

# Backwards and Forwards

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I learned a long time ago when hunting in woods where I've never been before that it is good to stop every so often and look back. The trail back always looks different if you haven't done this and can sometimes be confusing when viewed from this new perspective. This time of year is a great time to do the same thing, that is, to look back down the trail to see where we've been and keep our perspective and goals fresh in our mind.

Over the past few years the church here has been moving steadily toward some certain goals. We have had some amazing unity in our decisions to organize in a biblical fashion by appointing elders, move into a population area (versus staying out in the country), purchase land (a prominent piece of real estate versus a lot hidden away somewhere), and erect a meet-ing place. That's looking at the back trail.

As we pursued the above goals, we have repeatedly been reminded that our preeminent reason for existence is NOT the purchase of real estate, but the redeeming of souls, I Peter 2:9. We have tried not to cut back on any of the teaching programs such as our curriculum for our classes, gospel meetings, Summer Bible Series, men's classes, lady's studies, and young lady's studies. Additionally, we have tried to render benevolent aid to local brethren, brethren in Louisiana, needy preachers and helped replant the church in Moscow, Russia. That's looking at the back trail.

We have been blessed from within by young men and women with talents that they want to work on to improve their service. Also with godly young people and couples who appear to enjoy one another's company. With numerous young children and several babies that add life to the group. And with a solid core of steadfast believers who add stability to all the work and fellowship. That is looking at the back trail.

We have been joined by believers with open hearts who desire to work and follow the word and the pattern of the New Testament. Some have joined to the Lord in the new birth and we rejoiced with them. Some returned after being away and we rejoiced with these also. And some have come seeking healing from the spiritual problems that they have found themselves in elsewhere. We also rejoice to have them and hope that our arms have been open and hearts welcome. We have doubled in our attendance in less than three years, but this also is backward looking.

We thank God for His blessings in the past, but it's time to stop looking backward. The goal of "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58) still stands before us. The essence of growth is change. What will you change in the coming year insofar as your worship, your fellowship, your passion, your giving, your hospitality, your service, your study, your leadership or *fellowship*? Look forward now and see where you are going and let's go together, with our Savior always.