

# OIM UPDATE

December 2014

It is hard to believe, but twenty years ago this month, during the sixth month of our marriage, Margaret and I traveled to Israel for the first time on a tour organized by the Messianic Jewish ministry led by Zola Levitt of Dallas. After all, we reasoned back then, if we as evangelical Christians were going on a tour of Israel, then a Messianic Jew should share his knowledge of the Promised Land where the Jewish Messiah and Patriarchs of Israel had lived! Providentially, Zola was unable to lead the group because of an unexpected heart ailment that prevented him from traveling at that particular time. Rather than enjoying Zola's larger-than-life personality during our tour, he placed his more placid videographer in charge of overseeing and guiding the group. Initially, we were disappointed with the change in leadership just prior to embarking on our transatlantic flight. But in retrospect, we were absolutely blessed—because the absence of the exuberant ministry leader, required the impromptu leader to depend on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for guidance throughout the tour. It was not until we returned home that we realized what a special gift such a Spirit-led tour would be for us personally. Several months earlier, we had been led to believe that Isaiah 43 was a Scripture for us, and we were both sincerely seeking the Lord for His will for our new life together. Thankfully, the future course of our spiritual journey, as one in the Messiah, was revealed through a variety of Spirit-inspired communications.

Vivid memories remain of God speaking through some of the thirty sojourning Christians, who for the most part, did not previously know any of their fellow travelers prior to the tour. But the Spirit of God also impressed us at times at various historical and Biblical sites, where we were supernaturally overwhelmed with His presence. One morning in particular (15 December, 1994), before the scheduled tour began, that day, Margaret and I secured a taxi for a pre-dawn visit to watch the sunrise from atop the highest point on Mount Tabor. With the Sea of Galilee on the northeast horizon, we overlooked the plain of Jezreel or Megiddo to the southwest, and reconsidered the message of Deborah's inspirational words found in Judges 4. With Nazareth to the northwest we contemplated the Messiah's upbringing in His hometown, and the place where He was almost thrown off a cliff by His fellow citizens. We then went back in history, and forward in time, and imagined the past and future battles at Armageddon—with appropriate prayers that dedicated our lives to Him—as we welcomed the rising of the sun over this blessed land promised to the heirs of Abraham.

As the morning continued, we rejoined our tour group as it headed down the Jordan River valley toward Jericho, where we stopped to be baptized in the chilly living waters. It was there that our disposable camera (before the days of digital cameras) recorded a glimpse of the Holy Spirit, evidenced in a wispy white light that surrounded Margaret as she emerged from the river. Oddly, neither the frame before nor the frame after captured any of the translucent light that engulfed Margaret. Needless to say, we believe that the Lord gave us a visi-

ble sign that He had heard our prayers and was going to bless us in the years to come!

Later that afternoon, we were surveying the Dead Sea from up above at the ancient fortress of Masada. Before descending, we were directed to a small synagogue located in the northern wall, which had some small openings where one could peer down over a valley of cragged rocks and eroded terrain. What appeared from a distance to be a valley of dried bones, was confirmed when we noticed a small plaque that noted how fragments from Ezekiel 37 had been found at this spot during the original excavation. Upon turning to my Bible, I found myself reading this Scripture passage out loud through one of the windows that opened to the north, without any concern for the growing crowd tuned into my intensifying oration. Of course, we had no idea at that time, how much of our future ministry would revolve around producing educational materials to help others in the long prophesied Messianic restoration of Israel, mentioned not only in this chapter, but also in Acts 3:19-21. Consequently, we took note, because I was not in the habit of drawing attention to myself. But clearly, there was no doubt in our minds that the Holy Spirit had definitely prompted me to boldly declare this Scripture to everything within earshot!

From there our tour group “went up” from the Jordan Valley and settled into our final lodging place at Kibbutz Ramat Rachel overlooking Jerusalem and Bethlehem, near the historical site where Jacob’s beloved Rachel was laid to rest. From there I was able to take early morning jogs down to the Old City and catch the roosters crowing as dawn was breaking, before praying at the Western Wall. There was something palpably magnetic about Jerusalem! We both discerned the presence of the Holy Spirit’s illumination about what we were learning at the various sites from our Jewish Israeli tour guide, who was a Believer in Yeshua, and also in our times of personal reflection, prayer, and conversations. One memorable highlight before we returned home came on the Temple Mount plaza, after we decided to *not* enter the mosques because of the discernible presence of evil. Instead, we discovered a reddish colored flat stone where we believed, “by faith,” the Holy of Holies of the ancient Temple was once located. Without hugging or noticeably praying, because those activities were not permitted by the Muslim authorities, we simply lifted our hands to the Lord and dedicated ourselves to His service!

Needless to say, our time spent in the Promised Land dramatically altered our thinking about how we were to pursue our relationship with the Lord, for the remainder of our lives. Inevitably, our understanding about the direct relationship between our belief in the blood sacrifice of the Savior, and how it was foreshadowed by the Passover deliverance from Egypt, was reinforced. Additionally, we were further exposed to the foundational building blocks of the faith system founded by Abraham and carried forth by Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons, which led to the formation of Ancient Israel. As our tour was coming to a conclusion, we both received the strong impression that we were supposed to in some way **participate in the feasts of the Lord** when we returned home to the United States.

However, when one receives a directive from the Holy Spirit that is differ-

ent from what one has been taught and has experienced in evangelical Christianity, there is not always an immediate departure from the more familiar routine. Nevertheless, the Lord was faithful to gently lead us to a Messianic Jewish congregation where we eventually celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. At that point, we definitely discerned His pleasure. Within a few weeks, we began to attend *Erev Shabbat* and *Shabbat* services, as we continued to visit a church on Sunday which we had considered joining. We became the classic double- or triple-dippers, simply hungering for more and more of God and His ways. Soon we realized that the Holy Spirit was feeding our desire for spiritual nourishment at the Messianic synagogue, and we simply discontinued attending the church. After a few months, we began to take Hebrew language lessons, and joined the new members class. At that point in 1995, we have never looked back and never regretted the spiritual journey the Holy One has had our family travel.

Nevertheless, over the years, we had to contend with some perplexed comments and even muted derision from our family, friends, and former acquaintances, who could not comprehend why we would leave the relative comfort of our Christian settings. *Do you still believe in Jesus? Are you trying to become Jewish?* These were just a few of the questions we had to answer on a regular basis, as we became more compliant with the Messianic lifestyle, which in our minds was simply doing what Yeshua and the Apostles did when they walked on the planet many years ago. However, as **non-Jewish Believers**, there were a number of dilemmas we had to overcome, as we sought to grow in our understanding and mature in our Messianic walk of faith.

How do evangelical Believers transition from a Spirit-led Christian walk to a Messianic and Torah obedient lifestyle? Where does one turn for instruction on proper protocol at the synagogue gatherings, given all of the opinions present in the Jewish religious community? *What is properly done on the weekly Shabbat or during the feasts of the Lord? What about a kosher diet?* **Our legitimate questions and concerns to not offend our Messianic Jewish brethren were seemingly endless.**

This was especially challenging during the mid-1990s, because the great majority of Messianic Jewish rabbis and leaders were appropriately concentrating their efforts on Jewish evangelism and making their fellowships and congregations comfortable for any Jewish non-Believers who might enter the assemblies. For a number of years reading from primarily Jewish sources, we discovered that there were very few written resources which were instructions for the increasing number of non-Jews like our family, who were supernaturally being drawn into these Messianic settings. As a result of this challenge, and constantly fielding questions that needed loving, balanced, and scholarly answers—we used our experiential knowledge and desire to help others, and began to write articles in the late 1990s which were used to eventually become books. Consequently, we were commissioned to launch Outreach Israel Ministries on November 1, 2002, with TNN Online merged into our efforts in 2003.

For over twelve years, we have **faithfully produced written materials that have addressed a wide range of topics to assist Messianic people**, who the Spirit of God has drawn into the Messianic community of faith. At this point in time, we have forty-seven titles that are available in paperback and eBook for Amazon

Kindle. A few years ago we asked people to contribute to the **Theological Defense Trust**, so we would have the financial support to continue the work we have been called to fulfill in the Messianic community of faith. Additionally, because of the great number of inquiries to freely receive our written materials from those incarcerated in the U.S. penal system, we formed the **Free Book Prison Ministry** to fund that effort.

This month's lead article is written by J.K. McKee, and is entitled, "**The Forgotten Past.**" In December, both the Jewish community and Messianic community will be commemorating the Feast of Dedication or *Chanukah*, but too many often consider *Chanukah* to be a holiday all about lighting the *menorah* and eating fried foods. This article goes into comparing how the Maccabean crisis of the Second Century B.C.E. is an overlooked part of Biblical-period history, which greatly affects Second Temple Judaism of the First Century C.E. and some of the challenges experienced by the early Messianic Believers. This is not unlike how the centennial of The Great War is being presently remembered in Europe, but how few Americans realize the significance of World War I for the later conflict of World War II.

Enclosed you will find a form and return envelope for an end of the year gift to help with the ongoing needs of Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online. Your intercessory prayers and generous financial support are greatly appreciated!

May the Lord bless you and keep you during this special season!

*Chag Sameach!*

Mark Huey

# THE FORGOTTEN PAST

by J.K. McKee

2014 is an important year for many across the world, as many people—principally in Europe, the United Kingdom, and British Commonwealth countries—are remembering the centennial or centenary of The Great War or World War I. Earlier this year, 888, 246 ceramic poppies, to commemorate the British and Empire war dead, were placed around the Tower of London. The Great War totally changed our world, not just in terms of the technology and tactics of warfare—but because when it started, four of the five empires who were belligerents were gone (Russian Empire, German Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire), dominions in the British Empire like Canada, Australia, or New Zealand began to assert a wider degree of independence, and an emerging world power in the United States began to wield its influence. When the war was over, and Britain and France demanded that Germany pay heavy reparations, and inflation hit the German mark at unfathomable proportions, extremist groups like the National Socialist or Nazi party were able to feed on the resentment of the people. The Russian Empire had become the new Soviet Union. At the same time, with the liberation of the Holy Land from the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration gave an impetus to the growing Zionist movement and world attention was focused to some degree on the need for a Jewish homeland and state.

It is not difficult to deduce how understanding World War I, and its aftermath, is important for the succeeding conflict of World War II, the rise of the United States as the principal Western power, as well as the Holocaust and birth of the State of Israel, and even the Cold War to follow. **But many of you who are reading this are Americans who do not know that much about World War I, because it was mainly a European conflict.**

As a student of history, as well as a Bible teacher, not understanding World War I and how it radically changed Planet Earth—is very much like not understanding the Maccabean crisis of the Second Century B.C.E. I do not have direct experience as to what it might be like when Jewish people either in Israel or in the Diaspora gather to remember *Chanukah* or the Feast of Dedication. But, I suspect that not a huge amount of attention is given to the historical record, and more attention is given to the traditional lighting of the *menorah*, eating fried foods, and giving presents to children. *This is what most of the Messianic community does...* A group called the Maccabees cleansed the Temple from a defilement, it was believed that the *menorah* stayed lit for eight days via a miracle, and without the Temple having been rededicated there would have quickly been no Jewish people and hence no Messiah.

Why do we not understand the circumstances surrounding the Feast of Dedication a little better? Part of this is due to how the main record of the Maccabean crisis is not contained in canonical Scripture, but rather in reliable ancient writings from the Biblical period. The main record is present in the Books of 1&2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha, texts widely preserved in Greek, that make up what some Christian traditions label as the deutero-canon, in a second tier of

religious writing, perhaps semi-inspired, which would sit just under the inspired Tanach and Apostolic Scriptures (Old and New Testaments). Other related texts are the Books of 3&4 Maccabees, as well as a record contained in the works of the First Century Jewish historian Josephus. There are various ecumenical study Bibles (from the RSV, NEB, REB, and NRSV), which will have English translations of the Apocryphal books, and perhaps some running commentary as well.

I have written extensively on the Maccabean crisis in the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper* by TNN Press (2009/2012), but it is important that each of us not forget some of the major components of what took place. Even though there was a large Jewish Diaspora, the Babylonian exile was over, and Jewish people were living in the Land of Israel, with an operating priesthood and Temple, widely serving as a vassal state of the Seleucid-Greek faction that had arisen from the dividing up of Alexander the Great's empire. The dangers of Jewish people assimilating into the more dominant Hellenistic culture and religion, had widely been present (1 Maccabees 1:11-15), but with the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.E.) and his mad thirst for power, Judea found itself caught in the middle of larger kingdoms vying for control of the region. When Antiochus left a less-than-successful campaign against the Ptolemaic-Greeks of Egypt, he came to Jerusalem and ransacked the Temple of its treasures (1 Maccabees 1:20-24; 2 Maccabees 5:16-17). While Antiochus was responsible for killing many at this time, what receives more attention is how several years later he wanted all in his realm to be the same, religiously and culturally. And what this meant for the Jews living in Israel, is that keeping the Torah and its instructions would become illegal on threat of death:

“And the king wrote to all his kingdom for all to be as one people and for each to abandon his own precepts; all the nations complied with the dictum of the king. And many also from Israel approved of his service and sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. And the king sent documents carried by the hand of messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Iouda for them to follow precepts foreign to the land and to withhold whole burnt offerings and sacrifice and libation from the holy precinct and to profane sabbaths and feasts and to defile holy precinct and holy ones, to build altars and sacred precincts and houses to idols and to sacrifice swine and common animals and to leave their sons uncircumcised, to make their souls abominable in every unclean and profane thing, so as to forget the law and change all the statutes. And whoever would not abide by the command of the king would die. According to all these words he wrote to all his kingdom and appointed supervisors over all the people and commanded all the cities of Iouda to sacrifice city by city. And many of the people joined them, everyone who abandoned the law, and they did evil in the land. And they forced Israel into hiding places, into every one of their places of refuge. And on the fifteen day of Cheseleu in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, he constructed an abomination of desolation on the altar, and in the cities around Iouda they built altars and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the city squares. And the books of the law which they found they tore up and burned with fire. And wherever there was found in someone's possession a book of the covenant, of if someone was conforming to the law, the judgment of the king put them to death” (1 Maccabees 1:41-57, NETS).

The scene of what took place on the Temple Mount is what tends to really garner our attention, as the appointed place where Israel met with the One True God, got quickly converted into a pagan temple, with the record here even making some connection with the Daniel 9:27 Abomination of Desolation (cf. Matthew 24:15). What should also not go unnoticed, is how while Yeshua had said, “It is written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER’; but you are making it a ROBBERS’ DEN” (Matthew 21:13; also Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46), appealing to Tanach Scripture (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11) and how many were being shortchanged—the author of 2 Maccabees presents a scene of what took place as being far worse, as the House of God literally became a whorehouse:

“Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Judeans to forsake their ancestral laws and no longer to live by the laws of God—also to pollute the shrine in Hierosolyma and to call it the shrine of Olympian Zeus and to call the one on Garizim the shrine of Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers, as the people who lived in that place had petitioned. Harsh and utterly grievous was the onslaught of evil. For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the nations, who dallied with prostitutes and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit. The altar was covered with abominable offerings that were forbidden by the laws. People could neither keep the sabbath nor observe their ancestral feasts nor so much as confess themselves to be Judeans” (2 Maccabees 6:1-6, NETS).

Much of the record contained in 1&2 Maccabees records the guerilla war and resistance of those Jews in the Land of Israel, who remained faithful to God and their ancestral heritage, and who fought against the Seleucid-Greeks. The ones who gain the most attention are the family of Mattathias (a derivative of Matthew), who died of old age during the conflict (1 Maccabees 2:49), but who passed on the mantle of leadership to his son Judah, being nicknamed *Makkabbi* (מַכַּבִּי) or “hammer.” The record of 1&2 Maccabees details some of the events which involved the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes, his limited success in seeing many Jews assimilate to Greek religion and culture, his defiling of the Temple, but then his defeat and the Maccabees’ victory. The immediate aftermath in seeing the Maccabees consolidate themselves as leaders of an independent Jewish realm—although still in a shifting Mediterranean world, given the rise of Rome as an up and coming power (1 Maccabees 8:1)—is also detailed. What is important for the Bible student, is while understanding and appreciating the history and sacrifice of those Torah-faithful Jews during this period is doubtlessly needed—is **evaluating the social impact of what took place among many Jewish people of the Second Temple era.**

It is not as though the decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes were just general prohibitions, forbidding the Jews in Israel to worship their own God at their own Temple, and from neither reading nor following the Torah or Law of Moses. *Specific* Torah practices were targeted as being illegal, and hence we see in the record of what took place, that these practices were not only “illegally observed” as a matter of resistance—but even fought and died for.

The most striking of all the Torah practices that was prohibited on the

threat of death, had to be **circumcision**. An ancient process, known as epispasm, did see that circumcised male Jews could effectively remove their physical circumcision, what the NETS renders as “they fashioned foreskins for themselves” (1 Maccabees 1:15), and never totally went away, as it is noted later in 1 Corinthians 7:18. It is described how many mothers who circumcised their sons during this time, did suffer the consequence of being executed:

“And the women who had circumcised their children they put to death according to the ordinance, and they hung the babies from their necks and put to death their families and those who circumcised them” (1 Maccabees 1:60-61, NETS; also 2 Maccabees 6:10).

During his campaign in fighting the Seleucid-Greek occupiers, it is actually witnessed that the Jew Mattathias saw that many Jewish boys were circumcised:

“And Mattathias and his friends went around and tore down the altars and circumcised by force all the uncircumcised boys they found within the borders of Israel” (1 Maccabees 2:45-46, NETS).

A defiling or dismissal, of the **Sabbath**, is also seen in the record of the Maccabean crisis. One of the main reasons why God gave His people the weekly Sabbath rest, was for them to remember the Israelite slaves in Egypt, who had no rest (Deuteronomy 5:15). During the time of Seleucid dominance, there was a total loss of such a Sabbath rest. It is indeed witnessed, though, how there were groups of Jews, keeping the Sabbath, and were slaughtered for not defending themselves (1 Maccabees 2:31-38). While these people were mourned, Judah Maccabee and his party all agreed that if they did not fight on the Sabbath, that they would all be completely slaughtered:

“And they said, a man to his neighbor, ‘If we all do as our brothers did and do not fight against the nations for our lives and for our statutes, now quickly they will annihilate us from the land.’ And they decided on that day saying, ‘Every person who comes against us in battle on the day of the sabbaths, let us fight against them, and we will not all die as our brothers died in the hiding places’” (1 Maccabees 2:40-41, NETS).

The third major feature of the Maccabean crisis, which has actually repeated itself in multiple ways throughout history since, was **forced consumption of pork** upon Jews, as a matter of demonstrating their dismissal of God’s ways. Pigs were not the only animals sacrificed on the Temple Mount by the Seleucids, as traditional Greek religion did employ sheep, goats, or cattle, which would be technically considered “clean.” Pigs, however, were not clean (cf. Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14), and Ancient Israelite avoidance of pork is often thought to have been rooted in a need for them to stay away from Ancient Near Eastern paganism, among other reasons. The author of 2 Maccabees records two significant examples of those who died because they refused to eat pork. The first, a scribe named Eleazar, was an old man willing to give up his life rather than eat pork:

“Eleazaros, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine’s flesh. But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh, as all ought to do who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life” (2 Maccabees 6:18-20, NETS).



Eleazar's colleagues actually urged him to just pretend to eat pork, so that he might save his life in the process, but he refused (2 Maccabees 6:21-23). He responded to them, "To pretend is not worthy of our time of life...for many of the young might suppose that Eleazaros in his ninetieth year had gone over the allophylyism [alien religion, RSV]" (2 Maccabees 6:24, NETS). He further said, "Even if for the present I would avoid the punishment of mortals, yet whether I live or die I shall not escape the hands of the Almighty" (2 Maccabees 6:26, NETS). And so for not eating pork, Eleazar went to the rack and was martyred (2 Maccabees 6:28-31).

The second, and by far most serious scene of not eating pork, is witnessed in 2 Maccabees 7. Seven brothers are taken before their mother, and with Antiochus Epiphanes present, each one of them is tested as to whether he will "partake of unlawful swine's flesh" (2 Maccabees 7:1). 2 Maccabees 7 summarizes how each one of the brothers defiantly refuses to give in, facing a painful death. They appeal to the God of Israel as their final Vindicator, and how they will each be resurrected into the new world He will one day inaugurate. The mother who has had to watch all of this too dies, and all the author can say afterward is, "Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices and the extreme tortures" (2 Maccabees 7:42). Biblical examiners and commentators are in general agreement that the brothers tortured to death here, are actually those referenced in Hebrews 11:35: "and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection."

By the time the military campaign turns in the Maccabees' favor, with the Seleucids being driven out, and the Temple cleansed and rededicated—it is hardly a surprise that a national commemoration would be declared so that what took place would never be forgotten (1 Maccabees 4:52-59), a commemoration which was present during the time of Yeshua (John 10:22-23). While the story and traditions surrounding *Chanukah* effectively end at 1 Maccabees ch. 4, the continuing record describes how the military conflict was not over, and did involve additional threats to the Jewish people, as well as internal strife among the Seleucid-Greeks themselves.

How did many Jewish people during the time of Yeshua perceive themselves, being the descendants of those who fought and died to preserve a Torah way of life? How did Jews contemporary to the Apostles think of the rite of circumcision, or of their Greek and Roman neighbors who were uncircumcised? How much did the events of the Second Century B.C.E. Maccabean crisis affect the spread of the good news among Jewish people *and* pagans out in the Mediterranean basin? Did the Maccabees, while rightly having fought against the defilement committed—also leave a **legacy of xenophobia and extreme suspicion against outsiders to the Jewish community**? When the gospel message of Israel's Messiah was received by Greeks and Romans, many Jewish Believers did not act too positively—because they thought their introduction into the faith community would be the end of the Jewish people, and a reintroduction of paganism.

*Not forgetting the Maccabean crisis is important for us as Messianic students of Scripture.* When we recognize its significance, much of the complex sociology of God cleansing all people via Peter's vision (Acts 10), the Galatian problem, the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council, and even the challenges in Romans, become clear!

# TNN ONLINE EDITOR'S UPDATE

December 2014

Dear Friends:

Is 2014 really almost over? Have I really been back in Texas for two years now? These are two



questions that have been circulating in my mind for the past several weeks, as time tends to quickly pass for those of us who are preoccupied with the work of ministry service. 2014 was surely an important year for Outreach Israel and TNN Online, with the projects that we completed, and with the things we have set out to do for 2014.

A huge assignment that was finished was the release of the 674 page *Messianic Kosher Helper*, and the 140 page condensed follow up *Kashrut: Kosher for Messianic Believers*. As I write this, the commentary *Romans for the Practical Messianic* is in its final stages of completion, as I would expect to see it released in both paperback and eBook by the end of the month. I am also presently writing the final chapter for *Torah In the Balance, Volume II*, and would anticipate an announcement for both *Volumes I&II* to be issued sometime in the First Quarter of 2015. Another announcement to look for will be how the eight seven years of Outreach Israel News back issues have been compiled into eight paperback volumes!

I always stay very busy, as I recognize that the work Outreach Israel and TNN Online are very unique for today's still-emerging and ever-maturing Messianic movement. Over the past month, a number of new FAQ entries have been added to the TNN site, with several others to soon be compiled. The two major projects in store for 2015, will be the Wednesday Night Bible Study on the letter of 1 Corinthians, and my coordinating the lengthy *Messianic Sabbath Helper* volume. On the side, I plan to steadily add new entries to the Bible Messages section. On the whole, I expect the same quantity of work for 2015, as I had in 2014.

One of the good things about 2014 is that although the broad Messianic community certainly experienced its fair share of ups-and-downs, that I personally had no real disappointments. 2014 was not a year "catching up" on half- or two-thirds-finished projects. Everything that I worked on was new. Everything that I am going to work on will be new. I might be on a "different track" than many peers my own age, but I am relatively content with the situation, both professional and personal, in which I find myself (Philippians 4:11).

Until next month...

J.K. McKee