

CUT AND FILL

There is a term which is very common in the construction industry, especially in highway and road construction. The term is 'cut and fill'. The meaning is quite simple. Initially the roadbeds are not straight, flat, nor level. A substantial part of the roadbed preparation consist of removing dirt from the 'high' places and placing it in the 'low' places. In this way the roadway is made to be both flat and level. Before work was begun you would have seen ordinary rough terrain with trees, shrubs, rocks, hills, and valleys. After the 'cut and fill' has been completed you see a flat, smooth, ribbon looking very much like a road. Take a close look at the things which must be cut. There are many flowers, blooming in season, providing beauty, food for birds, bees, and insects. There are trees and shrubs which also have both beauty and function in nature. There are many things which will be pruned away in this cutting process which had both beauty and usefulness in the 'wild kingdom' but are of no use whatever in the 'road kingdom'. If the 'road kingdom is to take place the 'wild kingdom' MUST be cut.

As Christians we rejoice in the Scriptural knowledge that we are to be made into the exact likeness of Jesus Christ. This is indeed great news. Jesus is wonderful, our ideal. The very thought that I shall be like Him is exciting and (almost) unbelievable. I WANT to be like Him and so do you. We have had a nature placed in us, foreordained from before the world began, and this nature works in us to desire to do His good pleasure. I desire what God desires but how do I 'get there'. It is impossible -- FOR ME.

When we were first born again we probably thought that the process would be primarily 'cut'. We had habits, thought processes, and beliefs that we were sure we had to change. Many of our Christian friends were only too happy to show us rules and laws to which we were to conform. Some of these were things which we were told to stop doing and some were things we were told to start doing. This was OUR notion of 'cut and fill' in our un-transformed state. Cut and fill was determined by custom, logic, culture, and 'law'. It is extremely unfortunate that many Christians never proceed beyond this notion

Father God has his own concept of 'cut and fill'. His version goes far deeper into the human heart and is far more difficult to describe. I confess to you that I expected, when I became a Christian, that I would need some polishing and some subtle shaping. I assumed that a trowel would surely be adequate for the task. Not so! He has used tools I never heard of including the big D-11 dozer with rippers in the back. He not only razed me to the ground, He tore out all my foundations. In

truth, His version of 'cut and fill' for you will surely be quite different than it is for me but do not expect it to be any less drastic. That is easy to understand since both you and I began our journey with NO GOOD THING to bring to the Kingdom. Scripture accurately says that "we know that in us, that is in our flesh, dwells NO GOOD THING. Just as I was leveled and then had my foundations dug out -- so shall you. This does not seem like a true blessing to the flesh but it glows with great glory to our Spirits as they are brought to maturity. We were created with different terrain so the making of a straight level road will change in detail from believer to believer though not in substance. In addition, you and I were created for much different purposes. Father has decided that I will be a light to the world showing them Jesus in one particular way for a few years. He has decided that you will be a similar light but showing a slightly different facet, a slightly different perspective. Together we show two of His infinite facets. We were each created to become like Jesus but it will take millions of us, each looking much like Him, to be an adequate Bride for such a one as Him.

Many have wondered how scripture could not only suggest but blatantly state that we are no longer under the law. If any of you doubt this, read the book of Galatians carefully. It is because -- **WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW**. It is not complicated! If that is true, what basis can we use to conduct the 'cut and fill' process so we can become more like Jesus. Frankly 'your' cut and fill plan will not do the job. You might as well give up before you begin. Why? You have not been given the 'plans' for the road. You do not know where the road goes, what kind of traffic it must bear, how wide it should be. You know nothing of the use or destination of the road [you]. This is proper since you are not a divine engineer nor a divine road builder. You just do not know how. If we were to use "Laws" to build the road we would probably wind up trying to look like someone else's road. It would be a mess. I would try to look like you, you would try to look like me and no one would be able to get anywhere because the roads do not do where they are supposed to go. The answer to this is simple, yet complicated. God, Himself is the one who does the 'cut and fill' in our lives -- not you, not me, and not our Christians friends, Pastors, or Elders. He does this through the use of experiences, relationships, and most of all, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit IS the Divine Engineer. He has access to and expertise with many kinds of tools. The most basic and pervasive tool that Father uses is the interaction and intimacy between Father and His children. Scripture says that the Law of the Lord is perfect and that it is intended to 'lead us to Christ' but law HAS NO FUNCTION in the life of the child who is in close relationship with his Heavenly Father. As we talk with Him, are corrected by Him, and most of all, loved by Him the real, deep, and permanent process of spiritual 'cut and fill' takes place. This process is sometimes painful but

ALWAYS result in joy. As we mature and experience the results of God's workmanship in us the pain turns to joy sooner and sooner in the cut and fill process until we find ourselves embracing the bull dozer and rejoicing in tribulations. Scripture states that when we see Him we will be like Him. Surely this refers to a transformation as we leave this world and enter the next but it also is true right now. By obedience and submission to the love of our Father we are changed from Glory unto Glory, not by our own efforts but through the molding work of God Himself. This is the work of creating a New Creature in Christ.

The gospel, whenever we see it in action, is always good news. This process just described is some of the best news that man has ever heard. Becoming like Jesus, which is an impossibility using self effort becomes a perfectly natural transformation as our relationship with Him becomes intimate. As we spend time with Him, come to know Him and His works, and learn to rest in His loving nature he increasingly forms us and shapes us into His own likeness. We do not need reform, we can not reform. What is required is not 're'-formation but 'trans'-formation and this is exactly what Father offers to us. As we put Him in charge of construction we will be changed from glory to glory. Others will see this, and shall see our lives as a road to the Father. For ourselves, the peace and joy of becoming what Father designed us to be passes all understanding. We will hunger and thirst no more.