

the **Maine Focus**

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DON EDWARD
“NED”
STEPHENS

December 19, 1951 to
July 7, 2020

This special edition of The Maine Focus is dedicated to the memory of Bro. Stephens, a faithful servant of God, a friend, and leader in the Maine District of the United Pentecostal Church International.

OBITUARY:

DON EDWARD “NED” STEPHENS



AUGUSTA – Don Edward “Ned” Stephens, 68, of Augusta, passed peacefully at home with his family on July 7, 2020, in Augusta. Ned was born in Kansas City, Missouri, to Donald Sawyer Stephens and Emma Rice Stephens on December 19, 1951. He attended South East High School in

Kansas City. He earned his Bachelor’s degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri, Columbia followed by a Bachelor’s Degree in Theology from Gateway College of Evangelism in Florissant, Missouri.

He married Lynn Elizabeth Merrill Stephens, his beloved wife, on December 31, 1977, in Augusta, and they were happily married for 42 years. After graduating from Gateway College of Evangelism, he ministered at the United Pentecostal Church of Waterville for six years. One of his ministries was holding weekly services at the Kennebec County Jail for 12 years.

Ned then served as Associate Pastor for the First United Pentecostal Church of Augusta and teacher at Dirigere Christian Academy for 34 years. He also served as Presbyter on the District Board of the Maine United Pentecostal Church International for 20 years.

Ned is preceded in death by his parents, Donald Sawyer Stephens and Emma Rice Stephens, and his Brother John Stephens. Ned is survived by his wife Lynn Elizabeth Stephens; children, Caleb (Kerry-Ann Stephens), Bethany (Alastair Woolcock), Emily (Rylee Knox), Nathan, Jonathan (Hannah Stephens), and Abraham; and his brother, Ray (Charlotte Stephens). Ned will also be fondly remembered by his seven grandchildren Josiah, Isabella, Natalia, Emma, Nigel, Eliyana, and Adalynn; as well as cousins, nieces, nephews, and many friends.

Near the end of his journey on earth, family, friends, and saints from the area would gather around Bro. Stephens and sing songs and hymns.



Ned would like to thank the healthcare workers at the Maine General Medical Center and Maine Medical Center for their wonderful care; and especially to the staff at the Kennebec Kidney Center for the care provided him and the friendships made, namely nurses Brandon and Jeanette. Also, special thanks to Dr. Smith, Dr. Dohner, and Dr. Price for their kindness and care. Thanks, also, to Dr. Stephen Anderson for his years of care. Also, thanks to the Beacon Hospice staff; namely RN Katherine Pushee and CNA Kami for their devoted care.

A Celebration of Ned’s life was held Friday, July 10, 2020, at the First United Pentecostal Church of Augusta, with Pastor Rick Stoops officiating.

*A legacy of
faithfulness
lives on...*

*The Stephens Family
2020*



BRO. NED STEPHENS: A FAITHFUL MAN OF GOD

By: Rev. Rick Stoops, Superintendent
Maine District UPCI



In I Corinthians 4:1-2, we read, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

The Church at Corinth had gotten bogged down with divisions and contentions.

Some were saying, “I am of Paul” while others were saying, “So what, I follow the great orator Apollos.” Still others claimed, “I was disciplined by the Apostle Peter.” Others bragged how that they were under the direct orders of the Lord Jesus Christ himself!

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, in part, to set the record straight. With a sigh Paul dipped his quill in ink and wrote, “Let a man count us as ministers of Christ.”

In Paul’s day, large galley ships were propelled chiefly by oars sometimes with the help of sails. There were three banks of galley-rowers. Those on the upper bank had the advantage of fresh air. Those beneath were more shut in, but the lowest rowers would faint with the heat. Their rapid strokes consumed their very life forces. These men were chained to the oars and in the worst position. That was their lot. Paul said to count us as one of those. We are under-oarsmen, we tug at the oars on the lowest bench in the galley ship. Account us as under-rowers and stewards of the mysteries of God.

We’ve been entrusted to care for God’s property. The Apostle continued, “Moreover IT IS REQUIRED in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Of all the characteristics of being a Christian, faithfulness is the most important of all. It is required. Dependable. Loyal. Reliable. Steadfast. Trustworthy. Bro Stephens was such a man. He would hold up under fire. He was a faithful man of God.

Faithfulness is one of God’s attributes! In Lamentations 3:22-23, we read, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: **great is thy faithfulness.**” In I Corinthians 10:13, the Bible says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God is faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Faithfulness is honored by God and man. Everyone respects a faithful man who steadfastly fulfills his responsibilities. A faithful man will continue the work assigned to him even though it might mean great stress and strain. A Faithful man may be trusted. Brother Ned Stephens is being rewarded for his faithfulness right now.

An individual may be extremely talented and bursting with ability, but if he is not faithful, disgrace and shame are his companions. Paul had a companion named Demas who must have had some very fine capabilities to be invited by the apostle to be such a close associate. But listen to Paul’s cry in II Timothy 4:10, “*For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*”

Faithfulness is counted so important to our Lord that he said, “*...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*”

The Lord Jesus has committed to his people stewardship of the mysteries of God including:

- 1) The Mighty God in Christ
- 2) The New Birth
- 3) The sanctity of the Body of Christ
- 4) Divine Healing

We have been called to be the custodians of these beautiful and wonderful revelations of God. Brother Ned Stephens took this stewardship seriously. He was steadfast to the very last day of his life on earth. Brother, as I called him, didn’t believe that it was sufficient to be true and faithful for a few years and then quit. He understood that our faithfulness is forgotten if we cease to live faithful lives. On the front inside cover of his Bible he wrote:

Values that last

1. *Faithfulness*
2. *Commitment*
3. *Humility*
4. *Loyalty*
5. *Obedience*

In one of his notes he wrote: “If I will be responsible, God will do more for me than I can imagine!” He wrote: “We are servants; we are to serve, not be served.”

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians in the fifth chapter and the seventh verse, “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” Many of the old time songs were written about faithfulness. “What a Gathering of the Faithful that will Be.” “I Am Determined to Hold Out to the End.” “Don’t Let Me Leave Behind An Unfinished Task”

Brother Stephens was able to say with Paul, at the end of life’s journey: “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*

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MY BROTHER, NED

By: Ray Stephens, Younger Brother to Ned

I was the youngest of three boys in our family...the runt...so to speak, the smallest. Ned was a year older than me. We had a unique and very close bond.

Ned enjoyed sports of all kinds—baseball, basketball, track—but football was his sport until an injury during the last game of his freshman year of college. That injury forever changed the course of his athletic life.



Many of Ned's high school and college teammates called him Big Ned! He was a giant of a man even during his high school years, at 6'5" and 230 pounds. He was a formidable football player.

In high school, he was ranked *All American Tackle* and was sought after by every major college team. He could have gone to UCLA, Ohio State, Nebraska, Kansas, Harvard, Yale, Brown, Princeton, Notre Dame, and more all on full scholarship as a result of his physical and scholastic abilities. He chose University of Missouri because he felt as if the college teammates he met there would become lifelong friends, and he had expected to live in or near Kansas City where we grew up.

During his freshman year of college, the Houston Oilers, were looking at him as a possible pro-football pick which was highly unusual for a college freshman. Although he could have flaunted his successes over me (being younger, smaller, not as athletic, and so on) he never did. I always felt proud to be Ned's brother, knowing he was always a supporter of who I was!

Several key elements shaped our lives. Our dad's unexpected death when we were young drew our family unit together creating an extremely strong bond! Ned was just eight at the time. We might have been able to tear each other apart growing up, fighting and wrestling as boys do, but we all had an understanding, *no one else gets to mess with my brother!*

Ned was a stalwart...he gave of himself to the work of the Lord! He sacrificed his life for his family and the ministry.

Ned was not rich by the world's standards; however, spiritually, he was a **giant** in Christ, and a very rich man, winning many souls to Christ. Hallelujah!!!

I only heard Ned preach a few times; and every time he brought forth a message, it was meaningful, impactful, and always had a life lesson to impart. It was a down-to-earth message, usually delivered like a parable. I remember hearing him preach in Cherryfield the story of the Good Samaritan. It was a simple, yet moving message that stirred my soul and made me think about my life and how I treated others.

He always had a great sense of humor, desiring to make others laugh, feel at ease, and welcomed.

He loved the Lord, his Savior, his High Priest, his Everlasting Father! He sacrificed time from his family to work for the Lord. Bible Studies, Prison Ministry, home Bible Studies, teaching, preaching, guiding others toward Christ!

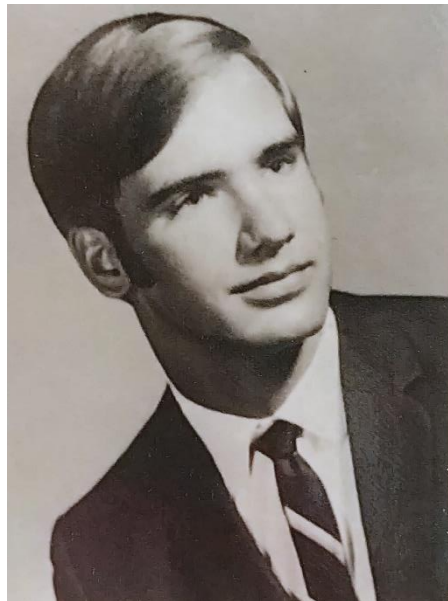
He reminded me recently that had it not been for me "bugging" him to come to church, that he may not have come to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He finally went, just so I'd stop asking.

Ned is in Heaven today. I sorrow, I grieve, I miss him, I hurt, just as many of you do. But because I know Jesus is my personal savior, because I have a personal relationship with him, I know, without a doubt, I will see Ned again someday. We are apart now, but in the future, I, too, will be with him in heaven. I, too, will be in the presence of my Lord and my Savior. The message we preach is real. Jesus is real. God's love transcends every situation.

My Brother is gone from this earth. He's left an amazing legacy that the rest of his family will pick up and run with. Not because we have to, rather because we get to!

Ned did fight the good fight; he's finished his race. He kept the faith, and he's going to receive his crown of righteousness. The crown is not for Ned only but also for "ALL who have loved His appearing," the Bible says in II Timothy 4:7-8.

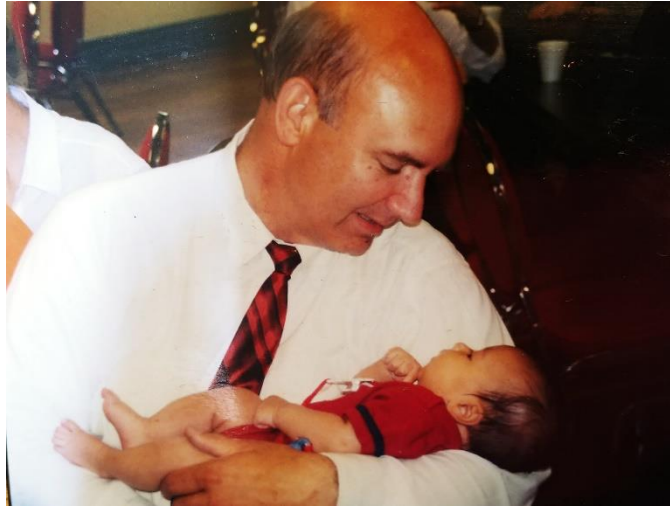
I urge each of you to pick up a piece of the mantle that Ned left for you to pick up. Heaven and Hell are real! There's a heaven to gain and a hell to shun for each of us. **Let's go gain heaven as Ned has done!**



MY TRIBUTE TO DAD

By: Caleb Stephens

Ned Stephens: my dad, my pastor, my advisor, my coach, my teacher. He was forever a teacher. Teaching was his preferred method of delivering a message from the Lord. Teaching was also his daily occupation at Dirigere Christian Academy, and he never stopped teaching at home. He was famous for his constant grammar correction. Each of his students will remember things like "It's, *may* I go, not *can* I go." Or "It's *we were*, not *we was*." Every conversation in our home, as kids (and as adults for that matter), was critiqued for proper grammar.



Dad loved to teach home Bible studies, teaching hundreds over the years. A 12-week study usually went much longer, as he invested time in souls that needed to hear the truth and be saved. There are several preachers of the Gospel, countless saints living for God today, and others still in glory with him because dad reached them through a home Bible study. He had a deep love for this Apostolic truth, and made sure everyone within his circle of influence had the opportunity to hear the plan of salvation.

He had a goal of make friends with everyone he met and worked at being approachable and easy to talk to. He was a lover of people and believed that before he could win a person to the Lord he must, first, win them to himself. As a result, he was deeply concerned about his witness to the lost and strove to always conduct himself in a manner that would bring glory to God. He had no enemies.

He was a numbers guy and loved teaching his students math tricks. He paid attention to numbers, so much so that he actually had memorized the number of seconds that the stoplights in Augusta stayed red! Well, God doesn't miss details like that, and He planned Dad's Coronation Day for 7/7/2020 (7/7 - God's number of perfection doubled and 2020 - he is no longer looking through the glass darkly, but with perfect vision, face to face.)

Many words could be used to describe Ned Stephens, but none more accurately than the word *faithful*. He was faithful. He was consistent and stable. He was faithful to his Lord, his family, and his calling. I never saw him waver in his faith. He embodied I Corinthians 15:58 "...steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..."

My dad was a prince of a man. Oh, how I'll miss him, but he made it! He fought a good fight. He finished his course and he kept the faith. His 40+ years faithfully teaching the Gospel, was rewarded that Tuesday

morning when he heard those glorious words we all long to hear; "Well done thou good and faithful servant." He has now received his crown and a new body. What a crown it must be! He had laid up his treasure in heaven for a many years. But, I know the crown pales in comparison to seeing his Savior face-to-face. He lived longing to lay his eyes upon his Savior, and I am convinced the view is even more wonderful than you or I could ever imagine.

I'll share with you a letter I wrote and read to him on Father's Day just weeks before he died.

Dad, you taught me to walk with my head held high and my back straight. You taught me not scuff my feet, to always wear a belt, how to tie a tie, and to always tuck my shirttail in.

You taught me how to shake a man's hand and to look people in the eye when I talk to them. You taught me how to shoot a killer jump-shot and to play shut down defense on the basketball court. But more importantly, you taught me "Hear, Oh Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6:4-5

You taught me Isaiah 43:10-11 10) "Ye are my witnesses sayeth the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen. That Ye may know and believe me and understand that I Am He. 11) Before me there was no God formed and neither shall there be after me. I even I am the Lord and beside me there is no savior." And I Timothy 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

You made sure I had all of these Scriptures memorized and could recite them by the age of 3. You taught me to "love my neighbor as myself" and that "a good name is
Continued on page six.

MY TRIBUTE TO DAD, *continued...*

rather to be chosen than great riches.” You were never rich by society’s measure of wealth, but the name Ned Stephens is highly respected and honored.

You showed me that real men can cry and that it’s not a sign of weakness. You taught me to love Apostolic truth. You taught me how to pray and hear from God. You showed me, by your love for the Scriptures, that the Bible is to be the highest Authority in my life.

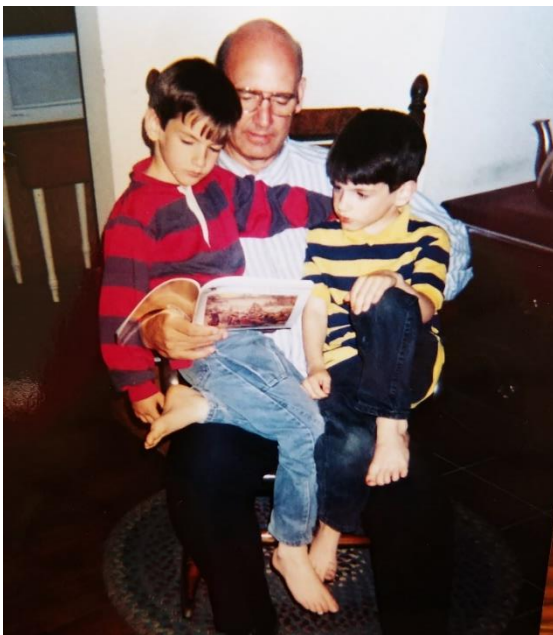
You taught me to respect authority and you demonstrated respect, honor, and loyalty to those in authority over you.

You showed me how to not be too proud to ask for forgiveness.

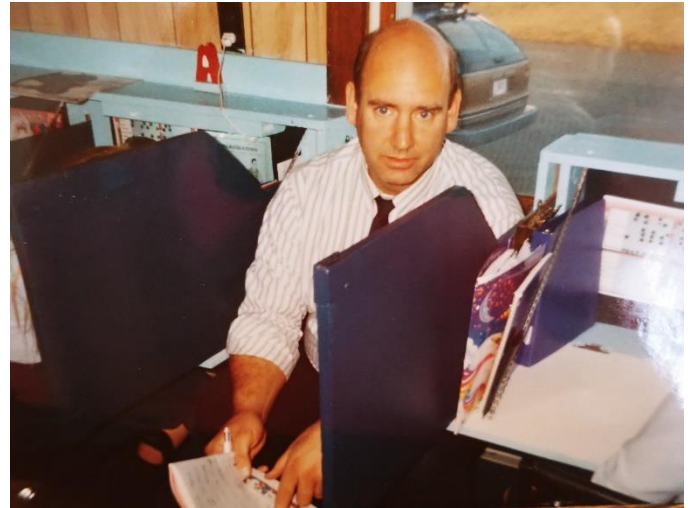
You demonstrated to me how to love my wife, by how you love Mom. You modeled how to be a father to my children, by the example you lead.

You demonstrated true Christianity to the world in public, and to us at home, through your faithfulness and daily walk with God. Someone accurately said “Love is spelled T-I-M-E.” One of the greatest gifts you gave your six children was time. You had many responsibilities vying your time and attention, yet you still made time for me. Thank you.

I can echo the sentiments of the Psalmist who said “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” (Psalms 16:6) I feel as though I have an unfair advantage in this world, because I had you as a Father.



BRO. NED STEPHENS: A FAITHFUL MAN OF GOD, *continued...*



Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Our eternal reward has less to do with what type of ministry we were given to do and more about our faithfulness to fulfill **to the end** that which God has asked us to do. We will be rewarded on the basis of our faithfulness. Be faithful, trustworthy, dependable, and steadfast. At the end of life’s journey, more than anything else, you will want to hear the Lord say, **“Well done, thou good and faithful servant!”**

Brother, it was a fight, and you fought a good one! We rode the river together, you and I. Now you’ve finished your course. You kept the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints.

Just a few days before his graduation to Heaven, Brother looked at me and said, *“I’ve taught in Dirigere Christian Academy many years. I’ve had a lot of students, and many of them are grown up now. Some of them are not where they ought to be with the Lord. I still love them. Brother Stoops, if any of them would re-commit their lives to Christ at my funeral I’d be so happy.”*

As I sit writing today, I am prompted by the Holy Ghost to ask someone who is reading this to please stop and consider what you are doing and the direction in which you are headed. *“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein.”* (Jeremiah 6:16)

Bro. Stoops is the Maine District Superintendent and was honored to be a personal friend to Bro. Stephens for many years. Bro. Stoops was the officiating minister at the Celebration of Life Service hosted in July.