

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,

Following one of our seminars Sue and I were eating dinner with several of the attendees. Sitting next to me was a retired clergyman who asked me a pointed question: "Are you against all church traditions?" I was stunned at first because my mind isn't wired to be *against* anyone. I file the truths which I hold dearly in the category of "What I am *for*."

What compounded the problem for me was that he cited as valuable the Greek philosophers who brought so much of Plato's teaching into the church, and whose writings created the atmosphere of anti-Semitism that has pervaded the Church for centuries. I didn't respond because we were galaxies apart in our foundational values.

What about traditions?

- Traditions can give meaningful continuity to our lives.
- Traditions can also be a prison nearly impossible to question or to break free from.

A few days ago I was walking down a fairway with one of my favorite nephews. He diligently pursues information and has the courage to ask the necessary questions to discover truth.

He's the type of person of whom the Lord speaks when He says, "*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened*" (Mat. 7:7,8).

My nephew and I were discussing the increasing fear that is besieging people we know. Fear to ask questions. Fear to confront. Even fear about what they eat! We both perceived a climate of growing apprehension that's been created by these various fears. Are you experiencing this also?

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36)

The Lord told Sue and me that the message of the Hebraic Restoration would "*Set the captives free.*" The central issue of the Restoration encompasses our Father's love for us and the Gospel of the Hebrew Scriptures which reconciles us to Him through Jesus.

I believe that the freedom offered by Jesus can be found only by those who have the courage to seek, to question, to discern the truth, and to hold onto it with wholehearted conviction. I am not against traditions

as much as I am for the privilege of equipping people to live free and question what may oppose biblical truth.

The Church itself has been held captive to the teachings of Plato because men were fearful to question the writings of the "Church Fathers." As a result, countless Jews have been annihilated and we have been kept prisoners of the Greek spirit of Plato.

Everywhere we travel I see the same timid hesitation of those who fear to question the basis for their religious practices. Their fear reminds me of how ludicrously the blind man's parents acted after Jesus healed him (John 9). Jesus spoke of the man's healing "*that God's power might be seen at work in him.*" But his parents, when questioned about the restoration of their son's sight, "*were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.*"

"Are you doing this for Jesus Christ and no one else?"

My Dad asked me this when I resigned from the Navy to head for an interdenominational seminary. Two years earlier I'd

Equipping the Church to Go Back for its Future

witnessed such a dramatic² change in my sister Mary when she put her trust in Jesus. She'd challenged me to read the Bible. After devouring it twice, I put my trust in Jesus too. Immediately I was burdened to find out why so many denominations existed—an estimated 22,000 today.

Enroute to seminary, my Dad wanted to confirm my motive. When I answered, "For Jesus and no one else," he responded, "Many in the family are against what you're doing. But I'll stand with you." (I'm crying as I remember this.)

During our discipleship, Sue and I were blessed with a "spiritual father" named Frank Murray. He was born in Jerusalem in 1908. His parents had gone there with a party of others to pray for God to restore the Land of Israel to the Jewish people.

Whenever he would come to visit, Frank would question us thoroughly to see if we were still upholding "The Banner of Jesus Christ." When he gave us the right hand of fellowship, it meant a lot!

Does God desire denominations?

While at seminary I studied many of the doctrinal positions of the major denominations. To my dismay, *not one* apperceived the Scriptures. Church councils that hammered out each new belief system gave way to revisionism and, as a result of conflict among themselves, compromise.

Many parts of their doctrines were written to justify their departure from the group they had left. Also, inordinate effort was spent on creedal positions,

disregarding the daily walk with Jesus and the importance of each follower fulfilling His purposes.

Consider this comparison:

1. When people see their faith community as a *system of organized activity*, traditions can be very helpful. It's easier to manage a system of repeated activity than equip each believer for daily needs and challenges. People with the *courage to question* strike fear into the heart of a smoothly operating system that hallows tradition.

2. If a faith community comprises *interconnected, intergenerational relationships*, it grows through depth in existing relationships and expands through new relationships. This is the Hebraic Restoration.

Why aren't traditions questioned?

Faith communities are, in fact, groups of people, and some types of people prevail while others are driven out. Many years ago I was given a Teamwork Test developed by Jim Dethmer. The test is used to determine the roles people assume when they cooperate as a group. We have used it with over a thousand people. Below is a short summary of the four different roles people may assume when they cooperate with others in a group setting:

Contributors

Emphasis on *Task*

The contributor is task-oriented. People describe him/her as responsible, authoritative, reliable, proficient, and orga-

nized. He/she wants everything orderly and efficient.

Collaborator Emphasis on *Goal*

The collaborator is goal-directed and sees the vision, mission, or goal of the team as paramount. People describe him as forward-looking, goal-directed, accommodating, flexible, and imaginative.

Communicator Emphasis on *Process*

The communicator is process-oriented and concerned with the feelings of people. He's described as supportive, considerate, relaxed, enthusiastic, and tactful. The job is not nearly as important as the relationships of the people involved.

Challengers Emphasis on *Question*

The challenger questions the goals, methods, and even the ethics of the team. He/she would be described as honest, outspoken, principled, ethical, and adventurous. This person reexamines everything to make sure it's on target.

Over the years we've found the majority of clergy to be "Contributors." That is, they see their faith communities as a conglomeration of tasks that must be accomplished so the congregation can "run smoothly". Sadly, over time, the tasks become traditions so hallowed that people are fearful to question their biblical foundation or relevance.

We've also found that most "Challengers" have been driven from their faith communities. Their questioning the "Why?" of traditions has branded them as "trouble makers."

- Whether in a family, a faith³ community, or a country, when questions inspire apprehension, something's wrong.

Why aren't Christians taught to question more?

We are so accustomed to the Greek teaching style of sermon/lecture that we think it goes back to Jesus. Not at all! Our Lord Jesus, the Master Teacher, *midrashed*: He introduced topics and encouraged questions so that his disciples could *apply* what they were learning. We might say He "chewed the fat" with His disciples.

This same style is how Hebrew parents trained their children. Children don't automatically accept the values we *lecture* at them. To take ownership themselves of the values we are imparting, they need to *listen, to observe, and to question*. (Remember all those childhood "WHY'S?")

Consider this in light of training your children as well as discipling others:

A person will retain:

90% of what he sees, hears, and demonstrates.

70% of what he sees, hears, and discusses.

50% of what he sees and hears concurrently.

30% of what he sees.

10-20% of what he hears.

- Are you afraid to discuss your faith with unbelievers?
- Are you afraid they might ask questions?

When Jesus commands us, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matt.28: 19,20), He's not telling us to go lecture at the world. It's not a knock-on-doors, cold-sell, get-people-"saved" command. He's also not telling us to develop Sunday school curricula which precludes open discussion and differences of opinion, or forestalls confrontation and only aims at general agreement with the subject. No, Jesus doesn't want patterns that are the result of the Greek spirit in the Church today.

In light of Jesus's divine understanding of the way people are to be discipled, reconsider the Matt. 28 passage:

"As you go and encounter unbelievers in your life, be bold enough to discuss with them, as you would any other topic, the truths of God's Word *that you live by*. Do not be afraid to discuss the teachings of God with a world that lives in darkness. The people of darkness need to hear the words of Light. When they accept the Light, baptize them to signify their death to darkness and their resurrection into a life of obedient trust.

"

The context in which we learn the content is the context in which we will use the content.

Why are "Christians" afraid to discuss the teachings of God with the people in darkness?

First, the *context* in which they learned the Bible is the con-

text in which they will use it. If you learned biblical truths by sermon or Sunday school lecture, that's how you'll use that information: you'll *talk at* others. Do you think people of darkness accept being lectured at?

If you learned biblical concepts through discussion, you'll *discuss* these same concepts with others. Discussion is somewhat more readily accepted by people living in darkness.

If a biblical truth was demonstrated to you, you'll *demonstrate* it to others. For instance, not much can come by lecturing about hospitality or acts of kindness. These virtues need to be experienced through demonstration (role modeling) in order for them to be emulated.

Second, most Christians have been trained to separate their lives into the "religious" and the "secular." This is the *great inhibitor* with which the Greek philosophical spirit has deceived the Church. We've bought into the lie, "Religion is a private matter." But Christ-followers don't want to talk religion, we want to share *Light*. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in if someone doesn't discuss it with them?"

Christians are so trapped by the fear of "talking religion" that the vast majority don't even know how to "chew the fat" over spiritual things even with their own family!

Please see the attached letter for a *midrash* style — intergenerational, interactive material we are developing entitled "Table Talk.

The time to prepare is getting short...

I just finished David Wilker-⁴son's new book, **God's Plan to Protect His People in the Coming Depression**. It's excellent reading! He writes:

"In the dark days ahead, when the majority will be satisfied merely with surviving and hoping for deliverance from hell, God will have a precious remnant outside of all religious systems who will seek him with their whole hearts."

Two years ago the Holy Spirit prompted us to close our book, **Pastoring by Elders**, with this:

"The Gospel of the dark period to come will not be the 'easy believism' of most so-called gospels found in the US today. Unbelievers will reject these for what they are, shallow and man-made. Times will be so desperate that seekers will want the Gospel that Jesus spoke of: *"Whoever trusts in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* Are you prepared to discuss this Gospel in the dark days with the people of darkness?

I write to you with full conviction that darkness is going to descend on the US. Those who already trust Jesus today may be compelled to trust Him with their very lives in the dark days.

These people have learned to question their traditions and religious practices. They have wholeheartedly sought biblical truth and are already suffering for holding onto it. They are the "precious remnant outside of all religious systems"—the ones who will be the light the Lord will use in the dark days to come.

Friends, now is the time to

question, to seek, and to know. Only a heart that has learned to trust God will carry you through the coming dark period. *Now* is the time of heart preparation.

Sue and I believe that it is for this time, the time of preparation, that the Lord took us to Israel several years ago to research the Hebraic foundations of the Church. If we all are to serve the Lord in the dark days ahead, we must be *spiritually powerful* and *relationally intimate*. Only the Hebraic foundations of those devoted to the Lord and to one another can accomplish this! Explore and appropriate the priorities of the the early Church. We must prepare ourselves before darkness descends on this land in ever-increasing measure.

Unto Jesus alone,

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz
1 Cor. 15:1,2

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