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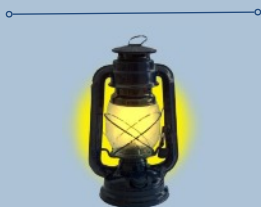
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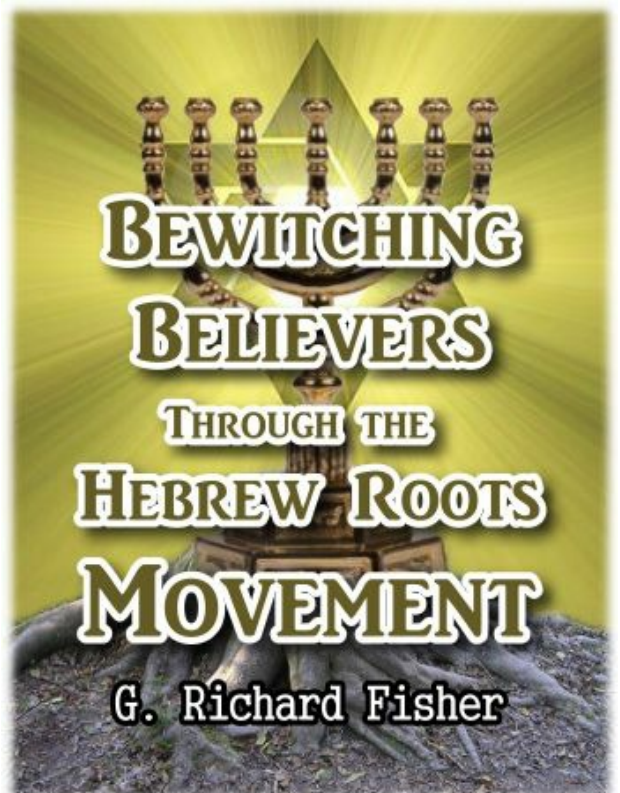
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The old hymn "I Would Be Like Jesus" has a chorus that has the hymn singers assert, "Be like Jesus, this my song, in the home and in the throng; Be like Jesus all day long! I would be like Jesus."

Many Christians don't realize that there is a battle being waged between Jewish externals and rituals as a means of spirituality and sanctification and truly biblical means that are internal heart issues. None would argue that being more like Jesus is a very commendable goal. After all, we are to constantly look to Him (Hebrews 12:2) and see Him as our ultimate example (1 Peter 2:21). But with every journey in life we must decide how we are going to get there. The larger issue of being like Jesus is: What does it really mean? What does it look like? and Just how is it accomplished?

The late Jewish scholar and researcher of first century life in Israel, David Flusser, said rightly; "Jesus was a Jew in every way" (*Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*, Adama Books, New York, 1987, p.7). There is absolutely no denying that Jesus was born a Jew and lived an observant Jewish life. He did this to fulfill completely every demand of the law, He did it for us (Romans 8:1-4), and He continues to do it in us if we are true believers.

So if we want to be like Jesus, does that mean that we must become observant Jews, as some allege? Is that what being like Jesus really means? Should Gentile believers try to be Messianic Jews? Can they? Should Gentiles don a yarmulke, worship in a synagogue, blow a shofar, wear a prayer shawl, call Jesus Yeshua or Yeshu, keep the Old Testament feasts



and dietary laws, and give their pastors the title of Rabbi, even though Matthew 23:8 says otherwise? Are Jewish ceremonies and practices efficacious?

Do we need to restore first century or later Jewish practices to really be good Christians? The Pharisees practiced all the ceremonies, but theirs is a cautionary tale since Jesus told them that they did these things in vain (Matthew 15:7-9, See also Matthew 23).

So, is Jewishness next to godliness? One very modern movement would answer the questions with a loud-- "yes, more or less!" This growing movement is called the *Hebrew Roots Movement* (HRM). Unfortunately, it lacks a shared, coherent, consistent theology, an internal mechanism of doctrinal control, and it is filled with mavericks who seem to be making it up as they go along in terms of attachment to Jewish accoutrements.

Some in the HRM are way over the edge in their denial of the Trinity and seem to know Jesus only in the flesh. As we will see, this movement is an idea, a view, an attitude, or a philosophy; a shared concept that Jewish traditions and Judaism are far superior for the church, a sure fire way to a deeper sanctification and with some, possibly even salvation.

It's hard to define the HRM because it is so diverse and made up of so many disparate groups and individuals. It's a moving target. It's a vast smorgasbord of everything from scholarship, as in the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research, to so-called Third Questers, to individuals practicing subjective pop (make-it-up-as-you-go) Judaism. It can even include the medieval mystical Kabbalah, with its esoteric numerology. More often than not there are no distinctions made between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant or between the Bible and the Talmud. This movement can impose legalism with a vengeance or in some instances may simply suggest Jewish practices that they say will give us deeper insight and understanding as well as make us more "authentic" believers.

Here, then, is a loose definition of the Hebrew Roots Movement. It is a very modern movement that insists that we must resurrect first-century Judaism (our Jewish Roots) and the milieu and lifestyle of first-century Jews and impose them on both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. This is not just an academic study to better understand Scripture and its setting

but is rather a movement of restoration that claims that the church has moved off its Jewish foundation and must return to a more Jewish way of life to be authentic.

Although there is great benefit in studying the archaeology, geography, sociology, religion, and customs of the ancient biblical world, it does not follow that we must reinstitute and copy those times, replete with language, customs, and even dress.

It is obvious in much of the HRM that it's not just the study of the first century for interpretation, information, and illumination that carries the day but keeping the traditions and practices of the Jewish Talmud, which was completed long after Jesus in the years 400-500 (*The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1965, p. 374). Actually, there are two Talmuds, namely the Babylonian Talmud and the Palestinian Talmud. The Talmuds vary in many of their customs, traditions, and practices.

Jewish believer Stephen Katz expresses his concerns when he says, "Much of the Jewish Roots Movement is actually based on later Jewish/rabbinic tradition. More importantly, the question of whether Gentiles need to add Jewish lifestyle and return to Jewish roots was settled by the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15. The remarkable news of the Gospel is that, in Y'shua, Jews and Gentiles have direct access to God" (*The Jewish Roots Movement: Flowers and Thorns*, "March 1, 2001).

In practice, many promoters of the HRM draw their content more from Talmudic Judaism than from Old or New Testament Judaism. Acts 15 addresses head-on the relationship of Gentile believers to Judaism. The Apostle James told the Jewish believers that they should not disturb Gentile believers. In verse 19, James strongly commanded, "I judge that we (Jews) should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God." Then an official letter went out to the Gentiles reaffirming the decision: "Since we heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, 'you must be circumcised and keep the law'--to whom we gave not such commandment" (v. 24). In other words, "Back off trying to make Gentiles into Jews!"

Messianic Jewish believer Stan Telchin sees the imposition of Jewish law and practice on Gentiles as

one of the more troubling aspects of the Messianic Jewish Movement: "I know that the overwhelming majority of Jewish believers do not attend Messianic synagogues. It has been suggested that less than five percent of the Jewish believers in the United States attend them....Many Jewish people who I have brought to such synagogues have told me they felt as though they were looking at a caricature--an imitation and not the real thing" (*Messianic Judaism Is Not Christianity*, Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004, p. 83).

If Telchin's statistics are even close, it means that up to 95 percent of the attendees at Messianic synagogues are Gentiles and only 5 percent are Jews. This tells us that Gentiles are being "converted" to forms of Judaism that even many Jews reject. That turns Acts 15 on its head. The really big question that Hebrew Roots teachers must answer is, "Why are there far more Gentile believers than Jews in Messianic synagogues and Messianic fellowships?"

This imposition of Jewish practice on non-Jewish believers really does constitute a serious issue that promotes elitism, unnecessary division, wide confusion, and unbiblical practices. We can almost understand Jews who convert to Christ who still try to keep some of the cultural aspects and celebrations of their familial heritage. If their intentions and motives are not legalistic, and if these things are not done for salvation or out of religious elitism, there may be some minor benefit. Yet to impose them on Gentiles (as is the case, more often than not) is a direct violation of Paul's words to the Colossians: *Colossians 2:16-17, Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

So Paul tells the Gentiles at Colossi that they are not to let anyone force Judaism on them. Didn't Paul tell the Ephesians that saved Jews and Gentiles were now one new body and one new man--the church? *Ephesians 3:1-8, For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

We have already mentioned the very confusing practice of superimposing the later Talmud and Talmudic traditions on New Testament believers (Jew or Gentile). Isn't this as serious as any of the extrabiblical books imposed on cult followers? Some of the

DEACON TRUE SEZ -



Our preacher took his wife away to see the grandkids for Christmas, and asked old Bro. Woodworth to fill the pulpit while he was gone. He don't preach too bad, but, boy howdy, is he long winded!

This mornin' I wuz carryin' a pillow out to the pickup just in case he went longer than last week, but Ma caught me and made me put it back in the house.

I needn't have worried. One of the Carlin boys had speaked a real loud alarm clock in and had set it for 12 o'clock straight up and hid it in the bottom of the piano. When it went off, the preacher wound down pretty quick and we got to go home about the usual time.

It wasn't the clock that stopped old Bro. Woodie. It was the whole church laughin'. I asked Ma if I could put our alarm clock in her purse for tonight's meetin' just in case old sister Bankwell decides to give that thirty minute testimony about the time she got gout in her big toe.

Ma presented some pretty good arguments agin' the proposition.

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Talmud has nothing to do with the New Testament and only reflects later Judaism without a land, a temple, a priesthood, or a sacrifice.

The Hebrew Roots Movement is cavalier and does nothing as far as the above cautions. The use of later rabbinical material must be done with much care, that is, sparingly and judiciously. We must be sure that it can be verified and corroborated by earlier or contemporary sources. It is our only safety. If we are unsure of a later source, would it not be dangerous to add it to the Bible?

Revelation 22:18-19, For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

One very important and urgent issue that the Hebrew Roots Movement never addresses is--which Judaism? This is the elephant in the room.

It would be more correct to speak of Judaisms. There were different streams of Judaism in the first century. Is it to be the religious Pharisees? And, if so, is it the school of Shammai or Hillel? Or is it the religion of the Sadducees? Why not the Judaism of the Zealots or the Herodians? Is it to be the Judaism of John the Baptist? Better yet, the purists--the separatists called the Essenes.

As has been mentioned, any first-century Judaism of any stripe cannot be fully practiced since there is no temple, no priesthood, and no animal sacrifices. Some in the Hebrew Roots Movement seem to be enamored with modern Orthodox Jews. But the large and unanswered question is: which Orthodox group?

In the complex world of Jewish Orthodoxy, there are a myriad of competing groups with different dress and different traditions, all claiming to have their corner on the truth. A few of the somewhat cloistered groups in Jerusalem are the Ger Hassidic Dynasty, the Belz Hassidic Dynasty, the Karlin Stoln Hassidic sect, the Breslav Hassidic Dynasty, the Samar Hassidic Dynasty, the Chabad Hassidic sect, and the Neturi Karta. (For details, differences, and dynamics of these groups, see *The Mysteries of Jerusalem*, Adam Ackerman,

Multipress, Jerusalem, 2007, pp. 61-77). Which one is right?

There is an almost total ignoring by the Hebrew Roots Movement teachers of two-thirds of the New Testament, namely the Epistles of Paul (as well as the other Epistles). There is some tipping of the hat to selective pieces of Romans that in their view speak of Abraham and also of being grafted into Judaism, or Jewish Roots. It is clear that being grafted into Israel has to do with Abrahamic and Messianic blessings--not cloning or trying to act like Jews.

These spiritual privileges are real spiritual and eternal blessings. They do not mean dressing up and pretending to be of some other nationality or religion. Gentile believers have received the Word of God, the Messiah, and His salvation. Being grafted into Abraham's blessings is as beautiful and as simple as Gib Martin and Larry Richards explain: "The olive tree...is a familiar and beautiful part of the landscape of Israel. It is a symbol of both strength and blessing. David penned in *Psalms 52:8: 'I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever'*....Paul uses the branch of an olive tree to picture what God has done in grafting in the gentiles, the 'wild olive tree' (Romans 11:17) into the cultivated olive tree, Israel.

In Paul's metaphor, some of the olive tree's branches were broken off and wild shoots were grafted into the tree. God was turning the Gentiles into fruit-bearing people....Paul is pointing them to the very source of their lives: God. God is the Keeper of the vineyard, the ultimate Gardener" (*The Book of Romans*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, TN, 2007, p. 168).

Ignoring the Epistles is one way to avoid a deluge of material about New Testament church life, church structure, church officers, church practices, and beliefs. It's no wonder that those in Hebrew Roots have a truncated and skewed message. I say this with sadness.

What we are dealing with is both foundational and fundamental. Is it to be synagogue or church? The Jews had a practice that if anyone professed Christ they were to be thrown out of the synagogue (John 9:22). Yet those in the HRM would try to pretend that synagogues are good places to be--or at least to emulate or push their way back in. Can we merge church and synagogue? Should we? We need to

NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- In his classic book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, William Law mentions two men, each completely absorbed in planning a retirement mansion. One plans to build his on earth, the other on Mars. Everyone thinks the second man is a fool. Law, however, shows that they are both fools and that the difference in the degree of their folly is only a short period of transient time. The one plans a house on Mars where he will never be; the other on earth where he cannot stay.
- Has it ever occurred to you that nothing has ever occurred to God? ~ *Terry Gilsenan*
- If the tender yearning is gone from the advent hope today, there must be a reason for it; and I think I know what it is, or what they are, for there are a number of them. One is simply that popular fundamentalist theology has emphasized the utility of the cross rather than the beauty of the one who died on it. The saved man's relation to Christ has been made contractual instead of personal. The "work" of Christ has been stressed until it has eclipsed the person of Christ. Substitution has been allowed to supersede identification. What he did for me seems to be more important than what He is to me. Redemption is seen as an across-the-counter transaction which we "accept", and the whole thing lacks emotional content. We must love someone very much to stay awake and long for his coming, and that may explain the absence of power in the advent hope even among those who still believe in it. ~ *A.W. Tozer*
- Vision and Voice! That's what makes a real preacher! He sees what others cannot see and then says what they cannot say! ~ *An old Scottish theologian, name unknown.*
- "How can you pull down strongholds of Satan if you don't even have the strength to turn off your TV!" ~ *Leonard Ravenhill* (contributed by Suzy Crocket)

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remember that Jesus said clearly, "On this rock I will build my church." He did not say, "I will build my synagogue."

Is it to be law or grace? The Book of Galatians deals with that in great detail. However, as I said, the Epistles are neglected and ignored, and Galatians is skipped over. It is interesting to note that Paul told the Galatians that a trip back to Judaism indicated that they had become both "foolish" and "bewitched" (Galatians 3:1). The word "bewitched" is the Greek root *baskano*, and it means to be allured and drawn into false doctrine.

Is it Old Covenant or New Covenant? If it was anything but New Covenant, Jesus would have never said at His last supper, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:28). This is repeated in [Mark 14:24](#) and [Luke 22:20](#). The repetition must be there for a good reason. Jesus must have known that some would ignore much of the New Covenant or get the two covenants confused.

Is it the Passover or the Lord's Supper? Paul reminded the Corinthians what the Passover stood for and what was really central: *"For indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us"* (1 Corinthians 5:7). It's clear that all the Old Testament ceremonies, symbols, and feasts were types and shadows pointing to Jesus ([Colossians 2:16-23](#), [Hebrews 10:1-10](#)).

Is it Saturday or Sunday? Saturday (the seventh day) was clearly attached to the finishing of the Old Creation ([Genesis 2:1-3](#)). Sunday, the first day of the new week celebrates the Resurrection and the new creation in Christ. Christians are a new creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

Is it Jewish externals and superficial ritual purity or internal cleansing and heart purity? [Psalm 51](#) answers that question clearly: *"Sacrifice you did not desire or I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart--these, O God, You will not despise"* (vv. 16-17).

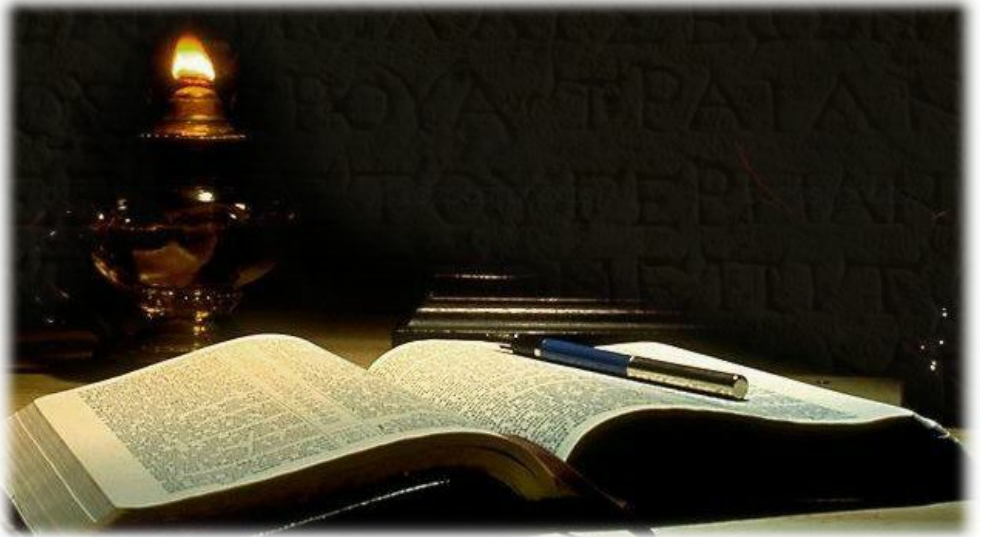
This brief article is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the Hebrew Roots Movement. For now we are just asking questions. There are detailed larger articles and a book in production to examine in depth and detail the entire movement. We hope to offer corrections to many aberrant practices and deal more fully with some of the issues raised in this piece. Stay tuned.

In Defense of the Faith, from The Berean Call.

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There is a wonderful word that I came across in study this week that is used only four times in the New Testament. It is first found in Luke's account of the gospel in the parable of the ten pounds that is given to three different men. It is used in somewhat of a negative connotation by the third man that hid the one pound he was given.

Luke 19:20 *"And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin."*



The word is found in the phrase "LAID UP." LAID UP is the Greek word *APOKEIMAI*. This is a compound word. The first word is the word *APO*, which means "to separate, or away from." The second word is *KEIMAI*, which means "to lie" as in to lay something down. When you put the two words together you literally get the idea of "to lie separately." We might think of it as a "reserving" of something. The connotation is that it is kept in a very safe place. Nothing at all, including men, can get to it. It is reserved to a particular individual. It was considered to be that which could be counted upon.

The man that put it in a napkin used that napkin for safe keeping instead of doing as the first two men did, and was summarily rebuked for his unfaithfulness.

APOKEIMAI is also used in [Colossians 1:5](#) - *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."*

Our hope is laid up, it is reserved, it is kept in the safest of places. When you consider the truth about the word HOPE as it is used in the Bible, coupled with the word for LAID UP, it shows the absoluteness of that hope: it cannot be taken away nor disappear. The word HOPE as used in the Bible does not imply doubt. HOPE speaks of a sure and certain expectation. Hope is always grounded in the Lord. That speaks of absolute trust. What is the HOPE laid up, reserved in heaven for us?

Peter answers that in [1 Peter 1:3,4](#), *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."*

Think about the depth of that truth – our hope is RESERVED – it has been set aside by God Himself for us in heaven. (NOTE: "reserved" in v. 4 is not the same word as in [Colossians 1:5](#)). It is preserved without any possibility of loss.

APOKEIMAI is used in [2 Timothy 4:8](#) where Paul declares, *"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."*

For those who love His appearance, the crown awaits in heaven, which is a very real reward. The point is, it is reserved and set aside by the righteous Judge Himself.

APOKEIMAI is used one other place, and that is in [Hebrews 9:27](#), *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."*

The word APPOINTED is that same word. Death is literally laid away, it is set, it cannot change for men. There have only been two exceptions in which we have been informed, and that is with Enoch and Elijah, who were taken on to heaven instead of facing death (of course this applies to those who will be alive when the Lord comes in the air – [1 Corinthians 15:51](#)).

It is laid away for all of us to face the final enemy, which is death. What we must do is be prepared to face it. When a person has come to the glorious gospel, repenting of sin, and putting their faith in Christ Jesus, they are as prepared as they will ever get to face that which is laid away for all believers. Are you prepared?

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From the Overflow of the Heart

*"Thy soul must overflow if thou
Another soul would'st reach;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech."*

H. Bonar

As blind Chang faced the homeward journey his heart was filled with intense joy. So full was he that he could no more help overflowing than a vessel placed under an open tap could keep the precious flow within its own vessel. The blind man had caught the same vision as the little child in the Welsh revival who, after hearing the grown-ups pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit, rose and with clasped hands upraised, prayed, "O, Lord! I'm only a little girl and I can't hold very much. Please fill me to overflow, for I can overflow lots!"

Along the road, as the blind man traveled to his hometown, were open wayside drinking places. There, wayfarers sat, rested, drank hot water, tea, and chatted. On reaching such places, Blind Chang would seat himself at a table and at once begin to tell the Old, Old Story which never, ever actually grows old, the story of Jesus and His love. He gave out with power the little he himself knew and so keen was he that soon crowds drew around him. Thus, before reaching his hometown, his ministry had begun.

The enemy of souls, however, was not going to let this man go without a struggle. While still on the homeward journey, he faced internal torment, doubts and fears. He kept asking himself - "Can it be that the hospital evangelist is no better than the smooth tongues liars I have been and dealt with? Can it be that the hospital witness is after all no better than ourselves? Did he say that he would visit and baptize me just to get me out, but have no intention of coming?" When the ground seemed to be giving away from under his feet as it were, the Lord sent a dream to comfort him. Later he said how this dream dispelled all doubts and fears and restored the joy and peace he seemed to be losing.

He dreamt he saw the Saviour coming toward him all glowing white. He had a book in His hand and a crown was upon his brow. As he handed him the book he smiled down upon him and vanished. This dream to the blind man became not only a strengthener to his weak, failing faith, but was much more - it came to him as a personal but Divine call to carry the Gospel to others. Being thus also influenced by the dream, Blind Chang was by no means alone among many Christians in China. If the



complete history of the Church in China were written, it would doubtless record hundreds of cases where men and women have been brought to decision, delivered from fear, strengthened in faith and given courage to face even death itself, through a dream until they became established in the written Word of God.

Five months passed before Mr. Webster found himself sufficiently free from ministry in the hospital to pay his promised visit to the blind man. There were no railways in Manchuria then and it was difficult to visit Taipingkow. Here we allow Mr. Webster to give his own account. "At the entrance to the village two men were standing. Addressing one I found him to be a Mr. Li who knew all about the blind man. He led me to his home with much ceremony and while we drank tea together he told me a story which caused me to forget all hunger and weariness. He told me how when Blind Chang returned home from Mukden he began at once to tell the people the story of Jesus, going from village to village and into as many homes as would receive him. In the evenings he would preach to hundreds gathered under the shade of the willow trees. At first, everybody laughed at him or thought him crazed and pitied him. But when he still kept on preaching and giving practical proofs of having undergone a change, people became divided about him. In short, the whole countryside became affected, even to the point of uproar. As week after week passed, the blind

man daily prayed his prayer for help from on high, sang his one hymn learned in Mukden (thought to be 'Jesus Loves Me'), then went forth alone to tell the story of Redeeming Love."

The missionary's heart burned with joy within him on hearing such news. Would that every newborn child of God at home and abroad could have such said about them. But where was Blind Chang? He was in the village but did not know of brother Webster's arrival. When Chang did hear, with great joy he knew his prayer had been answered. The missionary by this time had also started out with Mr. Li to find Blind Chang. They met on the road and as the blind man came within hailing distance, Mr. Webster called him by name. Chang stood quite still for a moment resting on his staff, as if to assure himself and then with his face radiant with joy and with great tears dropping from his eyes he exclaimed in a voice trembling with emotion, "Oh, brother, I always hoped you would come. You promised and now you have come!"

That night Mr. Webster was kept busy till well past midnight. He had for his bed fellows Blind Chang and a Chang's friend. (Chinese beds can accommodate from six to twenty people.) He tells how the last thing heard somewhere in the small hours of the morning was an earnest discussion regarding the difference between Confucius and Christ. Confucius was likened to the man who discoursed on the advantages of walking circumspectly to a man who had fallen into a deep pit, while Christ was compared to another who, on seeing the man's helpless condition threw him a rope and helped him out. Reformation and salvation were starkly contrasted.

The following two days were a never to be forgotten experience for the missionary. Hour after hour of the first day was spent in examining candidates for baptism, each one being given a private interview. On the following day the nine who had been accepted were baptized and received into the fellowship of the local church. Mr. Webster wrote of this occasion: "I have seldom had more satisfaction with candidates than with these men. I have never witnessed a more interesting scene, nor joined in more solemn and joyful exercises. The nine men were headed up by their blind guide who had to be led by the

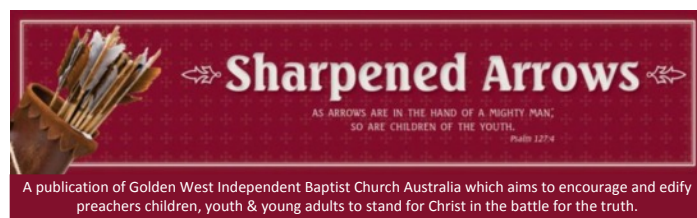
hand to receive baptism and the Lord's Supper. Professing to have come to Christ and having believed in Him, they stated their intention to forsake all for Christ. They declared their intention to forsake the idolatry of their fathers, having cast the idols out, smashing them and burning them completely. They expressed their desire through grace to turn from evil to serve the living God."

For five years Blind Chang continued to work for the most part throughout his home region, which included Szepingkai and many other towns and villages. By 1892 one hundred and seventy had received baptism there. At other centers, Christian services were held regularly and later seven halls were erected as a result of this work. One Christian remarked to the missionary when he was on one of his annual visits, "If Chang Shen had not lost his eyesight there would be no Church here."

There was one element in all this which must not be overlooked. This was a very hard thing that came upon the blind man but was really the means of thrusting him forth in a way that resulted in more blessing in his remarkable pioneer life. As time passed "the seeing" Christians came to realize that they knew more than their teacher. Some of these converts were men with spiritual gifts that eminently fitted them to be leaders in the churches. They could carry on the work far better than the blind evangelist. It was thus that God turned Chang's affliction into a means of blessing for many more of his countrymen.

A Mr. Inglis wrote of Blind Chang; "His was but to kindle the light and then pass on." C.H. Spurgeon once said, "Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to tremendous difficulties." This surely applied to the blind evangelist of whom we write. Another has said, "The cost of shining is burning." Such was the life of this man whose testimony has come down to later generations here in Manchuria. He was a bright light. We have recently met Christians who were the grandchildren of men won to Christ through Blind Chang. Those who still live who knew Chang and those who only know him through the testimony of others, all speak with reverence and affection of his devoted self-sacrificing life.

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"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
(Philippians 4:11)

"Contentment" was the subject of a recent post on a Facebook group page for missionary women, and the fact that contentment is learned, provoked me to much thought on the subject. I got to wondering why contentment is such a difficult thing to learn, and why I can be content one moment, and in the next, completely dissatisfied.

Methinks that the mission field is a terrific school in which to learn this great virtue. The Apostle Paul learned it on the mission field, and it is something that I, too, am learning on a continual basis on our own mission field of Romania.

For example, God has been teaching me something about contentment recently. He's been teaching me to be content with my personality, my gifts and abilities.

Things haven't been going so well lately with one of our churches. There is a real need for revival. And I have been praying for that every day for more than a year. My husband and the national pastor we work with have been preaching for a solid year about nurturing an intimate relationship with Christ. But it seems that few are listening. It is a big problem. Certainly not something we ought to be content with. But I had begun to look around at other ministries, at other pastor's wives. I saw how well some of their ministries were going. I saw how easily they seem to be able to reach out to others. I saw their extraordinary talents in music or in teaching. I saw their wonderful house-keeping skills. I saw what "perfect"

mothers and wives they are. I saw how they always seem to "have it together." Always so organised. And they still manage to smile and have their hair nicely done, and keep in good shape. I began to think that if I was more like them, or if my husband or pastor or children were more like theirs, then things would be better. I began to wish I was more like them. Of course, this is very foolish thinking. And the Lord showed me this as I read through the first chapter of a book I'm reading called, "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World," by Joanna Weaver. In her book, she points out the personality differences between Mary and Martha,

and remarks that each personality has its own strengths and flaws. One is not better than another. She goes on to say that "when Jesus corrected Martha, he didn't say, 'Why can't you be more like your sister, Mary?'" He knew Martha would never be Mary, and Mary would never be Martha. But when the two were faced with the same choice - to work or to worship - Jesus said, "Mary has chosen the better part." To me, this implies the Better Part was available to both Mary and Martha." This was like a revelation to me. Jesus doesn't want me to be anybody but myself. But He wants me to be the best version of me that I can be. He didn't say, "Why can't you be more like...(add the pastor's wife of your choice in the blank)?" He just said, "Why don't you make better priorities?" I realised that God wants me to be me. He gave me the personality, gifts and abilities that I have. And He likes me. So I should like me too. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean that at all in a proud way. I know there is plenty of room for growth and development in my personality and abilities, but I do believe that God wants me to be content, to be the best "me" I can be, rather than try to be someone else.

Why is contentment so difficult to achieve? I think because it is tied to our faith. And so, just as our faith grows over time as we gain experience in trusting and depending on the Lord, so grows our ability to be content. (That's why the mission field is such a great place to learn contentment. Being daily on the front line of the spiritual battle, missionaries are every day having to learn to depend on God.) On the other hand, as our faith fluctuates, so does our level of contentment. I find that I am not consistent in my level of faith. Some days my faith is strong, other days I have to ask the Lord to increase my faith (Luke 17:5). Likewise, some days I am so content I

cannot think of a single thing in my life that I would change, and other days I am just plain unthankful. And I have observed that the days that I am ungrateful usually coincide with the days when my faith is weak.

But why is contentment a matter of faith? Because in [Psalm 84:11](#) the Bible says: *"no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."* If I really believe that my Father will give me all things that are good for me, I will not yearn for other things.

So then, how can I learn contentment?

A) RENEWING MY MIND

While it is true that our contentment will grow in step with our faith, it is also true that contentment is a discipline of the mind. When seeds of unthankfulness germinate in my heart, I have to renew my mind with the Word of God ([Rom.12:2](#)). The Bible reminds me to *"seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"* ([Matt.6:33](#)). It tells me to *"set my affections on things above, not on things on the earth"* ([Col.3:2](#)). In it I learn to *"lay up treasures in heaven"* ([Matt.6:20](#)). I have to renew my mind with truth about the character of God as a loving Father who delights to provide for His children ([Luke 11:9-13](#)).

B) DELIGHTING MYSELF IN THE LORD

In [Ps. 37:4](#) I read: *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* If I delight myself in the Lord, I find it is impossible to be discontent. When He fills my heart, there is nothing lacking. I read in a devotional this morning, a quote from C.H. Spurgeon: *"What a heartfelt Jesus must be, for heaven itself cannot contain Him!"* How true.

The Apostle Paul delighted himself in the Lord. He wrote of this to the [Philippians](#) in chapter 3:7-10: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;"* If I am to attain true contentment- if I am ever going to be able to count all my gain as loss, all my things as dung- then my #1 priority must be to know Jesus Christ intimately, to experience His power in my life, to know the fellowship of His sufferings and to die to self. If I fall short of these things, I can be tempted to be discontent.

C) MAKING A COVENANT WITH MY EYES

[Lam.3:51](#) says: *"Mine eye affecteth mine heart..."* How true this is! If I allow myself to more than glance at other ministries, what others have, other women's talents, etc, etc, I can very quickly become discontent. Job made a covenant with his eyes to not look upon a maid. I can make a covenant with my eyes not to dwell long upon what others have.

D) REMEMBERING GOD'S PROMISES

- That well-known verse, [Philippians 4:13](#) is written in the context of contentment. *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Jesus Christ will enable me both to abound and to suffer need.
- In [Heb.13:5](#) we are reminded of God's promise never to leave or forsake us, again in the context of contentment: *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

Why strive for contentment?

A) TO BE IN GOD'S WILL

Contentment and thankfulness are almost synonymous. And thankfulness in everything, according to [1 Thess.5:18](#), is *"the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning [me]."*

B) FOR MY BENEFIT

"But godliness with contentment is great gain" ([1 Tim.6:6](#)). Content people are happy people. On the other hand, if I keep pining away after something that God has not intended for me to have, just maybe He will let me have it, and I will regret it later: *"And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul"* ([Ps.106:15](#)).

C) TO AVOID SIN

It does me good to remember that discontentedness is just one baby step away from the sin of covetousness, a very destructive sin. Covetousness drove Israel to demand a king instead of God's leadership ([1 Sam.8](#)). This was the beginning of a long history of bad kings over God's people. King David's covetousness caused him to commit adultery with Bathsheba and murder her husband, Uriah ([2 Sam.11](#)). Ahab coveted after Naboth's vineyard, leading to Naboth's murder, and Ahab was punished by God when he died and his blood was licked up by dogs ([1 Kings 21-22](#)). These are just a few of many examples in the Bible of the destructiveness of covetousness.

May God help us to learn contentment!

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WHEN THE MULTIPLE VERSION APOLOGISTS ARE FINISHED, WHAT DO THEY LEAVE US WITH?

(I know some pastors who advocate using multiple Bible versions in their churches. They tell me that there are many good versions and we should not simply use the KJV. I tell them this practice is confusing and that it inevitably introduces their people to the paraphrased play Bibles that mainly exist to generate megabucks for the infidel owners of publishing companies. But most of all, they undermine their people's faith in the Word of God. - Ed)

HERE'S THEIR LEGACY.

1. THEY LEAVE MEN WITH THE WRONG SOURCE OF SCRIPTURAL BIBLIOLOGY.

The textual critic, multiple versionist has never started with the Bible. He didn't go to history to find the historical, biblical position on the preservation of scripture. He didn't and doesn't develop a biblical position before he starts in with his textual criticism. He is not a man of faith, in other words, because faith always starts with what God says.

You know you will be wrong when you don't start with the Bible to come to your position. You will read zero development of theology as a basis of the multiple version point of view. Nothing.

The last issue of the Biblical Evangelist republished an article by Douglas Kutilek on Psalm 12, concerning the doctrine of preservation. A very, very long article was intended to establish that Psalm 12 teaches the preservation of the poor and needy and not the Words of God.

So here is Kutilek attempting to "liberate" the Bible from teaching on the perfect preservation of scripture, and

what does that leave us with? We are to depend on a handful of scientific gurus to reveal what God's Words are.

Kutilek buttresses his point on gender discordance, and in so doing, is dishonest in not revealing the purposeful gender discordance that is found in pronouns that refer to the Word of God. There are multiple clear examples of this in the Bible, and, therefore, taught in Hebrew grammar and syntax.

I and many others have communicated to Kutilek on this, but then he would have to admit that error, so he continues to propagate the misrepresentation. He says that "them" in Psalm 12:6-7 must refer back to poor and needy based upon gender agreement. Again, that's not true. I'm not saying that the passage doesn't teach the preservation of the poor of needy, but that the plain reading, and why many Christians have read it this way, is the preservation of God's Words.

2. THEY LEAVE MEN WITH DOUBT ABOUT THE WORDS OF GOD.

Men don't think they can know what the Words of Scripture are. This is the byproduct of the work of textual critics and multiple versionists. If you can't know what the Words are, then you can work from there on all the other things you couldn't possibly know.

3. THEY LEAVE MEN WITHOUT RELIABLE AUTHORITY FOR BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

They may say sole scriptura, but they believe and practice something different. Sole scriptura relies on the Bible alone for doctrine. The multiple versionist relies exclusively on so-called science for his position. He does not trust God would do what God said He would do. He staggers in unbelief. If men cannot know what the Words are, then how can they know what the doctrine is or its application? Men are left without reliable authority.

4. THEY LEAVE MEN WITH AN APOLOGY FOR ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM.

Bart Ehrman is a favorite for atheists and agnostics. When the authority is shifted to science and textual criticism, then we are now at the mercy of that practice. The atheist and agnostic uses the material of the multiple versionist against Christianity.

5. THEY LEAVE MEN WITHOUT A HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE.

For all the teaching in historic theology, this history is dismissed or ignored. The multiple versionists don't talk about how they reject historical doctrine. They are silent on this. They don't want people thinking about it. They're big on history when it supports them, but they are silent here when it eliminates their position, revealing it to be of entirely recent origin.

Multiple versionism is a new doctrine. It doesn't have a history in churches.

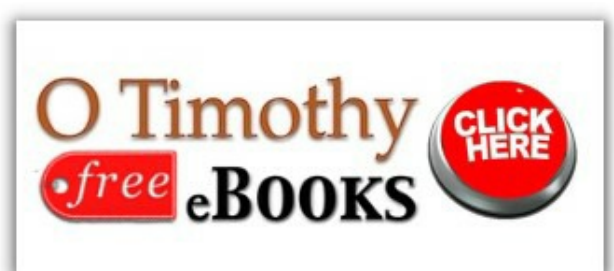
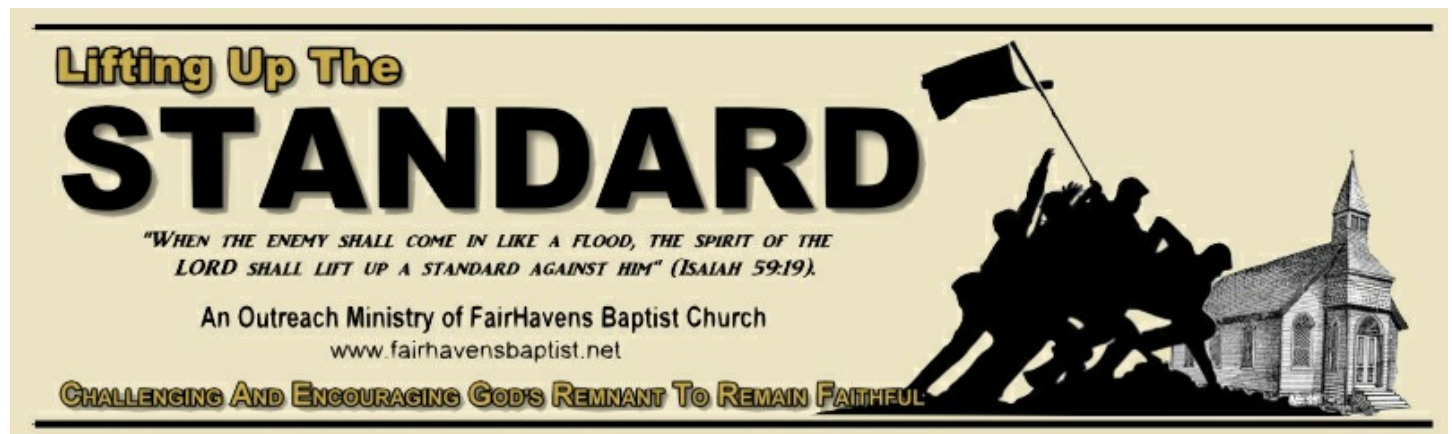
Much more could be said on this, and even other bad things we are left with, but the multiple versionists don't leave Christianity or any of us professing Christians with anything good. It's all bad.

How is believing that God preserved all His Words in the language in which they were written a danger? Isn't the danger in the doubt? In the uncertainty? Not being sure what the Words are? Isn't the danger in leaving a historic and biblical position? If the King James Version has all the doctrines and is an overall good translation, what they themselves say, then why not leave it alone? Why pursue it like it is a very strange and unorthodox teaching?

Multiple version men don't leave us with much good, if any at all.

(<http://kentbrandenburg.blogspot.com.au/>)

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MY FATHER'S FINGERPRINTS -

SCIENTISTS FIND SECOND "HIDDEN LANGUAGE" IN THE HUMAN GENETIC CODE

(Friday Church News Notes, December 20, 2013,
www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org)



Geneticists have discovered a second language code hiding with DNA that overthrows 40 years of scientific assumptions. "Since the genetic code was deciphered in the 1960s, scientists have assumed it was used exclusively to write information about proteins, but University of Washington scientists say they've discovered genomes use the genetic code to write two separate 'languages.' One, long understood, describes how proteins are made, while the other instructs the cell on how genes are controlled. One language is written on top of the other, which is why the second language remained hidden for so long, a university release said Thursday" ("Scientists Find Second," Breitbart.com, Dec. 12, 2013).

Professor John Stamatoyannopoulos of the University of Washington says: "These new findings highlight that DNA is an incredibly powerful information storage device, which nature has fully exploited in unexpected ways."

That is an amazing statement. How could blind "nature" have created a language code so incredibly complex that it has taken thousands of top-flight modern scientists decades to figure out its mere rudiments?

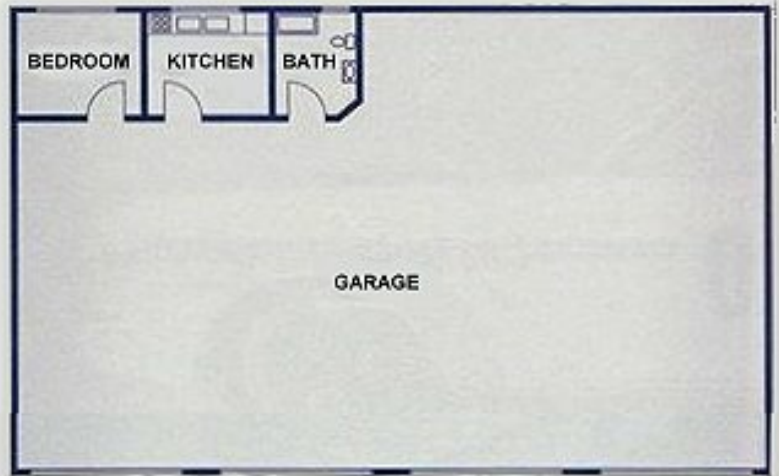
The very existence of DNA is evidence for a Creator for those who are not willfully blind.

(And just what other amazing things did the Lord put in DNA that men have not discovered? - Ed.)

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THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE -

REDNECK HOUSE PLAN



A "Liberal Paradise" would be a place where everybody has guaranteed employment, free comprehensive healthcare, free education, free food, free housing, free clothing, free utilities, and only Law Enforcement has guns. And believe it or not, such a place does indeed exist..... It's called prison. ~ From AMAC

The Doorway Phenomenon (If I forgot that I published this already, it's because I've walked through a door since then and hoped you had, too. - Ed)

Ever walk into a room with some purpose in mind, only to completely forget what that purpose was?

It turns out, doors themselves are to blame for these strange memory lapses. Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame have discovered that passing through a doorway triggers what's known as an event boundary in the mind, separating one set of thoughts and memories from the next. Your brain files away the thoughts you had in the previous room and prepares a blank slate for the new locale.

Thank goodness for studies like this. It's not our age, it's that Stupid Door!

MY ROAD RAGE IS GONE! FINALLY!



NARCISSISM 102 - THE ME ME ME GENERATION -

(Friday Church News Notes, December 13, 2013, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -

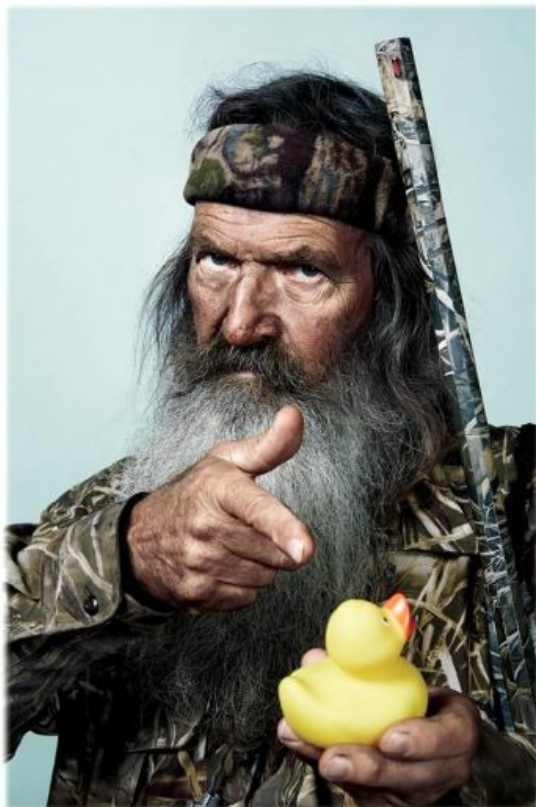
The following is excerpted from "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation," *Time* magazine, May 20, 2013: "The incidence of narcissistic personality disorder is nearly three times as high for people in their 20s as for the generation that's now 65 or older, according to the National Institutes of Health; 57% more college students scored higher on a narcissism scale in 2009 than in 1982. Millennials got so many participation trophies growing up that a recent study showed that 40% believe they should be promoted every two years, regardless of performance. ... Millennials consist, depending on whom you ask, of people born from 1980 to 2000. ... because of globalization, social media, the exporting of Western culture and the speed of change, millennials worldwide are more similar to one another than to older generations within their nations. ... In the U.S., millennials are the children of baby boomers, who are also known as the Me Generation, who then produced the Me Me Me Generation, whose selfishness technology has only exacerbated. ... Millennials have come of age in the era of the quantified self, recording their daily steps on FitBit, their whereabouts every hour of every day on PlaceMe



and their genetic data on 23 and Me. ... They got this way partly because, in the 1970s, people wanted to improve kids' chances of success by instilling self-esteem. ... All that self-esteem leads them to be disappointed when the world refuses to affirm how great they know they are. ... What millennials are most famous for besides narcissism is its effect: entitlement."

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SO WHAT DOES THE DUCK DYNASTY REALLY BELIEVE? -



DUCK DYNASTY'S CHRISTIANITY

(Friday Church News Notes, December 27, 2013, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org)

Duck Dynasty is the highest-rated reality series in cable television history. It highlights the lives of a self-described "redneck" Louisiana family who own the multi-million dollar hunting-accessories company Duck Commander, which was built on a popular duck call device the founder invented in 1972.

It is a true life "rags to riches" story. *Duck Dynasty* began airing on A&E in March 2012 and the wildly popular program has become a multi-million dollar brand with its own line of camo clothing, t-shirts, iPhone games, birthday cards, bobbleheads, blankets, Segways, recliners, sunglasses, headphones, cookbooks, you name it--1,200 items altogether! *Duck Dynasty* merchandise sales have reached \$400 million, with about half of that sold in Walmart stores. Universal Music teamed up with A&E to produce a holiday music album entitled *Duck the Halls*, Hallmark has *Duck Dynasty* greeting cards, and the 2014 *Duck Dynasty* cruise is already sold out. *Duck Dynasty* has been A&E's most financially successful venture. The heroes of *Duck Dynasty* present themselves as backwoods rednecks, but family patriot Phil Robertson has a masters'

degree in education and his son Willie has a business degree.

Unlike most television fare today, there is “no cussing, no meanness,” and the family represents conservative, patriotic American values. In his autobiography, Phil Robertson says, “Our founding fathers started this country and built it on God and His Word, and this country sure would be a better place to live and raise our children if we still followed their ideals and beliefs,” to which we say a hearty Amen. The unlikely stars--Phil and his sons, their wives, and other relatives--are outspoken Christians. They are strong in their beliefs.

The problem--a very serious problem according to God's Word--is that their gospel is the false baptismal regeneration gospel of the Church of Christ. Phil and his oldest son Al are elders at White's Ferry Church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana. They add baptism to the gospel, believing that water baptism places the candidate “into Christ” (“Jase Robertson Baptizes ‘Duck Dynasty’ Fan,” *The Christian Chronicle*, March 2013). Phil told *The Christian Chronicle* that he and his sons Alan and Jase preach the same message of faith, repentance AND BAPTISM wherever they're invited. Speaking to Harding University student body on Nov. 28, 2012, Willie Robertson told of how that he baptized a sports star “into the Lord.” They also believe that a born-again child of God can lose his salvation, which means that they don't really understand the gospel. This is not a light matter. The apostle Paul said that a false gospel is cursed of God, and the gospel that Paul summarized in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 has no baptism.

Of lesser importance, but still an issue that should not be ignored if we want to be faithful to God in all matters, is this: The Robertsons despise the Scripture which says that even nature itself teaches that it is a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14). This is the verse that the Spirit of God used to convict me to cut my long hair 40 years ago even though I thought it looked good. On my cross-country hitchhiking trips before I was saved in 1973, I thought my success was due to the fact that I “looked like Jesus”! I was deceived then, but I thank God for the light of God's Word to shine godly wisdom into every area of life.

DUCK DYNASTY AND THE UNEQUAL YOKE

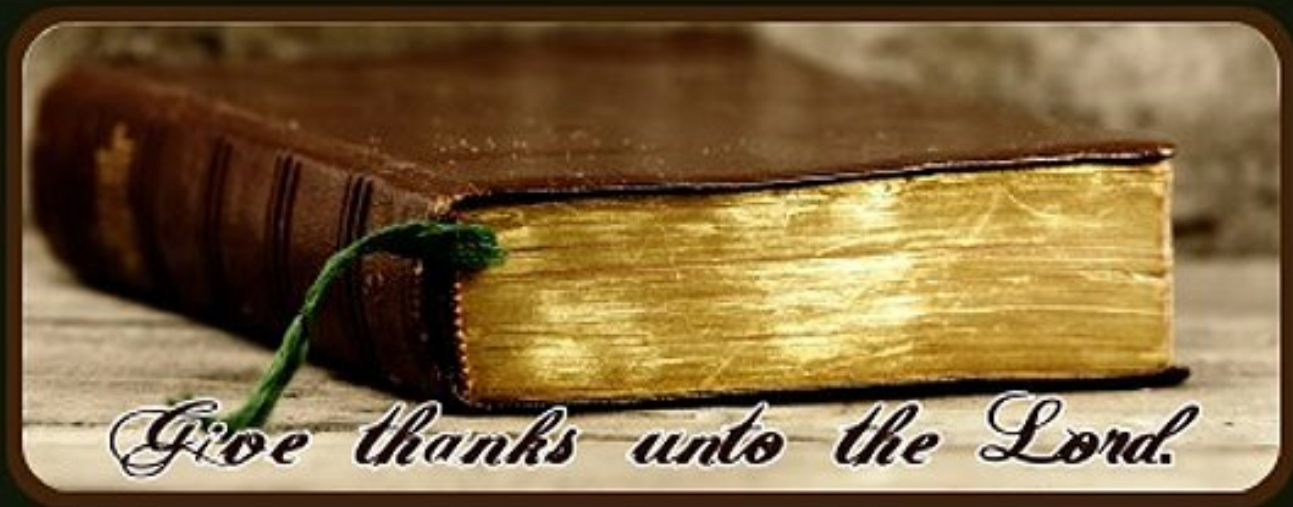
(Friday Church News Notes, December 27, 2013,
www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org.)

There is another issue that should be raised pertaining to Duck Dynasty's Phil Robertson's firing by A&E, and that is the fact that the Robertsons, of their own free will, signed



a business contract with a company that is owned by the Hearst Corporation and Disney. These are godless companies that have done a lot of harm to the moral and spiritual fabric of society. Hearst owns, among other things, 29 television stations, *Cosmopolitan* magazine, *Seventeen*, *O* (Oprah's magazine), and some of the most liberal newspapers in America, including the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Hearst Books publishes the best-selling *Cosmo's Kama Sutra* which promises “steamy illustrations” and “a sex position of the day.” Surely the following commandment applies to the believer's affiliation with such people: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean*thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). For a Christian to form a business partnership with an unbeliever is disobedience to this command. Further, in the process of entering this business partnership, the Robertsons probably signed a “morals clause” in which “they promised to, among other things, avoid anything that would embarrass or bring shame to A&E or the brand.” The *Los Angeles Times* reports that “such clauses are standard in the entertainment and sports industries” (“A&E Warned Phil Robertson about Speaking out too Much,” *LA Times*, Dec. 20, 2013). If they did sign such a clause, they were agreeing to abide by A&E's rules.

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Most Sunday nights during the song service we set aside a time for our people to give thanks aloud to God for His blessings. I have found, over the past fifty years, that God's people are encouraged and blest, and that their lips are emboldened to speak up for Christ as a result of testimony times at church. I know, there are times when the pastor sees a troublemaker or an eloquent heretic come in the door, and he decides to sing an extra song instead of giving the devil a platform for his lies. That's true, but pretty rare.

Sometimes we ask for testimonies along certain lines. Other times we just encourage them to tell what God has been doing in their lives. Last Sunday night we heard some really precious accounts of the Lord's providence and kindness to His children.

It is true that pastors (or whoever he asks to lead in the testimony time) have to maintain control of the meeting, and not let any one person speak for too long, unless pastor knows that the congregation needs to hear a lengthier testimony, and in that case he may wish to announce ahead of time that Bro. _____ will be "sharing with us tonight how the Lord did _____ for his family," and then turn the entire testimony time over to that brother.

Once in a while I like to ask our people on the first Sunday night of the month to recount the goodness of God as seen in His Ways. On the next Sunday night we may testify regarding His Works, and the next Sunday on His Words, and the last Sunday night of the month on His Will.

Sometimes we like to ask if there is anyone who is younger than 10 years old who would like to testify, and then someone between ten and twenty, and on up.

Sometimes we like to read a passage of Scripture and ask who can testify as to what is the greatest blessing to them in this passage.

Sometimes we like to ask if there are any testimonies from those who have been saved less than a year, between one year and five, between five and ten, and so on up to the oldest. We had one dear old chap years ago, Bro. Sherman, who had been saved 85 years when he went home to glory. He told us it just gets better every year.

When I was just a baby Christian our pastor called for testimonies one Sunday night with these words, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

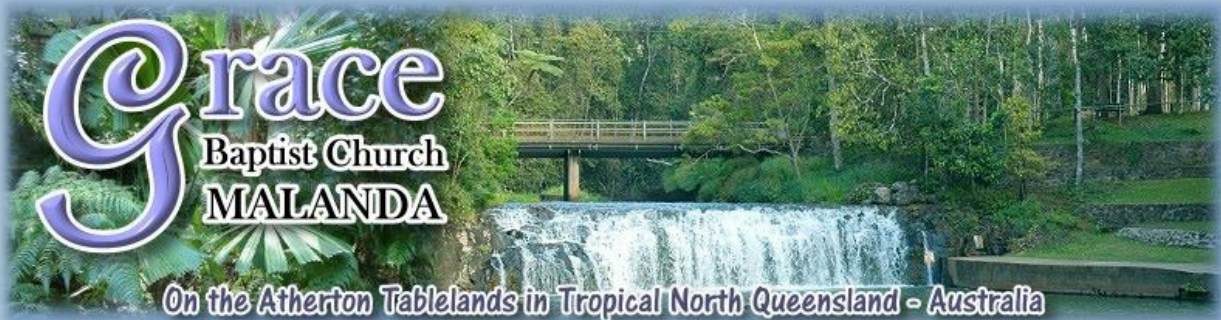
I don't want to ever forget that.

If we are redeemed, we need to say so!

Bro. Buddy Smith

Note: Because we are away for about ten days, we will postpone the next issue of Heads Up until the first week of February.

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On the Atherton Tablelands in Tropical North Queensland - Australia

Heads Up!

A fortnightly publication produced by Pastor Buddy Smith, [Grace Baptist Church](http://www.gracebaptistmalanda.net.au), Malanda, QLD., 4885. Australia.
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