

## To My Fellow Runners

Early last week I received news of a member in Trenton, FL who had passed away. His name is Wimpy Welch. I have no idea of how he got the name “Wimpy” but it was what everyone called him. In fact, he held a public office as tax collector, and even the name on the door was “Wimpy Welch.” More importantly to me, he was the church treasurer. Almost every Monday morning I would walk across the street from the parsonage to the courthouse then to Wimpy’s office to get my check because most of the time he forgot to have my check on Sunday. I really think it was his way to have time to visit with me. He was always pleasant and kind. His wife, Janice, made a jelly from her rose bush; I think it was called Roselle jelly, and it was good.

Janice passed away from cancer a number of years ago. The last time I saw Wimpy he had remarried and retired from public office. Many brethren and friends have passed away throughout the years. I grew up in a little country congregation in the hills of Ohio County, Kentucky, called Antioch. It was at Antioch I gave my first invitation on a Sunday night in August. I attended and became a member at Valley Station in Louisville, Kentucky. They had a training class and I began to fill in preaching. From there I went to Danville, Kentucky and a training class. Then places like Gainesville, Florida, Shoals, Indiana, Trenton, Florida, Wilburton, OK, Flatwoods Kentucky, to Tuckerman, Arkansas, Jonesboro, Arkansas, Owensboro, Kentucky and now Leitchfield Kentucky. Along the way I have met many Christians.

The Hebrew writer speaks of Christian as runners in a race. **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2).** I often think of this passage when a fellow Christian, a fellow runner finishes their race. I think of our lives on the track and as we run, we are not alone. There are those in

the stands watching, those who have gone on before and finished their race. There are those who we get to run with a short while and others who are by our side for a long period of time. Some who are running strong and straight while others are slowing down due to years of running the race. They are still running and we are privileged to be running with them. We may change lanes and not be run side by side as before but we are all still running. This may be comparable to when we move to another place and meet new Christians.

Have you ever paid attention to runners in the Olympics as they finish their race? Some hold up their arms in celebration, some are so spent they crumble for a while then start smiling. Others give their fellow runners hugs. They appreciate each other for they know how hard the race can be. A few may start jogging down the track in joy.

I will miss knowing Wimpy and many more like him who are no longer race with us. Like Wimpy they have finished the course. Just as those before me helped to encourage me to run, I hope in some way I have encouraged others to run with endurance looking to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith.

Well done Wimpy and all the others who ran the race and now get to rest.  
Well done. - - Dennis Tucker