

## **Tomme, Don't Be a Dinkas**

(11/07/03)

Greetings to the Church from Betsy's House,

Something "occurred" (i.e. I was shown) to me this AM as I was waking up. I realized that no matter how much money I make or how much acclaim a person gets at what they do it's still just another temporary job here on planet earth.

The whole idea of big money, big jobs etc. being a big deal is just a figment of the world's vain imagination. It isn't a big deal at all--it's just another deal--in the words of Solomon, "vanity, vanity all is vanity".

We were watching a TV show the other night about a obscure tribe in the Sudan called the Dinkas.

Now the Dinkas had some unusual ways but one "tradition" stood out. Once a year all the men in the tribe would do everything they could to get as fat as possible. Ordinarily these were very slim people, skinny would be a better description. They would gorge themselves and then avoid any kind of physical exertion. No work, no play, no nothing except eating to get fat. Lay around and eat was all they did. At the end of this marathon eating event the fattest one would win.

"What would they win", you may ask? Well they would win the honor of being the fattest male in the tribe. "Wow", sign me up you may say. I mean, what a prize!!!

Some men had tried year after year to win this coveted position only to be denied by another. Some had even died trying to attain to this lofty place. Their commitment and effort knew no bounds.

As they progressed in their expansive endeavor they would sit there for all to admire, and admire they did. There they were in all their splendor, fat and still, a testimony to the tribes "tradition".

No one, in the tribe or outside the tribe, knew where, when or why the "tradition" had begun. All they knew is that it was a big deal to be big.

To the outsider, the sophisticated modern man, this looks absurd, ridiculous and superstitious to the nth degree. An example of what can happen to a bunch of uneducated savages. Without the benefits of modern society they were reduced to doing some very stupid and crazy things. In fact, the documentary showed them doing even more stupid, crazy things.

What struck me was this: there was/is a absolute correlation between them and our, or any "civilized", culture of today. Permit me to illustrate.

A young man is born into this world into the "American" tribe. Immediately his middle class parents (a distinction based upon a variety of ever changing and meaningless ideas and values) set about to insure his future success.

By age 3 or 4 they are scouting daycare centers that will get him started down that right track. They must not only give him an intellectual boost they must be the "right" daycare. He must be identified with the "best" (i.e. fattest) ones. It must be "the" daycare center, that is recognized by everyone as being "the" one.

From that point on his whole life revolves around fitting into that image of importance. He must participate in the "right" social events, schools and have only friends who are also in that "elite" group. Bear in mind that all of these things are only "right" because someone believes they are. They are the "traditional" way of seeing things in the American tribe.

Finally he graduates from "the" school and takes a position with a firm that is not just any old firm but "the" firm. He then begins to live the lifestyle of people in his "position". He has "made" it and his lifestyle must reflect it. (He's got to be the fattest) He drives a shiny metal box that everyone recognizes as the symbol of his position. He lives in a wooden box in a pasture that is noted to be the best box and pasture there is. There are other wooden boxes in that same pasture that mark the place of the fattest. His wife and family are raised in the same important traditions and so share in the same wonderful values. So the process repeats itself over and over again with no one, in the tribe or out, knowing where, why or when it began. There is one thing for sure, though, everyone knows it's true and good.

Finally, he dies and all the initiated members of his inner circle attend a ceremony. During this ceremony they put him in a new box, much smaller than his other box. This one is very ornate, so as to depict that he was important and loved. They paint him all up so that "he looks better than he did when he was alive". Some important person, you can tell he's important by what others know about him or the garb he wears or some such thing, stands in front of the wailing group. He makes some strange sounds that are supposed to mean something and they cry all the more. At the conclusion of that part of the ceremony they close the lid on the ornate box and drop him in a hole in the ground. The hole is then filled in and then a "big" ornate stone is placed on it so they can all go and find it and remember who is in the hole.

Now his wife will sell his metal box that got him to that important position. His important position will be readily filled by another member of his tribe who is now the new, soon to be old, important person who will continue the legacy of doing and being important.

Now, I ask you, "do the Dinkas really look that ridiculous"?

The only thing that counts and is truly important is that which is done in, for and by Christ. Eternity is what counts. It is more important than any temporal "success".

Is it more important to spend 30 minutes a day at the feet of our Friend and Master learning Truth or chase the meaningless traditions of the tribe?

Is it more important to attend the social events of the tribe or fellowship around His Word?

Is it more important to spend a life that will end in a hole in the ground or spend it on things that will last for eternity?

Is it more important to spend the majority of our time, effort, money and energy on the temporal symbols of this world or on the eternal things of Heaven?

I was reminded of "be not conformed to the pattern of this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind". I think I heard a voice on the wind that day that said, "Tomme, don't be a Dinkas".

In His Love,

Tomme