

## ARE YOU A R.O.A.D. CHRISTIAN?

By Keith Greer

As a member of the Armed Forces, we have "adopted" some phrases to describe various situations. When a member is getting close to retirement, we say that they are "short". Others are called "**ROAD Troops**", a phrase which means, quite simply, "**Retired On Active Duty**".

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is In heaven." Sadly, I am afraid that we have many R.O.A.D. members in the Lord's church, but, as Christians, do we have a "retirement" age here on earth?

Admittedly, many older people have health problems which prevent them from being as active in a local work as they once were. I am concerned, however, when I hear comments such as, "I've done my share of the work. Let the younger ones take over." Or, in making a plea for teachers in a local work; one of the older ladies said, "I've taught classes for thirty years. I have put in my time."

Does the Bible teach our "older members" to have such attitudes? God had a teaching program in mind for the church, but if we do not follow His plan, then everyone will suffer. Where can a younger Christian better see the principles of Christianity put into practice than in an older member of the body of Christ? Age brings wisdom by experience. Such members have a wealth of knowledge they can pass down to the next generation. Do we realize this is exactly what God demands us to do?

In Titus 2, the apostle Paul encouraged Titus to " ... speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1) While much has been said about the following verses (Titus 2:2-8), I fear sometimes that we miss the point. While certainly the younger men need instruction, guidance, and encouragement from the older men, and the younger women need instruction, guidance, and encouragement from the older women, they are not simply to be "told" what they need to do. Rather, "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." (Titus 2:7-8) We may "talk" all day, but the best teaching tool we have is our example.

One of the greatest tools God has given the church, in promoting spiritual growth, are those who make up His church. Older songleaders need to be taking the younger men under their wing to instruct in the leading of singing. Older members, who have taught classes for many years, need to take the knowledge they have learned and pass it on to the next generation of teachers. Elders and deacons need to be encouraging the next generation to begin preparing now for the time they can be elders and deacons themselves. Older women need to take the younger women and help them develop into good wives for preachers, elders and deacons. Could it be that one of the most useful resources for teaching in a local church is not being used?

In Hosea 4:6, we have often read that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge .... " God intended that parents would teach their children and that one generation would teach and encourage the next generation. It is very encouraging to see a Christian who has been dedicated to the cause of Christ for many years and is still active in the Lord's work. Such examples are powerfully effective in building up the local church. On the same hand, it's very discouraging when older Christians become R.O.A. D Christians in the local church. All that knowledge, wisdom, and experience just going to waste. Sadly, I'm afraid many local churches are not utilizing this resource to its full potential. Why? Some have become comfortable in our approach to the local church work—just let someone else take care of it. Our "retirement" plan is not here on earth. Will you still be found on "active" duty when your "tour" is up?\*\*\*