

Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"— our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

"Church for me begins with my family." Isn't that a thought-provoking statement? Our dear friend Joan Ferrero shared this thought with us last week during our visit in Connecticut. Where does 'church' begin for you? Is 'church' a place to go to, or is it people with whom you live your life for Christ?

As Sue and I began our October trip to Georgia, North Carolina, and Connecticut, the Lord impressed upon me that the November Mishpachah is to be on the topic of family. [Take a moment to review what "*Mishpachah*" means, above.] Family has a technical understanding of blood relations. But it also has a deeply relational meaning of those with whom you hold a kindred spirit. "*Kindred spirit*" implies warmth and acceptance—people with whom you want to intimately go on in life.

Jesus told His disciples a condition for having a kindred family spirit: "*Here are my mother and brothers. For whoever **does the will** of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*" (Matt. 12:49,50). Doing His will out of loving trust is a critical identifier of those who belong to Him and will be welcomed by Him at the Judgment Throne. Consider this critical family feature of your faith....*obedient trust!*

"Prepare yourselves by families" (2 Chron. 35:4).

The concept of *spiritual preparation* is foreign to many Christians. Most Christians show up at religious events with unprepared hearts. Often their attendance is analogous to going to the movies. Yet, preparation was clearly understood by our Hebraic forefathers. No one then would think of approaching our Lord without meeting the spiritual standards He required in His Word.

I remember one early morning while we were still at the retreat center in Connecticut, kneeling in front of my Bible. The day before, my friend Bert Schlossberg who lives in Israel had called me. Three days earlier we had arranged with our Board of Directors to leave the center after almost 11 years. The Lord's word through Bert was for Sue and me to live with him and his family for three months in Israel.

I had been taught that the Church had replaced Israel in God's plans. Israel was not a place I would have considered visiting. On my knees that morning I said, "Lord, I am going to open this Bible and I would like to have you show me why I am going to Israel." As I flipped the Bible open my eyes fell on, "**Get yourself ready! ...for I am with**

you," declares the Lord."

Having spent 10 years in the military, I knew what it felt like to be given orders. A short while later Sue and I left for Israel. We returned with the truths of the Restoration which we now share.

What does spiritual preparation look like to you?

- Do you pray in the morning before you start your day? Do you pray as a family?
- Before attending a church gathering, do you prepare your family? Do you see if there is any unconfessed sin in yourself or your family?
- Before going to work, do you ask God to prepare you so that you may represent Jesus in your workplace? What impact would it have on your children as they sat around the supper table to hear the divine encounters you had during your workday?
- Do you pray with and for your children before they leave for school?

**"Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea,
only the remnant will be saved.**

For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality"

(Rom. 9:27,28).

Equipping the Church to Go Back for its Future

At church gatherings or² because of my silence or non-involvement or lack of love. Christian conferences, many believers are pleased to see great numbers of 'God's people' present. There is a sense of contentment and satisfaction when we are gathered with others for religious purposes. But something is wrong. I saw one estimate that there are over 600,000 congregations in the US. Wouldn't you think that with *this many congregations* the US would become a theocracy with Jesus as Lord of this nation?!!

Are our congregations truly serving the interests of the Lord? Or are they focusing on *their own* interests? Has your faith community grown through *new converts*, or through people *leaving other congregations*? Does this even matter to you?

I contend that just as for the Jew only a remnant would be saved, among churchgoers today only a remnant will be saved.

Just as the Lord spoke of Israel in His words to Jeremiah, so today He is speaking to His people: *"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Let them glean the remnant of Israel as thoroughly as a vine; pass your hand over the branches again, like one gathering grapes.' To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it"* (Jer. 6:9,10).

If there is a remnant, I want my relatives to be included! In 1977 I asked God to use me any way He wanted so that none of my relatives would end up in hell

If you are the head of a family, I encourage you to earnestly seek God. Get alone some place and ask Him for help. Confess to Him, acknowledging that you have trouble keeping Him as the **#1 priority** in your life. With your repentance, watch what He can do *in* you and *for* you!

Isaiah understood how important *determination* in pursuing God was when he wrote, *"If you do not stand firm in your trust, you will not stand at all!"* (Isa. 7:9b). It is our **trust** in our Lord that makes all the difference. Our trust in His forgiveness. Our trust in His power to change us. Our trust that He will fulfill His purposes through us.

Your children need to see you in earnest pursuing a trusting relationship with our Lord. That one thing is probably the greatest inheritance parents could ever leave their children. So many children today are lost in this country, many within our congregations. They have been taught religious behavior, but have never seen genuine trust in Jesus. If this was the last letter the Lord enabled me to write, this is the most important point I've ever made!

I know from our seminars that many have no idea what they need to trust the Lord about. Ask Him to reveal your area of need. It is probably an area in which you are striving the most and getting the least satisfaction. It may be an area in which you fear a particular event happening in your life. Know this: If you don't come to the point of trusting Him, **He causes you** to face

and encounter the very thing you fear!

You know from our previous letters that I believe a day of tremendous darkness is coming on the US. Read this quote from David Wilkerson's most recent letter: "Today, as I write this letter, my heart is broken and I weep inside. Tonight at eight o'clock, the filthy play *Corpus Christi* opens just a few blocks from Times Square Church. In this play, Jesus is openly depicted as homosexual, having a sexual affair with Judas and all his disciples...The Holy Spirit spoke clearly to my heart, saying, 'Do not fight. This is my battle! This is now out of your hands—out of everybody's hands! Today God signs the death warrant—this is the day America dies! It dies as the world's leading power!" Strong and painful words...

"Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph. 2:3).

A clue as to why there is so much disintegration in the family and church today has been provided by Carle Zimmerman. In his book, *Family and Civilization*, Zimmerman traces the typical development and eventual disintegration of the family unit in a variety of cultures. He points out that in most great civilizations—including Greece, Rome, and America—the shifts in family relationships and in attitudes toward the family follow a similar course.

Initially there is great respect for³ly ties are respected. Husband the family, and individual desires are subordinated to the family needs. Eventually this attitude gives way to its opposite: a deification of individual rights and a deprecation of family commitments. This is accompanied by the disintegration of that society. This was the pattern, he believes, that took place among the Greeks and Romans, and this is the pattern that is currently taking place in America.

Zimmerman identifies three types of families, each of which predominates at various times in the life cycle of a civilization: the trustee family, the domestic family, and the atomistic family.

“The **trustee family** is the most powerful of all. It places great importance upon the resources and traditions that ancestors have passed along. The state is normally a patriarchal structure in which power is exercised in the name of justice and according to family laws. Divorce is rarely practiced; the individuals must subordinate their own interests to the interest of the family. Wealth is accumulated under the spirit of selflessness and hard work.

“The **domestic family** occupies a middle ground between individualism, on the one hand, and absolute authority of the family on the other. Under the domestic family, and the type of government it tends to foster, individual rights cannot be overturned or subordinated to the family. Divorce is rare although it does tend to occur occasionally. With the advent of the domestic family, the civilization moves towards human greatness. Both individual rights and strong fami-

ly ties are respected. Husband and wife are seen as one unit; parents assume major responsibility for their children, even if it means that some parental desires must be sacrificed.

“Soon, however, the powers of the family wane as the *powers of the state wax*. An obsession with individualism develops during the **atomistic family stage**. People are seen as distinct units, not connected to families; and the emphasis is on individual rights rather than on family responsibilities. Whereas self-sacrifice was the norm under the trustee family, complete and unabashed selfishness becomes normative under the atomistic family. Civilizations undergoing the period of disintegration in which the atomistic family reigns begin to resemble swarms of antagonistic insects at war with each other. Under the atomistic family, individuals become obsessed with their own desires and concerns; commitments and responsibilities are seen as infringements on individual freedoms.

Aspects recognizable in an atomistic society are:

1. Marriage loses its sacredness and is frequently broken by divorce.
2. Feminist movements abound. Women lose their inclination for childbearing and rearing; the birth rate decreases.
3. There is an increased public disrespect for parents, parenthood, and authority in general so that parenthood becomes harder for those who still try to rear children.
4. There is an increase in

juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, and rebellion.

5. There is an increasing desire for, and acceptance of, adultery.
6. There is a tolerance for, and spread of, sexual perversions of all kinds, especially homosexuality but including many others, such as rape, incest, child pornography.

This generally marks the final stage of social disintegration.

The Church today can still return to the stability and security of a family system that respects authority and honors biblical family values. But we must apperceive the Scriptures once again and put aside all of the revisionist forms we've adapted. [See our book *Pastoring by Elders*.]

As I share with church leaders, there is no doubt that it is too late for the US to avoid God's judgment. But the Church, the true family of Jesus, can still be the light it was called to be.

Here is how: Jesus gave us a warning on how we should live in this age when He tells us, *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it”* (Matt. 7:13,14).

As **The Gatekeeper**, He is fully able to show you and your family the way to and through the gate. Daniel, in his in apocalyptic visions, foresaw this day.

Consider his words:

⁴ pray:

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever... Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise* will understand”* (Dan 12:3,10).

***Wisdom** is seeing life from God’s vantage point. His wisdom enables us to understand His purposes and the importance of keeping His commands. If you love Jesus, we encourage you and your family to take the humble position Daniel took, and

“O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to [us] and to all the people of the land. Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on [this] desolate [nation]” (Dan. 9:4-6,17).

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

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