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# Morgan County Today

Psalm 100:3

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## More Than A Newspaper.

# 75¢



### Morgan County Today

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WEEKLY WEATHER



TUE 3/24  67° 46°

WED 3/25  66° 52°

THU 3/26  79° 57°

FRI 3/27  69° 34°

SAT 3/28  59° 38°

SUN 3/29  65° 41°

MON 3/30  71° 48°



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

### Annual Alumni Banquet

— Sunbright High School —

Saturday, May 23rd • 6:00 PM

Sunbright School Cafeteria

205 Burrville Rd

Sunbright, TN 37872

\$20 Per Person

Class of 2026 Graduates

— FREE

Celebrate • Reconnect  
Honor Our Tigers



— In Loving Memory —

**Arthur Willis Brown, 90  
United States Army Veteran**



Arthur Willis Brown, age 90, passed away March 10, 2026 at Life Care of Morgan County.

He is preceded in death by parents Floyd and Martha; first wife (Dixie); son John; step daugh-

ter Malissa and sisters (Merta, Edith, Marie and Rosie).

Arthur is survived by wife Marjorie; sons Wendell Brown of New Market, TN and Jeremiah (Lynn) Brown of Oak Ridge, TN.; 8 grandchildren and many great grandchildren.

Arthur married Dixie Baker in 1965 and was married to her until her death in 1996. They had 3 sons, Wendell, John and Jeremiah. He married Marjorie in 1997.

Arthur was a member of the US Army from the ages of 22-24. He

was a heavy equipment operator with Conner Brothers Excavating for 30 years and had a hand in building many subdivisions in the west Knoxville area. He lived in many different places, including Port Comfort and Yokum Texas as well as Harriman and Knoxville Tennessee. He eventually settled in Deer Lodge, TN.

In his later years, he enjoyed spending time with family and friends. He loved to cook, spend time in his garden and to sing. He treasured his time as part of the congregation of Pilot Mountain Baptist Church. He had a knack for telling great stories

and was always ready with a "dad joke."

The family will have a graveside service Friday, March 13, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. with Bro. Josh Baldwin officiating in the Island Ford Cemetery in Lancing.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Arthur Willis Brown.*

**James Bauer, 79  
United States Army Veteran**



James Bauer  
October 2, 1947 —  
February 19, 2026  
Sunbright

James Robert Bauer, age 79, gained his wings February 19, 2026 at Methodist Medical Center with his family by his side. James was born October 2, 1947 in Erie Pennsylvania to the late Walter and Margaret (Pistner) Bauer of Erie, PA. James proudly served his country in the US Army. He was a hard working man with a great work ethic and a long work history at Bell South and

had a huge passion for hunting and woodworking.

He was preceded in death by his loving parents, Walter and Margaret (Pistner) Bauer; and in-laws, Aramadao and Elizabeth Argentina.

James is survived by his loving wife of 44 years, Jean Bauer "His Honey"; children: Scott (Erica) Bauer of AZ, Mark Murray of GA, Sheri Harris of Munford, AL, and Stephen (Misty) Bauer of TN; sisters, Ann Glasspell of PA and Linda Bauman of PA; 7 grandchildren and his longtime friend and chosen brother, Bill Podewils of Sunbright, TN.

A memorial service will be held in James's honor on March 1, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at American Legion Post 149, 202 S Kingston St. Wartburg, TN, 37887.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of James Robert Bauer.*

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

**James Bauer, 79**



Liam, Oaklynn, Hunter; brother Barry (Diana) Phillips; step brothers Steven Aytes (Holly), Ken Aytes; step sister Crystale Aytes; special friend Donna Gunter and a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, and uncles.

The family will receive friends Sunday, February 22, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 1:00-3:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 3:00 p.m. with Bro. Robert Freels and Bro. Tyler Trout officiating. Graveside services will be Monday at 11:00 a.m. in the Frankfort Cemetery in Lancing.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of William "Bill" Phillips.*

William "Bill" Phillips, age 55 of Deer Lodge passed away Friday, February 20, 2026 at Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville.

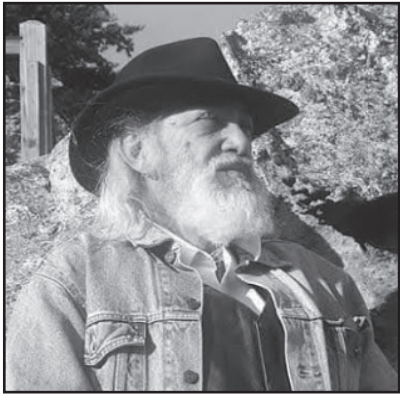
He is preceded in death by his father Robert Alton Phillips; special friend Steve Gunter.

He is survived by his parents Peggy and Butch Aytes; children Kailyn (Logan) Simmons, Kelsey Phillips and fiancé Adam Pass; step sons Dylan Hughett, Shade Underwood; fiancé Amie Underwood; grandchildren Sophia,



## — In Loving Memory —

### Phillip Ray Detrick, 64



Mr. Phillip Ray Detrick, age 64, of Sunbright passed away Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at his home in Sunbright.

He is preceded in death by his father, Larry Stolzenburg Sr.,

his mother, Betty McDaniel, his brother, Larry (Duck) Detrick, his nephew Jason Detrick, and his brother-in-law Cody Marmon.

He is survived by his wife, Jennifer Detrick; children Jay (Kaleigh Brock) Hawn, Cameron (Mickie) Robbins, and Phillip Detrick Jr.; his special granddaughter Jayde Robbins, and eagerly anticipated grandson Kolton Hawn. Also surviving are his step-father Paul Ed McDaniel, his step-mother Roberta Stolzenburg, his sister Pat (Keith) Wilcox, his loving family of in-laws; Robin and Linda Marmon, Greg and Robyn Bunch, Sean and Tori Marmon,

and a host of nieces and nephews and close friends that will greatly miss him!

Extra thanks to special family friend Marcie Brookman for all the help she gave to make Phil's final days comfortable. The family cannot begin to name all of Phil's friends that have been there for him at the end, but we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Phil was an avid sportsman! He loved to collect guns and knives, go fishing, and hunt when he was able. He had a gruff exterior but was a very loving family

man who never took those that cared for him for granted. He was quick to joke with anyone that would stop to talk.

The family will receive friends Friday, February 27, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 2:00 p.m. with Military Honors.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Mr. Phillip Ray Detrick.*

### Phyllis Seiber, 79



Phyllis Seiber, age 79, passed away on February 23, 2026 surrounded by her family.

She is proceeded in death by her parents, Noble and Aliene Stringer; brother, Paul Stringer and sister, Sandra Faye Ledford.

She is survived by her daughter, Lisa (Jimmy) West of Mossy Grove; Son, Doyle (Vicky) Seiber of Clinton.

Devoted partner of 25 years, CL Patterson.

Grandkids, Ryan (Brooke) Jackson of Oliver Springs; Taylen Jackson of Mossy Grove; Alison (Cameron) Seiber of Oak Ridge.

Great-Grandchildren, Lily, Savannah, Tommy "Boy", Bailey and Beckham.

As well as a host of special cousins, nieces and nephews.

Phyllis was a member of Petros Baptist Church.

She worked at Red Kap for several years then on to Methodist Medical Center.

Phyllis loved The Lord, her family, to travel, laugh, and have a good time.

She never met a stranger. If you were friends with Phyllis, you had a true friend. She will be so missed by all that knew and loved her.

The family will receive friends Thursday, February 26, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. David Seiber officiating. Graveside services will be Friday at 11:00 a.m. in the New Petros Cemetery in Petros.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Phyllis Seiber.*

### James Bauer, 79



Stella Bunch Kelly age 100 passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 28, 2026. Stella grew up in Coalfield and was a true Coalminer's daughter. She was born on January 15, 1926 to the late Walter and Lillie Bunch. She served her country during WWII as a Calutron Girl at the Y-12 plant. Her husband, 2 brothers and 4 brothers-in-laws all served overseas during WWII. She was a very dedicated Christian always working in her Church and teaching many Sunday School Classes. She took pride in her ability to raise her 3 children by working off the land to provide for them. Between milking a cow and making butter and cheese, to raising a garden and canning vegetables, fruit and meat, she provided most of the food for her family. As her children grew, she started working. She worked many years as a Head Start teacher and was very proud and honored to volunteer at the Methodist Medical Center's Coronary Rehabilitation Facility.

She was preceded in death by her parents Walter and Lillie Bunch; husband Clyde; special son-in-law Mark Shelton; sisters Aletha Bunch Spainhour and Florence Bunch Worthington; and brothers, Harvey, Isaac, Paul and James Bunch. She is survived by brother Earl Bunch; daughter Brenda Shelton; sons C.A. (Marcia) and Gary (Kathy); grandsons Stephen, Darren (Jess), Joe (Amanda), Patrick (Heather), and John (Jessi); 13 great-grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The family will receive friends Monday, March 2, 2026, from 12:00 until 2:00 pm Schubert Funeral Home, Wartburg. Funeral services will follow at 2:00 pm with Ronny Jones officiating. Internment will follow in the Union Cemetery, Wartburg, TN.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105.501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Stella Bunch Kelly.*

**Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.**



— In Loving Memory —

**Patricia Ann Crouch McGrath**



Patricia was happily married to George H McGrath III for 56 years before his passing in 2016 . To this union were born 4 children, daughter Mary Anna Widick, daughter Karen Griffith (Allen), son Michael McGrath (Candice), and son George McGrath IV (Wendy).

She served her family as a dedicated stay-at-home mother until the children were enrolled in high-school.

Her career highlights include a long standing role as an Administrative Assistant in the Engineering Dept at Amerex Corporation in Trussville, Alabama

Following their retirement, she and George moved home to Burrville, TN in 1986.

Patricia continued to proudly serve her community through many years with her volunteer

work with the charitable non-profit organization, Unicorn Fund in Wartburg, Helping Hands of Sunbright, and most notably as Morgan County Farm Bureau's Women's President from 1991-2009 and District IV Women's Chairman from 2005-2009.

Over the last 40 years, Patricia may have best been known for her role as "Memaw". She played an instrumental part in her grandchildren's lives and she was blessed to be able to watch her family continue to grow with the addition of all her great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband George H McGrath III, her parents Houston and Anna Belle Crouch, her brother Gene Ray Crouch, and son-in-law Glen (Russ) Hensley. She leaves behind her sister, Elaine Rose, 4 children, 12 grandchildren and 23 great grandchildren.

The family will receive friends from 1:00-3:00 P.M. Saturday, March 21, 2026 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg, TN. Funeral services will follow with Brother Charles Webb officiating. Burial will follow at Mt Vernon Cemetery in Burrville. TN. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Mt Vernon Cemetery Fund. 5817 Baxter Road Baxter, Tennessee 38544.

*Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Patricia Ann McGrath.*

Patricia Ann Crouch McGrath passed away peacefully on March 17, 2026 at her home in Burrville. She was born in Glades, TN on October 26,1939 to Houston and Annabelle Crouch. She was a graduate of Central High School of Wartburg, class of 1958. Patricia developed a passion for basketball, playing throughout high school and during her 2 years at business school in Nashville. Her love for the sport of basketball lead her to be a life-long fan of the Lady Vols.



## Historically Speaking Touring Oak Ridge's future nuclear energy hub (part 5): TVA and Kairos Power

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Carolyn Krause is exploring what's happening in Oak Ridge. She has read that new companies are investing in building facilities on Oak Ridge land partly for tomorrow's nuclear reactors and making the special fuels they need to power future data centers for advancing artificial intelligence.

The companies will help to meet the goals of the Department of Energy's Manhattan Project 2.0. DOE is aiming to ensure that the United States maintains its global leadership in AI and its competitiveness in national security, economic prosperity, and scientific discovery through supercomputing and quantum computing. AI data centers require electricity 24/7, and of all the energy sources, nuclear power is the most reliable, generating electricity more than 90% of the time.

Past accomplishments can lay a path for future achievements. As this Historically Speaking column has often mentioned, researchers in Oak Ridge and elsewhere learned in the past century how to make nuclear fuel and nuclear reactors, on land and sea, that have used the fuel for decades to produce electricity worldwide. Oak Ridge helped chart the way for developing advanced nuclear fuels and for designing easier-to-build, safer, more efficient, and less expensive small modular reactors that will require the new fuels to meet 21st century needs for power.

On Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2026, during Nuclear Science Week sponsored by the American Museum of Science and Energy in Oak Ridge, Carolyn took the New Nuclear "Dirt Tour" on a luxury bus paid for by Kairos Power. It helped her find out more about how and why Oak Ridge is becoming the "core of America's nuclear renaissance." The tour "guides," the lunch speaker, and passengers were well-informed about nuclear companies' plans for Oak Ridge, as well as her internet searches using AI chatbots, which provided excellent information, much of which she presents in this five-part series.

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Two sites we visited in the afternoon in the luxury bus are owned by potential builders of small modular reactors. Both are expected to produce electricity but are different in several ways.

TVA. The Tennessee Valley Authority's plans and partnerships have elevated East Tennessee to a position of national leadership in nuclear energy.

The largest public utility in the United States, TVA aims to build and operate the nation's first commercial small modular reactor (SMR). It will be constructed at its Clinch River Nuclear Site, which consists of 935 acres on TVA's 1200-acre tract of land in Oak Ridge.

As our luxury bus drove around the site, Malinda Hunter (mhunter@tva.gov) of TVA's New Nuclear Communications, External Relations, pointed out that the site's newest improvement is a five-lane bridge so that the SMR reactor pressure vessel and other heavy equipment can be hauled on the site. She added that the TVA site now has 161,000-volt power lines, wider roads, potable water and silt fencing to prevent material from construction or road widening from migrating into the waterways.

An SMR is a compact nuclear reactor that, compared with traditional nuclear power plants, will generate one-third as much electricity (e.g., 300 megawatts electric or MWe) and take up less land than traditional large nuclear power plants



TVA's Clinch River Nuclear Site is being prepared for Small Modular Reactors (Courtesy of Halley Lewis)

such as those in the TVA system. The goal is to build the SMR faster at lower cost onsite using standardized, factory-fabricated components and to equip it with passive systems to enhance its safety.

For its flagship project, TVA plans to deploy a GE Vernova Hitachi BWRX-300 reactor. This Generation III+ light-water SMR will have a capacity of about 300 MWe per unit. The reactor will produce enough electricity to power about 300,000 homes.

Hunter said that TVA has technology collaboration agreements with GE and Ontario Power Generation, which is building an SMR at its Canadian site that TVA is following closely.

In 2019 the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) granted TVA an early site permit for its Clinch River Nuclear Site and approved it for up to four SMRs, Hunter added.

During our ride, she pointed out wild turkeys, an osprey nest and the location of the giant hole that had been excavated in limestone for the proposed Clinch River Breeder Reactor. Congress canceled this project in 1983 because of cost overruns and nuclear weapons proliferation concerns. All I could see were tall trees that had grown taller than the rim of the excavation pit, which obviously is no longer a reactor site.

In May 2025, TVA submitted to the NRC a construction permit application, which the commission is actively reviewing. With this submission, TVA became the first U.S. utility to apply for an SMR construction permit.

In December 2025, the Department of Energy recently selected TVA to receive \$400 million in federal cost-shared funding. The purposes of the DOE money are to accelerate reactor deployment, reduce financial risk to consumers and help TVA target commercial operation in the early 2030s. TVA executives hope to start operation in 2032 of what might be America's first Generation III+ SMR.

TVA expects to employ up to 9,000 workers at peak construction of its first SMR. A much smaller but highly skilled staff will be required to operate it.

Partnerships. TVA also has developed partnerships with new nuclear companies in the Oak Ridge area. One example is Type One Energy, which will use the turbine building, switchyard and transmission system of TVA's retired Bull Run Steam Plant to create a power-producing

fusion machine called a stellarator. It will harness the energy of a magnetically confined, superheated, heavy hydrogen plasma to produce electricity.

TVA also is a partner of Oklo, which intends to build in Oak Ridge the first privately funded nuclear fuel recycling facility in the United States. With BWXT, TVA is participating in a coalition of major domestic nuclear supply chain partners to ensure the U.S. can domestically manufacture the necessary components for advanced



The Janus Project signage (Courtesy of Kairos Power)

nuclear reactors and producers of nuclear fuel.

TVA is a strong partner with Kairos Power, which is planning to build two Generation IV, salt-cooled Hermes reactors on its Oak Ridge site. The second reactor, called Hermes 2, will produce 50 megawatts of electricity by 2030.

On August 2025, TVA and Google announced a power purchase agreement (PPA) in which Kairos Power would sell the electricity from the Hermes 2 reactor's power plant to TVA's grid starting in 2030; in turn, TVA will deliver the equivalent amount of power to Google AI data centers in Montgomery, Tennessee, and Jackson County, Alabama, so that Google gets some of the clean energy credits it needs.

This partnership marks the first time that a U.S. utility has signed a PPA to buy electricity produced by an advanced reactor and to feed that amount of power to AI data centers. The centers' purposes are to develop and test AI models and train them so they can be safely deployed for real-world use. Signing the PPA also accelerated Kairos Power's timeline for commercializing its advanced salt-cooled reactor as a power source.

- Continued on next page

## Historically Speaking Touring Oak Ridge's future nuclear energy hub (part 5): TVA and Kairos Power

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

As part of a Master Plant Development Agreement with Google, Kairos Power plans to build a fleet of dual-unit reactors by 2035 that will generate up to 500 megawatts-electric (MWe) of commercial electricity for Google's AI data centers.

Kairos Power. In 2023 and 2024, Kairos Power received two construction permits from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for its two planned salt-cooled reactors (a first for a non-water-cooled reactor). As of December 2025, NRC had not yet granted TVA a construction permit.

In July 2021, Kairos Power purchased a 207-acre parcel for its nuclear power demonstration project. It is now constructing its first reactor, called Hermes 1, on the tract of land where the K-33 Gaseous Diffusion Plant once enriched uranium, said a senior engineer on Kairos Power's site integration team. The bus traveled slowly by the foundation pad of Hermes I so the passengers could see what he called "52 drilled piers about three-and-a-half feet wide that go down almost 50 feet to bedrock."

The next steps, he noted, are to add a four-foot-thick concrete pad, a "seismic isolator" to protect the building from damage by an earthquake, and then another six-foot-thick slab of concrete on which the reactor building will sit.

The 35-megawatt thermal (MWt) advanced reactor will produce nuclear heat only after it receives an NRC license. Kairos Power plans to submit the Hermes 1 operating license application this year and is targeting operations starting in 2028.

The company calls its unique reactor design the Fluoride Salt-Cooled High-Temperature Reactor (KP-FHR). It uses molten fluoride salt coolant and TRISO particle fuel embedded in graphite pebbles, almost like the nuclear products of the TRISO-X subsidiary of X-energy and of Standard Nuclear, both located in Oak Ridge.

Both the coolant and fuel used by Kairos Power are based on innovations at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. One breakthrough was the successful Molten Salt Reactor Experiment (MSRE) built and operated in the 1960s at ORNL.

There, a mixture of lithium fluoride and beryllium fluoride (FLIBE) was tested; that's the same salt coolant Kairos Power will use in its reactors.

The other ORNL development that is being modified for use in Kairos Power reactors is the TRISO fuel designed for high-temperature, gas-cooled reactors that were never built and operated. Kairos Power is repackaging TRISO into a new fuel form suitable for KP-FHR reactors and developing manufacturing methods to mass-produce that fuel in collaboration with Los Alamos National Laboratory and BWXT.

The TRISO fuel is embedded in graphite pebbles the size of golf balls. Tens of thousands

of them make up the reactor core. Embedded in each pebble are tens of thousands of particles the size of poppy seeds, each coated in multiple carbon layers.

The innermost layer, the kernel, is a sphere of fissile material made of uranium oxycarbide; it has a uranium enrichment level that is close to 20% uranium-235 (High-Assay Low-Enriched Uranium, or HALEU).

The multi-layered structure makes each particle highly resistant to corrosion, irradiation and high temperatures and prevents it from releasing radioactive fission products. The pebbles will not melt or leak radiation during reactor operation.

At the entrance to the Kairos Power site, the engineer speaking on the bus noted that staff

reactor will produce more electricity (300 MWe) than Kairos Power's Gen IV Hermes 2 reactor (50 MWe). Here are other comparisons between TVA's Boiling Water Reactor (BWR)/Advanced Light-Water Reactor (Generation III+) and Kairos Power's Fluoride Salt-cooled High-Temperature Reactor (KP-FHR/Generation IV).

Coolant? (TVA) Water, which boils to create steam directly in the reactor vessel. (KP) Molten fluoride salt, which does not boil away and operates at low pressure.

Fuel form and uranium enrichment levels? (TVA) Traditional fuel rod assemblies with low-enriched uranium (LEU), like those in current large commercial reactors. (KP) TRISO particles with an inner layer of HALEU coated with carbon layers and embedded in a graphite pebble, so the fuel won't melt or release radiation.

Pressure level?

(TVA) High pressure to keep the water liquid at high temperatures, like the three BWRs at TVA's Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. (KP) Low, near-ambient pressure, enabling the use of less expensive containment vessels and other structures.

Design heritage? (TVA) A simplified, smaller version of

the already-licensed Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor. (KP) A novel combination of technologies based on ORNL developments – molten salt from the MSRE and pebble bed fuel from HTGR projects.

Safety? (TVA) Passive safety features but still risks coolant loss. (KP) Inherent passive safety because the fuel tolerates high temperatures and the salt coolant cannot boil away.

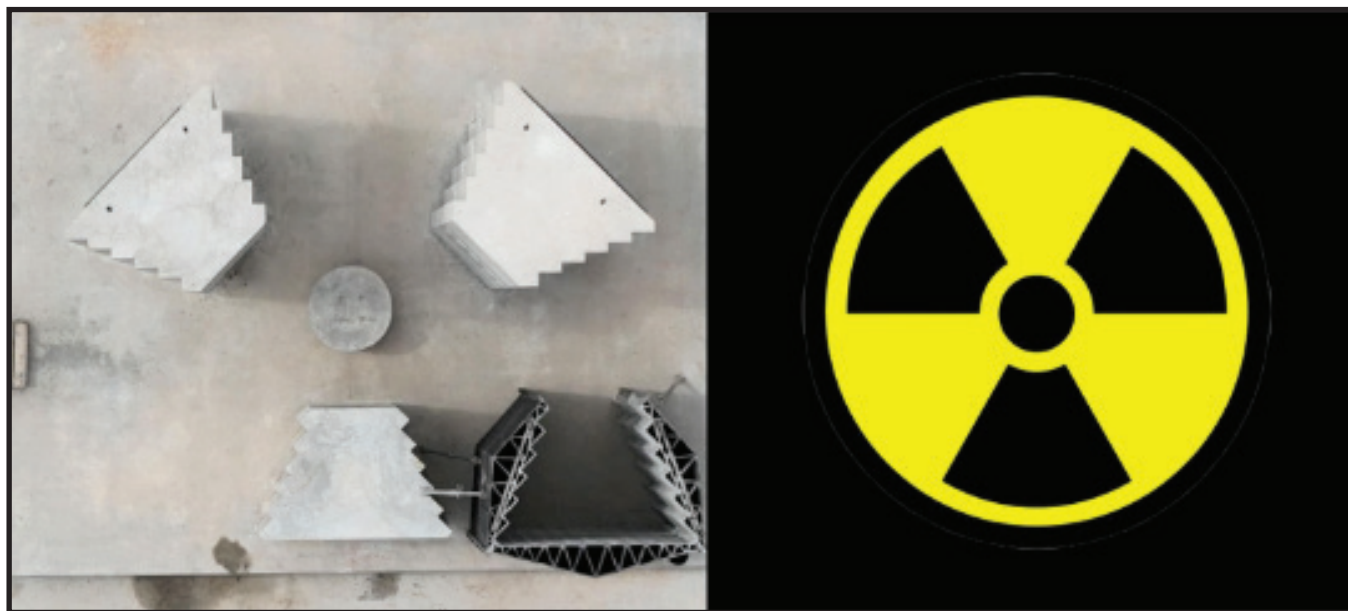
For the TVA reactor, 80% of its components are based on licensed, proven technology, potentially accelerating its licensing and deployment.

The challenge for Kairos Power as a reactor pioneer is that it must prove that its novel reactors should be licensed because they can operate safely with a unique fuel and coolant. Kairos Power has been engaging with the NRC since 2018 and has made significant progress in navigating the regulatory pathway for its technology. The NRC has issued three construction permits to Kairos Power and approved 14 topical reports supporting the licensing basis for KP-FHR technology.

The company must also develop the supply chain to enable commercial deployment of its technology. Kairos Power is investing heavily in its vertical integration strategy to produce critical components in-house, including salt and fuel, to mitigate supply chain risk and make Generation IV reactors a viable source of 24/7 electrical power in the 2030s.

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Thank you, Carolyn, for continuing your review of the nuclear companies featured on the Nuclear Science Week's "Dirt Tour." This is the last of a five-part series being published in Historically Speaking.



Looking from above, the Janus Project signage is shaped like the radiation symbol (Courtesy of Kairos Power)

at ORNL's Manufacturing Demonstration Facility (MDF) in Knox County partnered with Kairos Power to develop and validate large-scale, 3D-printed molds made of a carbon-fiber-reinforced plastic (polymer composite). The molds made at MDF and in partnership with the University of Maine's Advanced Structures & Composites Center will be used to cast more concrete columns with complex shapes like the ones on display at the entrance to the site.

"From overhead, the top of this column looks like a nuclear radiation symbol," the engineer said.

"The actual reactor building will have columns that interlock at grooves. The columns provide radiation shielding by removing any pathways for neutrons to stream out of the reactor area."

Next to the entrance (which now has a guard) is the non-nuclear, Engineering Test Unit 3, or ETU 3, facility. In Albuquerque, N.M., the first iteration, ETU 1, was the world's largest FLIBE system, built to test system integration and operation at high temperatures. Kairos Power decommissioned ETU 1 in 2024 and is now building ETU 2 in its place. ETU 2 is Kairos Power's first fully modular system. The company fabricated the reactor vessel for ETU 2 following stringent quality control standards in its ASME-certified vessel shop in Albuquerque.

At Oak Ridge, ETU 3 serves as a proving ground for advanced manufacturing methods, including electron beam welding for construction of a prototypic reactor vessel, for training operators, and for testing robots and other equipment for remote handling and maintenance to ensure safe and efficient operation of the Hermes reactors. With all this activity and planned construction, the number of local workers at Kairos Power in Oak Ridge should be growing from 60 to more than 200 in the next five years.

Reactor comparisons. How do TVA and Kairos Power reactors compare?

None have received their operating licenses from NRC yet. The TVA's small modular

# Romans 11



Melvin Howard

(Romans 11:1-10) Israel's rejection and the remnant: at the end of the previous chapter, Paul described national Israel as a disobedient people. This section begins with the question: "Does this mean that God has cast off his people?" Absolutely not. At least not entirely. Surely not indiscriminately! The apostle himself is an example. He is of the seed of Abraham. So God did not cast off his people whom he foreknew. The apostle had already identified these people as Christians (8:29-30; 9:6-8). They subsequently are depicted as the "remnant according to the election of grace" (v.5).

As this discussion is begun, we must emphatically state that neither this chapter (which is commonly abused) nor any other in the Bible teaches a "national" conversion of the Jewish people. The reign of God was to be removed from physical Israel and replaced by a new nation, a spiritual Israel (Mt. 21:43; Gal. 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9). Paul's identity with Israel (v. 1) is a blend of his ethnic history and the new Israel--not the Israel that is castigated in this very segment of Scripture. I have discussed this matter in detail in my commentary, *Jeremiah & Lamentations*.

The prophet Elijah is mentioned. He lamented the fact that all faithful Hebrews seemingly had vanished---except him! He was wrong. God had thousands yet who had not capitulated to idolatry (v. 2-4). There was at this time (Acts 3:24; Rom. 8:18) a "remnant according to the election of grace." Note: (a) "Remnant" signifies a fragment, a minority of the whole. (b) These are they who have been "elected," an expression for the redeemed (1 Pet. 1:1; 2:4, 6, 9; 1:18; 22-23). It has nothing to do with the alleged unconditional election of Calvinism. First-century Jewish converts were the remnant. (c) The election process is the result of God's grace (Tit. 3:4-7). If salvation is of grace, it is not of works. Not by the works of the law of Moses, or any other legalistic system (2:20, 28), or by works of human merit (Eph. 2:8-9). A misunderstanding of this text has led many down the dead-end road of unconditional salvation---a terrible misguided conclusion. This context, however, does not nullify the necessity of obedience to divine commands in the Christian dispensation (Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:17).

Physical Israel was obsessed with "seeking" a righteous standing before God (9:30-10:3), but they "obtained (it) not" because they imagined that such was to be found in legalism (Gal. 5:4). The elect did obtain it, because in yielding to Christ, they were credited with righteousness that resulted from his sacrificial death (3:21). Tragically, "the rest" (the non-elect)---those not of the remnant---were hardened (v. 7). In what sense were they hardened? (a) God may be said to have hardened them by making demands upon them they refused to obey; (b) they hardened themselves by the choices they made, and God merely permitted (not forced) them to exercise their free will to disobey him (Jer. 4:10; Ezek. 20:25). Several Old Testament texts are quoted to establish that the stubbornness of Hebrew rebellion was prophesied centuries earlier (v. 8-10; Dt. 29:4; Isa. 29:10; Psa. 69:22).

Romans 11:11-16) hope yet for Jewish conversions: Paul concedes that Israel "stumbled," but was their fall fatal? Certainly not. At least it did not have to be. There was still time and opportunity for salvation in Christ, if they could be convinced of gospel truth (v. 11). Even their fall, however, was not totally void of benefit. As a result of their initial rejection, apostolic attention was turned toward the Gentiles, who more readily embraced the truth regarding Christ. This in turn provoked the Jews to jealousy, stimulation their interest in the gospel. How marvelous is God's plan. Jewish rejection worked toward Gentile acceptance, which in turn provoked Jewish interest! Paul speaks of Israel's "loss" and then also of their "fulness" (v. 12). The term "fulness" is employed by dispensationalists as a proof point for the idea that there will be a future national conversion of the Jews. The theory is bereft of biblical evidence. "Fulness" is the opposite of "loss." If the Jewish rejection of the gospel was indirectly a great blessing to the world of Gentiles, how much more would their conversion be valued, should such occur? The point appears to be logical and theoretical, not a prediction. There are too many other text that paint a dismal portrait of the Jewish nation's future (see "always" (v. 10) and "forever" (Matt 21:19).

The apostle now speaks to the Gentile element of his audience. He is thankful that God has granted him opportunity to teach them, especially if his Gentile ministry provokes his fellow Jews to accept Christ. Note the phrase, "some of them" (v. 14). There is no hint of a massive conversion of Jews in that expression. In fact, just the opposite is implied. "Some" is more in tune with the word "remnant." Verse fifteen is complex. It may suggest God's rejection of the Jews would result in the reconciliation of vast numbers of Gentile converts. Also, as a result, "some" Hebrews likewise might be saved (v. 14). If so, he would be supremely happy. In either case, conversions are a "resurrection" of spiritually dead people. Borrowing from Old Testament imagery, Paul affirms that if the "firstfruits" (the original Hebrew converts) are holy, so would be the "lump"---the rest of the harvest (both Jew and Gentile). They would be united in one body. There is no allusion to a national conversion of Israel.

(Romans 11:17-24) warning to the Gentiles: the Jew-Gentile relationship is illustrated from nature. An olive tree had some branches broken off (the rejection of the Jews due to their unbelief), and wild branches were grafted in among them (the inclusion of the Gentile converts); nonetheless, both partake of gospel blessings (v.17). The Gentiles are warned not to boast as if they somehow are superior. They must recall that they owe much to the "root" (Jewish stock). The Gentiles must not mistakenly assume the Jews were "broken off" (rejected) so they might be accepted. No, they were broken off because of their personal "unbelief"; the Gentiles must stand firm if they are to maintain their faith. They should be most thankful. How can anyone possibly read these admonitions and not see that salva-

tion is conditioned upon faithfulness to divine instruction and obligation---for both the non-Christian and the Christian?

(Romans 11:25-32) Israel's partial hardening: the following declaration is one of the most misunderstood in this document, if not the entire New Testament. It is the favorite text for the misguided national-conversion-of-Israel theory. According to the dispensational dogma, Israel is to be "re-gathered from all nations, restored to her own land and converted" (Scofield Reference Bible). Paul wants his readers to understand this "mystery," the reality of Israel's future, which was obscure in the writings of the prophets.

Paul states that "a hardening in part has befallen Israel." (a) The hardening was manifested in their utter refusal to believe in Christ, in spite of overwhelming evidence (Jn. 11:47; 12:37-40; Acts 4:16). (b) "In part" acknowledges there was a "remnant" that did believe (v. 4; 14), as reflected in the conversions on Pentecost (Acts 2:38). (c) The expression, "has befallen," involves a verbal tense that suggests an attitude initially engaged and then sustained. As one scholar noted, it was not a "temporary insensibility." (d) The terminal point is described as "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." This is key to understanding this passage.

The expression, "fulness of the Gentiles," denotes the accomplishment of Jehovah's purpose among the Gentiles (or the "nations"). In other words, Israel's hardness will remain until the end of the present dispensation. This hardening of the bulk of Israel will continue "throughout the time of the Gentiles" (until Christ's return, Lenski). There is a similar phrase in Luke's Gospel. Christ, alluding to Jerusalem's impending destruction, declared that the city would be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (21:24). The expression, "trodden down," is in a tense that hints of prolonged hardships (though not necessarily uninterrupted) for Jerusalem (and what she represented---the nation). Again, the phrase, "times of the Gentiles," represents the current age. It implies a previous "times of the Jews." When they rejected the Messiah, that age of prominence (called a "reign") (Matt. 21:43) ended. It was superseded by "the times of the Gentiles"---the Christian age. It is clear that physical Israel is to be the recipient of divine retribution throughout the Christian era.

What, then, is the meaning of "and so all Israel shall be saved" (v. 26)? Since the hardening of Israel was not total but only "in part," there was still hope that many Jews might be saved. How? Those that are saved will be saved by their acceptance of the gospel (10:12-16) and their surrender to the Deliverer from Zion (v. 26). The word "so" is an adverb of manner, meaning "in this way." Hence, it is in the way of obeying Christ that "all Israel" (who are saved) may be saved. There will be no exception to the divine procedure! This passage does not affirm a nation-wide conversion of the people of Israel. The following quotation (v. 26-27) is from Isaiah 59:20; it confirms this interpretation. (a) The Deliverer is Christ. (b) He comes "out of Zion" as per dispensational theology. (c) The deliverance is by means of Christ's "covenant" (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8). (d) The prophecy is fulfilled in the "taking away of their sins" (as on Pentecost)---not by the return of Christ.

It is true that the Jews are the "enemies" of the gospel, but they are still beloved of God because of their heritage, and the Lord longs for their inclusion into the "elect" (v. 28). Jehovah does not regret the blessings poured out upon the nation of Israel in centuries gone by, even though the Jews have, in large measure, rejected his Son (v. 29). Just as the Gentiles obtained mercy (by having an extensive opportunity to hear the gospel following the Jews' rejection), it is the apostle's hope that the mercy that has been extended to the Gentiles might somehow influence the Jews to reconsider at the gospel of Christ (v. 30-31). Verse thirty-two suggests that even though the Lord has "shut up" (allowed, tolerated) disobedience, his mercy still is available to all willing to accept it. Note that between verses thirty and thirty-two the terms "disobedient" and "disobedience" are both used twice. This graphically underscores Paul's definition of "faith" as used in this letter. His conception of faith is a universe apart from the modern Protestant theory.

(Romans 11:33-36) God be praised: this chapter and the end of the doctrinal section of the book are concluded with an anthem of praise concerning God Almighty. A collection of divine attributes is depicted respecting the "depth" and "wealth" of these qualities. The Lord's knowledge and wisdom are applauded. The former refers to the limitless scope of what he knows; he is omniscient (1 Jn. 3:20). The latter alludes to the consummate skill with which his knowledge has been and is exercised---both in material creation and in the "new creation" through Christ.

His judgments exceed human analyses, and his ways are "beyond tracing" (trackless"). Ignorant humanity would do well to acknowledge this and cease their silly criticism of the Almighty. Job certainly learned this lesson. No one can fathom the mind of God nor serve as his advisor (though many attempt to). The Lord is not indebted to us, and his gracious gifts are not the result of his repayment for anything we have done on his behalf. God is the source, agency, and goal of all things. May he be glorified eternally. So be it!

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