

# 2nd Opinion: Looking for something reliable

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**By Bruce Lampert**

The tradition of Groundhog Day came to the United States from Northern Europe. Legend has it the groundhog awakens from his winter sleep on the second day of February. He sticks his head out of his den and looks around. If the sun is shining, he can see his shadow. The shadow frightens him, so he scampers back into his hole—six more weeks of winter! But if it's cloudy that day, then the groundhog can't see his shadow, and he will stay outside his hole. This means spring is on its way.

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Obviously, there's nothing scientific about Groundhog Day, but there was at least some scientific observation involved in its origin. Somewhere in the misty past, somebody figured out the relationship between the weather on the second day of February and the weather patterns of the following several weeks. Then they associated that relationship with a familiar woodland creature, and they passed the information along. Soon it became part of folk wisdom.

We shouldn't be too hard on folk wisdom. There's actually some real wisdom in it—like the Farmer's Almanac, which still enjoys a wide circulation. For some reason, people who plant their gardens by the signs

in the moon seem to make better gardens than those who just plant when they get a chance.

It's all an attempt to get a handle on the world we live in, to bring some order into what doesn't always seem too orderly. Before the days of electronic, digital, computer-operated weather-forecasting devices, people had to depend on their observations of what the atmosphere was like before weather changes occurred. Then they could make plans and bring some order to their lives.

We're always looking for things we can count on. Life brings too many surprises, so we turn to whatever is within our reach to help us understand our world and order our lives.

There really is very little in life that we can always count on. But the Bible does tell us we can always count on God. Psalm 102:25-27 says: "Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will endure; they will all wear out like a garment. You change them like clothing, and they pass away; but you are the same, and our years have no end."

Although change constantly is happening around us, God is consistent. In every situation and circumstance, he offers salvation and strength, help and hope. The weather may not cooperate, the economy may falter, personal situations may deteriorate, but God stays the same.

Whether or not the groundhog sees his shadow on Groundhog Day, remember that God will be at work in your life for the next six weeks, the next six months—and forever.

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