

Kenneth Berdine: Forty Years of Service

By Gary Berdine

On May 2, 1971, brethren Carl Parsons and Kenneth Berdine were appointed as elders of the Tomlinson Run church of Christ. Tomorrow will be the 40th anniversary of brother Berdine's appointment. The scriptures teach us concerning elders, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves" (1Thes. 5:12-13, NKJV).

Permit me to give you a little history concerning my Dad, Kenneth Berdine. He obeyed the gospel in 1957 in Waynesburg, PA. The family moved to this area in 1967 and began attending the Langeloth, Pennsylvania church of Christ. Dad chose this congregation at the suggestion of brother Bill Wright, a man well known to many of us. The family was a part of the Langeloth congregation for less than two years. Langeloth had no elders. In early 1969, the men of the congregation decided it would be appropriate to mention the Herald of Truth television program in the church's newspaper advertising. Dad and brother Wright stood in opposition to this decision, and as a result, were compelled to lead their families away from this error. Our families began attending Tomlinson Run in February 1969. After two years passed, brother Denzil Wharton, one of the Tomlinson Run elders, along with several other members of this congregation, decided to begin a work in New Cumberland, WV. With brother Wharton deciding to leave with the new group, and since brother Lloyd Nuzum would be the only elder remaining to serve at Tomlinson Run, the church realized the need to appoint additional men to serve as elders. By this time, Bill Calame was serving as the local evangelist at Tomlinson Run. The church decided to appoint brother Parsons and Dad to be elders. This appointment was carried out by brother Calame on May 2, 1971. This meant that Tomlinson Run would continue to be served by an eldership, which is as God has prescribed in the scriptures.

This new eldership immediately had to confront a problem that would end up defining the future of this congregation. Brother Nuzum decided to retire, and move to Florida, which meant that brother Parsons and Dad would lead the congregation. For some time men who did not stand firmly against institutionalism had been invited to hold meetings for Tomlinson Run. These men were well known to many of the brethren here, and were old friends to many. Brother Parsons and Dad determined that any men who came to Tomlinson Run to preach would be investigated concerning their positions on the institutional question before they would come to hold the meeting. While some were upset by the questioning of old friends, this decision identified the men who would not stand firmly against institutionalism. Time has verified the wisdom of this decision made early in these two men's years of service.

Over the years, Tomlinson Run has been known as a beacon of the truth in the Ohio Valley. Brother Bill Gailey served with brethren Parson and Berdine for several years, and then decided to resign due to poor health. Eight years ago four men were added to the eldership here at Tomlinson Run. Three still serve, brethren Ron Hennen, Paul R. Blake, and me. We lost our dear brother Parsons to cancer a few years ago. Since then, brother Joe Blake has been appointed to serve as an elder. The list of men who have served this congregation as either local evangelists or meeting preachers is a testament to the faithfulness that has been a hallmark of Tomlinson Run. Constant throughout all of this has been the forty years of service of Kenneth Berdine. I esteem him highly as my father. Ask my sons what kind of grandfather he has been. He has not been perfect, but who among us can truthfully claim perfection. I have been witness to his service all my life, and have never questioned his love for the truth, as well as his love for the brethren. His works, often with the help of my mother, do follow him. Today, as we honor these forty years of service, join with me in esteeming him very highly in love for his work's sake.

A Parent's Prayer

Lord, this I ask, that I may be
True to the trust You gave to me;
That I may raise this child of mine,
Each day to be a child of Thine.

That I might guide his precious feet
From each new danger he will meet;
And I might keep him in the fold,
And teach him, Lord, Thy hand to hold.

Tis when the big sheep go astray,
That off the lambs, too, go that way;
So that is why this day I ask,
Lord, make me worthy of this task.
(Author Unknown)

The Biggest Lie

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25).

In Boston, a minister noticed a group of boys standing around a small stray dog. "What are you doing, boys?" "Telling lies," said one of the boys. "The one who tells the biggest lie gets the dog." The shocked minister said, "When I was your age, I never ever thought of telling a lie." The boys unhappily looked at each other and, finally, one of them shrugged his shoulders and said, "I guess he wins the dog!" (From *Illustrations Unlimited*, by James S. Hewett, p. 287).

Proverbs 12:22 says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight." Let us be painstakingly truthful at all times.

A Moments Wisdom

- The everyday kindness of the back roads more than makes up for the acts of greed in the headlines.
- If you were arrested for kindness, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
- The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone.
- Remember, people will judge you by your actions, not your intentions. You may have a heart of gold — but so does a hard-boiled egg.
- If you spend your moments judging people, you will have no time left over to love them.
- It isn't the mountains ahead that wear you out, it's the pebble in your shoe.