



South Hill Church of Christ

1136 South Hill Avenue

PO Box 3425

Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702-3425

Voice & Fax: 479-521-6809

Lsgage129@cs.com

Web: www.southhillcoc.org

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Change

“You turn man to destruction, and say, ‘Return, O children of men.’ For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night. You carry them away like a flood; they are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up: in the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers.” Psalm 90:3-6

Recently I was in the city of my birth and early life, Fort Smith, Arkansas. I decided to drive by the old church building on the corner of May & Alabama Streets. In the 1960’s it was the May & Alabama Church of Christ. The old brick building looked a little like a castle with large windows and high ceilings with ceiling fans. It is now the home of a Vietnamese Baptist Church and they have painted the building gray. The old attached house is gone and a new, modern structure now is attached on the eastern side of the old original building. I was only able to see the outside, but I wonder what the inside may look like now? One of the images that floods into my mind is an old brother who was blind and sat at the back of the building with his seeing-eye dog underfoot. The steps up to the doors used to seem so steep, but now they don’t appear to be high at all. What a change the years can make in your perspective of things.

Next I drove down Grand Avenue past Tilles Park (where are the old wading pools??). At the corner of Grand Ave and Albert Pike there was a large two-story house that sat on the top of the hill. The house belonged to Belle Star; some of her relatives lived in it when I was a boy. That house is gone and a fast food joint has flattened most of the hill. The plant nursery across the street is also gone and gas stations and eating establishments have filled the scene with concrete, metal and brick.

I went up the hill on Albert Pike and made the turn east onto Tilles Avenue. That old neighborhood used to seem so big to me and now it seems so small and dwarfed. On my right is the house where I grew up, but it is so changed from what I remember. The lot where we used to play baseball is filled in with trees and the pasture out behind the house where cattle & horses ran is now full of apartments. Everything looks so small now. I guess maybe some of it may be the difference in being a skinny kid barely four-feet tall and a grown, balding man who is six-foot-four.

Someone may chime in, “Is this supposed to be encouraging me? This sounds depressing. Why do you want to bring up stuff like this?” I call to mind the second verse of the song *Abide With Me*: *Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day; Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away; Change and decay in all around I see; O thou who changest not, abide with me.* Winston Churchill once said, “There is nothing wrong with change, if it is in the right direction.” I suppose most would say the changes in my old home town are progress, and maybe that’s true. I look and am reminded that earth’s “glories pass away.” There is definitely one change that is coming that we should all look forward to with great anticipation. See the quote below!

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed--in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-52