The Old Paths

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"A Review Of 2002 ..."

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2003 is upon us. Like many people world-wide, we take this opportunity to reflect upon the previous year. Let us see what was accomplished, and what was left untouched in the last year. I must say that there have been quite a few positive things occur at Southside in the last year.

Below, we have a listing of various high points from 2002, as well as points which, even now, require our attention. Let us look at these things honestly, and do our part to make 2003 better than years gone by. Let's not look back in fondness to "good ol' days," thinking that it will never be as good as before. Rather, let us look forward to "good days" yet to come, knowing that to a great extent, 2003 will be a "great" or "terrible" year because of what we decide right now. We have seen progress made in several areas at Southside.

- ***Website***

From April 4, 2002 to January 1, 2003, we recorded some 2,186 "hits" to the website! This is due in large part to the efforts of brother Scott Gentry who has worked to start this site, and continues to keep it "running." This is also due to the brethren here telling friends, co-workers, family, neighbors, etc., about the site. Our website does not have "fluff," nor is it simply an "announcement" page; but this site has Bible articles, archived radio questions, archived bulletins, and other such works which are geared toward leading people to Christ! Through this site, we have gained one member (sis. Nancy Myers), as well as had countless opportunities for study with people literally all over the world. (Ex: India, England, America, Malta)

- ***Baptisms***

2002 saw four precious souls baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). We are so thankful for these souls. Two who were baptized this year, George and Nick Greco, have already been quite active in public roles during the worship periods.

- ***Restorations***

Also in 2002, some asked for prayers on their behalf, seeking God's forgiveness, and wanting to straighten out various problems in their lives. We're so thankful for these dear ones. They came to God with broken and contrite, penitent hearts, confessing their wrongs, and asking for God's forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9). We're so thankful for their renewed commitment to God, and know they will do much for God in 2003.

- ***Spiritual & Physical Growth***

This year saw people grow and mature in the Lord. This is evidenced by the growing attendance this year. Furthermore, spiritual growth is seen in people's willingness to give sacrificially to the Lord as they have been prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-7). Except for perhaps 2-3 times that I remember, our giving has always surpassed the projected weekly budget. Brethren, this says a great deal about you and your willingness to sacrifice to God. Seeing that our budget grew in 2002, we now have the ability to do even more for the Lord this year. God is giving the increase (I Cor. 3:6). As we grow spiritually, so also we will grow physically! May this increase in 2003!

- ***Those Willing To Serve Publicly***

Brother Chris Clark came around a few months back and asked the men what they were willing to do. From this list, we have:

21 who agreed to make announcements
30 volunteers to be ushers/greeters
14 song leaders
37 Bible-readers
22 who will lead public prayer
68 who will serve at the Lord's Table
35 who will lead a closing prayer
16 who will preach
19 who will offer an exhortation
6 radio hosts/co-hosts
11 radio switchboard workers
20 Bible class teachers (for adult class)
6 leaders for the drill class
10 group leaders

When we look around and see many congregations who have to beg men to serve every week, why not stop and thank God for this blessing we have! On most of these duties listed above, we can go 4-5 months and never repeat a person in that duty. How great! In 2003, let us be mindful that in order for this duty list to reach its maximum potential, we must not be satisfied merely to have our names on the "list;" but let us be busy and DO what we said we would do!!

- ***Radio Program***

The radio program has really taken off this year, I believe. It is not uncommon, and in fact, quite normal, to have anywhere from 1-4 calls per program. Some callers are mad, some happy, some are curious, and some try to play "stump the preacher." Nevertheless, this radio program is a great opportunity to get the word

of God spread to this community. In 2002, we had three co-hosts (Jeff Lankford, Chester Ward, and Gary White), we had several men who ran the switchboard, and answered calls, and we continue to try to make an impression for good on this community. How we ought to thank God for this open door into the homes of home-bound Christians we love, as well as an open door into the homes of those who might not "darken the door" of this church building. Christ wants us to spread His word (II Tim. 2:2; Mk. 16:15), and this is a great way of doing it!

For these things, as well as countless other blessings, we ought to thank God! I want to take a few lines, though, to remind us all that these things above didn't begin in 2002. They had their beginnings long before now. At least, the "seed of thought" was planted in the minds of people before 2002. Love for the truth has been ingrained in us for some time, I know. There are those present who grew up under the preaching of Bill Wallace, and James Needham. Others may remember Bobby Witherington and A.C. Grider's preaching. In the most recent years, Jeff Lankford has worked hard in preaching the gospel in this area. Whether your family was one of the "originals" who started this congregation, or you have come here in recent months, we all ought to thank God for this congregation, and the foundation of truth that was laid by these men and others.

Besides these men, we ought to thank God for the mothers, fathers, and grandparents who tirelessly, and often thanklessly raise their children in the Lord. We would not have the young people we have today were it not for the training going on "at home" (Eph. 6:4; II Tim. 1:5, 3:15). Let us never forget this! Our children don't get the "bulk" of their spiritual training inside these four walls, but within the four walls of their own homes!

I am excited for 2003. Are you? Yet, like anything else, there are some things which demand our attention this year. Some things demand it due to where we are in our spiritual growth. Other things demand our attention because we keep shirking our responsibilities. Whatever the case may be, let us consider things to work on in 2003:

- ***Let Us Be Scripturally Organized.***

The Bible teaches that this is a necessity (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). This church had such organization on two different occasions, and can have it again. Let us with urgency AND patience, strive to be what God wants us to be.

- ***Unity***

I know of no time when unity cannot be improved. We need to work toward Paul's ideal when he said that God's people *"all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (I Cor. 1:10). We still have work to do, I believe!

- ***Continue In Love For One Another.***

The Holy Spirit said, *"Let brotherly love continue"* (Heb. 13:1). Paul said, *"ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"* (I Thess. 4:9). The Thessalonians didn't need Paul to write about that, but perhaps we do. Let us strive to love each other more and more in 2003, realizing that we are all God's children (Rom. 12:9).

- ***Look For Someone To Instruct In The Truth.***

The urgency to speak with someone about the gospel ought to burn within us. Christ said, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Lk. 19:10). Are we doing our part to continue this mission? There are still lost people today. If people hear the gospel in 2003, will it be because of my efforts?

- ***Remember Who Signed The Duty List, And For What Things We Volunteered!***

Let us not fall into the trap of letting "someone else" do our job in 2003!

Conclusion

Brethren, great strides were made in 2002, but let us not allow this to puff us up, nor encourage laziness. Rather, let us honestly look at our past, and learn the lessons needed to make 2003 the best year yet. While much was accomplished last year, we have much to do for the Lord ***this year.*** Therefore, let us be about the Lord's work in 2003, with that well-known song on our lips: "To the work, To the work..."!

Past Bulletins Are Posted At:
www.southside-churchofchrist.com

I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

Come and meet with the church at Southside.
Our address is: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303.

MEETING TIMES:

Sunday Morning Bible Study ——— 9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship ——— 10:20 am
Sunday Evening Worship ——— 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study ——— 7:00 pm

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. ***Call:*** **683-5200** with your Bible question.

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