

## KISS (keep it simple stupid) - even if you are from the other side of the track.

I have, ironically, always been an outcast, an outsider with respect to every positive and productive thing I have ever been involved with. Not since the time I was hanging with my old gang have I felt truly accepted in spite of my lack of material stuff. At times I have found this to be profoundly perplexing and bewildering, given the relative ease in which stuff can be obtained by someone with my professional background. They just don't present that much of a challenge to me. It's very unfortunate, I think, that on one hand we encourage folks like me, from the wrong side of the tracks, to come over to the right side of the track and then go out of the way to make them feel out of place, and rejected.

This is the kind of hypocrisy that has been the hallmark of many Christian churches, and is probably the single-most important reason for many believers taking up the call to worship from the comfort of their own homes. The interesting thing is that this insolence cuts across racial lines. It seemed to be a matter of class "peculiarities" that I was lacking. I lacked the haughtiness, the pretension, the conceit, the immodest façade, the superficiality, and the self-righteous indignation that marks the behavior of those in my profession, and even many so-called Christians. This has especially been true in my pursuit of an engineering profession. In engineering school, and in the electronics industry, I have been looked upon with suspicion, scorn, and contempt by many of my colleagues because of my disgustingly humble façade. I think it was mainly because I just did not fit the "mold" of someone having the intellectual grasp of mathematics and electronics, and just plain old common sense.

I simply saw no need for the unnecessary elevation of these disciplines to such a lofty position where the aim was invariably to create an environment for pontification and pretension. I saw no need to participate in long-winded, pompous, embellished conversations disguised as arcane industry jargon. You might say, I cut through the chase, got right to the heart of the matter - like a true southerner. In effect, these conversations were contrived. They were all a cover, a smoke screen to intimidate and confuse the uninitiated. You might call it a method of confusion that disguises the incompetence of the speaker with regards to the listener. It also doubles as a method for complicating that which in reality is not complicated. I used to have math teachers like that and it was the very reason I was never good in math until I met Mr. Michael, my college math professor of whom I am forever grateful. My Michael demystified mathematics for me by taking it down from its high pedestal and lowering it to a base level by using transitions that were not designed to intimidate by confusion, but to encourage through revelation. In effect, Mr. Michael undressed mathematics and exposed it's nakedness to show that underneath all that pomp was something very elementary.

While listening to his compelling lectures on mathematics, I used to say to myself, "I'm not gonna let this stuff change the person that I am." However, to a large extent, it did change who I was because education by its very nature changes mindsets but I was able to hold on to my ability to keep things simple, uncomplicated, and unpretentious. I like to think that this is my most redeeming quality, and has been instrumental in opening the doors of many needlessly complicated and convoluted engineering problems. Consider the following passage from scripture where Jesus is addressing a situation causing strife among the twelve:

<sup>1</sup> At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? <sup>2</sup> And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup> And said, **Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>4</sup> **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>5</sup> **And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.** <sup>6</sup> **But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**  
Matt 18:1-6 (KJV)

This is my approach to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I look at it in a very simple way, like a kid. Jesus himself encourages us all to adopt a kind of child at heart attitude for becoming the best we can be in Him. You would think that this would apply equally as well in the church. However, it seems that the more unlike a child one is in the church, the more esteemed one is. Today's preachers themselves seem to practice a more complicated version of the gospel through very heady and convoluted sermons that are designed to feed the pompous adult in us. The irony about these sermons is that the scriptures that are readily apparent and uncomplicated get twisted into a mass of theological jargon, while the scriptures whose meanings are vague and open to interpretation get treated with simplicity where thou shalt not becomes thou shall, under the right circumstances. I think this is why I feel so out of place among the folks I worship with. I'm too much of a child at heart and have a fondness for the simple things of life.