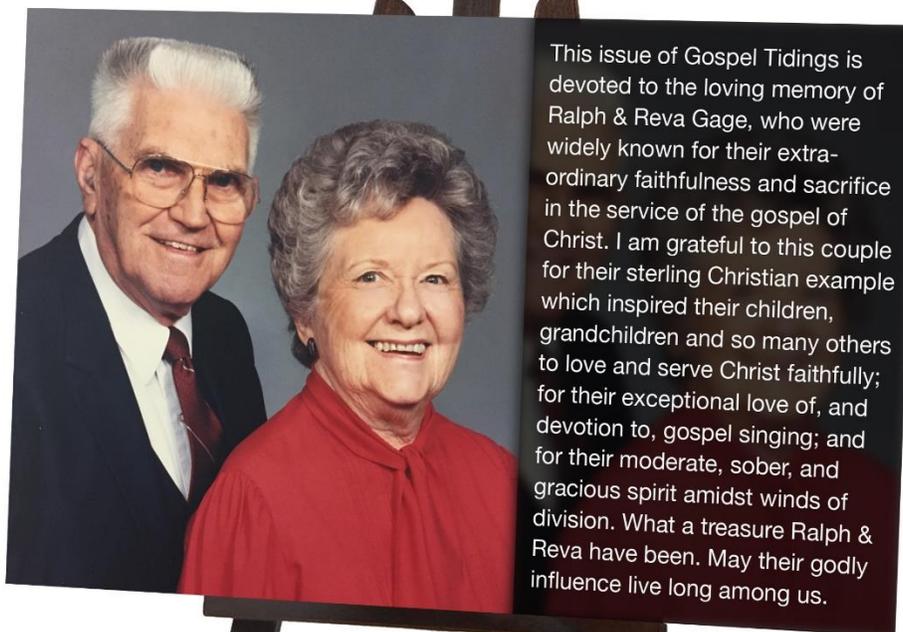


Gospel Tidings

April 2018



"Respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work." - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NIV)

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A number of the tributes had to be edited down in length in order to get them all in the printed version of GT. This document contains all the tributes in their full length.

Ralph and Reva Gage: The Story Within the Dashes

By Leland Scott Gage, Son

Linda Ellis wrote a poem that we have probably heard either in full or in part at a funeral we have attended. It is titled "The Dash." Here are just a couple of lines from that poem:

For that dash represents all the time that they spent alive on earth. And now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars...the house...the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.

Many of those who will read this article may have been acquainted with my father and mother, Ralph and Reva Gage. In fact, you may represent either a little or a larger part of that dash which the poet so eloquently described.

It has been my privilege and joy to help edit and put together this issue of *GT* in honor of my parents. I have certainly enjoyed reading what various members of our family have written and which we will share in this issue. We will hear from daughters, a son, sons-in-law, a daughter-in-law, grandsons, granddaughters and one former student, or "Timothy," who worked with my father in the summer of 1979.

I need to give a very brief overview of what occurred within those dashes. I will start with the dashes. **My father**, Ralph Dennis Gage, was born in Healdton, Oklahoma on July 23, 1915. He passed on to his reward on July 16, 2005, just one week shy of his ninetieth birthday, in El Dorado, Arkansas. **My mother**, Reva Omega (Walker) Gage was born near Booneville, Arkansas on November 21, 1915. She passed on to glory on December 24, 2003 in El Dorado, Arkansas.

I remember a couple of stories that my parents used to tell about growing up. My grandfather, Carlton Pounds Gage, was living in Healdton, OK when my dad was born. He and a brother were there after the oil boom in 1913. They evidently were in line to make some money when my grandfather's brother lost everything they had in a poker game. They say this brother disappeared and was never heard from again. The Gages moved back to the farm.

My mom used to tell about her family moving back and forth between Elk City, Oklahoma and areas around Paris, Arkansas. She said they couldn't make a living in Arkansas, so they would go to Oklahoma to pick cotton and make some cash and then they would return to Arkansas where Papa Walker preferred to live. We used to have Walker Reunions at Liberty Schoolhouse on Reveille Road just south of Paris, Arkansas. There were a lot of Walkers in the cemetery there and my mom attended the one-room school.

Ralph and Reva Meet



My mom was working at a café in Elk City, OK in the late 1930's. By then my dad was singing with one of the Stamps Baxter Quartets. It was the Lonestar Quartet based in Wichita Falls, Texas and it had a radio program on station KWFT. The quartet would travel to Elk City to hold concerts. During one of those concert trips, Dad was eating at the café where my mom worked. One of the other men in the quartet baited my mom and got her to talking about the quartet. I think the quartet had been on the local radio advertising. Of course, my mom didn't know my dad from Adam. They got her to talking about that member of the Lonestar Quartet known as Ralph Gage. My mom finally said that she wished she could buy that fellow for what he was worth and sell him for what he thought he was worth! They all burst out laughing and introduced my mom to Ralph Gage.

According to a cousin of mine on the Walker side, Glenna Joyce, mom and dad courted for a while and she remembers attending the concerts at the local high school. She even got to mingle with the quartet a little since she had an aunt dating one of the singers. My mom and dad were married on December 23, 1940. My oldest sister, Madalyn, was born to my mom from a previous marriage. My mom's first husband was killed in a train accident in California. There are six of us siblings. From the oldest to the youngest we are Madalyn, Nell, Elaine, Dennis, Scott and Brenda.

A Murder Trial

Before I move on from the quartet days I want to relate a story that I learned about on a singing trip our family made to the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas. For about 11 years our family sang every August at the Folk Center. My dad used to tell about an incident that happened when he was holding a singing school at Roastin' Ear Creek just outside Mt. View. The quartet used to go and hold what they called Two Week Normals. All the men in the quartet would teach singing schools in different venues and they would also hold concerts during the time. On this particular day at Roastin' Ear Creek my dad had been out hunting all day and came in the evening to a one-room school house to teach singing. A scuffle broke out in the back of the room. One man was named Brewer and I don't remember the other man's name. There was some bad blood between them. When the fight broke out the son of one of the men pulled a gun. The other man broke into a run out the back door and the son put three shots right up his spine and then darted into the woods. They asked my dad to come back when the trial took place and he promised he would. When he returned for the trial, the bus only took him as far as Leslie, Arkansas about 30 miles west of Mt. View. He began walking and walked all night. We used to kid him about this story, but we finally got the details from a man named Brewer who was just a kid when these things happened. This man Brewer told us that not only did my dad walk, but that it was raining. When my dad arrived at their house early in the morning this man Brewer got out of his bed to give it to my dad. My dad was somewhat of a folk hero to those people, a man who kept his word. Just to end the story, I became so interested that I began trying to research at the Stone County Courthouse in Mt. View. I found out that rats had eaten a lot of the old court records. I couldn't find much in old newspapers either. I finally found just a little scrap about the trial and learned that the boy who did the shooting was found not guilty. According to what I found and heard, the Defense Attorney in the case was from Little Rock and a relative of the Prosecuting Attorney in Stone County. According to some of the locals I talked to, after the trial was over some of the men caught the Prosecuting Attorney in the court yard and gave him a thrashing. The boy who had done the shooting left the county and never returned.

From Singing to Farming to Preaching

When my sister Nell was born, my dad decided that singing and traveling with the quartet was no life for a man with a family. He and mom moved to a little farm house outside Colbert, Oklahoma and he farmed peanuts. In the late 1940's my dad received a letter from a man in the church that daddy said was addressed: Dear Peanut King! This man encouraged my dad to devote his time to preaching. In fact, he told Daddy that he was going to lose his soul over a few measly peanuts. In either 1948 or 1949 my dad, my mom, Madalyn, Nell, Elaine and Dennis left the farm and moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas where Daddy began preaching full time. They attended the May & Alabama Church of Christ. I was born in January, 1952 while we were there. We moved to El Dorado, Arkansas sometime after I was born. Daddy moved there to help the congregation on Spring Street build a new church building, which became the East Faulkner Church of Christ. My little sister, Brenda, was born in January, 1953 while we were in El Dorado. Sometime after that we moved back to Fort Smith.



Ralph and Reva, Madalyn (R), Elaine, Nell

We lived in Fort Smith from 1953 to 1968. My dad helped build a new church building in Fort Smith which is now the North 50th Street Church of Christ. I was beginning my junior year in high school when we moved. I had gone on down early to El Dorado to begin football practice and was living with Virgil and Ann Scott for those weeks. Virgil and I traveled up to Fort Smith in August, 1968 for the dedication service for the new building in Fort Smith. Right after that Mom and Dad moved on down to **El Dorado** where they would live for the rest of their lives. During all these years Dad and Mom worked with the East Faulkner Church of Christ, the Antioch Church of Christ and the Urbana Church of Christ.

Widespread Ministry

During all these years of raising a family, my dad was preaching all over the United States from Georgia to



Gage family portrait 1960. Front Row: Scott, Reva, Ralph, Brenda. Back Row: Madalyn, Nell, Elaine, Dennis

California. He held numerous debates, produced weekly radio programs, wrote articles and began the publication of *Basic Christianity* in 1982. He also made several trips to Mexico. I was privileged to travel with my dad and Elmer Beshears of Greenwood, AR to Salamanca, Mexico in the fall of 1979. We drove down in a car. My mom and dad logged many, many miles in cars over the years. Also, along with my Uncle Quinton Gage, Daddy started the Gage Cousins and we sang in concerts and produced six gospel music albums throughout the 1970's to the 1990's. Dad had also produced some old 78 rpm records with the Gage Quartet in the 1950's.

Daddy also worked with many wonderful men over the years. My Uncle Leland Knight was one who had a great influence on Daddy in his early years of

preaching. In fact, I am named after my Uncle Leland. Dad held Youth Meetings with Uncle Leland, N. E. Rhodes, Jr., my Uncle Quinton Gage and others. Daddy was privileged to work with Billy Bennett, John Gilmore, Joe Bullock, Charles Parker, Thomas Calhoun, Virgil Scott, Lloyd Langham, Harvey Bean, Jesse McCracken, Elmer Beshears, Earl Pryor, Oren Colley, Muggs Johnson and many more men who I cannot name.

Dedicated Servants

The one word that always comes to my mind when I think of my mom is the word Servant. My mom was always serving others, whether it was members of the family, neighbors, church members or others. She was a hard worker and she worked as a waitress for many years in Fort Smith while she and Dad were trying to raise six kids. She was a true help mate for my dad.

Both mom and Dad were dedicated Christians. The Lord and his Church are the main themes that permeate all the articles that various family members have written for this issue. I believe I can honestly say that Mom and Dad had these priorities in this order: The Lord, his Church, Family and Neighbors. I know of no better way to close this article than with a poetic line from a hymn by Charles Wesley. Dad used this line at her funeral in 2003:

Servant of God, well done!
Thy glorious warfare's past;
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou art crowned at last.

They Gave us the Armor of God

By Nell (Gage) Franklin, daughter

I think my mother and dad read Ephesians and raised their children accordingly. Ephesians 6:11 tells us, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (NKJV)

Ephesians 6:13-18 explains that armor:

1. ***Having your loins girt with truth*** - Bible reading in our home.
2. ***Breastplate of righteousness*** – Romans 3:10 "There is no one righteous" but we must strive to be righteous. Our parents taught this by their honesty, trustworthiness and consistency in teaching the WORD to their children and all who would listen and look at their life.
3. ***Your feet shod with the gospel of peace*** - always putting the services of the Lord first in our life whether it was meetings, singings, youth meetings or just having Christian people in our home.
4. ***Above all take the shield of faith*** – They first taught us to have faith in them, then in that way we knew how to have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They were both strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, taught it by their life.
5. ***Helmet of salvation*** -We were taught early in life about the steps to salvation.
6. ***Sword of the spirit, which is the word of God*** - When we were teens and busy with our own lives, our parents

told us to remember to read the word each day. We were taught not only to listen in our bible studies at home, but we were expected to read the word for ourselves. I am not saying I always did that, however, when I did not read I felt guilty and I think that is good.

7. *Praying always* - We were taught to pray the same time we were taught to sing I guess. I never remember being taught to sing or pray.....I just always did it.

I remember my kids telling me as they got older that they felt like they were raised in a bubble. When I asked what they meant, they said there were things in the world they never knew about until they got old enough to be on their own. After thinking about it, I guess that bubble is the armor of God. I was raised in a bubble for sure.

I thank the Lord my parents were grounded in the truth and kept us in his word, put the services of the church first, were always truthful in their dealings, taught us to love, live, work, be accountable and always have a good time with our Christian friends. Parents, put your kids in a bubble— teach them how to put on “the whole armor of the Lord.”

They Gave Us an Example

By Elaine (Gage) Johnson, daughter

The older I get, the more I realize how blessed my life has been. One of the primary reasons for this, I believe, is the influence of Mother and Daddy. I never doubted their love for my siblings and me. They didn't verbalize it a lot, but “actions speak louder than words”. Most importantly, I never doubted their love for the Lord. They were selfless in their devotion to the Word of God. Most of my early memories revolve around worship and activities associated with the Church.

My earliest memories were made at our first house in Fort Smith, AR. The house was next door to the church with a hallway connecting them. It seems like that house was always full of people. They came to visit, to eat, and out of town guests sometimes spent the night. We gave up our beds for company on a regular basis. Much of the conversation during these visits centered around scripture. When I studied early childhood development later in life, I recognized what an impact these discussions surely had on me.

We spent several summers traveling as a family to revivals (we called them meetings) with Daddy. I thought it was great fun. We were told it was vacation and that's what it seemed like to me. Many lifelong friendships were made during these trips. I didn't realize until I was grown with children of my own that traveling with several kids required quite a bit of extra work for both Mother and Daddy. They seemed to enjoy it though. Mother was a real partner to Daddy in his work. Together they were a great example to all of us.

Mother worked for a time as a waitress after we moved back to Fort Smith from El Dorado, AR. Daddy would cook for us occasionally while Mother worked. I'm sure most of his meals

were good. Isn't it funny how the ones you remember are those that didn't quite work? His most famous example of a culinary fail was his bologna casserole. However, he insisted it was delicious and I believe he ate most of it. Daddy's expertise in the food department was his garden. He had a garden in every place we lived, and Mother was an expert in converting his produce into delicious meals. She was an excellent cook and, in addition to feeding the family, she used her gift to provide countless dishes to those in need.

Singing was an integral part of our lives. Both my parents were singers who grew up in singing families. When the Walker or the Gage family got together, someone always brought songbooks. We learned the "Do, Re, Mi's" at an early age at home and by attending singing schools in various congregations. By the time we were teenagers my sisters and I were singing for weddings, funerals, and other events. We sang as a family for several years at the Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas. All of this instilled in me a deep love for the songs of the faith. Technology has allowed us to continue hearing them sung by our parents. I look forward to singing with them again.

My parents really enjoyed the work they did in the Kingdom. They made sure that we were taught the truths in the Bible. But the best thing they did was to live these truths out in their lives, not perfectly of course, but lovingly. I thank God for them.

They Left Us Good Memories

By Madalyn (Gage) Cordell, daughter

I remember going with Daddy and Momma to meetings. We got to meet so many nice people and stay in their homes during the meeting. Some I will never forget. We also had a lot of company. As I got older I liked to listen to them discuss the Bible. They didn't always agree on everything, but they had respect for each other's opinions. I am so thankful I was raised in a Christian home. I have many wonderful memories.

First Rate Parents-In-law

By LaDonna (Maddox) Gage, daughter-in-law

Ralph and Reva Gage were my mother- and father-in-law. I was married to Scott in March 1980. I suppose many people are a little nervous about their in-laws. I was fortunate to not have anything to be nervous about! We got along quite well. I remember them as being extremely passionate in their faith and devoted to their family. We experienced a lot of this devotion while living in El Dorado. When we first moved there we didn't have any children. One cold winter day

it began to snow. El Dorado didn't get much snow and I was excited! Ralph and Scott had a funeral in Ft. Smith and I remember the "look" Ralph gave me as they were about to leave, and I was voicing my excitement about the weather! I went to stay with Reva and it just kept snowing. That little bit of snow we were supposed to get turned into 9 inches! Their power went out and Reva and I enjoyed a dinner by oil lamp!

We traveled with them to California in 1981. Ralph was holding a gospel meeting out there. They were hilarious to me. We were in Arizona, I believe, and Reva bought these stone looking air fresheners for the car. He called them Stink balls!! He commented on them all the time, I think just to rib her. Good times!

They truly enjoyed the people in the churches wherever they went. They really loved doing the church work. I was amazed at how well they remembered people's names! Their brothers and sisters in Christ were very special to them. They cherished the times they had with them and they both had very entertaining stories about their life of spreading the gospel to people and staying with them. We heard the same stories several times, but they always brought a smile and never got tiresome to hear. Reva was a great entertainer, something I was terrified to do. She cooked for a crowd and it didn't seem to bother her at all! I learned a lot from her. Ralph looooved his garden!! We all did, actually. He was dutiful to pick the crop and I would go over and help Reva put it up. We shelled a lot of purple hull peas and shucked corn and made pickles. Her pickles were divine!!! They were spicy. We ate them like candy. At Sunday dinner it was wonderful to see them on the table, along with all the other fabulous things she made. I didn't like sterilizing the jars, but the taste of those pickles made it all worth it!!

Reva really wasn't too wild about the time I saw on tv this pea sheller you operated with your hand mixer. Well, I ordered it and it worked like a dream!! It really messed with her idea of sitting in the chair and peacefully shelling the peas! I was a little rebellious about it. But that thing could shell a whole big bowl of peas in a few minutes! While the peaceful way took an hour and a half! Like I said, I guess I was rebellious. She forgave me for it though. I just took mine home and did it!

Our kids have wonderful memories of going to their house, Sunday dinners, holidays when Papa and Memaw would buy a GIANT candy cane filled with candy, spending the night and playing dominoes with papa. Dominoes!! That brings me to another memory. Reva didn't like to lose. I've seen a Domino pounded on the table, or maybe fly, when the game wasn't going her way! He would just laugh and that didn't make her feel any better! He knew what he was doing!

Back to the kids and papa playing dominoes. He made them feel like champions when he would let them win. He would give them rides in his wheelbarrow too. It was wonderful that Scott could have those years to work and continue to learn from his dad while working at East Faulkner, Antioch and Urbana churches. It should have been that we were doing for them, but they were doing for us the whole time we lived there. Our son, Kyle, was diagnosed with cancer while we lived there, and my parents came and lived at the house to keep the girls lives as normal as possible while we were in Memphis so much with him. Ralph and Reva were also so helpful to us during that trial in our lives. It was so wonderful to have both sets of our parents so loving and caring to us during that time.

Ralph and Reva were a great team!! They fit each other like a glove. He filled in what she needed, and she filled in what he needed. Their walk of faith with God is what lives on so brightly about them for me. God brings

out the good in people. It was certainly true about them. Their grandchildren can't possibly think of their grandparents without thinking of church and Bible. They were a couple who walked with God. What a lovely thing. It was lovely, and I was blessed to be a part of it.

Valuable Mentors

By Danny Johnson, son-in-law,
gospel preacher and grandson
of the late Alva Johnson

I am married to Elaine, Ralph and Reva Gage's third child. But despite my in-law status, Ralph and Reva had a way of making me feel as loved and welcomed as one of their own and usually it came in the form of good-natured teasing. Whenever we would visit the church in El Dorado, for example, Ralph would stand before the entire congregation with this mischievous grin on his face and welcome me as "Reva's son-in-law".

At other times though, teasing was not fitting. Once, he and Reva were in the audience where I was teaching when he saw that I needed to know "the way of God more perfectly". So afterward, he very discreetly slipped me a hand-written note with nothing more than a book, chapter and verse written on it. As he did he whispered, "You might want to read this." That gentle rebuke proved very enlightening but perhaps just as important, it made me feel like a natural born son. So, whether sons or sons-in-law, Ralph demonstrated his love in a very practical, scriptural way: "For what son is there whom a father does not chasten?"

Reva, it seemed, was always in the background quietly fulfilling her God given responsibilities as a wife and mother. She epitomized the "keeper at home", showing hospitality and working tirelessly to keep the home running smoothly. While Ralph was famous for his beautiful garden, folks tend to forget that it was Reva who did the vast majority of canning and preserving. It was Reva who could turn raw garden produce into a feast fit for a king and do so with joy. While I miss it greatly, I'm thankful I was able to put my feet under her table for a while.

Years ago, Ralph and Reva were involved in an auto accident. Thankfully no one was injured. When his birthday rolled around I gave Ralph, as a joke, an oversized crash helmet. We all had a good laugh, but he was not one to let the other person have the last laugh. A few months later we met up for a trip to Savannah Georgia where Ralph would be holding a gospel meeting. Just before getting into our vehicle he, as usual, offered to drive. However, I insisted otherwise, joking that I was a much safer driver. I then turned and went back inside the house to retrieve a forgotten item. As I stepped back into the van, there Ralph sat in the front passenger seat with that unmistakable, mischievous grin, wearing his crash helmet! TOUCHÉ!!

Ralph and Reva Gage were of that generation which came to be known as "the greatest". They were raised in an era and in a locale where men were men and wives were their "help meet". For most folks, the only thing held more sacred than the family unit was the Church. And despite the pedestal that we, the succeeding generations, may have placed them on, they were well aware of their own imperfections and therefore better, I believe, at forgiveness. For them, holiness was preferable to happiness and eternal joy to temporal pleasure. These were the values of Ralph and Reva Gage and it appears that all who knew them were blessed as a result.

They Taught Us Respect

By Ralph Franklin, son-in-law

When I think of **Ralph D. Gage**, the scripture that comes to mind is Philippians 4:9– “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Ralph Gage would *never* have said this of himself, but I will. I learned from him, I heard the truth from him, I saw the way he lived his life. He loved the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind. He was a teacher, a mentor, and a great example for me.

Ralph’s philosophy was simple: read the word, believe it, and obey it. He really liked II Timothy 3:16-17. He used “the word” as a standard, as a guide by which he gauged everything, and tried to live his whole life. Plain old horse sense (common sense) was his favorite tool.

I remember he, Brother Bean, Brother Langham, and Brother McCracken would always kneel at their seat with one knee on the floor when we went to the Lord in prayer. Don’t see this any more.

When we walked into the church building and our worship service started there was nothing but honor and respect shown by man, woman, and child. Everyone felt like they were in the house of the Lord and acted accordingly. Children were disciplined; there were times when Ralph (from the pulpit) would chasten the young ones that got a little rowdy. Men and women opened their bibles and followed the teaching.

When we left the building, there were no gum and candy wrappers in the pews. The song books and pew bibles were not strewn all over the place; they were put back in the book holders. Ralph Gage taught these simple, common sense fundamental characteristics of honor and respect for the Lord and His house. I watched him, I heard him, I learned from him I saw how he lived his life and I would do well to put these things into my life. I miss him.

The scripture that describes **Reva Gage** is Proverbs 31:10-12– “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.”

Ralph had a wife, Reva, that was as one with him. She walked with him step for step in the good, the bad, and the ugly. Same philosophy, same goals, same character, same ability to teach, admonish, and be an example. Quiet, strong, meek, disciplined, forgiving, loving, and loved the Lord with all her heart, with all her soul, and with all her mind. She was a prime example of a godly woman for all the young women in the church. She taught her daughters and they in turn taught their daughters and the church continues on and will forever be strong. I miss her too.

A Godly Caution

By Lance Franklin, grandson

I have a lot of great memories of spending time with Papa & Memaw, but this is one that I have thought of often over the years. When I was much younger I can remember asking Papa to sit and watch a funny sitcom with me. It was one of those 30-minute shows that I thought was really funny, and I thought Papa would enjoy it. I don't even remember what the show was now, but I do remember that it was one of the first shows that had a gay person as one of the lead people, and he always had the funniest lines. I did warn Papa that this was a funny show, but that it has a gay person in it. He said ok, and we sat together and watched the show.

After the show was over, I asked Papa if he liked it. He said it was ok, but he made a point that I have always remembered. He said to be very careful of what I watch and listen to; he said this show is a good example of how the world works and how the devil works. In this show that I liked, they were introducing a gay person's lifestyle; this person had the funniest lines, and he was only in very short segments of the show; they made him a very likable person. Papa said to be aware of bad things that we are fed in small doses. In this sitcom, I was being fed in small doses a gay lifestyle; the character was likable and funny, and over time the doses would get bigger and bigger until a gay lifestyle would be accepted everywhere as the norm.

Look at where we are today. It's been about 45 years since I had that conversation with Papa, but sure enough, over time, we have been fed those small doses until it has become the norm. It's not just the gay lifestyle, but there are a lot of bad things that we are being fed in small doses in this country, and we must always be aware of what we watch and listen to and allow our children to watch and listen to.

Another story is one that most of the family knows. It's about lighting fireworks. It seems like we were always at Papa & Memaw's on the 4th of July. One 4th of July we were in the back yard shooting off fireworks. I thought it was cool to light the firecracker, hold it until the last second, and then throw it. Papa kept telling me that I was going to blow my thumb off, but I didn't stop it. I kept doing it because I knew what I was doing, and he kept warning me that I was going to blow my thumb off.

After he had warned me 6 or 7 times, it finally happened. I got a hold of a firecracker with a short fuse, and BANG, I about blew my thumb off! I'll never forget the look on Papa's face when I turned and ran to him crying, and he was just sitting there chuckling and saying, "Told ya." He finally got up and put his arm around my shoulders and walked me into the house, and when we got inside he did the most unspeakable thing. He called out, "Reva, get the alcohol." I was struck with fear of the thought of pouring alcohol on my open wound, and I spun around and said, "Please no!" It was at that point that he started with a big belly laugh, and Memaw came to my rescue. I love and miss them both dearly.

Experiences that Shaped Us

By Tamara D Franklin-Walker, granddaughter

Papa and Memaw Gage were So Cool!! I am so very thankful to have had all the time with them that I did. Growing up we made the trek to El Dorado very often. Making a 4-hour trip to see grandparents these days is unheard of! We were there all the time and while I was learning how to cook with Memaw, my 3 older brothers were all getting in trouble from Papa, as he giggled the whole time he was getting on to them. As the adults would sing in the living room, the girl cousins would be back in Papa and Memaw Gage's shower singing; the acoustics were just phenomenal!

After graduating high school, I moved to El Dorado to live with Papa and Memaw for a while. I had a job there and hung out with them listening to stories of their upbringing and learning all along the way. The trip Papa and Memaw took Michelle and me on to Indiana was just so awesome. We were so fortunate to get to travel with them different places and meet so many great people and see so much of the country we wouldn't have seen otherwise.

I thank God each and every morning for Papa and Memaw Gage. I'm so thankful for the way they were raised, and for the way they raised their children, which leads to how thankful I am for growing up with all my aunts and uncles and cousins. These relationships are a huge part of who I am today, which all stems from the mother ship...Papa and Memaw Gage. The foundation to all of this is Christ, His Word, His church. #blessed

Traveling with Papa & Memaw

By Michelle (Cordell) Smith, granddaughter

My cousins and I were very fortunate to get the opportunity to travel with Papa and Memaw. Tamara and I got the chance to take a trip to Terre Haute, Indiana for a Gospel Meeting one summer. The memories made on that trip will last a lifetime, from meeting other brothers and sisters in Christ to eating at an authentic German Restaurant. I especially remember sticking black olives on our fingers at the sweetest lady's house while eating tacos! Memaw scolded us a little, but Papa didn't hide his giggle very well. So many wonderful memories are forever in my heart, and I thank the good Lord for each of them!

Fun at Branson

By Valerie Johnson, granddaughter

Just like all the other grandkids, I have many good memories of Memaw and Papa, but one of the more vivid ones is a story they both liked to remind me of.

First of all, our grandparents made a special effort to spend quality time with each and every one of their 18 grandchildren even though many of us didn't get to live near them. Papa and Memaw planned eventful trips for all the grandkids, but since there were so many of us, we were split up into different groups. They took my sister and some of the older girls to Six Flags one year, and later they took my brother somewhere, maybe that was Six Flags too. Anyway, I was a little bit jealous, and I just couldn't wait until it was my turn to go on a fun-filled journey with my grandparents.

Finally, I think I was about 8-years old, when Memaw and Papa took me and my cousin Kelly to Branson, MO, and of course, the highlight of that trip was going to SILVER DOLLAR CITY! Now, if you've ever been to Branson, you know that it offers various other unique attractions. So as my grandparents were explaining the itinerary on the way to Branson, they also mentioned going to see the...*ball-hoppers*? I had no idea what that was, but I didn't care, we were going to SILVER DOLLAR CITY!!

Again, just before the excitement of the amusement park ensued, my grandparents made it a point to remind us of everything on the agenda for the day, and that included going to watch the...*ball-nodders*?! Was this some kind of a baseball team or something? Didn't sound like much fun to me, but we were at SILVER DOLLAR CITY!!! And I know a grand time was had by all while we were there. Even though I might have gotten in trouble for wandering off on my own, I didn't let that spoil my fun.

When it came time to leave the park, I'm sure I was a tired little kid, but I was anxious for the next fun activity, and so I asked what we were going to do next. My grandparents patiently responded that we were going to see the...*ball-dobbers*?! Really? We're going to watch a ball game?! This 8-year old girl was sorely disappointed by the prospect of watching any kind of sports. I don't remember precisely how I expressed my discontent, but I'm certain it was in a child-like, passive-aggressive manner. And before long, my behavior prompted both Memaw and Papa to ask me, "What's wrong, why are you so upset?" I looked at them and cried, "I don't want to go to a BALL GAME!!!" They just looked at each other and laughed. "Valerie, we're not going to a ball game, we're going to see the Baldknobbers."

The last part of that explanation still meant absolutely nothing to me, but I was simply overjoyed to know that I would not have to sit through a boring ball game! For those of you who haven't heard of the Baldknobbers, you can Google it, though it would appear the show has changed a lot from the silly hillbillies that I recall. I can't remember anything else about the Baldknobbers show, but I know I enjoyed spending time with Memaw and Papa. I'm thankful for their loving sacrifices over the years and I look forward to seeing them again in heaven. (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

Young Learning from Old

By Megan Gage, granddaughter

When I think about the time I was able to spend with Memaw and Papa, a few things come to mind, but I feel that they were some of the best teachers in their obedience to God and living their life for him. They led by example and taught us all about love, commitment, discipline, good morals and values, kindness and to always remember to laugh. Their relationship was very sweet and special. Old love is the best love because it values the commitment and the support of each other that is necessary for relationships to work and for families to be strong. It's a true gift to come from this kind of support system. They instilled it in their children and hopefully that commitment, love and support will continue to grow because of their love for each other. Their physical spirits are assuredly missed but the love they instilled in us will live on for our lifetime and many more to come.

Sweet Journey Back in Time

By Lindsay (Gage) Malony, granddaughter

I remember my excitement when Friday came around;
I'd pack my bag and hop in the car for Papa and Memaw's home ground.
Our nights together were filled with lots of laughter and fun;
We'd make stovetop popcorn, play dominoes, and watch Hee-Haw reruns.
When bedtime came Memaw made the softest pallets on the floor;
I felt safe falling asleep to the sound of Papa's loud snores.
The smell of Memaw's homemade biscuits, eggs, and crispy bacon
Were sweet aromas to my nose that summoned me to waken.
Even after breakfast I could have a little something sweet,
'cuz Papa went to the Spudnut shop and brought us donut treats.
In the morning I'd help Papa in his garden and pick his crop;
He'd give me rides in his wheelbarrow and I'd say please don't stop.
The fresh picked veggies and fruit would make its way to Memaw's hands;
She would make salsa, jams, jellies, and the best PICKLES in the land.
After lunch, Papa would nap while Memaw watched her favorite show;
While Papa was sleeping I'd play a trick and paint his big fat toes.
After dinner we'd gather round the table for many domino games;
Memaw did not like to lose to Papa and he'd smile at her cheating claims.
The next morning Memaw would wake me singing "Good Morning to You";
It was Sunday, their favorite day, but I was quite blue.

We would go to church and Mom and Dad would come over to eat;
Memaw made mashed potatoes, gravy, salad, and her famous “Rump Roast” meat.
After evening church service, I had to go back with my Mom and Dad;
I had school the next morning and I was quite sad.
While I was young I never understood why Sunday made them so elated;
I had to leave their house and that was something I hated.
As I got older, I began to see why Papa and Memaw loved the Lord’s Day;
For my entire life I watched them serve others, preach the word, and pray.
Their number one priority in life was to live for the Lord;
They did not have fancy things because heaven was where their treasures were stored.
When Papa and Memaw passed away these memories became very dear;
As I get older the details fade a bit more every year.
There is something that they taught me I carry with me every day;
Love the Lord with all your heart and from Him never stray.
So, when Sunday rolls around now I lovingly think of my beloved two,
Praising the Lord in heaven and giggle thinking if they are eating “Rump Roast” too!

Training for Ministry

By Clay Johnson, grandson and intern

My Papa and Memaw Gage had the strongest spiritual influence on my life besides my parents. During the summer of 1994, I had the privilege of living with my Gage Grandparents in El Dorado, AR as a student intern minister for the East Faulkner Church of Christ.

Every day, Papa would teach me a chapter from Scripture, and my assignment was to deliver a prepared sermon on that chapter to an audience of one the very next day. After I finished each sermon, he would sit me down, correct my mistakes in doctrine and delivery, then teach me the next chapter. I have a strong feeling that Papa and Memaw were moving and shaking behind the scenes in ways unbeknownst to me that helped lead me into a ministry path. They saw gifts in me that I didn’t and couldn’t recognize. Papa arranged my speaking schedule in area congregations, organized my ordination and introduced me to churches all over the country. He and Memaw also coached me from early childhood in singing and vocal performance. And to this day, I have two passions that I cannot deny – singing and preaching. Needless to say, I am deeply grateful to God for these two spiritual giants in my life.

I wrote a silly poem shortly after my summer stint in El Dorado, and I’m including it here. Even though I have edited it for grammar, content and brevity, the reader will do well to forgive its juvenile nature, as I was only 21 or so when it was originally written.

A Day in the Life of Ralph and Reva

by: Clay Johnson, grandson

'Twas my Papa and Memaw whom I liv-ed with
That memorable summer filled with such blith;
With love I will recall the joys of that time
(And maybe, just maybe, my end words will rhyme).

There are countless others who've preceded me
In biding with these folks a summer or three;
Sure, they may have better tales, yarns and wheezers
But I'll note the small things about these below'd geezers.

The best way, I think, to wade through this whole thing
Would be to revisit their daily routine;
Of course, their routine may have varied a tad,
But if you've any doubt of truth, just ask Mad.

The morning began with black coffee and chow,
Then off to the church for my preaching know how.
Papa spoke earnestly of life and death,
But mostly I 'member his bad coffee breath.

At ten A.M. sharp we came home to rest up.
"Take a nap, Clay! You need your strength to sup!"
And out like a light, in his lounge he snorted
While Memaw sweat cooking dinner (and they courted?!?!).

Preachers must need lots of food and shut-eye,
More than most people, I guess or they'll die,
For Papa consumed till he could no more swallow;
Then back to the lounge, and yes, I did follow.

While the kitchen Memaw cleaned up spic-and-span,
My Papa and I, well, just sat on our can.
The old man attempted to stay up and chat,
But soon we both snoozed, cause our bellies were fat.

Clearly, we weren't so idle and lazy.
Of course, we did things, but my memory's hazy;
Plus, writing such facts would be purely superfluous;
This poem is meant to poke fun and be humorous.

Therefore, I'll skip to the evening session
When the rested old couple was ready for action;
After our supper with stories and chatters
It was time to move to more serious matters.

The table was cleared and the stage was all set
For a battle of wits that I'll never quite get;
The duo retired to their room to prepare,
For the nightly Gage Domino War would soon flare.

First, came the challenger wearing her gown;
Her eyes were on fire; dead set on that crown.
Then, enter the champion, burping and scratching
And taunting Memaw over her last good thrashing.

The contest began; the game pieces were shuffled;
And with each passing round, more feathers got ruffled;
There was shrieking and crying, and gnashing false teeth,
The title of "winner" too rich to bequeath.

But I could go on, they have so many gems,

Like flat-tops and gardens and singing old hymns,
Or holidays, laughter and chocolate gravy
And hearing once more they are minus one tree.

And who could forget that rusty old truck,
That barely would crank and moved only by luck.
With blue and white paint and a pine sap veneer,
No one looked cool while trying to steer.

Oh well, that's it; I'll stop here for now,
But know this: I'll never forget them for how
They've loved me and taught me and helped me go on;
They are righteous examples of God's only Son.

I love you, Papa and Memaw Gage

A Blessed Association

By Charlyne (Weger) Gage, wife of Quinton Gage and sister-in-law to Ralph & Reva

How do I say in a few words what a lifetime of association was with Ralph and Reva? I can say they were loving, kind, thoughtful of others, were good listeners, shared their home with many, cooked for and fed multitudes of young men who aspired to be good church workers/preachers, inspired many to do and follow their example, spent endless hours traveling to help, encourage and strengthen local congregations and individuals. They did so much to promote the church, Jesus Christ, and God's Word...many little things like when we moved to Ft. Smith in 1949 and helped with the weekly live radio program that was already started; Ralph did the speaking, and Reva was there to help with the singing (this was when she had four kids to feed, dress and get ready for Sunday worship, besides cooking Sunday dinner). They added us to the numbers right from the start. For a long time, Ralph, Reva, Bruce Langham, and Quinton were the quartet. In those days there were daily/nightly Bible discussions with different members that had questions and were looking for more knowledge of the scriptures. Ralph was good at debating, was always calm, handled the issue and even some insults as well. You would have enjoyed the debates. Reva could take nothing, cook a delicious meal to feed a car load of people who just dropped by. Then there are the family times we had together, the church trips, then times just the four of us. About the only time I saw Reva really upset would be when Ralph and Quinton would gloat when they beat us at

dominoes. I have seen her frightened about the weather. There were many happenings that were interesting, exciting, and funny all through those years.

There was always "one more" for a meal, over-night or months, sharing their home and family times. While we were in Ft. Smith, there was also Kermit Lynch, Ralph, Reva, and the four older kids, and if there were more I don't remember; we were all around the long table in the big back room having our meal that Reva had prepared (there was not any going by Chicken Express in those days). The food was passed around, and Kermit said, "You better get something as it is passed around because it is not coming back." This had nothing to do with the amount of food, it was all about the number of people around the table and this was a usual occurrence at Ralph and Reva's.

One time the 4 of us went to the Valley for a meeting; we visited in many of the members' homes. That year there was not a market for Grapefruit, and many had backyard grapefruit trees, with fruit on the ground. We enjoyed the grapefruit; tree ripened grapefruit is wonderful. As you know, when four people travel the car is full of luggage, books, snacks, etc. So, when the people offered us some grapefruit to bring back to Oklahoma/Arkansas, we put many in every little space, both in the trunk and inside the car. It was good, the aroma of grapefruit was delightful, until we had a flat tire. There were so many grapefruit they literally rolled out of the doors and trunk. We didn't leave them, we picked them up when the flat was changed and came on to Oklahoma.

Another time Bill & Artie, Ralph & Reva, Clifford & Peggy, Quinton & I went to Billie and W's to make hominy. Billie had the old iron wash pot and Artie remembered how to make hominy. Richard had bought us some shelled corn and lye; the men built the fire under the pot and started the stirring and watching the hominy cook. It was a day long project to cook off a pot of hominy. The ladies visited while the men worked and after we had lunch, Artie decided it was time to check on the men and the hominy. As she came back into the house she said, "Should have known better than to try to tell a Gage how to do something." The hominy was finally cooked, jarred and had a delightful flavor... P. S. that was the last time we made hominy.

All through those years there was the regular church going, the Gage Cousins' practice sessions, the 2-week-long meetings, the week-end Family reunions, the debates, (Quinton moderated some of those) the radio programs, youth meetings, and, in our later years, the long weekends when Ralph and Reva came to Colbert. What enjoyment, pleasure, and encouragement they were to all the family. What stories, what memories, all interwoven together with our family, Ralph, Reva, and their family, going to church, Sunday singings, family gatherings, and sometimes just took a day off to play. What a journey it has been!

These stories seem inadequate to portray the person that Ralph was, the preacher/elder, the dad, the brother, the dedication and influence. Then there was Reva, the helpmate, the preacher/elder's wife, what a pattern for all women to follow; the mother, the hostess who welcomed countless numbers into her home, the mother who took care of and taught her children. What a blessing she was to all of us.

The main memories I have are just a lifetime of togetherness. I mentioned Quinton in so much of this because our lives were so intertwined and so many of my memories included the both of them working together.

Ralph and Reva (Walker) Gage were One, a Team, who loved their creator with all their heart and soul. They never looked to the right or left; they intended to please God. They were never long on giving advice; instead they set the example as a Christian couple, as parents, as neighbors, as elder and wife, and as children of God.

The Making of an Evangelist

By Bill Adcox, summer intern
and close family friend

The summer of 1979 was a benchmark time in my life. With an invitation from the East Faulkner Church of Christ in El Dorado, AR, I shifted from the Farmers Branch Training Work and Dallas Christian College to begin a summer internship under Ralph Gage. Tim Johnson from Lubbock, TX was my intern partner that summer. The summer of '79 was one of Brother Ralph's "normal summers" with him on the road for what seemed an almost every-other-week gospel meeting. Despite his home and away pattern all summer long, he managed to line Tim and me out for our entire stay. A new congregation had started under the direction of Ralph and Nell Franklin in Russellville, AR. Brother Gage had one of his "Timothys" booked at Russellville almost every Sunday that summer.

As well, Brother Gage made sure his interns were introduced to the nearby sister congregations of Urbana and Antioch. Between the three congregations there was such an abundance of opportunities in members' homes, working on their farms, gardens and chicken houses, plus the midweek pulpit opportunities and gospel meetings that summer. Friendships in Christ grew that exist to this very day.

There were other significant relationships that Brother Gage helped to forge for his Timothys. Evangelist Virgil Scott was assigned to keep an eye on us when Brother Ralph was away. Virgil, the sweet singer of El Dorado, was such an energetic gospel worker. Brother Delos Johnson and his wife Sammie also came visiting that summer from Arlington, TX. Delos was the speaker at East Faulkner's summer gospel meeting. When my summer internship ended the Lord was already working (along with Ralph, Virgil and Delos) for me to head to Arlington, TX where my feet would securely be fashioned for the work of a gospel preacher.

I am thankful for the influence of Brother Ralph who seemed to understand how much an enduring gospel preacher needed to be surrounded by other gospel workers, both for their influence and the knowledge that needed to be gained. Oklahoma Christian and Dallas Christian Colleges, along with Elder Quinton Gage at my home congregation, gave me a firm foundation in Bible theology. Under the tutelage of Delos Johnson I learned the daily work of a gospel preacher. Brother Virgil became a lifelong friend who seemed to know just the right moment when this young preacher needed a little encouragement. Brother Ralph Gage's gospel wanderlust, mixed with his passion for his home congregation, helped to plant the seed and ignite my desire for evangelism.

The single thing I treasure most about Ralph and Reva Gage was their great love for the Lord and His Church. Ralph's gregarious spirit and Sister Reva's beautiful "Walker family" singing voice and mothering-spirit, endeared this wonderful couple to all who truly knew them. Their home from that summer to the very last time I visited was always an oasis of love and hospitality.

I also learned to laugh a lot around Brother Ralph, even sometimes at his own expense. The summer of '79

saw the East Faulkner folks finishing a new fellowship hall and on tap for the summer was a new concrete parking lot. Brother Gage had carried many of the “bruises” of pressing forward the fellowship hall project against the wishes of one of his very-loving, fellow Elders. The day the concrete was poured Tim and I were visited by Brother Virgil Scott. Virgil thought our suggestion to scribe RDG in the sidewalk to “honor” Brother Ralph Dennis Gage was a great idea. With that the two young, foolish interns left an indelible mark in the hardening concrete that remains to this day. I still remember when Brother Ralph returned from his gospel meeting and for the first time saw his initials firmly set in the sidewalk. His very familiar headshake showed his disapproval. Without a word he proceeded to his office, only later to scold us boys and that with a big disapproving smile on his face.

In the years since I had more than my fair share of opportunities to preach in the presence of Brother Ralph and Sister Reva Gage. While Brother Gage was never shy to disagree on some particular point, at the same time I don't remember a time that he was not also very encouraging in his comments. Looking back, I thank God for the influence of Ralph and Reva Gage upon my life, my ministry and the Lord's Church.



Editor's Note: I am grateful to Scott Gage for gathering tributes for this issue. We close this memorial issue with writing from Ralph Gage. Whether writing about doctrine, morality or the Christian life, he always encouraged God's people to follow God's word rather than what is popular. He and Reva also lived by this rule.

The Christian and Recreation

By Ralph Gage

That everyone needs recreation of one kind or another is an indisputable fact. Man was created with certain basic needs for his wellbeing and happiness while living here on the earth. He needs food, water, exercise and wholesome recreation. What is recreation for one person is not necessarily that which all enjoy, any more than one special food is enjoyed by everyone. The things we love to do are relaxing unto us.

The old proverb, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is upheld by the Bible.

And the Apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. (Mark 6:30,31).

The Bible says the time spent in eating is recreation or leisure.

When the children of Israel journeyed through the wilderness they had to stop often for recreation. They had pictured getting out of Egypt and slavery as a time of singing and rejoicing on their march to the promised land. But the march went on day after day, across the sand, with the hot sun beating down upon them until they were exhausted. Tiredness is not physical exhaustion alone; you can fix that with sleep, food and relaxation. These marchers became very quarrelsome, murmuring against their leaders. This weariness came from another source; the weariness that comes from prolonged waiting and disappointment. The road was longer than they thought; the victory was not so easy as they had imagined; they were tired and frustrated. "And they came to Elim where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the water" (Exodus 15:27).

Many of us today, like Israel of old, find trees, grass and water an aid to the restoration of our bodies. The great story teller, Tolstoy, thought that by walking through the fresh-plowed earth, barefoot, he would draw strength for his body from the earth. There is a real connection between water, earth and our bodies. That is why so many people find the lake so relaxing. Others prefer the trees and the hills, while some find digging in the good earth and growing things the most relaxing form of recreation. All of these are forms of recreation that Christians may engage in. However, if we are not careful, we may allow our joy in these things to hinder our Christian life. This is always the case when they cause us to miss worship or neglect any of our responsibilities,

Even Jesus had the need to get away from the press into a solitary place. *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).* Do we find time for prayer when on vacation? *"And when he had sent the multitude away he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when evening was come he was there alone" (Matthew 14:23).* When Jesus felt the need to get away from the press he found relaxation in prayer. Is prayer relaxing to us? When we feel the need to get away from the daily grind, do we find time to pray?

Today, we have more time for leisure than at any other time in human history. This time can either be an asset or a liability in living the Christian life. I'm afraid we have not taught the church the proper use of our leisure time. If our lives are Christ-centered, we will arrange a part of this time for spiritual endeavor. A family was taking a vacation in an area where a youth meeting was in progress. I suggested that they spend a part of their time attending this work. They had several children who could have profited greatly by attending, to say little of what they themselves could have gained. The lady replied: "Not on your life; I sure don't want to spend my vacation attending church!"

To many people spiritual activities are not a joy but a drudgery. They not only find the worship services of the church a chore, but also all other spiritual activities. They only engage in them because they feel it is their duty. This is a wrong attitude for entering the work of our Master. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Paul also said, "Rejoice in the Lord." We "rejoice in the Lord" by having a Christlike attitude toward all things, including leisure time. When Christ sought solitude and rest he did not forget prayer. In fact, there is much evidence that he found prayer relaxing.

H. Leo Boles has given some rules for spending leisure time that may prove helpful unto us. I give these rules in part. The comments in parentheses are mine.

Is it right? (Will it cast reflection upon the congregation of which I am a member? Is it in harmony with God's Word?)

Do good people approve it?

Will it interfere with business or school? (Will it interfere with my worship?)

Will it produce bad habits?

Will it lead to doubtful company?

Will it lead to questionable places?

Will the example hurt others?

Can cost in time and money be afforded? (Will it cause me to neglect the poor or cut down on my church contribution? Am I spending more on my pleasure than on spiritual responsibilities?)

Will it affect the rights and property of others?

If we will follow these guidelines they will help us make a Christian approach to recreation.

It is a responsibility of prime importance that parents provide wholesome recreational activities for the youth of our congregations. However, when we spend more money on recreations than we do on spiritual pursuits, I'm afraid we become "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:4). The Bible lists the "pleasures of this life" as one of the things which choke the word (Luke 8:14). When we use recreational activities, rather than the word of God, to draw the youth of our brotherhood, we can expect to turn out playboy preachers, if they preach at all. When we do this we are not putting "first things first." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

Christians should be on call for God around the clock making a Christian approach to our surroundings. In the home, at work, in our social activities, and in our leisure time, Christ should be our guiding star. The way we spend our leisure time tells more about our faith in God than any other thing in our lives. One reason is that we are more or less out of the public eye, with time to do with as we please. A number of years ago an article appeared in *Reader's Digest* entitled "When No One Is Looking." The essence of the article was this: what we do when no one is looking tells more about us than any other one thing we do. How do we spend our leisure time? Do we spend a part of it in spiritual activities? Do we use all of it entertaining ourselves? May the day hasten when we all will learn to spend a part of each day's leisure time in reading the Bible, visiting a friend and talking about Christ, visiting the sick, caring for the needy and in other spiritual pursuits. May we learn to draw on leisure time to enlarge the borders of the kingdom of heaven and our own spiritual growth. May we soon learn that if our hearts are Christ-centered, such activities can be recreational.

Love is the one universal talent. God created man and placed within him the capacity to love. All use that talent in one way or another. We love something. If we love our families we will spend some of our leisure moments with them. Even though it is a physical hardship to make it home to be with them, the time spent will prove recreational unto us. The things which are dear to us, that are close to our hearts, are the things we will be near during the time that is ours to do with as we please. That is why the true Christians will find recreation in spiritual pursuits. It may be a task to get home and spend time with the family during

vacation, but when we love our family, it will prove recreational to us despite the hardship. Likewise, when we love God, when we love the church, to spend at least a part of our leisure time in spiritual pursuits will prove recreational, despite the hardships entailed.

One of our basic needs is recreation. However, when we spend that time, all of it, for our own pleasure, forgetting to pray and worship, we are not acting like true Christians. The true Christian can find recreation in spiritual pursuits as well as in other pursuits of pleasure. *The true Christian does not forget God while on vacation!*

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