As you pray seeking God’s love and forgiveness for yourself, it becomes so much easier to love and forgive others.

Summer meetings are almost over. My prayer is that meetings were successful and people were strengthened and encouraged by the preaching of the Gospel. God bless men who are willing to proclaim the message of Christ and may the borders of spiritual Zion be increased.

That’s all for now. Pray for the brotherhood.

SOME THOUGHTS ON “AUTONOMY”

by Randy Tidmore

We hear and read often about the “autonomy” of the church. Some congregational leaders cry “foul,” at violations of their “autonomy.” Others preach the importance of recognizing and respecting the autonomy of each congregation. What exactly is “autonomy”? What does it mean that a congregation is autonomous? What does the Bible say about the autonomy of a congregation of the church of Christ?

Oxford Dictionary

autonomy /o:’tanemi/

noun (plural autonomies)

1 the possession or right of self-government.

2 freedom of action.

- DERIVATIVES autonomist noun & adjective
autonomous adjective autonomously adverb

- ORIGIN 17th century: from Greek *autonomia*, from *autonomos* ‘having its own laws’, from *autos* ‘self’ + *nomos* ‘law’.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

au•ton•o•my /-me/ noun

plural -mies circa 1623

1: the quality of state of being self governing especially: the right of self government

2: self-directing freedom and especially moral independence

3: a self-governing state

By definition, a congregation is “autonomous” when it

is free to make its own law(s). Technically, the Lord’s church is not autonomous. When a group of people, whatever it calls itself, demands its right to “self-rule,” it has rejected the Lordship of Jesus Christ as Head of the body. A congregation of the “Lord’s church” is autonomous if it practices “self-rule,” but then, it is no longer the “Lord’s church.”

What did the restoration leaders mean when they designated the Lord’s church as autonomous? They were opposing any individual or group of people standing in authority between the local leadership (elders, deacons and teachers) and the Lord. In the scriptures, every congregation is “complete” in Christ. There is no earthly, governing body over the local congregation. The term, applied in this sense, fits, but it has fallen from that limited scope, lately.

Some congregations have decided to reject the Lord’s authority, preferring their own rules. If anyone who is not a member of the congregation confronts them about the authority of their practice, they and their defenders accuse the one who confronted them with a violation of their “autonomy.” Is this an accurate charge? Is this a violation of scripture?

There are several things claimed as violations of a congregation’s autonomy that are false.

1. Admonishing members of another congregation does not violate their autonomy. They are still free to do as they please. No one has forced them to return to the scriptures. (Many of Paul’s letters to the churches)

2. Criticizing the attitude of a congregation’s leaders is not a violation of their autonomy. They are still the ‘leaders.’ No one has “booted” them out and installed others. (3 John 9,10)

3. Informing other brethren by letter is not a violation of their autonomy. No one forces them to change. (2 Timothy 4; 1Corinthians)

4. Refusing to work with a congregation is not a violation of their autonomy. They can still do what they want. (Ephesians 5:8-10)

5. One congregation refusing to acknowledge another congregation as a faithful congregation is not a violation of their autonomy. They can still meet when and where they wish. They can still “worship” any way they see fit. No one has imposed anything on them.

6. One member of the church, as an individual work, deciding to print a directory of faithful congregations, and choosing not to include some congregations is not a violation of their autonomy. They continue to meet and do as they please.

It amazes me how inconsistent some brethren are. One congregation has the right, by its autonomy, to do what it pleases. Another congregation does not have the right, by its autonomy, to refuse to work with them. Who is over the second congregation to force it, against its will, to accept a congregation that it considers unfaithful?

What am I missing???
Randy Tidmore



DRIFTING. . . continued from page one

We also observe God's vengeance in the New Testament times. God will still punish those who tamper with His Word and fail to live in accordance with it today. We must, as Paul said, Rom. 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if Thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt I be cut off. Only by having a proper view of God, will we have the proper respect for Him and His Word.

II. Drifted in the proper view of the Scriptures

Some have drifted from the proper view of the scriptures. There are those today who are teaching that the Scriptures are nothing more than a "love letter."

The Bible teaches that it is a pattern, and our obligation is to obey it: Rom. 6:17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. The word form is elsewhere translated "pattern." Paul teaches us that we are to Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 1:13.

The writer of Hebrews makes a comparison between the Old Testament tabernacle and the church of our Lord. He informs us that God was concerned with the pattern of the tabernacle: Heb. 8:5. What stands out is that if God, under the inferior covenant, wanted His instructions carried out with exactness, then should we not expect the same with the superior covenant. Some have a careless attitude about what God says. God is concerned about the pattern He gave under the superior (or the New) covenant.

The Bible is God's Word; it is not the word of man: 1 The. 2:13. Holy men of God wrote what God instructed them to write: 2 Pet. 1:21. What they wrote was inspired

of God: 2 Tim. 3:16-17. Since it is the Word of God, and it is a pattern for man to follow, man must not change that Word in any way. From the beginning of God's revealed written revelation to man God placed warnings in His Word for man not to change it. Moses said, Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you, Deu. 4:2.

A rejection of that Word will result in man's eternal damnation. Paul, after telling the Galatians of his amazement of their deserting the gospel of Christ, tells them, But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed, Gal. 1:8-9. God will not tolerate any tampering with or rejection of His Word as revealed in the Bible. Sadly, those who have drifted from the truth no longer hold to the old paths. They have changed, ignored, and rejected His clear Word and God will not hold them guiltless.

III. How to avoid drifting

Since drifting is so dangerous, you may ask, how do we avoid it? Heb. 2:1 says, Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. Here the writer informs us of the remedy for spiritual drifting; it is paying attention to Christ and His word. The principle is this; whatever becomes your focus determines your direction. What we give heed to, what we set our affection on, sets the course of our lives. We need to establish reference points for our spiritual lives, so we can determine our drift before it is too late. A business does not drift into success. It gives attention to income, profit and loss, objectively charting its progress. In the same way we need similar reference points in our spiritual life. Keeping them before us should quickly alert us to the dangers of drifting and prevent further spiritual erosion. We need to ask God to help us recognize trouble a mile away and give us the courage to deal with it immediately. We are to carefully examine our lives on a regular basis, checking our habits and actions for spiritual integrity. We are to walk as wise men, alert to the strategies of our adversary the devil and

we are to be sensitive to our own particular weaknesses. That means that we always need to be in touch with God's word and let it influence our personality. If we practice, these principles the consequences of drifting can be averted. Our spiritual journey can be an upward path of obedience and blessings, keeping our focus on the person of Christ and anchoring our soul to his unchanging will.

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SUPREME COURT. . . continued from page two

such First Amendment protection may not always exist. This Court decision has put the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants equal protection on a collision course with the First Amendment, which grants freedom of religion - the very scenario of which certain civil liberties groups and social activists have dreamt. Sadly, more change will come. These changes may be in the form of increased regulation and stricter and more scrutinized registration requirements for Churches. The change may be in revoking tax-exempt status of faith-based organizations. The change may be in the enactment of "hate-speech" legislation, forbidding the targeting of any "group" or "class."

Whatever form these changes take, we already know that the increasing ungodliness and immorality in the world will make the world less tolerant towards religion and the free exercise of religion. Religion is officially in the minority. Too, darkness hates light (Jn.3:19-21; Jn. 15:18). Therefore, we should prepare our hearts and the convictions of our minds for the fact that we "must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29) and for what eventually lies ahead for all who live godly in Christ Jesus. Paul said, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Our true allegiance, however, belongs to Christ (Gal. 1:10) and our citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20). As strangers and pilgrims (1Pe.2:11) we seek a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). The writer of Hebrews continues, "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. 11:16) So beloved, we are "in this world" but we are not "of this world." (Jn.17:15,16). As being "in this world" we have certain legal obligations

to Government, but as being "not of this world" we have certain spiritual obligations toward God. As you see, the two don't always agree and conflicts do arise. Jesus said to Pilate, "...my Kingdom is not of this world." (Jn.18:36) Here are some conclusions and observations that I offer regarding these social changes, this Court Ruling, and Our duties to God and Man:

1. The Church is the pillar and ground of the Truth - not Government (1Tim.3:15)
2. The Church is a "holy nation" - not the United States (1Pe.2:9)
3. God rules in the Kingdoms of men - Governments do not rule in the Kingdom of God (Jn.19:11; Dan. 5:21)
4. Christians are to live quiet and peaceable lives (1Tim.2:2)
5. Christians are to pray for and honor Kings (1Tim.2:2; 1Pe.2:17)
6. Christians are to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's (Mt.22:21)
7. Christians are NOT to speak evil of dignitaries (2Pe.2:10,11)
8. Christians are to be subject to the powers that be (1 Pe.2: 13; Ro. 13:1)
9. Christians must obey God and not Man (Acts 5:29; Gal. 1:10)
10. Christians are to let their light shine by doing good works (Mt.5: 16)
11. Christians are to reprove the works of darkness by preaching the truth in love (Eph.4:15; Eph.5:11)
12. Christians are the salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt. 5:13,14)
13. Christians should not give men occasion to speak evil (Tit.2:8)
14. Christians are not to strive but be gentle unto all men (2Tim.2:24)

I can tell you how this court decision SHOULD affect us. This decision should awaken us to the reality of our spiritual war (2Co.10:3-5; Eph.6:11,12) in which we are engaged and alert us to prepare for hardness as good soldiers (2Tim.2:3). May we all do as Paul admonished in saying "... cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:12-14). Be not shaken in your faith. Be courageous in your life. Let Peter's admonition be heard: "Submit yourselves

to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. "(1 Pe.2: 13-17) May God bless his people wherever they are found.

**THE WORLD'S
MOST AMAZING PREDICTION**
by Aaron Battey

The world's greatest prediction does not relate to sports. The record prediction in the title of this article is found in the Bible. Hundreds of years before Jesus Christ ever walked the earth, men known as prophets predicted His coming in great detail. The critic may ask, "Where is the proof, and how do we know for sure these predictions weren't made up after the fact?" First, consider the Dead Sea scrolls, and then contemplate the mind boggling list of prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered over the course of 10 years (1946-1956) in caves near Jerusalem. These scrolls have been dated by secular archaeologists as early as the 400's BC. The scrolls include parts of various Old Testament books including Isaiah, Psalms, Genesis, Daniel, and several others. Keep in mind that Jesus Christ is documented by secular authors -Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius to name just three- to have walked the earth during the early 1st century. These are all non-Christian sources cited thus far: sources that have no reason to make Christianity look favorable. The very books found within the Dead Sea scrolls contain the most amazing predictions fulfilled in Christ, predictions dating hundreds of years before He lived.

Here is just a short list of Old Testament messianic prophecy with the prediction cited, followed by its fulfillment.

The Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus was born of a virgin (Mt. 1:20-23).
The Messiah would come from the Israelite tribe of Judah (Isaiah 37:31). Jesus came from the tribe of Judah (Mt. 1:1-2,16).
The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:1).
The Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12). Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Mt. 26:14-15).

The Messiah's betrayal money would be used to buy a potter's field (Zech. 11:12-13). Jesus's betrayal money was used to buy a potter's field (Mt. 27:3-10).

The Messiah's hands and feet would be nailed (Ps. 22:16). Jesus hands and feet were nailed to a cross (John 20:25).

The Messiah's killers would cast lots for His clothing (Ps. 22:18). Jesus' killers cast lots for his clothing (Mt. 27:35).

This list is only a small sample size. In comparison, this list is like a six inch sub sandwich cut off of a 100 foot sandwich. "What do you mean?" the critic may ask. Well, there are over 425 messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ and this list only contains seven for brevity sake. No human could simulate this feat. Some people would call these coincidences, but they would have to go to court and legally change their name to Fool. If coincidence is the new word for miracle then this author agrees. The Bible is exactly what it claims to be ...the word of God.

IS YOUR HOME CHURCH STRONG?
Homer L. King

The following article appeared in the July 1959 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. It was written by Brother Homer L. King. Brother King needs no introduction to the readers of this paper. - Rick Martin

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth (16:13, 14), saying: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." If you, the individual, are not strong for God and the church, try the remedy given by Paul above. Can you not see the need of being watchful, standing fast in the faith, quitting all the evil, sinful, and childish practices like men, of drinking deeply and freely of the word of God "that ye may grow thereby," in order to become strong in the Lord and the power of His might? Then, let all that you do, practice, or teach, be done in love. Brother, the above admonition from Paul will make you strong, and that will make you able to stand against the wiles of the devil; you will be able to face the enemy. Too, being strong, you will be able to work in the Lord's vineyard, yes, and you will be able to run in the Christian race without fainting by the wayside.

Now, apply the above from Paul to your home congregation. If the whole church will do as Paul says above, the church will be strong and able to do all the above things. Furthermore, the church will be strong enough to be the "Pillar and ground of the truth"-it will be able to hold up and support the truth, thus saving souls and developing the talents of the members. The need of developing the singing, the ability to direct the singing, that we all may more happily and efficiently

praise God in spirit and in truth, is urgent. We can never have good singing as long as brethren encourage boys and men to try to lead the singing, when some of these have neither ear nor voice for singing. Talk about leading a song, when one cannot even make a tone, much less a succession of tones! It is high time that we stop and think just a little. The same is true, when we use no better judgment regarding the teachers of the word. The men who teach need to qualify for this important duty. They need to study and train so that they can impart knowledge to others. Unless they know something to teach, they will not be able to edify the hearers—"Let all things be done unto edification" -Paul to Corinth. If we expect the church to grow and be strong, we must do something to develop the talents in the church. Prayer and the ability to pray in public intelligently, from the "heart and the understanding," so that the church will be edified in prayer, needs to be stressed, as well as in all that we do. Just here, I think of some appropriate, well spoken words by that noted gospel preacher, Benjamin Franklin via The Restoration Herald as follows:

"Well Spoken Words-We must have living churches. The members must be living members, active, energetic and persevering. There are some churches complaining that they 'cannot get the right kind of a preacher,' when the trouble really is, that they are not 'the right kind of churches.' Preachers, if they had the power of angels, could not make interesting churches, where no advice that they give can be received, but where members remain inactive.

What can a preacher do for a church where he cannot prevail upon the members to meet to commemorate the Saviour's dying love more than once a month or where he cannot induce them to meet for prayer once a week or where old members cannot be induced to enter the place of worship until a half-hour after time or where old and prominent members take so little interest in the worship that they fall asleep while he is preaching to dying sinners to save them? What preacher can do anything for a people who will take so little interest in public worship that they will not practice singing the praises of God enough to enable them to sing with any spirit and understanding? If some of our churches that cannot get a preacher who can draw out an audience would apply themselves to their own improvement in singing, exhortation, and prayer, and thus make themselves interesting and useful, they would assist mightily in drawing out an audience, and make it infinitely easier to preach when an audience is out."

I Miss Miss Modesty

I miss her charm and winsome ways very much. I wonder where she is. I seldom see her on the streets, in the malls, schools, or the media. Probably the worst thing is, she sometimes misses church services. I know that others miss her, too. Just the other day Hal Wholesome and Calvin Cleanmind were asking about her. They liked Miss Modesty's company because she always put them at ease. That certainly is not the case with Evelyn Exposed and Hilary Highhem who constantly embarrass them. These girls do not seem to care though, because they are quite popular with Larry Lear, Frank Foul, and Sam Smut. I understand that they are dating these fellows quite frequently now. Someone said that they felt that one of the reasons why Miss Modesty is staying away is because many young ladies offended her by just ignoring her. When on inquiry, I was told by Mr. Naive and Mrs. Indifferent that they just assumed that their daughters would get to know her. It never occurred to them that you should have to introduce anyone to Miss Modesty.

There is someone who told me that she is glad that Miss Modesty does not come around much anymore. Apparently she never did care for her. I speak of Felicia Fashion. She considers Miss Modesty to be entirely too conservative and old fashioned. I have heard that there are others, such as Beverly Brazen and Francine Flirtation, who feel the same way.

One thing that does concern me greatly is that two of Miss Modesty's close friends, Pauline Purity and Virginia Virtue, are not seen very much either. We certainly don't want them to disappear.

Well, if you see Miss Modesty, will you please tell her that many of us miss her? And will you help bring her back? She is our friend and oh how we need her!

Selected

THE SIN OF DOING NOTHING AT ALL

Author Unknown

He made no mistakes, took no wrong roads,
 He never fumbled the ball.
 He never went down 'neath the weight of a load,
 He simply did nothing at all.
 He lost no hard fight in defense of the right,
 Never bled with his back to the wall;
 He never felt faint in his climb to the light,
 He simply did nothing at all.
 So death came nigh, for life slipped by,
 And he feared for the Judgment Hall;
 When they asked him why, he said with a sigh,
 "I simply did nothing at all."
 So God will pardon your blunder, my friend,
 Or regard with pity your fall;
 But the one big sin that surely means hell,
 Is simply to do nothing at all.

Matthew 25:24-30 " Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Our Departed

SMITH- Rickey Nelson, age 56 of Wesson MS was born on August 28, 1958 to Nelson P. Smith and Jean Smith. He departed his earthly journey on April 18, 2015. Rickey was a long time member of the New Salem Church of Christ. He greatly loved the Lord's church and was loved in return. His leadership at New Salem is and will continue to be missed for years to come. Rickey leaves behind to mourn his passing, his loving wife of 33 years, Vanessa Cox Smith; daughter, Millicent Smith Porter and husband Blake; son, Alex Nelson Smith; two sisters; one brother-in-law; and one grandchild, Meredith Grace Porter. He is also survived

by other family members. It was an honor to be asked to stand alongside brothers Michael Cain and Michael Conley in an effort to find words to express the love and appreciation for this our beloved brother. To those of you have visited New Salem over the last many years, you will understand the void that has opened with the loss of brother Rickey. He was usually one of the first ones you saw as you entered and one of the last to leave. He loved to joke and carry on with all, especially those who were younger, and yet his sermons were always spoken with conviction and courage. He didn't believe in sugar coating the gospel. He believed we should simply preach it like it is and let the chips fall where they may. My respect for Rickey has continually grown since moving back to Mississippi over five years ago. He was a man who was working hard at being the best Christian he could possibly be, and every day it seemed he grew a little stronger and a little closer to his goal. Not only did I notice his growth, but many of his closest friends and neighbors spoke openly of how his life and growth had affected them. He was a man with a huge heart. He reached out to many, and recently pushed us all to do more, providing a list of individuals that we should be working to influence for good. The last meeting we held, he braved the storms and the rain night after night inviting individuals out to the coming meeting. He simply loved the gospel, loved the souls of man, loved to discuss Bible things, and he often challenged all of us in our teaching and our understanding. The night before he departed, I visited with him briefly after services at the Jericho Church of Christ. He was as happy as I have ever known him. We lifted our voices together in the words of the closing song "Must Jesus Bear The Cross Alone", not knowing this would be the last song we would sing together while sojourning in this weary land. - Cecil Smith

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com July 15- Since last reporting I have conducted meetings at Indiana, PA where I enjoyed the hospitality of Don and Melissa Dunlap and the association of the church in that location. Brethren from Greenville came over twice during the meeting rendering great help and encouragement by their presence. Several also came from Flemington and Love Joy. Next we were at McGregor, Texas the home of Wayne and Jean McKamie. It was so good to see Wayne. He seems to be doing well and one day I enjoyed a visit with both Wayne and Jean. Jean still has physical problems but was a joy to visit the day I was there. We had large crowds throughout the meeting with people from several neighboring churches in attendance. We made our

home with Ronnie Wallace and his good wife. It was a pleasure to have Colby Culberson present for the entire meeting. He was received well by the congregation. Our next meeting was at the Claxton congregation near Competition, MO. This meeting brought back many pleasant memories. I was only eighteen the first time preached at this church. Thru the years it has been my pleasure to hold numerous meetings there. Most of the "old" crowd is now gone, silently awaiting the resurrection in the nearby cemetery. The Lord willing we go next to Manceca, CA July 24-Aug. 2 then to Joplin, MO (20th St.) Aug. 19-23.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com July 7, 2015: Phyllis and I enjoyed our week's meeting in San Angelo, Texas, very much. The Eric and Tara Stone family was there from Hawaii for the week and their presence was a real boost to the meeting. We saw a lot of longtime friends during the week and pray the preaching accomplished some good. I am scheduled here at home for the next three services and then our schedule includes: Deer Park, Texas (July 19-26), Leawood Village (Joplin), Missouri (Aug. 5-9), Shawnee, KS (Sept. 11-13), and Lee's Summit (near Lebanon), MO (Oct. 4-11). Our next meeting at home is with Don King, September 20-27. May God bless us all as we strive to serve and glorify Him.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, July 10; oldpaths@iuno.com We enjoyed the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO. Large crowds were in attendance and we appreciated the good singing and preaching. It was wonderful to visit with so many old friends we have loved through the years. We are now in Marietta, GA holding a gospel meeting. We have enjoyed spending time with our good friends Rick and Jane Martin, with whom we are staying during the meeting. Rick has rendered valuable help in putting the paper together this month. Our next will be in New Salem, MS, near Brookhaven, over the 1st two Lord's Days in August. We look forward to seeing many of you there and ask your prayers for us in the work. We want to remind our preachers to please remember the paper as you travel and to send a report of your meetings and the results. Brethren appreciate seeing the good that has been accomplished. These are perilous times for the Lord's work and let us be as effective as possible in every way. May the Lord bless us all.

Douglas T. Hawkins 409 Worthington P1 Richmond, KY 40475 (859) 353-2538 douglast69bellsouth.net - July 13, 2015 - I recently closed a meeting with the congregation in Columbia, MO. The Church conducted the meeting in the Moberly community at the college, a town 30 miles or so north of Columbia. I commend the brethren for their evangelistic work. They have purposed to get out in their community and to go to other areas in an effort to preach the gospel. Many sweet families constitute the Church in Columbia and you can definitely see the love and concern they have for each other. While there, I made my home with Shahe and Liz Gergian. They have labored with the congregation there for a few years and have done an exceptional work. They have found out that they are going to have a little one in December. May the Lord richly bless them. I have been conducting a monthly session on leadership with the Church at Chapel Grove, TN. I enjoy these brethren immensely. I was able to see Don and Diane Pruitt during Don's meeting with the Church there. I enjoyed my time with him and was encouraged from hearing his sermon 'Why I'm Still A Member of the Church of Christ.' We continue to do all we can where we are at home. My focus is my family at this point in my life. My prayers are with the faithful. May the Lord bless us in his service.

Rick Martin 300 Clubview Terrace Woodstock, GA 30189 mmartin@bellsouth.net July10, 2015 I had a very enjoyable meeting at the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Brookhaven, MS. I would like to thank the leadership at Hillcrest for asking me to conduct the meeting. I would also like to thank the people from the surrounding congregations, who attended the meeting. We had visitors from Hwy. 84, Monticello, New Salem, Jericho, New Hope, Jackson; MS, Hammonds, LA, Baton Rouge, LA, and New Orleans, LA. A spirit of cooperation was evident. The hospitality of each family that had us in their home, or took us out for meals, was greatly appreciated. A special note of appreciation goes to Jay and DeeDee Culbertson for being our gracious host. Preaching brethren who attended were; Michael Conley, Cecil Smith, Al Felder, and Slade Powell. We will have our annual singing here in Marietta, August 15th with Kevin Presley. We are looking forward to having Johnny Elmore in attendance. Our summer meeting will start Sunday, July 12th with Brother Don King.

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THE BACK PAGE. . .

A MOTHER'S LOVE AND A REVERENCE FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The evangelist Timothy was a very fortunate child because he had a loving mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) who instilled in him a knowledge of and a reverence for the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Obviously, they took seriously Solomon's charge in Proverbs 22:6 to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

The expression "train up" is from a Hebrew word that means "to put something into the mouth, as nurses give infants food." Lois and Eunice were Jews, and the Jews took pride in training their children from their earliest days. William Barclay says the Jews "learned the law even from their swaddling clothes, and that they drank it in with their mother's milk. They claimed the law was so imprinted on the heart and mind of a Jewish child that he would sooner forget his own name than he would forget the law" (Letters to Timothy 228-229).

UCLA's Dr. Harry Chugani, a leading authority on pediatric brain research, says the brain of a child is most absorbent from the time it is born until about 10 years of age. He says the brain is like a sponge during that period. Therefore, he says that if you intend to teach a child a foreign language, or to play the violin or piano, you should begin teaching while the child is very young. Obviously, the same is true for teaching a child the Holy Scriptures.

The amazing story of Moses E. Lard is a classic example of the above principle. Moses was born in Tennessee in 1818. His father was a restless frontiersman and when Moses was about 12 years old, his father moved the family to the wilderness of Clinton County, Missouri. Soon after arriving in Missouri, Moses' father contracted small pox and died, leaving a widow and six children in isolation and poverty.

Moses' mother did the best she could to hold the family together, but eventually found the burden too great. She concluded she had no recourse but to send Moses and his younger brother William out into the world to make their own way. She called the two boys outside the house and explained the situation. She placed a little New Testament into the hand of each of the boys and gave them her blessing. Then with tears streaming down her cheeks, her lips quivering, and her body convulsing with grief, she shrieked in anguish and sent the boys out from the home forever.

When Moses was seventeen he could not write his own name, but had taught himself to read a little and memorize. Eventually, a schoolteacher saw possibilities in Moses and began to educate him.

Moses wrestled with his faith during that period of his life until he heard Jerry Lancaster preach the gospel at Richmond, Missouri. He was relieved at the beauty and simplicity of the message, and he was baptized. The little New Testament his mother gave him was now especially precious. Moses recalls, "I read it, committed it to memory; thought on it through the day and dreamt of it through the night; the feast and joy of my soul" (Abilene Christian College Lectures 1962, 356).

He took a keen interest in the church and people encouraged him to preach. Eventually, he met Alexander Doniphan who arranged for Moses to attend college in Bethany, Virginia. Even though he was married and had to work to support his wife and two children, Moses finished a four-year curriculum in three years and graduated valedictorian of his class.

Upon his graduation, Moses moved back to Missouri where he stayed for twenty years. He settled in Independence where he began to develop as a preacher. Like all young preachers, he made a lot of mistakes and received a lot of criticism, but due to his own determination and the encouragement of supporters who saw potential in him, he emerged as the greatest orator of his generation.

He was equally gifted as a writer. In 1863 he began publishing Lard's Quarterly. His essays in the quarterly are of such literary quality that some church historians say they raised religious writing to heights never seen before. His fame as an essayist caused the New York Ledger to offer him \$5,000 a year to write for its pages. Moses declined the offer.

Between 1873 and 1875 he devoted himself to writing a commentary on Romans. He considered it to be his greatest literary work. He died June 17, 1880, and is buried in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Moses never saw his mother again after the day she sent him away from home, but he said the little New Testament she gave him that day, the reverence she had for it, and the love she had for him sustained him the rest of his life. He never neglected the book and he could never forget the memory of his mother. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com