

## Pastor Phil's Family Spiritual Heritage - by Jerry Layton

1. 33 years ago I was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by our missionary sending church in Tacoma WA, and today our son is being ordained for the gospel ministry here where we both attend. I cannot think of a better father's day gift for either Phil or myself than to share the spiritual Heritage of faithful men of God in our family tree who have gone before Phil to help make him the faithful man of God that he is today!
2. Today is also Pastor Phil's Birthday. He came into the world on a Monday afternoon 38 years ago today in Poughkeepsie NY. He was not scheduled to arrive until July 4<sup>th</sup>, and his Mom was supposed to help with Vacation Bible School which started that very day.
3. His mother and I were fairly new Christians, committed to raising Godly children. We dedicated Pastor Phil to the Lord when he a baby, after making our commitment as parents "to bring up ALL our children in the training and instruction of the Lord". Shortly after his birth, the Lord made clear to Donna and me that He was calling me to preach. So instead of returning to my teaching job that fall, I enrolled in seminary.
4. I was ordained to the gospel ministry when Pastor Phil was 4 years old, commissioned as missionaries, and we left for our first term of Missionary service for evangelism and church-planting in the Philippines when he was 6.
5. On one of our furloughs when Phil was in High school, we took a cross-country trip that would bring Phil face-to-face with an actor representing our earliest known preacher ancestors. Donna and I knew we both had relatives on the Mayflower that brought our Pilgrim fathers to Colonial America seeking religious freedom.
6. So we spent a day at Pilgrim Plantation living museum, where they have rebuilt the village home and actors play the parts. Our ancestor on my mother's side was Pastor William Brewster, Ruling Elder of Plymouth colony, who preached and taught the people in God's Word. Theirs was a prominent home, so we entered in and had the joy of actually talking to our ancestors, in the person of a look-alike actors. Someone wrote about his preaching: "he was very moving and stirring of affections, also very plain and distinct in what he taught, ripping up the heart and conscience before God in the humble confession of sin, and begging the mercies of God in Christ for the pardon of the same."
7. More recently Phil became interested in our unpublished Family Heritage book entitled: "The Memoires of A Missionary" written by Phil's Great Grandfather on my father's side.
8. The book begins describing the pre-Civil War days of Phil's GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER, Dr. Perry Stillwell Layton, a saddleback preacher and medical doctor riding throughout the foothills of Kentucky, before . This was who is described as later in life being a godly influence in Kentucky state government just previous to our nation's Civil War.
9. The archived Annals of Kentucky government from 1863, which on page 121 states that "Legislature made special solemn protest against the Emancipation Proclamation, as unwise, unconstitutional, and void. They voted AGAINST the president's proposition for freeing the Negro slaves. And it's noted that "only Perry S. Layton, Representative alone (and one Senator) voted against this rejection of freeing the slaves. Later, when

we visited Kentucky, we found the graveyard where there is a 6-foot monument to Dr. Perry Stilwell Layton, with the inscription: "He alone stood for the Union!"

10. Phil's great grandfather WHO WROTE OUR UNPUBLISHED FAMILY HISTORY describes his life as a pioneer medical missionary to the Belgian Congo at the turn of the century.
11. They had the first white child born in that part of Africa, which made international news at the time, and named her Lita which is short for "Little White Angel". It is an honor to have my sister Lita here today, who was named after her aunt Lita who was born in the Congo.
12. At the end of Dr Edwin Aid Layton's Memoires of a Missionary, pg. 212, it reads like he wrote from a broken heart: "Our children have all grown up and As yet, none have been inclined to "go as missionaries". We can understand, of course, that missionary life today does not make the same appeal that it did when we were young.
13. Our conviction is, too, that no one should follow this calling unless he has the missionary "passion". My sanctified imagination makes me think that he would have prayed for one of his children's children to catch that "Missionary Passion." I clearly sensed that silent prayer directing me, and then through me to Phil.
14. Those who have followed Phil and Jaime's Congo adoption journey, or heard Phil's powerful series on "God's Multi-Ethnic Family Plan", know that the passion is still burning bright! For personal comments Phil, It is such an honored to be part of your Ordination ceremony today, and I want to say that your mother and I stand constantly amazed at the awesome, amazing, incomprehensible goodness of God that He would place us in your flock at this time in our lives to be blessed week after week by your always FAITHFUL in-depth, always marvelously insightful, accurate and trustworthy exposition of the Word of God.
15. Pastor Phil, I want to close by reminding you of the motivational words of our Risen Lord which you heard me preach in your growing up years regarding God's call evangelistic passion. His words are for all His faithful servants, whether He leads them on horseback to humble mountain folk of KY, or to savage warring tribes in the steaming jungles of darkest Africa, or to lost souls of cities and universities of the Philippines, or to spiritually hungry people of Gold Country CA, Christ call recorded in Acts 26:16-18 is ever passionate that we be faithful in going for Him:  
***"I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness .. <sup>17</sup> I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."***
16. Remember to walk in the faithfulness of the many choice servants whom God has placed before you as your example for faithful ministry. May all who come behind YOU find you faithful!. And Phil, may all who follow in your footsteps find in your faithfulness the courage and inspiration to walk ever faithful in their service to their God and Savior. Amen and To God be ALL the glory! Amen!