

Review: Counterfeit Culture: A Memoir

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Counterfeit Culture: A Memoir

By Keith Brown (KB Books)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The contents of the book reviewed here are disputed by members of the Heritage Homestead community. One, Dan Lancaster of Waco, has published [his own detailed review](#) of the book on the Heritage Ministries United website.*

How can intelligent, well-educated, committed Christians striving to walk deeply with God be drawn into a religious culture that regulates every aspect of life?

How can they bring themselves and their children into a community  that discourages education beyond basic homeschooling and controls what to wear, what to eat, how to behave, how and where to birth children, and which ones can stay and who must leave when they turn 18?

Keith Brown answers those questions in *Counterfeit Culture: A Memoir*, written after she and her lawyer-husband left a religious community after nearly 30 years.

The author starts Part One with her journal entry the night before they would leave after giving Homestead all they had—their money, their land on the Brazos River, their legal and business skills, their parenting freedom, their alone time with God, and so much more.

The LSU graduate then begins at the beginning with her challenging childhood outside the church, her college years, her marrying a CPA-lawyer and strong Christian man and their life in Dallas.

The grooming begins when Curtis Brown writes a resolution on parental rights and home schooling for the platform committee at the 1984 Republican State Convention in Austin and is approached by a leader of Emmaus Christian Fellowship.

The couple's longing for a church home, Curtis' work with Christian political leaders, the idyllic description of what was later renamed Homestead Heritage and a five-year period of "homogenized" courtship ultimately lures them to turn over all of their assets to Fellowship and move to Waco.

Part Two details changes needed to fit into the community of "order + honor = the patterns of God." These unwritten patterns regulate "lifestyle, education, entertainment, boy/girl relationships and family structure" but allow leaders to live by different standards, to meddle in families and to create a culture of "tattling" by family and friends that causes public discipline and fear.

In retrospect, the mother of nine expresses regret at not standing up for her children, especially the cruelty to their second son Jonathan who wanted to be a Marine and courageously left his family to fulfill his dreams and ultimately helped give the Brown's the courage to leave.

In Part Three, Keith takes the reader through unveiling the truth, the differing treatment of their children and leaders' children, the takeover of their sons' horseback riding business and one of their children's birthday parties, the disfellowship of one son without telling him, the rage when Curtis attempts to help with serious financial and business issues and the shunning that follows.

The heartbroken mother tells how one daughter left after Brother Tzafrir said it wasn't God's will to marry the man she loved, and her parents missed her wedding day. But among other things, God gives Keith a powerful dream showing how "Jesus Saves" and an encounter with a woman who offers the only assurance she received in 30 years that Jesus loves her.

Part Four paints a picture of "Life After Bondage" and a powerful testimony of God's love, grace and his still small voice in Keith's heart. Finally, gone is the fear, shame, blame and isolation that provided her no time to think or meditate or become the person he called her to be.

In *Counterfeit Culture: A Memoir*, Keith Brown pens a well-written, quick read that presents an honest, heart-felt, heart-wrenching, heart-written, behind-the-scenes look at what can happen when good people fall prey to manipulation, man-made rules, false doctrines and authoritarian leadership. Yet, at its very heart, the Brown's story is about redemption and God's grace and faithfulness.

I highly recommend the book, especially to anyone who has a friend or loved one involved in or considering such a counterfeit culture.

*Kathy Robinson Hillman, former president
Texas WMU and Baptist General Convention of Texas
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