

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. 3

“...MEDDLE NOT WITH THEM THAT ARE GIVEN TO CHANGE”

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The title of our article is taken from Proverbs 24:21. This is the sound advice of the wise man Solomon. We are also told by James “... He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed” (Jas. 1:6). Nadab and Abihu, priests of God in the tabernacle service in the Old Testament were given to change and it cost them their lives (Lev. 10:1,2). Like people today, they probably thought it would make no difference.

All through the history of mankind changes have taken place - some good and some bad. As Christians, there is little that we can do to deter trends among the people of the world. But the apostle Paul says, “... Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom.12:2) “Be not conformed” means “do not be formed with” the world. In other words Christians are to be different from the world and from the changes which are made that are contrary to the will of God.

The church of Christ should be the trendsetter for the world - not the world for the church. Yet we have always had a problem with Christians being effected by changes in society. Many want to think and dress like the world, including immodest apparel, bazaar styles that identify them as rebels of society, or slovenly and inappropriate dress at worship services. I witnessed a man lead a song with a tee shirt on that said “Coors Beer”. Others have been used in church services and even officiate at the communion table with a shirt advertising “I’d rather be golfing” or “I’d rather be fishing.” They are not as concerned with what the Bible teaches as they are with what their peers think. They want to be popular with their worldly friends more than they want to be right

with God. Some begin smoking and drinking because the people they associate with do those things, and thus they destroy their Christian influence. And sometimes the younger members do these things because they see older members setting a bad example and they know these people are nothing but hypocrites - some even leaders in the church. But preachers don’t you dare say anything about these things or “we will brand you as fanatics and we will cut off your support, or refuse to have you for a meeting, because, you see, we are in control.” The apostle Paul predicted a long time ago, “... The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3,4). That time has come, and such brethren know who to call for their meetings, knowing the ones who will compromise or else keep silent because they do not have enough backbone to deal with the problems for fear they will not be asked back. What a shame! It has been said, “As the preachers go, so goes the church.” One place where I was, from the pulpit I mentioned that it had been thirty-five years since my last meeting there. After the service one of the brethren told me it was because the main leader of the congregation was afraid I would preach on the women cutting their hair and immodest apparel. I saw the need so I preached on both.

Another trend that we face (again) is a tendency to relax the lines of fellowship. “Unity in diversity” is the popular cry among liberals today. This is not something new. This was the siren song of digressives many years ago before some of our younger preachers were ever born. This was an argument being used when we lost some of our own preachers. Boys, this is not something that has been conjured up recently by scholarly students of the Bible. It is exactly the same old hackneed argument made by liberals in years past and gone. Some preachers

continued on page 4

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXXIX No. 3



ADVOCATE

Meddle Not With Them That Are 1
 Editorial 2
 Querist Column 3
 Guidelines For Christian Living 7

Announcements..... 8
 Our Departed..... 9
 Field Reports 9
 THE BACK PAGE..... 12

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Editorial

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

By JOE NORTON

During the early days of Christianity, the apostles had a monumental task in trying to prove there is such a thing as a dead body coming back to life. It should have been easier back then, but evidently it wasn't. At least, the Apostle Paul didn't find it easier, even though many were living witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

In the Corinthian letter, Paul undertakes such a task and offers compelling evidence that there is such a thing as resurrection of the dead and that every person who dies will rise again someday. He says Jesus is the first fruits of those who slept, meaning those who had died. Jesus is the first man to be raised from the dead, never to die again.

Paul approaches the Corinthians with a series of questions and statements that show the foolishness of teaching there is no resurrection. For example, he asks:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. But if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty (1 Corinthians 15: 12-14).

As assuredly as Jesus had arisen from the dead, so would those who follow after Him be resurrected. His resurrection is an assurance that there will be a general resurrection.

The problem was the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, and they seriously opposed Jesus on this matter. And not only that, but Paul argues for the assurance of the resurrection by pointing to several actions that are foolish if there is not such a thing as the resurrection from the dead-that is, if "the dead do not rise."

The apostle gives the Corinthians a solid warning in verse 33 when he points out the corrupting influence

continued on page 5

QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: What should be said when giving thanks for the cup, in the observance of the Lord's Supper?

Answer: Unfortunately some brethren serving at the table fail to properly define both the bread and cup in their thanksgiving. It would be much better for one to just give thanks for the bread and the cup rather than say something that is misleading or false. In 1Cor 10:16 Paul says "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" It seems to me that one could do no better than to say just what Paul said. That is "we thank you for this bread which is a communion of the body of Christ." Likewise one could never do better than, "we thank you for this cup of blessing which is the communion of the blood of Christ" 1Cor 10:16. I believe it is both misleading and wrong to thank God for the cup which is the New Testament and then for the fruit of the vine that represents the blood. An empty cup does not represent the New Testament. Only a cup containing the fruit of the vine represents the New Testament. The cup for which the Lord gave thanks in Luke 22:20 was a cup containing grape juice. Our thanksgiving should mirror what the scriptures say and teach. It is unfortunate that we sometimes say the very thing that we don't believe and what the scriptures do not teach. For years those brethren who use individual cups have accused us of believing that an empty cup represents the New Testament. We, of course, have denied the charge, and rightly so. Our thanksgiving prayer should mirror only what the New Testament teaches about these matters without addition or subtraction.

Question: Would you please address the problem of making known to the congregation how the money in the treasury is being spent?

Answer: It is amazing how often this topic comes up. I can only answer it by pointing out a number of obvious truths that I believe every congregation should take into account:

1. The money collected on the first day of the week belongs to the Lord. We have all essentially given to His work. (1Cor. 16:1-2)
2. That money can only be scripturally used for the purpose of preaching the gospel, supporting the truth and helping needy saints.

3. Since every member of the church is to give, it follows that every member should have an interest in the work of that congregation and should be apprised of how the money is being spent.

4. This may be done by an announcement, a hand out outlining the work in which the church is involved, or by making available in some way what has been collected and how it is being spent.

5. This does not imply that every member of the church will be involved in the decisions made by the leadership of the congregation, only that every member should be made aware of what is being done.

6. I have often advised that a statement of each month's collection be posted in some place along with a listing of how the money has been spent, so the church will know what is being done. I see nothing to be gained by keeping such information secret.

7. Exactly how this procedure is carried out by the church is up to the leadership of that congregation.

8. Such information is not for those people who are outside the body of Christ.

It seems to me that the leadership of every congregation should have an interest in carrying out the work of the church with the support of every member, and that this can best be done by making sure that each member is aware of the work and goals of the congregation. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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MEDDLE NOT continued from page one

to whom we gave credit for having more sense bought the idea. And where are they now? Some are among the digressives; some in the denominations and some have quit the church and are in the world.

We can and do have unity in diversity in matters of liberty and judgment - matters of expediency. But this is not what "unity in diversity" liberals advocate when they use the term. They encourage fellowship with others who practice doctrinal error - things for which there is no scriptural authority; yea, things that violate the consciences of sincere and conscientious brethren who advocate and practice the truth. Brethren may sometimes be inconsistent in their effort to contend earnestly for the faith, but this does not justify opening the floodgates to the fellowship of those who blantly practice doctrinal error.

What about the modern trend toward immorality? Has that effected the church? Yes, we are faced with more cases of fornication and adultery than ever in nearly sixty years that I have been preaching the gospel. (And it is among the "no exception brethren, too.) There are more and more cases of adultery that come to our attention in various parts of the brotherhood year after year. What a disgrace! People who are Christians know better, but apparently their consciences are seared, and for some reason they do not fear the damnation of the Lord. But don't condemn these things, preachers, because it might upset some that are good givers to the church, or because they are prominent members of the congregation. Listen, the scriptures teach, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25). Even elders need to be rebuked when it is proven they have sinned, and Paul told Timothy to do all things without showing partiality (1 Tim. 5 :20,21). And James teaches, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin... (James 2:9).

Another dangerous trend among us is the ordaining of men as elders and deacons who are not scripturally qualified. Some preachers have specialized in church government, and all one has to do is to look at their track record and consider how many of those they have installed have gone "haywire" -- either quit the church, or gone digressive, or resigned their office. In some cases

it later caused trouble in the congregations because they were not qualified to begin with. We need to "stop and smell the coffee", brethren. It is not unscriptural for a congregation to exist without elders or deacons where no one qualifies, but it definitely is unscriptural for men to be ordained to these offices who do not meet the qualifications of the Lord. It is wrong, brethren! Don't let a preacher stampede you into doing something just to "put another feather in his cap" in his effort to make a record for himself in church government.

Another trend is the unscriptural and unprecedented practice of requiring a contract between a preacher and the brethren to do a scriptural work. This smacks of distrust, to say the least. But how ridiculous can brethren get. Think about it. Brethren sign an unenforceable contract with each other in an effort to force each other to do what they agree to do. Such a contract is unenforceable because the scriptures forbid brethren to go to law with one another (1 Cor. 6:1,7). If the word of a Christian is not to be trusted, he cannot be forced to do what is right by getting him to sign a contract which cannot be enforced by the law. How do brethren hope to enforce their contract -- make an unfaithful, or dishonest, or an untrustworthy preacher keep his word? Or how can a preacher force unscrupulous and coniving brethren to keep their promises to the preacher? If brethren are not honest because they are Christians and fear the Lord, a contract is not the answer. Conversion is the answer.

Also, among us there is the trend to experiment with various versions of the scriptures. (Some are perversions, rather than versions. No use to argue the point, I have the proof.) These preachers can't even agree among themselves as to what version is the best or most accurate. And so one preacher uses one version and another uses a different one. As a result, we don't know what we are going to hear when these men get in the pulpit. And don't expect to be able to follow their reading unless you use their choice of versions.

In conclusion, let us be reminded, "meddle not with them that given to change" The apostle Paul says, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:57,58). Again, Jesus promises, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

AWAKE TO continued from page two

of these false teachers: “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’ “The King James reads, “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” The words “company” and “communications” both refer to every day associations. The Sadducees were a corrupting influence on the Corinthians because they taught false doctrine about the resurrection. “Habits” or “manners” refer to everyday practices and beliefs.

Those who did not believe in the resurrection were influencing some who were weak in knowledge, so Paul says the Corinthians are not to be deceived. No one is so strong that he cannot fall--even the strongest apparently have the possibility of being influenced in the wrong direction by false teaching.

Finally, Paul writes to the Corinthians, “Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame” (15:34)

In calling on the Corinthians to “awake,” Paul says they must do just what the word suggests: they must wake up and be aware of what is going on around them. And this is what was going on around them: they were being taught false doctrine about the resurrection- they were being influenced in the wrong direction.

The word translated “awake” is formally defined as to “return to soberness of mind from the stupor consequent upon the influence of evil doctrine” (Vine 92). Paul is telling the Corinthians they must awake out of the moral intoxication being brought upon them by the teaching of a doctrine that is opposed to truth. Just as a person who is drunk does not think clearly, they are not thinking clearly about this matter.

The word “righteousness” literally means “right action” (Vine 92). Thayer defines it as “properly, as is right” (1346).

In context, this passage is the closing part of Paul’s arguments against those who sin by not believing in the resurrection. He writes to correct the Corinthians and to bring them back from their straying away from the purity of the gospel message. He cautions them, exhorts them, and reproves them. In presenting his convincing arguments in favor of the resurrection, Paul

emphasizes a deeper problem: their failure to believe in the resurrection can have a corrupting influence on their other Christian beliefs (verse 32).

The “...denial of the resurrection was already producing immoral results; and the appeal is to arouse them, as from a state of drunkenness, to prompt action to shake off the delusion under which they were living...(The denial of such a doctrine as the resurrection was in Christians not only a matter of opinion but of unrighteousness” (1 Corinthians volume of Gospel Advocate Commentary 237).

Paul has already taught them the importance of the gospel and of a firm belief in Jesus Christ who is the resurrected One. It is in the risen Christ, Paul teaches, that we have hope for etemal life.

If there is no resurrection, Paul says they might as well live it up because this life is all they will ever enjoy. But, of course, Paul did believe in the resurrection, and he didn’t want any Christian of any age to believe false doctrine about it. He strongly emphasizes in all of this teaching in Corinthians that there is such a thing as the resurrection from the dead. Since that is the case, then all of the gospel message is true and Christians have a strong motivation for living righteously so that they can retain the hope of salvation.

One writer had this to say about verse 34: “Rouse yourselves, break off your sins by repentance: renounce and forsake every evil way, correct whatever is amiss, and do not, by sloth and stupidity, be led away into such conversation and principles as will sap your Christian hopes, and corrupt your practice” (Matthew Henry 593).

Paul doesn’t stop with Awake to Righteousness. He goes on to say, “and do not sin.”

Here is Paul’s sharp reproof of at least some Corinthians. He says they should be ashamed. Some of them did not have enough knowledge of God to know better than to believe the Sadducees. So Paul teaches it is ignorance of God that leads men not to believe in the resurrection and then to go on into many other sins.

In summary, Paul teaches the obvious evidences of the resurrection and advises his hearers to improve their spiritual condition by waking up, breaking away from their sins, avoiding false teachers who will corrupt their

beliefs, and seeking the best that God has to offer: a path to righteousness.

Meaning for the Christian Today

Even though the context of this teaching is about those who do not believe in the resurrection, Paul's teaching has a broad application to the everyday life of every Christian and is consistent with other teaching in the scriptures. When anyone promotes a doctrine--any doctrine--that is not consistent with teaching in the New Testament, we are to beware--we are to note the ways in which it contradicts scriptural teaching and avoid it. As well, we are to follow Paul's advice about associating with those who are teaching such a doctrine. If we allow them to, they will have a negative influence on our lives and can ultimately cause us to lose our souls.

Error and vice are infectious; and, if we would avoid the contagion, we must keep clear of those who are involved in it. The scriptures give the best information there is about God, His nature, His grace, and His desires for man. It is a shame when Christians don't have enough knowledge of God to withstand the evil influences of sinful companions.

The scriptures certainly give us more than enough convincing evidence that there will be a resurrection; and if there will be a resurrection and a future life, we should live and act as those who believe it and should not "give in to such senseless notions as will debauch our morals, and render us loose and sensual in our lives" (Matthew Henry 593).

So today we, too, are to Awake to Righteousness. The word "righteousness" is predominant in both testaments, and it isn't a vague concept that we can't understand.

Such Old Testament writers as Ezekiel define righteousness as doing what is lawful and right. He gives a number of concrete examples in Ezekiel 18, and he concludes in verse 9 by saying, " 'If he has walked in My statutes And kept My judgments faithfully-He is just; He shall surely live!' says the Lord God."

The writer of Proverbs says: "Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice" (16:8).

Then Deuteronomy 6:24-25 clearly expresses for those

under the Old Law' "And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us."

The psalmist just says, "For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright" (Psalm 11:7).

In these and many other passages, the teaching on righteousness means the right actions of the individual in his relationship with God.

In the New Testament generally, 'righteousness' means the same as it does in the Old Testament: conformity to the Divine will, but with the thought greatly deepened and given a new spiritual context. God has made righteousness and ultimately salvation available to all through His Son Jesus who shed His blood on the cross to atone for our sins. We take advantage of that opportunity by performing the "right actions" that God has given to us. And we continue to perform the right actions in our daily living after we have come to Him. John put it simply: "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous just as He is righteous" (1 John 3:7).

In Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, He makes it clear that righteousness includes the right feeling and motive as well as right action. In Matthew 3:15, He uses the word in the sense of "ordinances." "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

All of the teaching leads us to the same conclusion: we have to do what God has said. And this teaching must be possible or God would not have given it. God has never expected His people to do things they are not capable of. It also it doesn't mean we expect a miraculous power to come over us so that we can fulfill God's will. It means we learn what God's will is and we do our best to follow it. In those areas where we fall short, God has given us repentance, confession, and prayer; and He has promised forgiveness, based on the blood Jesus shed on the cross.

The lesson for us is clear: those who know God will awake from the stupor of believing a false doctrine, they will not give themselves to sin, they will not neglect

acquiring a knowledge of God, nor will they abandon Him for the allurements of the practices and doctrines of the world. Disbelief in a future state destroys everything else we believe in as God's people. But the assurance of a resurrected state can help us in our attempt to cease from sin and set ourselves to the business of serving Jesus seriously. Simply put, Paul says Wake up and do what is right.

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

By RICK MARTIN

Imagine if you will that all progress in the United States stopped in 1875. There would be no automobiles, no skyscrapers, no antibiotics, no computers, no refrigerators, no electricity, as well as a host of other things.

Now, ask yourself: What if all my spiritual progress stopped years ago? That would be a very sad thing. We must realize and know that God requires growth and progress in our life for Christ.

The growing Christian seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, Matt 6:33 His chief interest is expressing the reality of the Gospel in every circumstance.

The growing Christian takes his faith to everwidening circles. Salvation is not just for him, but for all men His circle of interest involves his family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and acquaintances. He is concerned about them and looks for opportunities to share his faith with them.

In this article, I want to give three guidelines for living the Christian life.

The first guideline is involvement. As Christians there are at least three areas of involvement that we need to maintain:

1) The first area, of course, is with God and Jesus Christ. Our first involvement resulted in our salvation. If we are to maintain a close relationship with our Lord, we must think about Him when we make our plans and we must pray for His strength and guidance. This is the most important area of involvement in our lives.

The relationship of Christians to Jesus Christ is described in a variety of ways in the Bible: Christians are described

as members in Christ's body, Rom. 12:5. Everyone knows that each member of the human body has a function that is peculiar to itself. All are essential, so you can't say one is superior to the other. Christians are described as citizens of the kingdom, Col. 1:13-14. Christians have been translated by God out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. They have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

2) Another area of involvement is with other Christians. Involvement with each other is known as fellowship. We are to have fellowship with our brethren, Acts 2:42-45.

The word fellowship denotes having things in common, participation, friendship. Christians have the same hope of heaven, the same joy, the same hatred of sin and the same enemies to deal with.

The early Christians shared their burdens and sorrows with each other. This helped hold them together in times of great need. It was always sincere and from the heart. It added to their sense of unity and harmony. Early Christian fellowship was a beautiful and wonderful thing. We need to be involved with fellow Christians because God commands it and the church needs it, Rom. 12:9. We are not just to pretend we love one another. We are to love each other with brotherly affection and take delight in honoring each other.

The devil's strategy for our time is really working. He has fooled us into believing that we really should not be concerned with each other.

There is no doubt that we need each other. If the church is going to do what it is supposed to be doing, we must be working together. To get rid of division we are to be involved with one another. We must assist each other as servants and friends just like the human body comes to the aid of injured parts. In God's family there is no such thing as completely independent members.

We live in a world that is preoccupied, indifferent, and isolated. This is not so with the church. We must care about each other and be interested in each other.

3) Our third area of involvement is with non-Christians. As followers of Jesus Christ we must be involved in telling others about Jesus Christ. Jesus did not just seek out the religious people of His day. We should not let opportunities to tell others about Jesus pass us by. We must be interested in the salvation of others.

So we see that one of the guidelines of Christian living is involvement, involvement with God, Jesus, fellow Christians, and non-Christians.

Our second guideline for Christian living is prayer. Although Jesus' disciples saw Him work many miracles during His time on earth, the Bible only records one instance in which they asked the Lord to explain His power. Lk. 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. These disciples must have saw that somehow prayer was the invisible source of Jesus' ministry.

The core of genuine prayer is seeking and submitting to the will of God in every circumstance. As we see that was the primary concern of Jesus not as I will, but as thou wilt. Often time prayer is seen as a last resort; an escape hatch if all else fails. There are times when we turn to everything else but prayer We need to realize that prayer is not a spiritual crutch. Prayer is the most effective problem solver we can use. God wants us to lean on Him Prayer is His divine provision. How foolish to ignore God's helping hand.

We all have problems in our lives and prayer is capable of helping us solve those problems. God possesses inexhaustible wisdom. We must realize that whatever difficulty we may face, God is able. Prayer is a guideline to Christian living and, without it; our lives will not be what they ought to be.

The third guideline to Christian living is surrender. In our society the word surrender has a negative connotation We respect and cheer champions who never surrender.

What if we were asked to surrender to someone who longed to bless and reward us? What if that person desired our welfare and was interested in our highest and best good? What if our submission brought us to someone who would lavish all His riches and provisions upon us? In such a case surrender would be very practical and appealing and to resist would be foolish.

This is the way it is when Jesus asks for the surrendered wills and hearts of men He is our rescuer, not our captor. Our bended knees and souls are acts of trust and liberation, not weakness.

Is there a point at which you have refused to surrender to the Lordship of Christ? If you are rebelling, you

are fighting His love and that is foolish. To surrender everything to Christ is victory and power. When a person gives in to Christ they will never regret it.

We must remember that Jesus Christ is no figurehead and surrender to Him is a necessity. He is a monarch in full sense of the term He is "King of all the earth" Psa. 47:4. He is the head of the body which forms His church He has complete and absolute control. He is seated at the right hand of God and has all authority and power His will must be submitted to and obeyed. Everyone must surrender to Him. Matt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. This means that a person must surrender his will, his affections, his body, and his soul. A person who surrenders to Jesus does not seek his own happiness as his supreme object.

The apostle Paul was an encouraging example of what surrender is all about. Surrender was the only thing that was important to the apostle Paul and that is the way it must be with us. Surrender is one of the guidelines to Christian living. We must be willing to give up everything for Jesus.

In this article I have given you three guidelines for Christian living. They are involvement, prayer, and surrender. There are surely many other things I could mention, but if we will follow through on these three we will be much better followers of Christ. mmartin@bellsouth.net

Announcements

TRACTS AVAILABLE - We are very glad that a 3rd printing of "The Blood of the Lamb" is now complete. The cost will be \$70 per 100, plus S & H. (Any quantity welcome). We also have copies of our "3000 Words that can lead you to heaven" at \$35/100. E-mail Steve at steven.bowen@redoakisd.org, call 972-824-5197 or mail to 105 N. Lenard, Red Oak, TX 75154. Thanks! -sb

DO YOU WANT TO HELP WITH THE HAWAII WORK? - Last month, Duane and Laurie Permenter moved to Honolulu, HI to work with the church in Waipahu, a suburb of Honolulu. The congregation in Livermore, CA is committed to back that work. We wish to support Duane \$5,000 monthly. At the present time a bit more than half that amount has been pledged.

Keep in mind it is more expensive to live in Hawaii than most places on the mainland. The amount we hope to support Duane will provide living expenses plus funds to do other work which could involve travel, etc. If you wish to be a part of that work the funds should be sent directly to Duane Permenter, 94-371 Ikepono Street, Waipahu, HI 96797 This a great opportunity to be a part of a good work. If you have questions, feel free to contact us in care of Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, PH 925-454-0530 or old_paths@juno.com.

THE CONGREGATION at Moore, Oklahoma will be hosting the 2017 New Year's Meeting. The theme will be: Victory, In Perilous Times II Timothy 3:5. Brother Cullen Smith will be in charge of the meeting. The dates and times for the meeting are as follows: December 27 thru December 31, times of Services: Wednesday 7:30; Thursday thru Saturday 10:00 and 7:30; Sunday 7:30. Services Sunday morning will be held at local congregations. We have chosen to utilize the talent of our people, and invite writers within the brotherhood to write songs for us. There will be a combination of older songs and ones newly written. The Moore congregation is looking forward to a wonderful, spiritually uplifting meeting and your attendance will help to make it so. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please send your songs to the attention of Don Hullet at the following address: Don Hullet, 7724 Pearl St. Box 528 Wheatland, OK 73097.

If you need any information about the meeting please contact the following brethren. Don Hullet 405-821-7755, Steve Martin 405- 760-0972, Danny Morehead 405-722-1160 or Larry Combs 918-781-2812.

Brother Ivan Costa has graciously agreed to write the theme song. The focus of the theme is on perilous times that we know will come as the world goes on, it seems even now so many ungodly things, which not long ago had not been heard of, are taking place. It is to be a theme of encouragement as the things come, that if our faith remains strong and with God's help we will gain the victory.

Our Departed

ARNEY - Patsy Jo Arney wife of Cliff and mother of Beverly Crawford, Cynthia Hammonds and David Arney was born March 26, 1933 and departed this life January

14, 2017. She was in so many ways the exemplification of what a Christian should be. As the wife of an Elder she demonstrated submission, hospitality, and devotion to Christ and His church. She obeyed the gospel at the age of eighteen in nineteen fifty one, and remained faithful to the Lord the rest of her life. Her departure from this world was preceded by a number of physical ailments that limited her ability to function as she had in past years. Even though she was weakened and often in pain she remained her kind and caring self until the end. Cliff wrote "We were married for sixty three years. She was always an inspiration to me. She was truly convinced, convicted, and converted." She will be greatly missed in the assembly of the 21st" Street church and the family circle. The memorial service was conducted from the Resthaven Funeral Home in Oklahoma City. It was my privilege to assist brothers Allen Bailey and David Arney in speaking words of comfort and hope. -Ronny F. Wade

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade - P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 ronnywade36@gmail.com. February 14 - The work of the church continues in our area with encouraging success. Of late it has been my privilege to preach at a number of congregations that are within a short distance from Springfield. Brother Richard Bunner has recently moved into our area and is proving to be a great help in the work of the Mission Hills congregation. Lord willing I will be in Temple, GA. Feb. 23-25, Brookville, FL. March 1-5, Kansas City, KS March 24-26 and Dothan, April 19-23. We ask for your help and hope to see many of you in these gospel endeavors.

Don L. King - 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, old_paths@juno.com. Feb. 1 - Bro Frank Brancato and I have just returned from a profitable trip to the Philippines which resulted in 93 baptisms and a digressive preacher converted to the truth. The work is doing well and still growing after 36 years. We first went there in March of 1981 with Bro Jerry Cutter. Later it was my privilege to also go with Bennie Cryer, Brian Burns, Kevin Presley, Matt Trent, Alan Bonifay, Greg Cardosa, Nathan Battey, Duane Permenter, Frank Brancato, Richard DeGough, and likely others. All of those trips were learning experiences for me and I am certainly the better for having made them. Some of the old guard have passed away in the Philippines, among them our dear friend and partner of 30 years, Virgilio O. Danao, Sr. Together, we traveled the Philippines, (including Palawan) Hawaii and even Canada preaching

the gospel of Christ. It would be impossible to recall all the great things that have occurred during the now 36 trips, but a great work remains as a result of much hard work on the part of many. I must also mention that were it not for the Old Paths Advocate the work would never have started at all. A liberal enemy of the truth sent the paper to Bro Danao without our knowledge for several years, intending to mock us and our old fashioned ways. However, the honesty of those who read the paper, and studied the articles, in the Country constrained them to make the needed changes and the work began. Paul Nichols and Jim Franklin also made several trips contributing to the spreading of the Word of God. On the first trip we made we had only a small congregation of perhaps 25 but it quickly grew and multiplied and today there are perhaps hundreds of congregations who contend for the Bible way. That work has become a major part of our life, consuming a great deal of our time, and also resulted in the work in Hawaii beginning as a direct outgrowth of the Philippine work. It was a privilege to be present for the first services of both places. I am especially happy that the work will continue with the competent assistance of local preachers who live there. They baptize many all through the year on their own. We usually receive pictures of the baptisms. Have there been problems? Of course, but the work is thriving and growing in spite of Satan's efforts. I appreciated Bro Brancato this year, as always, and was also grateful that my previous problems with speech seem to have disappeared with the use of medication. The work there is quite the reminder of the passage in 1 Corinthians 3:6 where Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." To God be the praise.

Frank Brancato - 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312. January 31, 2017 email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. On January 25th Brother Don King and I returned from the Philippines. We are happy to report that the work in the Philippines is going well, and many are being added to the body of Christ. Our preaching itinerary began on Sunday January 8th in Makati City in Manila. Later that day we met and worshipped with the church in Tay Tay. The next morning we began our trip to Baguio City, stopping to preach in Panique (Tarlac) along the way. We stayed in the Baguio area for a few days, preaching in Dagupan, Matulolng, and in Baguio City. Over the next week we travelled to and preached at a number of places in Ilocos Norte, Pasuqui, Lapogan Tabuk, and Isabella. On January 20th we flew to Palawan where we were honored to preach at 5 different places. Over the 21 days we were in the Philippines, there were a total of 93 baptisms, and we give God all of the glory. It was so encouraging to see the power of the gospel at

work when planted in good and honest hearts. These results would not be possible without the hard work of Filipino preachers before we ever get there. These men work very hard preaching the gospel and planting the seed, and many are converted throughout the year as well. This was my eighth trip to the Philippines and I have grown to love and appreciate this work very much. It was especially encouraging to see folks that had obeyed the Gospel two and three years ago still remaining faithful. I especially enjoyed traveling and working with my good friend and partner, Don King. I have learned a great deal from him through the years, and for that I am grateful. I also enjoyed traveling and working with Brother Libertino, Brother Edson Danao, and Brother Daria Estavillo. These men were a great help to us and served as translators and companions during our time in the Philippines. Please continue to pray for this work, and for the faithful everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson - 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com. Feb. 8: Since my last report I have preached at Sulphur, Healdton, McAlester, and Galey, Oklahoma. I have also preached here at home several times. At Healdton, I had the pleasure of baptizing Emily Ely. She is the 17 year-old daughter of Mark and Renea Ely, and the granddaughter of Skeet and Myrna Chapman. This family is dear to our hearts and we were thrilled by Emily's decision. May God richly bless them all. We are preparing for our 41st annual March meeting (March 3-5). Brother Cullen Smith will be conducting the meeting, and he will preach along with Lane Branch, Landon Hughes, and Jason Coon. The theme of the meeting is, "What Is Truth?" The speakers will investigate how to harmonize the apparent tension between truth and tolerance. Frank Brancato is scheduled to conduct our spring meeting here in Ada (Apr. 9-16). In addition to my regular preaching appointments here at home, I am scheduled the next few months at Healdton, OK (Feb. 19), Council Hill, OK (Mar. 17-19), Nashville, TN (Apr. 21-23), Miami, OK (May 3-7), Indiana, PA (June 21-25), and Temple, GA (July 16-23). Please, pray for us.

Steven R. Bowen - 105 N. Lenard, Red Oak, TX 75154. Since our last writing, the Lord has really been at work for the sake of the gospel. We are so thankful for that and wanted to share some good news that comes out of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, and also West Virginia. In the early fall, a new "babe in Christ" arranged for us to share that great story with her uncle as soon as we got to Little Rock for our September work. Two nights of hearing the gospel was enough for her uncle, and that second night the young man would

see his sins washed away wondrously in the blood of the Lamb, and the Little Rock congregation rejoiced at that! ...Soon after, we traveled to Deer Park for our monthly work there; and brother Chuck Sears made sure we would have an opportunity to study with this good couple who had attended the Deer Park congregation for several months. The problem was that by the time we arrived that month they were having to move back to Kentucky. In fact, the night that Chuck and I walked up to their house, they were loading the trailer I have to say we stood and talked more than we worked, and after awhile our good friend stopped abruptly and said to us, "I want you to baptize me tonight back here in our pool." Before the night was over, both he AND his wife had obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:17). Our new brother later would express his joy that the Lord providentially had brought them to Texas just for such an occasion! We were not able to break bread with our new Christian friends in Texas; but in November we had a great reunion at our gospel meeting in Foster, WV where Jamey's mom and dad labor; and there gathered around the Lords table for the first time. What a blessing shared that Lord's Day morning! You and I get the picture, I'm sure, of how our Lord works. Sometimes our labor is small, but the brethren's work is greater, and the Lord's work is powerful! There, indeed, is where the glory always must go. ... A few weeks later when Marilyn and I concluded a nice meeting with the good brethren and sisters in Grassy Forks, Tennessee, we all gathered for lunch after the final Lord's Day service. We were just about to say our goodbyes when a newly married lady, who had attended every night of the meeting faithfully with her new husband John, walked up to us wanting to be baptized. You cannot help but praise the good Lord when you drive away from such an occasion still a little wet from a cold Tennessee creek, leaving behind good friends and a new sister in Christ. Marilyn and I had to smile, thinking, "The Lord sure knows how to "close out a meeting." ... A month later, Thanksgiving weekend, in fact, our good friends, the Wells, hosted their monthly Bible study in their home. The Wells "send the call" out to friends and family every month, and sometimes we'll have a dozen there with their Bibles and questions. But on this night, no visitors came, and we and the family started our study as normal. We had hardly started when one of Tammy's nieces called and asked if it would be all right for her to come. The niece, Keri, is in her mid-30s and raising four young boys, and she walked in the door ready to make a change in her life. In fact, she had tears in her eyes the entire night. The Wells and I had the chance to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, explaining the power of the blood of the Lamb as best we knew

how. We shared the great story that night, and the next, as well. The third night Keri called with the greatest of all requests: will you baptize me into Christ? The Lord and the gospel had done its work. The same group that was there the first night and a few other friends and family gathered back at the Wells' house where Dale himself had obeyed the gospel a few years before and we all experienced joyfully Keri's baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Oh, the water is always cold that time of the year be it a pool, river, or baptistery but the joy both in heaven and earth builds a fire in our bones and in all who gather around and who later hear such great stories of conversions. We hope this month's report will help rekindle a fire in us all!

Darrell Crawford - 208 E Baldwin Rd Unit S, Panama City, FL 32405, bugz1955@hotmail.com. Greetings to all the saints of God everywhere. It's hard to believe that we have been here in Florida for seven years. Time really flies while doing the Lords work. We have been blessed richly with at least five who took their stand with the truth from digression. We are studying with four currently who hopefully will obey the gospel very soon.

We were told that the Friday fest we have been doing the last five years has been completely cancelled, but we found out that isn't true, so we will continue with the Friday Fest, Lord willing. We are also looking for another similar type event to start working to help spread the gospel.

We have been blessed with brother Bob Bennett from Southwest Missouri coming down the winter months the last three years. He is a real asset to the church. It will be sad when he returns to Missouri for the warmer months.

Lord willing I will be teaching at a preacher's study in Jackson, Ms. In March. I am looking forward to participating in that study.

Looking forward to taking our brethren here to several meetings starting in the spring. Please pray for the work here in NW Florida.

May we all stick to the "old paths" and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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THE BACK PAGE...

TODAY'S DEFINITION OF TOLERANCE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Almost 20 years ago I wrote an article for Old Paths Advocate dealing with what I perceived to be an effort by our culture to redefine the meaning of the word "tolerance" ("Redefining Tolerance" OPA March 2000). I thought it might be worth revisiting that subject to see if we can determine exactly where we stand today.

In Webster's 1997 edition of its New World Dictionary, "tolerate" is defined as, "To recognize and respect [others' beliefs, practices, etc.] without sharing them," and ["to bear or put up with someone or something not especially liked]" (1407). Although the word "tolerant" is not found in the NT Paul expresses the essence of the word in 1 Corinthians 13:7 when he says, "charity endures all things." The word endurance derives from the Latin "tolerare," meaning to endure.

Because we are told not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14), and are warned that "evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Cor 15:33 NKJV), brethren have sometimes wished we could isolate ourselves from the world completely. However we are commanded to be the "salt of the earth," and the "light of the world" (Mt. 5: 13-14). We cannot fulfill those obligations to the world if we are isolated from it.

There is a difference between being separate from the world and isolated from the world. Jesus was separate from the world's rebellious attitude, sinful behavior and God-defying lifestyle, but He went among worldly people daily. He talked with them, ate with them, and opened His heart to them in an effort to save them.

During my college days I had classmates and work associates whose lifestyles were clearly ungodly. I did not endorse their sinful activities and I did not participate in them. I was never tempted by these associations to forfeit my belief in God or my hope of heaven, and when I had opportunities I explained to them my faith and my hope (1 Pet. 3:15-16). I did my best to get along with all my classmates and co-workers, treating them with courtesy. Paul says, "If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with ALL men (Rom. 12:18). Again, he says, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto ALL men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

Based upon the meaning of the word at the time, I exercised tolerance toward these people. Traditional tolerance values, respects, and accepts the individual without necessarily approving of or participating in his or her beliefs or behavior. We hate the sin, but we love the sinner—a soul created in the image of God (Gen. 2:7), worth more than the world (Mt. 16:26), and therefore in need of saving.

In the past 20 years, however our culture has gradually foisted upon us a new definition of tolerance. Today, if you do not APPROVE and ENDORSE a person's beliefs and lifestyle, you are accused of "hating" the person and being intolerant, insensitive, and bigoted.

Almost every time you hear the word "tolerance" spoken today outside the walls of the church—by school teachers, news anchors, government officials, activists, celebrities, perhaps even your own children and grandchildren—this is the definition that is meant.

The new definition is based upon the premise that there is no such thing as moral absolutes—moral laws that apply to everybody. One sociology textbook says, "Everything is right somewhere, and nothing is right everywhere."

According to the new definition, anyone who believes uncompromisingly in anything and especially in absolute truth—is guilty of intolerance.

The Bible makes it clear however that all values, beliefs, lifestyles, and truth-claims are NOT equal. God's words are absolutely true (Ps. 119:160) and if something is not right in God's sight it is wrong (Deut. 6:18).

Naturally, our convictions about these teachings offend the proponents of the new tolerance. Consequently, Christians are viewed as the greatest sinners in our culture, committing the only serious sin left in our world—intolerance. It is the pariah sin. America is sick of intolerant people and is not going to tolerate them anymore!

Since the 1990s, a primary tactic used by the new-tolerance advocates is "jamming." It is part of a three-pronged approach devised by two Harvard-educated marketing experts named Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen. Jamming is the use of name-calling to smear Christians, traditionalists, or anyone who opposes the new tolerance. They will not engage you in rational discussion if you disagree with them, they will just attack you by calling you names such as "homophobe," "hater" and "bigot." The tactic is used almost every day in our present culture war and has been very effective over the past 20 years.

Our best defense continues to be preaching the gospel in love to ALL those in sin, and living our lives in a way that is consistent with what we preach (Rom. 1 :26-27' 1 Cor 6:9). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com.