

Tony Denton / Ron McRay

by T. J. Smith

This article appeared in the 2023 Summer issue of *Fulfilled!* Magazine

**G**REETINGS FELLOW STUDENTS OF Scripture! Welcome from the great state of Texas. When I signed my multi-million-dollar contract to provide a column to *Fulfilled!* Magazine I also hammered out an agreement to occasionally submit “fluff” pieces as a bonus for my hard-hitting, journalistic, exposés. I can think of nothing more “fluffy” than an interview with Tony Denton. Not that Tony is fluffy, but . . . uh, never mind.

Anyway, I’ve been familiar with Tony’s long-time ministry, and wanted to share it on a larger scale and let others know who this mysterious man is behind the mask. No, not the useless, paper mask of cv19, more like the Lone Ranger’s mask. Enjoy!

***Fulfilled!* Magazine: Tony, what was your thought process to create the Preterist Networking Registry? When did you start it? How many current registrants are there?**

**Tony Denton:** I created Preterist Networking Registry (PNR) program in 2013, and I decided to do that since I was continually being asked if I knew others of like faith in their respective areas. I found a template for the USA based on zip codes and began plugging in people’s names and email addresses. Because of the PNR, I know that there are several groups around the country meeting together to study, encourage, evangelize, etc. When one asks how many registrants are on PNR, the “low-ball” is around 1700. However, what’s more significant is the number of connections I’ve made between the registrants. In the past ten years, that has exceeded 16,000.

**FM: Speaking of preterism, what have you experienced about the growth? Is it gaining traction? Has it tapered off?**

**TD:** Since I became more involved in 2008, I have seen growth. One metric used to measure growth is how desperate anti-preterists are becoming; since preterism isn’t a denominational doctrine but an interdenominational doctrine, every new preterist brings along his/her own individual baggage (i.e., individual life experiences and religious backgrounds). Besides this gauge, over the past decade there is a greater percentage of people who have heard the term

“preterism.” With preterists bombarding the web with reading, audio, and video material, it seems almost impossible for someone to have not heard of preterism, and in large part due to so much constant talk in churches about “end times.”

**FM: When did you come to the understanding that all prophecies were fulfilled?**

**TD:** I was raised amillennial and taught that view myself for the first several years of my 41-year ministry, but I was open to whatever God had to say. In 1985 I was studying Matthew 24, which took me to Matthew 16:27-28—the fuse which lit the bomb of my ministerial career in the Churches of Christ. I ended up over the next several years moving into partial preterism and finally (due to despising inconsistencies) into full preterism.

**FM: When did you enter the ministry and were you raised in that?**

**TD:** I was born into a paternal family of multi-generational Church of Christ members, while my mom was a Catholic (but converted). The Churches of Christ is my background essentially from birth. Born in Fort Hood, TX, but raised in Raleigh, NC. I began my trek into the full-time ministry in early September 1980. That January I preached my first sermon as a full-time minister in the sense of Titus or Timothy, for I lived and traveled with a veteran evangelist for two years, preaching from the Atlantic Coast to Oklahoma. I left that mentor when I received a call in 1983 to work in Oklahoma, not far from my future wife of Fort Smith, AR. So, no, no “seminary” for me, though I did take numerous college classes in different places I lived; I took mainly classes that would aid in my work such as writing and speaking ones.

**FM: A native Texan? Alright! That leads to my next question. Family? What do the grandkids call you?**

**TD:** Married to Debora Lynn Joyce since 1985, and we brought up three kids: a boy 37, a boy 35, and a girl 26. Our oldest gave us four grands (3 boys & 1 girl) who call us Grandpa and Grandma.

**FM: I have noticed that a lot of believers who espouse a fulfilled view of eschatology come from a Church of Christ background: yourself, Sam Dawson, Ron McRay, Max King, Don Preston, Jessie Mills, Ed Stevens, William Bell, CG Caird, the list goes on. What is it about the Church of Christ that breeds this understanding of Scripture?**

**TD:** Preterism in this country, 50, 40, or even 30 years ago seemed to be comprised mainly of Church of Christ folks, and I think it jettisoned among us as it did by mere fluke, when just the right person with an open mind hit on it (perhaps via some old works from the 1800s, since there were several of them), and it got picked up by others of such a mindset. Though I was raised in one of the most legalistic branches of the Churches of Christ, I tried to teach a lot on having the Berean attitude.

**FM: This question is from Maria: What is the most glaring oversight committed from the mainstream western church? And don't jump to the obvious "miscalculation of the Second Coming." (Think deeper about what drives this. She's trying to set you up for brilliance. HA!)**

**TD:** I'd have to say the lack of genuinely teaching the humble principle of Berean- or open-mindedness, which cannot be divorced from accurate biblical interpretation. I strongly encourage folks to purchase a well-written book by two guys who are NOT preterists, *Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes* by Richards and O'Brien.

**FM: You've written six books and have many links to YouTube videos on your website. Do you have any new books coming?**

**TD:** Yes, I keep a deal going for five of my books at \$60 postpaid. I have started a new one on 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude.

Thank you, Tony, great info on your ministry. Thanks for sharing. To contact Tony: A Site For The Lord | Bible Studies And Books ([www.asiteforthelord.com](http://www.asiteforthelord.com))

Before I sign off, I wanted to offer my condolences to the family of a valued asset of the preterist view. Born in 1935 in Fort Worth, Texas, and passing into the presence of Yahweh this past December, Ron McRay left a legacy of ministry. Coming from the Churches of Christ, Ron also wrote 52 books, and the last time we spoke, he had several more he was planning. We never personally met, but he seemed to like my YouTube videos and articles, and we ended up exchanging books that we had written. Since Ron's books outnumbered mine about 9 to 1, I would usually mail him a small donation for his time. He would always either call or email thanking me, and always end with "Love, Ron." He struggled with his health for a long time and fought bravely, always pressing ahead to share as much truth as he could before God called him

home. I didn't always agree with his interpretations, but I don't always agree with Ed Stevens, Don Preston, William Bell, or David Curtis (but that's the way the globe spins). We can all have fellowship in Christ.

God bless you Ron, for your life and rich legacy of study and sharing the Gospel. ✝