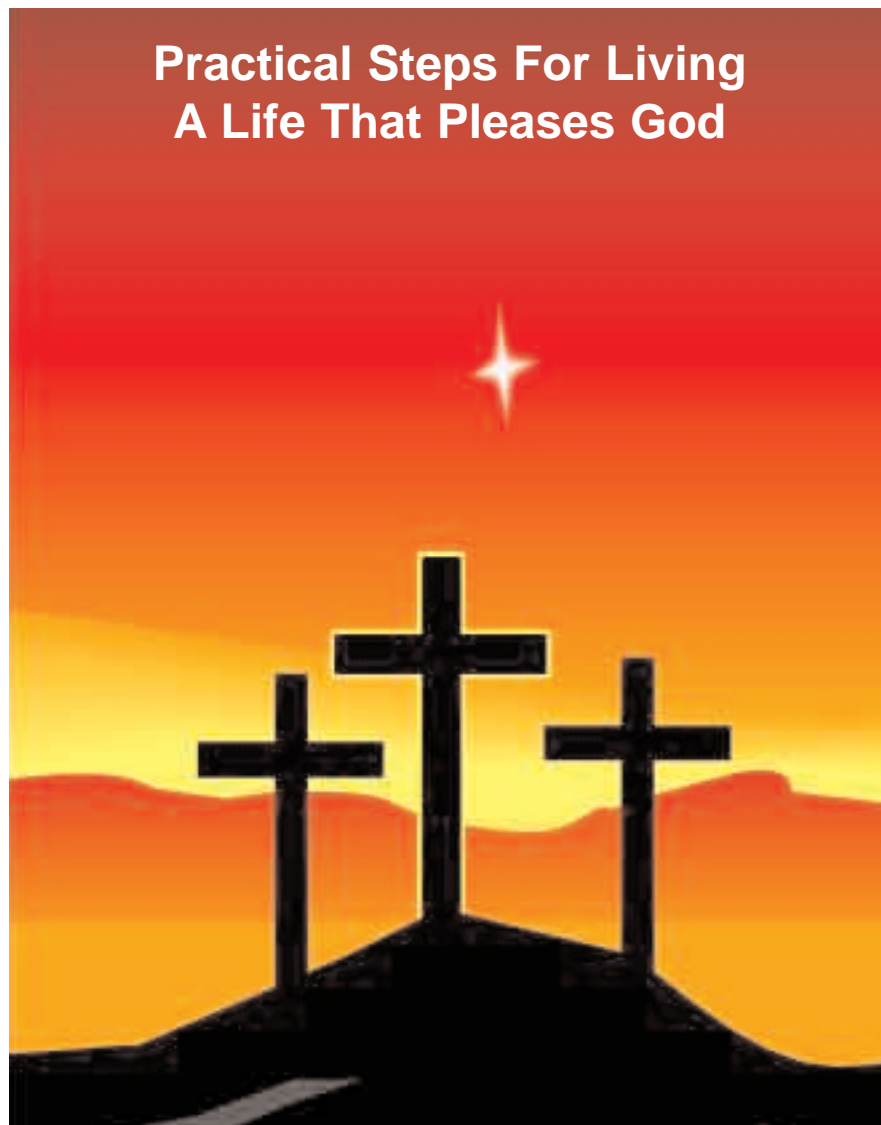


# Lifebytes

## 22. Obedient Trust versus Reasoning The Hebraic Foundations Confront Evangelicalism



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## Preliminary Note

Sue and I wholeheartedly believe in the ***inerrancy of God's Word*** as our foundation for applying it to our lives. We also ascribe to Paul's admonition, "*Do not go beyond what is written*" (1 Corinthians 4:6).

(Please see our book, **Christian Halakhahs: Loving Jesus Through The Way You Apply His Word**).

This Lifebyte specifically addresses evangelical men and the influence that Hellenism has on many of them. We aren't addressing Charismatics and Pentecostals here because many times "spiritual experience" in these communities has superseded reliance on God's Word in *priority*. This misplaced emphasis has opened a potential path for deceiving, counterfeit experiences orchestrated by Satan. Experience that has no foundation in Scriptures leads to *focus on the signs* rather than on the One to Whom *biblical signs point*.

Neither are we addressing Roman Catholics here because we've found that while their faith practice is based somewhat on the Bible, the emphasis on "church tradition" is far stronger.

Unless the 66 books of the Bible are agreed upon as the foundation for discussion, ever-changing traditions will lead down rabbit trails of resistance.

## Obedient Trust versus Reasoning *The Hebraic Foundations Confront Evangelicalism*

### Introduction

Have you ever been asked, "What church do you attend?", or, "What denomination do you belong to?" These are pretty common questions in Christendom,

and generally accepted as appropriate for Christians to ask each other.

Many Christians today identify themselves by the edifice they attend ("First Church on Smith Street") or the creedal allegiance to which they adhere (Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, etc.). But do you realize that **NO ONE** in the earliest Church would even understand the nature of the questions? Nor would they be able to give an answer. **They were followers of Jesus**. And, their brothers and sisters in union with Jesus, not any particular place, were the CHURCH!

If you're familiar with the Hebraic foundations that made the earliest followers of Jesus so relationally intimate and spiritually powerful, then you know that Christendom today embraces little of what was so important to our spiritual ancestors. A key point: Our earliest forefathers in the faith identified with Jesus as LORD of their lives. Their identity was found *in Him*, not in man's creedal fragmentation of His teaching.

Many of the so-called gospels peddled today have strayed far from the Gospel that fulfilled long-awaited prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Older Testament. Make sure the Gospel YOU believe hasn't been altered by men! (See: *The Gospel Of The Covenant Is The Pilgrimage To Salvation*.)

## Hellenism Displaced The Hebraic Foundations

As we have written in *Restoring The Early Church*, Hellenism supplanted the Hebraic foundations through means of Greek philosopher/converts who entered the Church in the second and third centuries. Their efforts to reconcile Plato with the Bible and destroy the

Hebraic foundations upon which the Lord Jesus established His Church reflected the widespread arrogance of anti-Semitism that invaded Christianity.

Some, in their hatred of all things Jewish, even advocated the removal of the Older Testament from the canon of scripture. But, as the anti-Semitic vitriol of such “Church Fathers” as Justin Martyr, John Chrysostom and others reveals, they were the **Fathers of Hellenism**, not of the Bride of the King of the Jews.

Hellenism was permeated by the concept of *dualism*, which carved an abyss between the supposedly corrupt *physical* realm and the untouchably holy *spiritual* dimension. Only that which could elevate the mind’s grasp of religion was worthy of consideration. Therefore, under Hellenist influence, centuries of theologians have argued and written much about the issue of faith in terms of **mental reasoning**.

*The Hebraic understanding of a life of love-grounded obedient trust — faith put into action — was essentially discarded.*

The history surrounding many of the Church Councils displays the depth of darkness that Hellenism brought into the Church. As a result of one Council, the body of a person labeled a “heretic” was exhumed just so they could burn the bones! The murky prevarication of demonic Hellenism steered Christendom downward into the Dark Ages.

As the Hebraic foundations crumbled into disuse, the understanding of **true faith as a way of life** disappeared. In its place, mental acquiescence to clerical interpretation surged. Philosophical discussion about scriptural truth placed God’s Word in the same category as political or social exchange. You may remember Paul’s summation of those

who dwelled in the bastion of Hellenism:

*“All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but **talking about and listening to the latest ideas**” (Acts 17:21). And that was no compliment!*

Grounded in the Hebraic understanding of faith as **obedient trust responding to God’s will**, James could so forcefully admonish, *“In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead... I will show you my faith by what I do... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead**” (James 2:17,18,26).*

(To understand the distinction of faith-in-action we recommend Charles Sheldon’s book, *In His Steps*; and Hannah Hurnard’s classic, *Hinds’ Feet In High Places*.)

The earliest followers of Jesus recognized that the extent of a person’s faith in Jesus was revealed through their *way of life*. To truly understand the depth of someone’s faith, you must see the choices he makes that result in *action*.

This is what our Hebraic ancestors who first put their trust in Jesus understood. And, this was the way of the earliest followers of Jesus until Hellenism became the dominant influence in Christianity.

(For further exploration of this topic, see *Restoring the Early Church: Chapter 3. A Hebraic Perspective — The Foundational Thinking of the Early Church*; Chapter 4. The Early Church — Humble, Hebraic, and Spirit-filled; Section 2. The Transition From Our Hebraic Origins.)

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We encourage you to download the recommended reading from our website for a clearer understanding of how far the institutionalized Church departed from the foundations upon which our Lord Jesus and the apostles founded it. As you'll see, Christendom today has little to do with the life and practice of the earliest Church.

We encourage you: Ask our Father if He intended for the Church to “evolve”. And, find out for yourself whether HE is restoring the Hebraic foundations today.

### **Is Christianity Enslaved To Demonic Hellenism?**

One point often comes up regarding the pervasive influence of Hellenism on the Church: “**How could God ever let so much of Christianity be taken over by such a demonic influence as Hellenism for all these centuries?**”

To answer this we need to look at God's everlasting promise to Abraham:

*I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you* Genesis 12:2,3).

As revealed in the chapters of **Restoring the Early Church** referenced earlier, many of the converted Greek philosophers were *fanatically anti-Semitic*. Their writings persuaded the Church to abuse and even murder the Jews under the banner of serving Christ. This persecution has gone on for hundreds of years, all the way to this past century's pogroms, ghettos, and holocaust massacre.

Ask our Father if He intended for the Church to “evolve”. And, find out for yourself whether HE is restoring the Hebraic foundations today.

In response to the afflictions much of Christianity has heaped upon the Jewish people, God has kept His promise to Abraham. His curse has fallen on many in Christendom because of its broad embrace of anti-Semitism.

Beginning in the fourth century the curse becomes most noticeable. Since that time Christianity has been dominated by the demonic influence of **Hellenistic thought** and **Roman organization**. When you study the foundations of the majority of denominations in Christendom, an anti-Jewish prejudice that was initiated by anti-Semitic church councils over the centuries filters through.

Two especially sinister influences of Hellenism have impacted the Christendom of today:

1. The Older Testament is virtually ignored or greatly downplayed, if not completely set aside.

2. *Replacement theology* has convinced many that the Church has replaced Israel in all of God's divine plans. Many passages that pertain to the Jewish people are now “spiritualized” to be blessings to the Church, while any of God's curses pertain to the Jew.

A number of followers of Jesus who have recognized these demonic influences have repented and renounced them. A few other examples of the combined effects of Hellenist syncretism and anti-Semitism may surprise you:

- Christmas (not observed by the earliest Church, but developed as a conglomeration of pagan cultural practices)

- Easter (a substitute for Jewish Passover, often incorporating pagan spring rituals and practices that obscure the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus)
- Treating the first day of the week like any other, except for time spent at services
- Branding the Jews “Christ-killers” when it’s *our* sins that cost Him His life, as prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures

In order to understand how God could bring the curse of demonic Hellenist dominion to bear on Christendom, we need to take a look at what has come upon the Jewish people:

*Did God reject his people? **By no means!** I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin... I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: **Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in** (Romans 11:1,25).*

Over all these centuries God has allowed the hearts of the Jewish people to become hardened (or blinded) until the Gentiles who will respond to Jesus do so. To humanity this sounds unfair. But God’s ways are far above mortal speculation or explanation:

*‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the LORD. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts**’ (Isaiah 55:8,9).*

Our limited understanding prevents us from comprehending God’s actions.

However, clues of fulfillment of this promise are peeking out. Many Jewish people are now putting their trust in the Messiah Jesus.

At the same time, our Lord is keeping another promise: He’s restoring the Jewish people to the land of Israel one last time as prophesied. In recent decades descendants of Jewish tribes that were dispersed from Israel during the Babylonian captivity are being discovered in such far-flung venues as Afghanistan, China, and India!

(Our Lord is the true Promise Keeper. See *Restoring The Early Church*, Chapter 13: Fulfilling Biblical Prophecy — *Israel and the Jewish People Today*).

In keeping His word, “*God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all*” (Romans 11:32). As our faithful Father keeps His promises to Abraham, He is showing us Gentiles His mercy as He reveals the Hebraic foundations of the Church. He is giving us the opportunity to undo the curse of Hellenism and Romanism. The Hebraic foundations enabled the earliest followers of Jesus to be so spiritually powerful and relationally intimate. Our Father calls this revelation “**The Hebraic Restoration**”.

## A Short Review Of The Hebraic Foundations

### Trust-based Faith, Not “Belief”

The Hebrew word for “faith”, *emunah*, does not mean belief, or mental assent. Rather, the word is pregnant with steadfast **trust in God**. Faith, or more accurately, *trust that brings about obedience*, is an emotional and responsive term that emanates from the heart. It

doesn't merely signify or acknowledge that God exists; that's already a given! To simply believe with your cognitive faculties is to give only mental assent.

The "belief" that many so-called gospels call for is not acceptable by the God of the Bible, or by the Bible of God, for that matter. Mere *belief* places you on par with the demons, as James warns: "*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder*" (James 2:19).

Belief is no more than passive mental assent to a fact. It costs you nothing, nor is your life changed.

To truly **trust** in God requires a wholehearted yielding of yourself to Him unconditionally. That yieldedness will be evidenced in your choices and decisions. There is **no trust** if that trust doesn't lead to action. In other words, your responsive action reveals the level of your trust.

Many faith communities erroneously teach that you're saved at the moment of conversion when you mentally agree with certain Bible verses. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Salvation in the early Hebraic Church was considered a ***faith-based pilgrimage***. Salvation occurs when a person stands before the Judgment Throne and hears his name declared before the hosts of heaven.

A person was never considered "saved" at the *beginning* of their conversion, but at the completion of their pilgrimage when they've "endured to the end" (2 Timothy 2:12; Mark 13:13; Matthew 10:22).

- Your **CONVERSION** is really the beginning of your pilgrimage OUT of the world's values and goals, and INTO the Kingdom's values and purposes.

- Your **TRUST-BASED UNION** with Jesus is the spiritual glue that enables you to endure until you stand before Him.
- Entry into the process means to trust that the **SHED BLOOD OF JESUS** paid the penalty for your sin; the pilgrimage process of salvation requires that you **KEEP ON TRUSTING**.

While we were writing our book *Restoring The Early Church*, a leader from a particular denomination told us, "We can't have our people trusting Jesus as you write about. That would cause *mayhem*! We need to control and direct the spiritual activities of the people in our congregation."

Do trust in God and obedience to Him *really* produce mayhem? Not according to His Word! "*For God is not a God of disorder but of peace*" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

There is no trust if that trust doesn't lead to action. Your *responsive action* reveals the level of your trust.

### Total Dependence On The Holy Spirit

The earliest followers of Jesus clearly understood their life-giving need for the indwelling Holy Spirit. From creation onward, the Holy Spirit was crucial to the Father's enacting His will on earth. Long before the Spirit descended on the disciples at Pentecost, the Lord told them (and us) that He works "***not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty***" (Zechariah 4:6).

The indwelling presence of the Spirit was so critical that Jesus warned His followers, "*whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is*

*guilty of an eternal sin*” (Mark 3:29). The most specific way many blaspheme the Spirit is to negate aspects of His ministry. Other scripture writings warned Christians to not “*quench*” or “*grieve*” the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19; Ephesians 4:30).

The death of Ananias was a testimony to the sobering consequences for those who deal wrongly with the Spirit: “*Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’*” (Acts 5:3).

It is ONLY through the indwelling Holy Spirit that your spirit is able to understand, relate, and communicate with God. Sadly, it seems so few Christians walk in His presence and power. The Hellenist influence on evangelicals, especially men, causes them to try to know *about* God through their mind.

The mind is able to receive information only via the five senses of sight, taste, touch, hearing and smell. And, these senses only enable you to perceive the *physical* world around you. The mind can NEVER know and experience a God Who is Spirit. Only your *spirit* communicating with the Holy Spirit can bring this about.

(We expand on this in Lifebyte 13. *The Unseen Indwelling Holy Spirit*; and in the Certain Of What We Do Not See video: “*The Unseen Indwelling Holy Spirit*”.)

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## **Pastored By Older Men of Wisdom: Zakens/Biblical Elders**

The pendulum of our society has swung sharply away from the biblical pattern of men as the spiritual leaders of their homes. Men of all ages are flailing about in cultural waters filled with sharks of broken marriage covenants, no time for their families, and financial pressures that keep them awake at night.

Few men are finding reliable older men of wisdom to come alongside as *spiritual fathers* to mentor and guide them out of the turbulence onto biblical solid ground. What’s been missed that has brought about such lethargy and helplessness among American men?

Robert Hicks, author of *The Masculine Journey*, has opened the eyes of many to forgotten scriptural insights about male development. Six distinct Hebrew words connoting “man” appear in the Older Testament—specific life intervals through which a man progresses **IF** he learns the lessons God intends for each stage.

The first stage, the **Creational Male** (*adam*), connotes mankind in general, both male and female. Having been made in the image of God, humanity is distinct from the rest of creation. Mankind is able to design, invent and produce that which began as an abstract idea and resulted in a tangible result. Due to man’s sin nature, however, our abilities can be used for evil as well as for noble purposes.

The next stage of male development is the **Phallic Male** (*zakar*). In this stage a man **recognizes his innate sexual drive** that impels and motivates him toward an intimate relationship. Biblical admonitions constrain him, however, to confine his expression of that sexuality to his wife.

In fact, a man's true worship of God begins by fleeing lust (1 Corinthians 6:18) and saving himself for the woman he will take in the covenant of marriage. It is through *not* giving in to lust that a man begins to learn true responsibility to God by denying himself for the sake of obedience to Him.

Men have 10 times more testosterone than women have. In order to stay pure and holy before God in order to serve His purposes, he must fight off one of the greatest biological urges in his life. The degree to which he learns responsibility in this stage affects his ability to act responsibly in succeeding stages.

It is through not giving in to lust that a man begins to learn true responsibility to God by denying himself for the sake of obedience to Him.

When the term *gibbor* is used in the Hebrew Scriptures, it refers to the third stage of a man's life development, the **Warrior Male**. A man in this stage seeks to excel and to conquer. He's known by **what he does**. In our culture this would generally represent a man in his twenties and thirties, and even into his forties, heading for the top in his occupation as he scurries to acquire the trappings of material success and recognition.

Hellenist-influenced evangelical ministry relies on this stage of development, for its recruits. (Sometimes it even reaches back into the Phallic stage for youth workers to "identify with" young people and attract them.) Warrior males within religious systems bring the same aspirations of worldly success into the congregation: the "nickels and noses" mentality that impels corporate America to attain prestige and acclaim.

Warriors are to be found among the majority of clergy; among men who lead Promise Keepers cells and similar groups; and among leadership of most evangelical ministries. Sue and I live in Colorado Springs, a city with a public reputation as the "**Protestant Vatican**". Warriors in this town run the multi-million-dollar evangelical businesses that are called "ministries".

The Warrior Stage induces men to scramble for prestige — to seek to be "top dog." Directing and controlling the affairs of organizations rather than leading through Christ-like humility and servanthood are the norm. That trademark of Hellenism — rationalization — justifies copying the world's ways of success.

During this period a man is often so consumed with his work that he spends little time enjoying his family. He may be deriving "attaboys" from church leadership for his activities in his congregation, but his own wife and children are yearning for intimacy and interaction that he has no time for. He may even grow angry toward them, thinking they're ungrateful that he's bringing home the bacon; isn't that enough??

Eventually a man becomes a **Wounded Male** (*enosh*) during which season God completes the wounding not accomplished in earlier stages. Only through wounding can a man be humbled enough to learn to trust in God in ways he couldn't have imagined in prior stages. Through the trials and disappointments he faces in wounding, he also begins to understand the needs of those around him.

Often the *enosh* is a man in his forties, but we've encountered those even in their sixties *still trying* to be warriors. Sadly, they're bludgeoning those around

them like old bull elk, trying to shore up their diminishing physical capabilities but ignoring growth in the character of Jesus. To renew his flagging self-image, he may take up with a younger woman.

The wounding he's undergoing creates deep-seated confusion and malaise. He loses the purpose and meaning he had in the Warrior Stage. In this culture his "mid-life crisis" leaves him in a funk feeling as though no one understands his misery. All he knows is that his marriage seems unfulfilling, his children don't seem to need him, his job isn't satisfying, and his body is starting to fall apart.

He feels very much isolated, and is unable or even unwilling to reach out to those who could help him see God's purpose for this wounding. Many men lose their marriages at this time.

The *enosh* stage is like going through the "**valley of the shadow of death.**" But during this time he must learn to die to his old inclinations and goals and practices. That's the only way he'll garb himself with humility. And, it's an essential part of our Father's design to raise up *humble* older men of wisdom who will shepherd His children.

God has designed for the wounded stage to develop a man who is totally dependent upon Him. It's only when the total dependence on his Lord is complete that a man comes out of the Wounded Stage.

The severity of the Wounded stage classroom depends on:

1. How much the man tolerated sin in his past, *and*
2. His personal access to older role models in the faith, or lack thereof in earlier stages.

Only through wounding can a man be humbled enough to learn to trust in God in ways he couldn't have imagined in prior stages. Through the trials and disappointments he faces in wounding, he also begins to understand the needs of those around him.

The Hebrew term *ish* defines the **Mature Male**. This reflects a man who has passed through his wounded period to become a person of dignity and integrity. At this stage of his life, a man is known by his character, by **who he is**. No longer is he known by *what he does*. The competitive spirit and desire to achieve that once drove him has been exchanged for *compassion*. He's now a reflection of our Father's heart.

The Mature Male senses a renewal of life purpose. No longer a warrior, he's able to cooperate with other men with a servant's heart. His humility of heart enables him to coordinate with others in service to Jesus. Paul's words have special meaning for him, "**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves**" (Philippians 2:3). This is the true understanding of humility.

At the same time, his dependence on his Lord empowers him to confront foolishness and those practices that are not of God. A courage to represent the interests of the Father grows inside him, culminating in the next stage, Sage/Elder.

If his marriage has endured through the wounding process, he finds his love growing to new dimensions toward his wife. His appreciation for her deepens, and they can at this stage be a highly effective team to help younger couples.

In particular he recognizes how the Father has always wanted to use his wife

to teach him humility. For a man to love his wife as Jesus would love her requires absolute humility. She is called to give deference as to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22,23), but he is never to lord it over her.

The final stage, which not all men achieve because they have acted foolishly in prior stages, is a man addressed as a *zaken* (zah-KEN) or **Sage/Elder**. *Zaken* means “gray-bearded wise man”. He is a willing and available mentor, revered for his wisdom gained through life experience. Even his past mistakes and sins, and subsequent repentance, have taught him wisdom.

An Elder is a man who has truly tasted the Father’s mercy. And this understanding is what enables him to represent the Father in caring for His children.

The *zaken’s* guidance and understanding allow him to bring practical application to God’s Word when others ask. In biblical times, Jewish elders who shepherded God’s people passed along wisdom in the *practical* realm, not the theoretical. They provided skillful advice for solving the current problems facing the community.

(See our book **Christian Halakhahs: Loving Jesus Through The Way You Apply His Word.**)

The importance of an elder’s ability to extend wise counsel and instruction is found in Paul’s parameters for elders: “*Now the overseer [elder] must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach*” (1 Timothy 3:2).

These qualities took years to develop! The fires of testing transformed selfish motivation and personal gratification into selfless humility that cared for the interests of others and regarded others more highly than himself (Philippians 2:4).

A *zaken* taught through **interpersonal discussion** with those who sought his wisdom. What a contrast to today’s expository preacher sequestered by a pulpit as he carries on a one-way monologue to a captive audience! (Incidentally, the Hellenist convert, John Chrysostom, introduced the sermon concept to church practice. From a Hellenist standpoint, only an educated “holy” man could speak forth the Word of God).

In biblical times, arrival at the stage of *zaken* represented the culmination of a life worth living. God has always used faithful elders to lead His people. From Sinai He commanded Moses to call the seventy elders together to convey to them God’s plan to free His people from slavery. This pattern of elder leadership continued to the establishment of faith communities in the Newer Testament. Elders were, and continue to be, His means to shepherd His children.

Yet the entire functioning of the people as a body was not to be dependent on any one man’s efforts or role. There was a *plurality* of leadership as each walked in his particular gifting. The apostle Paul anchored the foundational ministries of the Church, which were already part of the Hebraic stream of Judaism centuries before the coming of Jesus.

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be **pastors** and **teachers**, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up Ephesians until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

Through the interconnectedness of these functions, the body of Christ was being built up into the fulness of Christ — that is, *until* the Hellenist philosophers entered Christianity and exerted influence to establish a priestly class of educated professionals.

In biblical times, arrival at the stage of *zaken* represented the culmination of a life worth living. God has always used the elders to lead His people.

The Hellenist system of clergy hierarchy is called “**Nicolaitanism**”. It produced a spiritual predominance of a priestly or ministerial order. The men who appeared to possess the greatest natural ability dominated. Younger academics considered “untainted by the world” were set apart to represent the people before God. No longer were older men who gained wisdom through life experience esteemed or called upon for life counsel.

Daily life and “religious” life were compartmentalized, with the former thought of as vulgar and the latter as sacred. This was the antithesis of the body-soul-spirit unity created by a Father Who called His creation *good!* The Hebraic early Church considered “sacred” a life walked in obedience to God, no matter what the occupation.

With the loss of the Hebraic roots, dependence on the Lord through His Spirit was replaced by dependence on the clergy to approach God for them. God’s verdict on this switch of allegiance and trust is full of grief and anger over the loss of intimacy with His children.

**Nicolaitanism**, which means “*to conquer the people*”, places an intermediary between God and those with whom He desires fellowship. We would all do well to heed the apostle’s warning:

*But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate... Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore, turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth* (Revelation 2:6,15,16).

(For more on this very current topic, please see our Hebraic Article: *I Hate Nicolaitanism.*)

Centuries later, in order to undergird the Hellenist clergy/laity distinction, translators of the King James Version, utilizing Bancroft’s Rules of translation, used the word “*pastor*” in the sense of a clergy position in Ephesians 4:11. Most subsequent translations of the Bible have done the same.

Had the Greek word used by Paul, *poimen* (poy-mayn), meaning “shepherd”, been translated as such, this passage would have kept continuity with the other Newer Testament passages that refer to the shepherding role of the elder, *presbuteros* (prez-boo’-tair-oss). This would also have reflected the biblical role from the Older Testament as well of elders as compassionate, self-sacrificing shepherds.

The inaccurate translation creates a false distinction between the Greco/Roman *ecclesiastical position* of “pastor” and the Hebraic biblical role of “shepherding by elders.” This manmade interpretation has maintained the clergy/layman distinction even in evangelical communities — certainly a division not intended by our Lord Who called for the priesthood of ALL believers!

As we have shared, a *shepherd* (Hebrew *zaken*/Greek *poimen*) was a gray-bearded man of leadership who impart-

ed wisdom and counsel to a specific group of people. Before the Hellenist philosophers convinced the Church leadership to install young educated men as “pastors”, the earliest faith communities were shepherded by older men of wisdom. These men, who had experienced God’s forgiveness and mercy, represented the Father’s compassionate heart for His children.

The extent of elder leadership was limited only to those the elders knew personally. Never were they intended to control and direct large impersonal groups as so many do today. Biblical spiritual shepherds intimately *knew* their flock, and led through role modeling a lifestyle that glorifies God. Every man who aspired to lead the Father’s children was called to personally role model the way of life others were to live. This required intimate ongoing contact with each among the flock.

The crucial limiting factor of a man’s leadership was the number of people for whom an elder *zaken* could personally render account to God. The Book of Hebrews affirms the interconnected responsibility between elders and their extended spiritual family:

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they **keep watch over your lives**, as people who will have to **render an account**. So make it **a task of joy** for them, not one of groaning; for that is of no advantage to you (Hebrews 13:17).*

The shepherds of a faith community were the best role models of representing Christ to their extended spiritual family. An elder’s marriage represented the qualities you wanted in your own marriage.

Yet these qualities didn’t come via something you read about. Our Hebraic

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forefathers understood that a man is changed:

- **by intimate access to role models.**  
A man is changed by what he esteems in others he respects and doesn’t want to let down.
  - **by being confronted.**  
Confrontation is an essential part of the shepherd-disciple relationship. That’s why Paul directs, “*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and **confronting you in order to help you change***” (1 Thessalonians 5:12, CJB).
  - **not at all by education.**  
Education only permits a man to know more facts. Yet, education is the method of Bible teaching that the Hellenists introduced — impartation of concepts and facts. That’s why so few men in evangelical circles truly *participate* in their faith by walking in loving obedience in a Christ-like manner.
- Remember this key distinction:
- **The Hebraic-based Church that our Father is restoring depends on the wisdom of wise biblical elders to shepherd His children.**
  - **Hellenist-influenced evangelicalism depends on Warriors to keep the system running through control and direction.**

(See *Pastoring By Elders* for more on biblical leadership in faith communities.)

## Participation In Worship

Pulpits towering over rows of pews containing silent observers were never part of the early Church. These pagan trappings adapted from Hellenism were designed to produce **spectatorship**. People showed up for a religious performance.

The Hebraic early Church was **participatory**. Paul describes the interactive nature of their gatherings:

*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church (1 Corinthians 14:26).*

The earliest followers of Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit within each of them to glorify the Father and edify each other. Each person in whom the Holy Spirit abides was expected to bring forth some manner of the Spirit's work in them so that others would be encouraged and strengthened in their daily walk in union with Jesus. (Explore this further through the **Hebraic-Greek Comparison Chart** in our books, or on our website under "Hebraic Articles".)

### Key Character Qualities: **Humility and Repentance**

If you ask many in congregations today why they attend, the three most common answers are:

1. The preaching
2. The worship style
3. The youth programs, singles group, or whatever fulfills their individual need.

The earliest followers of Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit within each of them to glorify the Father and edify each other.

If you asked the earliest followers of Jesus why they were part of a particular faith community, they would reply:

1. The humble, repentant nature of the shepherds and their ability to lead them into Christ-likeness
2. The communal righteousness as each endeavored to walk in obedient trust
3. The extended-family load-bearing and one-anothering.

They knew from biblical precedent that repentance opened the way for fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus. Regardless of Christendom's persistent fragmentation, God's perspective has never been which denomination or creed a person ascribes to. From our Lord's perspective, are you in righteous standing with Him through repentance and confession, or *not* in fellowship due to unconfessed sin? This is, and has always been, the crucial dividing line.

The apostle John wanted to make clear this important connection between righteousness and fellowship:

*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:3,9).*

The *imputed righteousness* of Christ imparts full forgiveness to those who have repented and turned away from their old life to walk in His Lordship.

From our Lord's perspective, are you in righteous standing with Him through repentance and confession, or *not* in fellowship due to unconfessed sin?

This is, and has always been, the crucial dividing line.

There is also the *responsive righteousness* of the follower of Jesus in walking in love-grounded obedient trust. Our fellowship with God encompasses this "if we confess...He will forgive" restoration.

It doesn't matter what a Christian says or thinks about himself as much as whether he is in fellowship with God. Confession and repentance restore fellowship. Nothing else is as important as being in full fellowship with our Lord. No true fellowship with others can occur if you are not in righteous standing with God.

Our Hebraic forefathers in the faith knew from their ancestral accounts that it's difficult for a lone individual to remain repentant. That's why those in the Hebraic stream — those who wanted to walk in the steps of their forebear Abraham — got together in their homes *before* the coming of Jesus.

The Spirit had inspired them to meet in homes for two reasons:

1. To uphold *communal righteousness* through mutual accountability. Unconfessed sin by any person in the extended spiritual family hindered the prayers of all from being answered. Jesus's teaching in Matthew 18:15-19 is applicable to a *home fellowship* of those who know each other well, not to a congregation whose participants may not even know one another's names.

- Confession restored righteousness (1 John 1:9);

- Righteousness resulted in the Father answering prayers (James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:12).

2. To provide intimate *load-bearing relationships*. The fellowship of homes was a 24/7 commitment of extended spiritual family in union with Jesus.

(For more on fellowship in homes, see *Restoring The Early Church* Chapter 11. The Home Fellowship — Promoting Righteousness; Chapter 12. The Home Fellowship — Load-bearing Relationships)

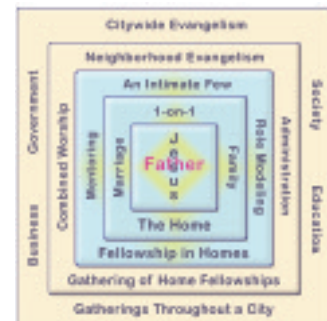
The relational priorities of the earliest followers of Jesus are captured in **The Restoration Diagram**. Everything in terms of our way of life in Christ flows from the center outward. In other words:

1. The most important relational priorities are in the *center*.

2. Your relational *p r i o r i t i e s* decrease the further out from the center you

go. The outer priorities *support* those closer to the center, and do not compete with them.

**The Restoration Diagram**  
*Relational Priorities of the Earliest Church*



If our Hebraic forefathers in the faith who first put their trust in Jesus could talk with Hellenist-influenced Christians today, they'd find nothing in common. The demonic influence of Hellenism is very powerful. It has deluded many into priorities and religious forms that have nothing to do with truly following Jesus.

(See *Restoring The Early Church*, Section 3, for more on the relational priorities of the earliest Church.)

## The Effects Of Hellenism On Evangelicalism

Most people, whether Christians or not, connote evangelicals as people who are focused on the salvation of the world. The common identifying factors of Evangelicalism today, however, are more likely to repel than attract the very ones they wish to draw to Jesus. Consider these factors from our Father's vantage point.

### 1. ***Creedal Competition.***

Through church councils over the centuries that have employed Hellenist philosophical debate, there are now over 23,000 competing denominations and creedal positions in Christendom. This contradicts the unity that Jesus prayed for in the lives of His followers (John 17).

### 2. ***“Christians” Who Know About God, but Don’t Know Him***

Because of the pervasive influence of Hellenism, God and the Bible are treated academically — as Someone and something to be studied and analyzed. The Holy Spirit, His ministry and empowerment have been uprooted from the heart of Christian life.

The reason so few are experiencing the powerful work of the Spirit through the followers of Jesus as seen in the Book of Acts is because the Hebraic foundations and reliance on the Spirit of Christ have been minimized or discarded.

### 3. ***Lawless Christianity.***

If the power and conviction of the Holy Spirit are not sought, cherished and obeyed, a tragic substitute is birthed. The sin nature of man has produced a “Christianity” *without regard* for God's holiness and His holy standards for man as engraved in His Word.

*God's* understanding of grace is the *power and the desire to keep His commands*. Much of evangelicalism now interprets grace as license to go on sinning because “you're already forgiven”. What a deceptive trap so many who swallow a false, nonbiblical gospel are lured into!

### 4. ***Knowledge-filled Younger Men Have Replaced Older Men of Wisdom.***

Young seminary graduates have replaced the elder/shepherds of the Bible. The life wisdom gained from experience and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit has been exchanged for non-confrontive witticisms and entertaining presentations designed to attract and indulge complacent listeners.

From the time God commanded Moses to send for the elders, His pattern has been for the shepherds of His faith communities today to be the *zakens* (gray-haired elders) and *poimens* (shepherds) of His children.

### 5. ***Fathers and Mothers Are Displaced From Their Biblical Responsibilities.***

One of the major spiritual battles on earth is over who will train the children to walk in righteousness. The Bible calls for *parents* to do this with support of their faith community. Evangelicalism encourages husbands to “outsource” their wives and chil-

dren for others to train in spiritual matters.

The home is no longer the basic building block for spiritual development that is the scriptural pattern. Sunday school, youth groups, conferences, and women's gatherings of all kinds have stepped in to allow lax husbands and fathers to complacently ignore God's call.

#### 6. ***Syncretistic Adaptation of "Whatever Works" Rather Than Standing Firm On God's Word***

Hellenism places *man* at the center of all things. The Bible affirms *God* as the immovable center. Left to himself, man will invariably define his own religious practices.

A key identifying factor of Hellenism is *syncretism*. Syncretism causes man to cross the boundaries of God's Word to blend or adapt other practices and beliefs into the pure truth. The basic motivation is to produce a custom-designed religion that meets your personal goals and desires.

For instance, syncretism has caused much of Christendom to adopt holidays infused with pagan practices and declare them holy days. The myriad of "church growth" formulas reflect a syncretism of corporate America success methods. The goal of leadership, whether secular or religious, is size, and **size equals prestige**.

Whether any of these activities is pleasing to God or found in the Bible is irrelevant. Many evangelical ministries are corporate enterprises in disguise. In the evangelical bastion of Colorado Springs, "ministry" is a billion-dollar plus industry.

Much of the leadership in mega-churches would not be commended

as the Bereans were who verified everything through the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). Many contemporary worship styles and programs lack any biblical foundation. This man-centered, man-pleasing emphasis is mostly due to the *law-less nature* of much of evangelicalism today — little or no regard for the boundaries of the Bible.

### **The Effects Of Hellenism On Evangelical Men**

The demonic influence of Hellenism on Evangelical Christianity is insidious. This is especially true if you are not dependent on the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit is not in control of your soul, it is under the control of your sin nature. Then your sin nature, rather than the Holy Spirit, guides and directs your understanding.

(Delve into this in **Lifebyte 18**. *The Powerful Influence Of Your Sin Nature*; or, watch the **Certain Of What We Do Not See** Video: *The Powerful Influence Of Your Sin Nature*.)

Hellenism especially appeals to right-handed men, who predominantly use the logical, left side of their brain. Church council resolutions have **logically produced** philosophical, analytically-based religious factions fragmented by creed and practice.

First, theologians have failed to maintain the unity Jesus calls for. They have divided people by man-made creeds. **Creeds** are developed through dependence on Hellenist philosophical discussion and arguments.

When the Spirit is not in control of your soul, it is under the control of your sin nature. Then your sin nature, rather than the Holy Spirit, guides and directs your understanding.

Conversely, “**doctrine**” to the earliest followers of Jesus was a *way of life*. You had to know a person and observe his life choices to know his doctrine. Walking the talk was crucial!

A creedal-based person can talk about his creed as a set of religious precepts to which he mentally assented. His creed, however, may not reflect his way of life.

Second, Hellenism causes men to develop a **supremacist attitude** about what they know — a characteristic of the converted Greek philosophers who launched this bent into Christianity.

Arrogant supremacy only serves to augment division. In particular, it attracts younger men to obtain knowledge **about** God rather than develop **Christ-like character**. They learn how to control and direct instead of coming alongside those who could role model godliness and wisdom.

Through Hellenist influence, the elder men of wisdom who shepherded faith communities were replaced during the second and third centuries by younger **Phallic** and **Warrior** men. [A note from Mike: During my years of counseling clergy, I found these two stages dominated the Nicolaitan religious establishment.]

This is why:

- Evangelicals are denominationally divided;
- Evangelical clergy are a foremost occupation for divorce in the nation;
- Evangelical “lay people” sunder their marriage covenants far more frequently than do the unchurched.

To put it succinctly: Love, humility and servanthood are foreign as goals of Phallic and Warrior religious leaders.

Instead, Bible knowledge, creedal distinctives and prestigious positions in the religious establishment are cherished. The Holy Spirit is acknowledged but not utterly depended upon as the early followers of Jesus did.

The goal of Evangelicalism may be the salvation of mankind. Its methodologies, however, are constructions that express the pride of men. Much of evangelicalism is **outcome-based** — that which man is going to do *for* God. Man, rather than Jesus, becomes the “lord” of the church to make growth happen. And Warrior males are most attracted to this.

The pattern for the true Church is to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, the first Hebrew and the father of all who trust in Jesus (see Romans 4:16). The love-grounded relationship between Abraham and his God is humble and **obedience-based**. That only comes about through Spirit revelation, humility and self-sacrificing love.

Creedal allegiance and Bible knowledge are the hallmarks of those who aspire to control and direct the religious affairs of people. On the other hand, the Hebraic, humility-based intimate love relationship with God and with others comes at the cost of abandoning self-promotion and public adulation.

A creedal-based person can talk about his creed as a set of religious precepts to which he mentally assented. His creed, however, may not reflect his way of life.

### **Evangelicalism Entraps Young Men**

1. Young men are taught to *know about* God only through their **mind's analysis**. Until they break through this trap, they can never become men of the Spirit, men who in humility would see themselves as loving and

obedient representatives of Jesus. Again, Bible knowledge and the supremacy of *knowing more* than other men do creates a “top dog” environment, with theologians and clergy leading the way. What a far cry from the servant leaders Jesus called His disciples to be (Matthew 20:26,27)!

2. **Outcome-based religious lives** and even their ministries are founded on what they are going to *accomplish* for God. They never let the Lord be LORD, and they never seek or apply His revelation to themselves. This has resulted in ministries which adopt the corporate marketing schemes of Satan's world system, as we discussed earlier. **God-dependence** is abhorrent to the majority evangelical men. Revelation that the Spirit would bring is supplanted by worldly agendas and methods.
3. **Unable to perceive love and obedient trust as the hallmark of their faith**, evangelicals lead this nation in divorce. Wives are leaving loveless marriages in droves. And the men, trapped by the supremacist goals of Hellenism, find it impossible to humble themselves and love their wives as Jesus would love them.

Our Hebraic forefathers in the faith understood that a wife was the highest gift God would give a man, since marriage represented the intimate relationship God had with Israel and Jesus has with His Church. A man's love (*agape*) for God (Matthew 22:37) was seen in how he loved (*agape*) his wife (Ephesians 5:33). A married man's ministry should flow out of the Christ-likeness he demonstrates in his marriage.

### **Consider This Warning:**

We want to voice a special warning to men who have been indoctrinated in any of the Evangelical Youth Ministries at a younger age. For the vast majority of you, Bible knowledge became an idol to you, and the idolatry of knowledge has prevented you from acquiring Spirit-based love that flows from your heart.

If you're a man who has been heavily involved in Youth With a Mission, Young Life, Campus Crusade, Navigators or other such ministries, you are at risk of being doubly addicted to the prison of your mind's analysis. This is because in your Phallic and Warrior Stages you were heavily indoctrinated into Hellenism rather than a love-grounded, trust-filled obedient walk with Jesus. You know a lot **about** God, but you may not **know Him** in intimate relationship.

Those in this situation find it almost impossible to consider humility-based, Spirit-empowered love as essential to their life. From our experience, the divorce rate among men who have been heavily involved with these Hellenist-based ministries may be higher than men who didn't participate.

There is only one way for you to break the influence of Hellenism in your life. You can NEVER press on into being a man of the Spirit until you repent of the Hellenist methodology and goals you absorbed. **Repentance** is the first step for you to take on your way out of this demonic prison. Then, fill in those old rationale-dug ruts by making the scripturally-based Hebraic foundations your way of life.

If you're a wife who lives with a man who can't love you as Jesus would have him love you, help him to scrutinize his life for participation in any of these

## Connect the Ministry with the Symptom:

- **Young Life**
  - **Campus Crusade**
  - **YWAM**
  - **Navigators**
- Majority of young people in this ministry controlled by a stronghold of rebellion
  - Uses haunted houses and other demonic ploys to attract young people
  - Fewer than 5% of young people involved with this ministry are following Christ five years later.
  - Ministry leadership acknowledges that reliability rather than love is their ministry goal. Many leaders confess that they themselves don't even know *how* to love as Jesus would.

Hellenist ministries that may be hindering him from loving you as our Lord calls for. As our Father's daughter, HE wants you to experience the love of Jesus through your husband here on earth.

### Summarizing Today's Fruit Of Evangelicalism

**Protestant clergy**, including evangelicals, have been among the foremost occupations for divorce in the United States for some time now.

One of the top three evangelical denominations has a documented adultery rate among its pastors of over 50%.

The **divorce rate** in the Bible Belt, the stronghold of evangelicalism, is 50% higher than among the unchurched in this nation.

Do Hellenist seminaries mold prospective clergy to fit into the Nicolaitan system? Yes, they do!

I experienced the Vietnam conflict through three shipboard deployments as a helicopter pilot. As my walk with Jesus has deepened, I've recognized the reality of the unseen world in the *spiritual warfare* that surrounds each follower of

Jesus. And, I've recognized how important humility of heart is in order to be victorious.

From watching numerous war movies I developed a little scenario to test the heart motive of people. Were they humble and dead to themselves? Or, were they self-preservationist at any cost?

With different groups who came to our retreat center during our 11 years there, I'd simulate dropping a hand grenade in their midst.



I'd tell them that they had 3 seconds to respond, and I would count off: "1...2...3...BOOM!!!"

- Over half of the teenagers and women would jump on the hand grenade to save others.
- About 1 out of 10 men would jump on the hand grenade.
- NOT ONE clergyman ever jumped on the hand grenade! Every one of them fled as they leaped over sofas and tables!

I was sickened by what I saw and really questioned if these men were able to apply Jesus's words to them-

selves: ***“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends”*** (John 15:13). What danger penetrates a man’s heart when you let others elevate you in their midst!

### **Biblical Evangelists Train Disciples**

Fewer than a 10% of those who go forward at the major **evangelical crusades** are found following Jesus afterward. In fact, the most well-known of the major crusades found fewer than 4% were following Jesus by year’s end. The other 96% who “went forward” were thereafter “inoculated” against the Lordship of Jesus as the Gospel presents.

The Hebraic evangelist of the earliest Church was a ***“faith-community planter and repairer”***. Paul, Timothy and Titus personified the evangelist who invested himself in the lives of those with whom they shared the Gospel. The Epistles of Paul were his means of addressing problems in the faith communities he started.

For example, the letter referred to as “First Corinthians” came about because *“...Chloe’s household has informed me that there are quarrels among you”* (1 Corinthians 1:11).

Paul encouraged his protegee Timothy to *“keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry”* (2 Timothy 4:5).

These men didn’t do “drive by” crusades that breezed in and swept out. They went and lived among the people until a faith community led by recognized reliable elders could be formed. We get a glimpse of the evangelist’s mission in Paul’s letter to Titus: *“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might **straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you**”* (Titus 1:5).

Modern evangelism is the construct of Hellenist men, totally nullifying the Hebraic foundations for the office of evangelist. Should any religious function negate what God ordained?

### **Whose Children Are They?**

The past sixty years have found a tremendous increase in **evangelical youth organizations**. The rise of parachurch ministries working with young people has for the most part been Satan’s most effective tool to separate children from the authority of their parents. These ministries have paralleled the goal of public education: to diminish the influence of parents in the lives of their children.

(We explore at length this subject in our Hebraic Article, *He Has Showed You.*)

Because of the syncretistic influence of Hellenism, parachurch youth ministries have introduced a host of unbiblical, worldly methods to attract young people. As with corporate America, the *number* of kids involved is the true measure of success.

Studies done on the fruit of this ministry activity have shown it to be minimal. Youth work in general in the US is considered less than 3% effective in training young people to love and serve Jesus as Lord of their lives.

We consider these ministries instead to be exceedingly effective in undermining father/child relationships. Unbiblical parachurch techniques are often adopted by many church youth ministries. Whenever any godly father questions these methods, he’s branded a “trouble maker” by the congregation leadership. To the congregation leaders as well, **size equals success.**

Because of the syncretistic influence of Hellenism, parachurch youth ministries have introduced a host of unbiblical, worldly methods to attract young people.

### Charity Promotes Dependence

The Hellenist influence on **evangelical missions** has been devastating. Missionaries see themselves too often in a paternal role to the people to whom they go to minister.

Evangelical missions are often **arrogant in their approach to other cultures**. Their intellectual knowledge **about** God can make them believe they're superior to the cultural ways of others. And rather than loving the ones with whom they share as Jesus would love, they suppress other cultures into a Europeanized, Hellenist Christianity that none from the earliest Church would recognize.

Many evangelical missions use charity to control those of other cultures. Ongoing dependence on the mission produces "rice Christians" who "believe" as long as the food is forthcoming. This methodology becomes self-perpetuating. The dependent believers are like children who are never given the responsibility of maturing in their faith and trusting Jesus to answer their prayers.

Many evangelical mission agencies have been in the same place doing the same thing for decades with few nationals in leadership. Again, the dignity of the native people is diminished as they are denied the responsibility of walking independent of outside aid.

In 2000 we were invited to visit the Lakota Sioux reservation by one of the elder women, Norma Blacksmith. She had been using our book, ***Demolishing Strongholds***, within the tribe. It's one

thing to meet white people who wrote a useful book, but what kind of people were we? she wondered.

Norma took us to meet the principal of a Christian school on the reservation. The "anglo" man bragged how he had quadrupled the enrollment during his five years as principal. I asked him, "How long has this school been here?" "Seventy years," he replied. "How many Lakota do you have on staff?" "None" was his answer. I pointedly asked him, "Don't you think you have a problem?" "I don't think so," he declared.

As we left, Norma grabbed me by the elbow and looked deeply into my eyes. "You see the problem!" A year later the principal was removed, and we found out that Norma had become the principal of that school. Hallelujah!!!

Our Hebraic forefathers upheld the dignity of other cultures — treating them as they would want to be treated. The basis to this process is the command of Jesus, *"Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Law and the Prophets"* (Matthew 7:12).

The highest method of upholding dignity in a culture is to enable a man to provide for his family through work. The Bureau of Indian Affairs in this nation clearly understood this. That's why they did all they could to *prevent* Native American men from supporting their own families. BIA policy included killing the buffalo, destroying the fruit trees, imprisoning the tribes on unproductive land, and damming up the rivers so they couldn't farm. They drove the men into alcoholism, then doled out meager supplies for the desperate families.

The Bureau hired Christian denominations to go in to destroy the Native

culture and replace it with “white” ways. Under the guise of evangelism these missions showed a complete disregard for the elders and traditions of the tribes. The children were abducted from their parents on the reservation and compelled to live in boarding schools. There they were forced to endure loss of all that represented their heritage. Short haircuts, elimination of tribal clothing and jewelry, and punishment for speaking in their native language was the norm for “Christian” boarding schools to assimilate Indian children into the Anglo world.

We know from the experience of Native friends that some of the evangelical missionaries at these boarding schools beat the children with rubber hoses, isolated them for lengthy periods in windowless rooms, and raped the girls — something none of the perpetrators would want for their own children.

Today, most mission work focuses on women and children. Few missions approach the elders for permission to minister. The paternal cycle continues.

An internal study by one of the largest missions to the Native Americans deemed its decades of ministry as “unfruitful.” After learning about the Hebraic methods of cross-cultural evangelism, seasoned missionaries within the ministry who had seen the decades of fruitless effort encouraged the administration to adapt these biblical foundations. The leadership, however, was **fearful of losing financial support** from evangelical congregations. They decided instead to go on with their old “unfruitful” ways.

#### Just a note:

A mission in Rwanda used the Hebraic style of cross-cultural mission when they first made contact with a par-

ticular village. Rather than trying to appeal to the women or children, they sat with the elders for three days to discuss their motivation and purpose. When the elders saw the heart of the Hebraic-oriented missionaries, they told the whole tribe, “Listen to these people! They are here for our good.”

(If this is unfamiliar ground, please see our Hebraic Article: *Hebraic Foundations To Trans-cultural Ministry*)

#### Consider this key point:

The supremacist attitude of Hellenism keeps evangelical missionaries from recognizing their own darkness. Seventy-five percent of missionaries going forth from this nation don't make it through their first tour. The most common reason for failure is **unresolved bitterness** toward parents, and **rebellion**.

Can you imagine how ineffective our military would be if we had this kind of desertion rate in the midst of war?

We met with a board member of one of the largest evangelical mission training organizations in this nation. They had an 85% failure rate of families, and 75% for single people.

We inquired about those who had failed on the mission field. “How do these people fare after their return to the States?” The reply? “We don't know.”

We asked, “Don't you think you have an obligation to follow up with these people.” Once more, “No” was his reply.

We tried again, “Have you considered finding out *why* these people fail, and doing something about reducing the failure rate?” “No. If we investigate the problem, we may **lose our financial support**.” He didn't want to pursue the matter any further.

### Author's Comment:

You may be able to sense how personally painful it is for Sue and me to share the Hebraic foundations, fully knowing that this is what our Father, in His mercy, is restoring. Daily we run up against a religious system which has become self-perpetuating without any perceived *need* for God.

We see it as a **“spiritual holocaust”**. Many who embrace false gospels believe they're going to heaven but are instead enroute to hell. You get a picture of Jews on boxcars enroute to death camps because they've embraced the lie that they are heading for “work camps.”

How did this happen to them and to so many evangelicals today? **Vested interests**. Phallic men and Warriors sell their souls to have positions in the system. The quest for prestige and esteem entices them to keep the system running without questioning whether it is of God.

In *A Passion For God's Presence*, Wayne Jacobsen wonderfully exposes the power of vested interests in churches today. Jacobsen illustrates his point with the story of *The Emperor's New Clothes* in which a group of royal advisors seeks to keep their jobs by lying about the emperor's nudity. As the king parades through the town in his “new clothes,” a little boy with no vested interest at stake shouts the obvious: “He's naked!” Jacobsen correlates the fable with the history of the church:

It's easy for us now to look back at those generations, not sharing their vested interests, and see how believers sold out to political and personal corruption during the Middle Ages; to high finance prior to the Reformation; to terror and murder during the Inquisition; to natural rea-

son during the Enlightenment; and to liberalism early in this century... We stay captive to deception by the same appeal of personal interest... So it is with the church today: many people are making Christianity just what they want it to be, whatever fits their interest... It doesn't take great wisdom to unmask deceit—only a desire to look at things the way they really are, not the way we want to see them.

(For more insight on the Hellenist Nicolaitan church, see *Restoring The Early Church*, Introduction: The Current Plight Of The Church In The Us).

### **The Hebraic Foundations We Must Go Back For Our Spiritual Future**

- It is crucial for anyone
- *who has a loving heart toward God,*
  - *who sees the deplorable condition of this nation,*
  - *who grieves over the lawlessness to which the Christian community has given way, to pursue a quest for truth.*

Is our Father, in His mercy, showing the Gentile community today the Hebraic foundations that enabled the earliest followers of Jesus to be so spiritually powerful and relationally intimate? Each individual and family must seek this confirmation for themselves.

When our Father makes this clear to you, earnestly explore these foundational practices and apply them to your life.

***“Then you will know the truth,  
and the truth will set you free”***

(John 8:32)