

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 ordinances 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 for your souls’ (Jer. 6:16). ‘And they that shall 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’ (Isaiah 58:12).

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## LAST ISSUE OF THE OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

*By Rick Martin*

It has been decided that due to the passing of our late Publisher, Don L. King, this will be the last issue of the *Old Paths Advocate*. The paper has stood the test of time, being published for 90 years and eight months. This decision was difficult and was made with much sadness, but the King family and the editors believe it is for the best.

The website will remain active, and you can access a wealth of information that has been published through the years. Various articles will continue to be published on the Facebook page.

As was written by our late publisher on the 50th anniversary of the paper “Our prayer is that we have rendered assistance to the faithful, warning to those who were not and instruction to those who honestly longed to be. We sincerely believe that we have filled this need to a degree. No, we cannot fill every need, and not every thing needs to be written within our columns. Some situations should be taken care of locally by those who are directly involved. However, where matters of doctrinal importance are concerned, we want to do our best to be on the side of right.” We sincerely believe we have met that purpose throughout the years.

On behalf of the King family and the editors, we would like to thank you for your support over the years. We hope you enjoy these various editorials from our publisher through the years. We urge you to “Think on These Things.”

## Editorial, June 1986

OUR SINGING

*By Don L. King*

Within this issue (June 1986) is an announcement of the new songbook “Blessed Assurance.” I am always excited when a new book is ready for the church. I sincerely hope every congregation

will, as soon as possible, buy them and begin learning the new songs. This long-awaited event, however, brings to my mind a bit of sadness as I realize some are not as interested in singing as they could be.

I remember many years ago when new books would come out. My old home congregation always had them before anyone and we would sing for days. Folks would get together at home, after services, even plan a time for the church to get together and practice singing the new songs. I really don’t remember learning the notes. I can’t remember a time when I didn’t know them. We loved to sing gospel songs, and most of the congregation could sing the notes. Learning music wasn’t drudgery for us! It was easy because we had a tremendous interest in that part of our worship. It was not uncommon, in those times, for outsiders to attend gospel meetings because the singing was outstanding. What a disappointment to a preacher who has a good sermon ready and is anxious to preach, to have the services begin with an out of tune, and often listless, song service. It just takes something out of me when this happens. Yes, I know some simply are not able to sing well and know nothing about music. But anyone can sing with enthusiasm, and anyone can have an interest in making the singing as good as possible.

I don’t know just when it began nor why it occurred, but, Brethren, we do not have as much interest in our singing as we need to have. Singing is part of worship, and it demands our best effort. We are diligent (most of us) to carefully prepare our lessons. We wouldn’t think of teaching or preaching with no enthusiasm or interest. Why do we sing praises to the Father in heaven and have little interest?

In many places at the close of a meeting a lunch is served by the sisters and later a time is set aside for singing. In times past, brethren made great efforts and came long distances to be at the singing. Now, fewer come, and less effort is made.

The logical reason for this being so is that we

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have less interest in singing than we once had. Brethren are sometimes even a bit critical of us who encourage an interest in learning to sing well. We are told the important thing is to sing from the heart and it really matters very little if it is not done well or correctly.

Frankly, I seriously question such logic. Would anyone question the benefit of a teacher learning to use good grammar so he may speak well and correctly? The rules of language are tools for him that he may effectively edify the body of Christ. Why not try to learn a few basic rules of music so that our singing together is just as good as it can possibly be?

Song leaders should be chosen thoughtfully by the brother in charge. Also, song leaders should choose their songs thoughtfully. One should choose songs which will fit the occasion, songs he is able to lead and the congregation able to sing. Every leader should strive to learn both to pitch and beat the time so the congregation can more easily sing together and at the same tempo. Anyone who can accurately sing the scale can learn to pitch a song with a reasonable degree of success. It may very well require a bit of time and effort, but the improvement is worth it. Those who are singing along should try to hold their songbooks low enough to allow them to see the leader and the tempo he is directing. When proper interest is maintained and each worshiper pays the necessary attention to the song service, it can be a wonderful and exciting part of our worship.

**Editorial, January 1987**

AS WE BEGIN A NEW YEAR

*By Don L. King*

1986 is now history. With it have passed the great victories we worked so hard to accomplish. New challenges are before us and await our efforts. The defeats, blunders, defections, hurts, tragedies and heartaches are also history; and though they may still burn within us, we know the passing of time will serve to lessen their memory. We have before us a clean slate upon which to chart our course for 1987. What opportunities lie before us! We have an opportunity to preach the gospel to people who have never heard it before in places we have never taken it before. By radio (yes radio), television, the printed page (such as the *OPA*) tracts, gospel meetings, and personal contacts, the entire world could be reached during this year if we will set our minds to it.

The world's population must be near or above

the five billion mark now. It staggers my mind to realize that there are roughly three times as many souls who need the gospel today as when my father began preaching about 1915. It is estimated that by the year 2000 there will be about eight billion living on our own mother earth. The fields are large, and our tasks seem nearly impossible. Unless, of course, we begin utilizing the media as never before.

It has been estimated that if we could fill the largest stadium in the U.S. twice a day and preach to them seven days a week it would take almost two thousand years to preach to every soul on earth if the population stopped growing right now! The only way we will ever reach such huge numbers is via the media. Surely anyone can realize this simple fact.

Take a brief view of the fields white unto harvest. Africa with nearly a half billion souls, China with about one billion, India about seven hundred million, one hundred million in Japan, forty million in Indonesia, ninety million in Pakistan, eighty-five million in Bangladesh, fifty million in Thailand, fifty million in the Philippines and on and on the numbers add. Few have ever heard the simple gospel of Christ. Yet, while all the religious organizations of the world together are said to spend four million dollars per year on foreign mission work, Americans spent about eight million dollars last year for dog food. Of course, we care nothing of the amounts spent by denominations to propagate their erroneous doctrines; but how much do you suppose the people of God spent during 1986 to preach the truth to the lost in America to say nothing of the rest of the world? May the Lord forgive us for our lack of vision.

The cheapest and most efficient way to reach the lost (undoubtedly the only way now) is through the use of the media (Television, Radio and the printed page). Couple these ways of contact with our present personal visits, meetings, etc., and the job becomes possible. Frankly, it bothers me a great deal to think of standing before my Lord in judgment and trying to explain that the reason I didn't preach to those who are lost was because it was too expensive, too far, too time-consuming or involved too much "red tape." I know that He knows He has blessed our brethren with more money today than perhaps at any time since the beginning of the church. Brethren should be ashamed to have large treasuries laid aside and doing little or nothing to save souls. By use of the media, we can reach millions for so little. The radio program presently in use in the Philippines has been responsible for the establishment of about twenty congregations during

the past five years. In many places throughout the world radio is still a wonderful way to reach the lost.

Also, we are too often satisfied with holding one or two meetings per year in our own meeting houses and preaching, to a great extent, to church members. I am not opposed to this, of course.

However, perhaps we could reach more of the world by holding meetings in places they are not used to seeing us. Rented halls, schools, tents, open lots, etc. Some are now doing this very thing and report greater interest by the lost. Preaching is what they must hear to be saved; and if they don't come to our meetings, we must try to take it to them in some way. Remember, Paul said, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:1).

## Editorial, December 1987

ALCOHOL

*By Don L. King*

A High School Principal in San Lorenzo, California recently banned the wearing of tee shirts on campus which promote the use of alcohol. Some manufacturers are now selling various beer advertisements on their shirts, etc. The Principal said, "...spending millions of dollars to educate our youth about the use and abuse of alcohol and then allowing students to wear clothing that promotes the use of alcohol is at best hypocritical." We surely agree!

The facts are we are becoming a nation of alcoholics. It is believed there are at least five million alcoholics in America. Frankly, we suspect there are many more than that. Approximately twenty gallons of liquor are consumed by the average American citizen each year. The last time I read of the alcoholism problem, alcoholism was recognized as the fourth ranking disease, after cancer, mental illness, and heart disease. This is no little problem, brethren. Our nation is certainly plagued with this sin.

Moderation and "social" drinking are sometimes defended and/or practiced by some who are members of the Lord's church. I really doubt if this is a widespread practice, but any at all is too much. A few try to defend it as a "liberty" while claiming not to use it at all themselves. I surely will not call their honesty into question, but I really fear for the future if our young are brought into contact with such weak and liberal teaching and such poor examples of godliness. Allow me to editorialize a bit further: why is it that brethren raised in the church

fall prey to this fallacy? I have noticed that usually those who have been converted from a life of sin where drinking was a common practice rarely have to be told that they need to leave alcohol alone when they begin living for Christ. They seem to know that is something to leave outside of Christianity. To be blunt, the world knows it is sin; it is brethren who must sometimes be convinced.

### Is It Sin?

Often the argument is made that the Bible condemns drunkenness; but if we have only a little to drink, and don't get drunk it is permissible. I'm afraid of that borderline business, brethren. Any honest hearted Christian who is determined to make heaven his home is going to be as safe as he possibly can. Solomon said, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). The Revised Version reads, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." Some years ago, I ran onto a bit of writing on this very passage by Guy N. Woods who put it into syllogistic form. When a syllogism is used a major premise and minor premise are presented. If both are correct and true, the conclusion is said to be inescapable. His syllogism was presented in the following way:

- Major premise: To be led astray (deceived KJV) is to sin.
- Minor premise: Those who ingest alcoholic beverages are led astray.
- Conclusion: Therefore, those who drink such potions sin.

Either the conclusion is correct, or Solomon's inspired affirmation must be disputed. Or so it seems to me. Peter wrote: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). Is it possible that we really need to be convinced that alcoholic drinks war against our soul?

### A Look At The Figures

Notice the following statistics:

1. In the United States, there are 98,000 alcohol-related deaths each year.
2. The number one killer of the 15 to 20 year-old age group is alcohol-related highway deaths.
3. Drinking is estimated to be involved in at least 50% of spouse abuse cases and 38% of child abuse cases.
4. A total of 54% of jail inmates convicted of violent crimes were drinking before they committed their crimes. Of those convicted of

assault, 62 % had been drinking, and 49% of those convicted of murder or attempted murder had been drinking.

5. In 1983, the economic cost to our nation was \$116.7 billion due to the use and abuse of alcohol.

How can anyone see such figures and still deny alcohol wars against the soul? It appears to be a real plague. Can it be possible that those who have loved ones who are slaves to this drug (yes it absolutely is a drug) and who spend their lives often literally in the gutter would agree that it is a practice Christians can indulge in? Would the man whose life and family torn asunder and ruined by alcohol agree it could be a Christian liberty? We suppose not. Paul wrote, "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded (or prudent, DLK). In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works..." (Titus 2:6, 7). Folks, we are supposed to be providing a "pattern" by which others may mold their lives. You say, "Well I take a drink now and then, but no one knows it." What if you are asked? What do you say then? Will you tell the truth? If you do, will your "pattern" be one to be followed? Are you willing for our young to "pattern" their lives and habits after yours? You are supposed to be. Paul told Titus to be that way.

Finally, alcohol not only needs to be left out of our private lives but taught against both privately and publicly. We have allowed a generation to grow up having heard very little against it from our preaching brethren. Am I suggesting our preachers are not opposed to the use of alcohol? Not at all. I believe they are definitely opposed to it. However, we have apparently felt such things are not as important as other "issues." At least alcohol and several other moral issues seem to lose out to subjects such as the Holy Spirit, angels, marriage and divorce, the home, etc., all of which are Bible topics and needed. However, in this writer's humble opinion we dare not neglect the many moral issues of the day any longer.

## Editorial, June 1997

UNITY

By Don L. King

The very night on which He was betrayed, and at the close of what some call His "valedictory" sermon, the Lord prayed a remarkable prayer. This prayer is found in John 17. In verse 21, Jesus prayed for unity. Verses 20 and 21 read: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all

may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

This prayer is popular with many who seek unity. Denominations love to recite this prayer in a vain effort to prove that all denominations should work together. We have often found it amusing to hear some television preacher remark that Jesus wanted all the churches to work together and quote his words in verse 21 as though Jesus had denominationalism in mind when He said it! First, denominations did not exist for many hundreds of years after His prayer. He obviously could not have had them in mind. Second, the denominational preacher makes such a statement and then goes right on with his work of promoting his particular church over any other. One might wonder if he really believes what he is preaching.

If the reader will look carefully at verses 20 and 21, he will notice that Jesus predicates the salvation of the world upon the unity His people, thus placing Christian unity upon a platform of very high importance. In fact, it would appear that unity is virtually responsible for the success or failure of the gospel itself. However, who is included in His prayer for unity? As we mentioned above, this passage is very popular with those who seek unity. In fact, it seems to be most popular with those who seek unity by compromising Biblical principles. It is often quoted by an erring brother in Christ as he chides us for refusing to accept his doctrines of individual cups, Bible classes, instrumental music, etc.

But did the Savior pray for the unity of all believers? No. Nor did He pray for unity among His followers, or denominations or for all professed Christians. Someone says, “Didn’t He pray for those who believe on me?” No he didn’t pray for that either. He prayed for all who believe on Him “through their word.” That is, through the word of the apostles. Beyond those of that class he did not pray. What is the point? Simply this: a doctrine, a faith, some wild idea, etc., which is not obtained through the word of the apostles will never bring us into the unity for which Jesus prayed. On the other hand, those who base their teaching on the word of the apostles (the Word of God) will enjoy unity because they will all agree. They will be one.

As the apostle John considered the many miracles of Jesus, he wrote: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (John 20:30-31). Notice now,

the faith by which we may have life through His name is received “through their word” (John 17:20). This is the only way we may come into the unity for which He prayed.

Folks, your doctrine must come from the word of the Lord! That’s what the apostles preached. No wonder Paul wrote: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). It won’t do to claim a new revelation. It won’t work to tell us that the Holy Spirit is leading you to believe this or that with your heart. We want the unity Jesus prayed for. We will move mountains to have it. But it will have to come from a faith founded upon a “Thus Saith the Lord.” If you wish us to accept your cups, classes, instrumental music, centralized funds, orphan’s homes, human creeds and names, etc. we are going to insist on scripture for them. We can’t have the unity Jesus prayed for in any other way. If we are to be expected to fellowship those who worship in ways not found in the scriptures, give us book, chapter and verse for it. Don’t tell us that the idea of one cup, for example, is only “your interpretation.” Have we learned so much that we must interpret the word “cup?” That doesn’t require interpretation, my friend. That requires obedience. Just imagine a fellow standing before the Lord in judgment and saying, “Lord, we would have done what you commanded, but we couldn’t understand the word cup!” Think on these things.

## Editorial, January 2000

RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE

*By Don L. King*

Sixty years ago, my father wrote an editorial titled the same as this one. The year was 1940. He looked forward to better times. He couldn’t possibly know that in a little less than two years the whole world would be involved in World War II. That brought some difficult times for the brethren, and it was hard on the preachers. Almost everything was rationed including gasoline, oil and tires; I still recall the 35-mph speed limit imposed on Americans to save fuel, etc. Today, as we begin the new millennium, we cannot but wonder what lies ahead. Only the Lord knows. Will it bring war? We fervently pray that it will not happen. Will it be better for the church? We sincerely pray that it will.

As we reflect back over the nearly 24 years, we have been involved in publishing the *Old Paths Advocate* (OPA), it is impossible not to recall some great things that have happened. This is perfectly proper, we believe. As Paul looked back over his

life as an apostle he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (2 Timothy 4:7, 8). He undoubtedly remembered victories he had helped to win. So, it is with us. We are grateful for the work we have been allowed to do. In fact, we appreciate the good accomplished by everyone. We thank God for the tool the OPA has been allowed to be. It now goes into nearly all the world. We suppose it does make an entrance into every major continent. What a thrill it has been for this writer to go into the humbleness of homes around the world and see worn copies, even photocopies, of the Old Paths Advocate.

We are grateful that the paper has played at least some part in the beginning of nearly every foreign work we know of today. We are thankful too, for whatever good we may have accomplished within the good ol' USA. We take heart as we think of the many stalwart brethren and preachers who love the church and work so hard for her welfare. May God increase their tribe. We are profoundly grateful for those who continue to send subscriptions for the OPA. Many of you have taken the paper for many years. Some write and tell us they have grown up reading the paper. One brother wrote just a few days ago and told us he reads the paper to his ailing mother now and that she looks forward to it every month. As we begin this 68th year of publication we beg your continued patience and loyalty and ask the Lord's choicest blessings for all of us. May He continue to use the paper for His honor and glory!

We realize, however, that it is not wise to reflect on the past and make no plans for the future. The apostle Paul also wrote in Philippians 3:13-14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

As we begin the year 2000, we are aware that so many are so involved with the things of the world. Attendances of church services are at an all-time low in some places. Undoubtedly this is due, at least in part, to church members being too much involved in things other than the church. It has become an accepted thing, in some places, for a few of the congregation to gather on Lord's day evening and midweek and carry on the work of the church in the absence of many who are just too busy playing games. This is sad, and it is wrong. Every member needs to feel the responsibility to hold up the blood-stained banner of Christ in the community. We have gone places to hold meetings and found

that some picked that time to take vacations and go away. Unbelievable!

What can be done to awaken the church to the needs of the time? One thing that can be done is for teachers and preachers everywhere to be awake themselves! Remind the brethren of their duty. Another thing is for all of us to be more involved and excited in the work of the church. People who are involved and excited will not want to miss a single service for any reason. I'm reminded of the true story of a brother who suffered a heart attack on Wednesday evening. When the doctor demanded that he be hospitalized, he said, "Oh no, what will the Lord think?" Compare that commendable attitude with the one manifested by so many today who miss for recreation and fun things. Brethren, we need to wake up!

Of course, there will be obstacles in the way. There will be new enemies to overcome and heart-breaks to deal with. However, we do not have to deal with these things alone. Jesus said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." That is the difference between the world and us. Everyone has to weather the storms of life. However, they must do so without the Lord while we know He is always with us.

Let us resolve to do more than ever for Him. Let every congregation resolve to do more than ever before to build up the Cause of Christ in your area and in the world beyond. Don't forget the preachers. They must often go through difficult situations and with inadequate support. With the high cost of automobiles and gasoline, why not consider raising the support you plan to give to the preachers this year. The cost of travel is high whether by car or public transportation. Support him well. If he isn't worth it, then get one who is. The Lord has blessed most of us with affluence unknown to our parents. Let us put this money to work and resolve to see the church grow and prosper in the New Year. Think on these things.

## Editorial, September 2010

WISDOM FROM LONG AGO

*By Don L. King*

In September 1981 while in a gospel meeting at McGregor, Texas, I enjoyed a good visit with James R. Stewart, one of our old-time preachers. Brother Stewart was born in March 1898 and would have been about 83 at the time of our visit. He began preaching in 1920, and it was enjoyable to hear him tell of some of the events during the early years of his preaching. One of the stories he told was so

interesting I have never forgotten it and what a lesson he taught!

He related an event, which took place not long after their first child was born. Times were hard because of the depression. He said no one had any money and of course, the brethren didn't either. He had been invited to preach at a congregation in a nearby town; and since he either did not have a car or couldn't afford to drive it, he decided to hitchhike that Sunday morning. He had two quarters, and that amounted to all the money the family had. He wanted to be able to put one quarter in the contribution that Lord's Day, and he assumed the brethren would pay him something for his preaching. He caught a ride with a denominational man who was driving to the same city and agreed to drop him by the church building. They discussed the Bible on the way, and he told the fellow that he was a preacher for the church of Christ.

After the services that morning, the brethren called an emergency business meeting. It seemed one of the brethren had a suit of clothes in the cleaners and couldn't afford to pay the bill. The brethren decided in the business meeting to give him the collection that Lord's Day, which was two dollars. That meant Brother Stewart would get no support for his preaching, and he had already put a quarter in the collection. He had only twenty-five cents left and wondered how they could afford to feed the baby that week, to say nothing of his wife and himself. He had no choice but to try to catch a ride back home, so he began holding his thumb out along the highway. As good fortune would have it, the same denominational man picked him up that had given him the ride earlier that morning. Without thinking, Brother Stewart related the incident at church and how he had not received any support for his preaching, hence was catching another ride home, etc. To his amazement, the fellow began berating the church and saying how terrible it was that any church would allow a man to come a distance to preach for them and then not pay him. This went on for quite a long time.

Brother Stewart looked at me and said, "My brother, I have never forgotten that. I was so sorry that I had said anything because that fellow had spoken badly of my Lord's church!" He told how he had prayed for forgiveness and had promised never to complain about the church to anyone again.

Since hearing that story, I have remembered it many times. What a lesson! Wouldn't it be wonderful if all members everywhere were that careful now? How much better off would the church be if every member, every preacher, every elder or lead-

er, would be that careful not to give an outsider ammunition to speak badly of the Lord's church. How much better off would we all be if no one spoke badly of each other or to each other. Our disagreements could, and should be, resolved without such behavior. As Paul wrote to the Romans, he mentioned this behavior and placed it in a very bad light. In verse 29 of Chapter 1 he wrote: "being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

The above passage is no surprise to most of us. Indeed, we have heard it over and over. Still, when we are hurt, frustrated, at our wit's end, it is so tempting to resort to saying bad things or repeating rumors that are perhaps no more than common gossip. Brethren, we must always remember that we must try not to do anything, say anything, or act in such a way as to give anyone cause to speak badly of the church or of us. We are God's people; and even when we disagree, we need to remember that we are still brethren and need to work together for the benefit of the church and everyone involved. Yes, these are troubling times; and it is obvious that the Devil is working hard to ruin the church. We must always keep in mind that any time the church is hurting it is the Devil who is behind it. We must beware that we do not allow ourselves to become the Devil's servants and aid in hurting the church Jesus died for. Think on these things. DLK

