

# 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.



## When is it time to say, "Go pound sand"?

Dear Friends,

In our home while growing up, when we spoke or acted foolishly, my mother would rebuke, "Go pound sand!" Now, I don't remember it being defined, but the words and the tone got the message across. In essence it meant, "Your words or actions are as foolish as someone pounding on sand. You need to reconsider what you're saying or doing."

Our parents were quick to confront our foolishness. Often the confrontation STOPPED us from a foolish path and gave us the opportunity to see things from a wiser perspective. Remember the biblical admonition, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Pro. 22:15). For most of us, especially predominant in the 40+ age group, the teaching and correction of our parents helped us embrace a wiser path.

Since the 1960's our culture has changed rapidly. We have reported in other newsletters that divorce is higher among Christians than non-Christians, and 20% higher in the "Bible Belt." This calamity didn't happen overnight; it has been brewing for decades. The epidemic of shattered marriage covenants among Christian households has decimated the biblical two-parent nurturing environment that our Father knew was so necessary for healthy emotional and spiritual development.

In particular, the confrontation and guidance provided by *fathers* is gone. The vast majority of children of divorce are raised by their mothers and educated in a public school system that in the late 1980's deemed itself "a totally effeminate institution."

The void in paternal influence in the development of so many children is a catastrophe, a catastrophe greater than any of us can imagine. Half of God's design for raising children has been eliminated. Do you think this has happened without dire consequences? Who is going to complete the corrective processes these

**The absence of fathers has brought about unimaginable consequences of unmet needs in their children.**

adults missed as children? Today, sociologists have extended adolescence, which once ended by age 19 in the 1960's, into the mid-30's. Consider the implications to your faith community. Do you really think that time alone is going to mature these people?

### Effects of Divorce and Bitterness on Home Fellowships

As home fellowships proliferate, so has the number of immature Christian adults, especially men, who are demonstrating "adolescent behavior." We've also noticed that a large majority of these adults are entrapped by *unresolved bitterness* toward their parents. You can recognize these beleaguered individuals because very little has gone well for them. Most have substantial debt.

This increase in men and women who are still "boys" and "girls" emotionally and functionally makes it all the more difficult for many home fellowships to press on to fulfill the purposes of our Lord Jesus. As a result of today's leadership training which emphasizes "tolerance," men shepherding these flocks spend more time "propping-up" the immature than in leading believers into maturity in Jesus.

Ralph Neighbour, a major proponent of the home group movement, wrote about dysfunctional adults who, for whatever reasons, have failed to make a healthy transition to maturity. He describes two dysfunctional types of people: *social neurotics* and *social psychotics*. When these people become part of a home fellowship, they exhaust everyone's emotional resources. Boy, do they!

"*Neurotics* have only ten or twelve people in their psychosocial system. Their systems include past relationships and those who live far away. Their contact with these people is sporadic. Only about 30% of the system is interconnected. It is as if the neurotic, having a variety of disconnected individual relationships, is like the *hub of a wheel* having spokes that radiate outward but are not connected at the rim.

**Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come**

“*Psychotics* have only four or five people in their system. The interpersonal relationships are ambivalent and nonreciprocal. [The tiny world of the psychotic allows for no penetration of others into his own exclusive sphere. He won’t let you encounter the few others who have impact on his life.]”

Unlike the dysfunctional, *healthy relationships* are described as interconnected systems in which 60% of the people know each other. In other words, healthy people want you to meet their other close relationships—closing the rim of the wheel.

If you lead a home group or are considering starting one, know that needy, dysfunctional people are coming your way. The unresolved issue within the home group movement is: *How do you respond to the dysfunctional — with passive tolerance, or with loving confrontation?*

**“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse”** (Mal. 4:5,6).

The restoration of fathers to the children of the next generation is an age-old problem. Satan’s strategy has been to destroy males and their leadership roles in the family and faith community. Our Lord’s goal is to raise up trust-filled men like Abraham. The Hebraic Restoration offers us men the opportunity to respond as did the first Hebrew,

**Older men can “father” (and train to “father”) many among their home fellowship relationships.**

Abraham. Within a home fellowship we older men can “father” many more followers of Jesus besides our own family. With the

methodology of our forefathers, we can complete the corrective processes the dysfunctional and immature need.

### **A Choice—Abraham or Lot**

Abraham’s obedient trust was not only credited to him as “righteousness,” but was foundational in Sarah being the role model for all Christian women so that our wives today can be called “*Sarah’s daughters*” (see 1 Peter 3:6). Remember that Lot, although a righteous man, didn’t trust God in all matters. He saw with his eyes and responded accordingly, as the worldly would. When Abraham gave him the first choice of where to live, Lot saw how green the Jordan Valley was and took his fam-

ily to live among the sodomizers. That decision later cost him his wife and all he owned.

Our Lord is recruiting men who are courageous enough to trust Him as Abraham did. To those of you 40 and older: Our Father wants to recruit you to represent Him in the lives of His children. He has taken many of you out of religious systems so that **you** can train your families to have intimate trust in Him. In this process it’s important that you don’t let your wife or family look back at what they left behind! You can easily find yourself reverting to a Lot instead of an Abraham in your decision making. The Hebraic Restoration is built upon *pressing forward*, not looking back over your shoulder (see Luke 9:62).

**“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”**

(Matt. 20:26-28).

Jesus is describing a mature man who is humble enough to serve Him by serving others. *Servanthood* is His basis for leadership, both within our families and our faith communities. Anyone who has missed the God-ordained corrective processes in his youth will have difficulty achieving servant leadership.

Sadly for many younger men who are looking to older men for guidance, we continue to hear of

**If you are approaching retirement age, stay where you can best help your family. They need you!**

the paucity of mature, wise mentors willing to help. I can’t tell you how grieved I am every time I hear this. It rips me inside. On Christmas Day Sue and I visited a nursing

home in Mesa, Arizona, where our friends Chad, Chris, and Nicole Parlier minister the love of Jesus. As I talked with different “inmates” I asked where they were from. Needless to say, none were born in Arizona. All had retired to the Phoenix area from somewhere else.

I had to walk outside and pray. I appreciated the loving kindness of the Parliers but I was haunted by a thought: These people are slowly dying here far from their families. Could this be God’s judgment on them for vacating family responsibilities? I would have to say yes... *If you are approaching retirement age, stay where you can best help your family. There is no biblical basis for you to vacate your family responsibilities. Don’t end up dying alone in Mesa!*

**“Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are guiding you in the Lord and confronting you in order to help you to change”** (1 Thess. 5:12, JNT).

Biblical leadership and authority require years as a willing recipient of teaching and correction. *“He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise...Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear”* (Pro. 15:31; 25:12).

- Correction produces Christlike character qualities.
- Teaching produces knowledge.
- Teaching + correction + experience = wisdom

The Bible tells us, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish [confront] one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God”* (Col. 3:16). Many want to *teach* these days, but few are willing to confront and admonish. Why? Because most lack wisdom. Yes, they've been exposed to tremendous teaching, but they lack the *correction and experience* that produce wisdom. The Book of Proverbs is a great source for how to obtain wisdom.

Many dysfunctional Christians move from one faith community to another, still carrying along the baggage of their unconflicted neurotic and psychotic tendencies. Sadly, each faith community perceives they'll do better than previous ones in helping these believers to walk in victory. But it never happens! While serving among the churches in Connecticut at our retreat center, I kept a list of about 45 people who moved unconflicted among faith communities. They wreaked havoc within 12-18 months, often sowing seeds of discord and alienation in their wake. These were the ones who fulfilled the passage, *“...the devil has taken them captive to do his will”* (2 Tim. 2:26).

One day I gave the list to a gathering of church leaders. They were astonished. Each of them recognized many of the names on the list! Not one of the leaders had verified why the person had left their previous faith community. The leaders' competitive motives convinced them that they were more tolerant than the prior faith community to help the unconflicted. However, none succeeded, and many hours and emotions were wasted.

The Bible offers the effective methodology for bringing people to maturity: *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Tim. 3:16,17). Paul even insisted that his timid son,

Timothy, use processes ordained by our Lord: *“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction”* (2 Tim. 4:2). Don't claim to represent our Lord in conveying His Word if you are not willing to use **all** His commands and ways!

### **No Fellowship Without Righteousness**

If you are leading or seeking to start a home fellowship, the above statement is a critical foundation for you. In chapter 11 of our book *Restoring the Early Church* we point out that the first, primary, numero uno reason for fellowship in homes was to *uphold righteousness*. Our Father sees each person in a home fellowship as *communally responsible* for the

**Unconfessed sins hinder the prayers of the unrepentant person and the prayers of everyone else in the fellowship.**

sins of the others. Our unconfessed sins not only hinder the prayers of the unrepentant

person, but the prayers of everyone else in the fellowship because they are excusing unrighteousness.

As we wrote, a *congregation* is too large to maintain the righteousness and repentance our Lord requires. This is the reason that our Father orchestrated meeting in homes *before* the coming of Jesus, as was common among the Hebraic people. When prayers are answered, our Father is glorified in our testimonies. Fellowship in homes was adapted into the church because within a home fellowship, unconfessed sin would be readily recognized — prayers would not be answered.

Think about this: If you were Satan, wouldn't you put a lot of effort into keeping people away from the intimacy and accountability of home fellowships? If you couldn't stop them, then you would influence the groups to gather for the wrong motives. You'd especially keep them blinded to their responsibility to uphold *communal righteousness* — convince them that they're really *not* “their brother's keeper.” You would base the group on mutual tolerance, and convince them that confrontation is unloving. Friends, in all of these deceptions Satan has succeeded.

Again, due to the disintegration of so many Christian homes through divorce, the last few decades have seen an enormous increase in people who have missed many of the corrections they would have received in a healthy household. As the house church movement increases throughout Christendom, these people will add to the burden of those leading the fellowship.

**“I know that after I leave,  
savage wolves will come in  
among you and will not  
spare the flock”**

(Acts 20:29).

Thankfully, our Lord gave the leaders of the earliest Church His pattern for bringing people to maturity. In our book *Pastoring by Elders* we address the importance of *authority* within a home fellowship. Biblical authority is the responsibility of men to include or exclude, to commend or correct.

Think about it. You wouldn't let people into your home without proper boundaries being respected. Neither can your fellowship within other homes accommodate foolish, self-seeking people without lovingly confronting them. As a leader, if you don't confront sin or irresponsibility, people in your fellowship will ultimately become emotionally calloused. When this happens, your group will enter a “death spiral” of emotional guardedness.

It's no mystery that people emotionally insulate themselves from further hurt when intimate relationships don't work out. I am reminded of the years at the retreat center when we would question a spouse who was emotionally unsupportive of their mate, “*Did you date a lot before you got married?*” Most answered with a quizzical affirmative, wondering why we asked. When we told them that those broken relationships only trained them to protect themselves from further hurt, they could see the disaster that broken relationships had brought into their marriages. These walls came down, though, through repentance and the healing that only Jesus affords.

The people in your care will harden themselves if you let wolves in to hurt them. To leaders of home fellowships, I ask:

*Where is the best place to confront the wolf? In the pasture among the flock? or outside the gate?*

As a fellow shepherd I admonish you: *Don't shepherd if you are not prepared to guard.* Remember, you are the Father's representative in leadership of the flock He has entrusted to you. A review of Ezekiel 34 can help restore your diligence in this matter. You are our **Father's gatekeeper** for His flock. Jesus didn't accept everyone who wanted to follow Him, sinful baggage and all. Neither should you. (Skim the Gospel accounts to see how many fell away because they were unwilling to walk His path



of turning from sin and coming to our Father for forgiveness and a righteous way of living.) I encourage you: **Don't open the gate too quickly.**

You may be asking, “What *should* I do?” Meet with all potential members of your faith community *before* they ever enter the group. “Kick the tires, check the teeth.” Find out what Gospel they embraced — the one our Father ordained, or one of the man-centered gospels so popular today. If your group is formed on the earliest church model, it has the commitment to uphold

righteousness, and your Father is being glorified in His answers to your prayers.

Then you owe it to the flock to maintain the commitment to this righteous path with any who want to join you. Don't be reluctant to meet with a prospective person privately *as many times as need be*. You may be able to introduce them to the Jesus of the Bible and to the significance of true repentance and walking His path! Bring another mature man or two with you. You are not seeking to reject the person, but to enable him to grasp the biblical boundaries and freedoms of fellowshiping with your faith community — freedoms and boundaries that bring our Father's blessings.

### **Whom Do You Tell, “Go Pound Sand”?**

Like your forefathers who first shepherded the flocks entrusted to them, a shepherd representing our Father's care for His children must discern the foolish bent of a person *before* they are permitted to hurt others in your care. Dr. Marvin Wilson does a wonderful job of reviewing the discernment process of our forefathers in his insightful book, *Our Father Abraham*. There are several words for fool in Hebrew. Wilson deals with four of them. One type was accepted, the other three who refused to change were told, in essence, “Go pound sand.”

Leaders of the earliest Church knew that people of bad character influenced others to become like them. “One bad apple...” To tell someone to “*go pound sand*” is a way of isolating the wrong fools to keep them from destroying or influencing other people.

If we are ever going to restore the intimate and powerful faith communities of our earliest forefathers, we need to embrace the methods they employed. The first category of fool, *peti*, is a con-

dition that most of us find ourselves in at some time or another: ignorant of a biblical concept or area of godliness but willing to learn. The other categories of fools, with the confirmation of two or three righteous people, need to “*go pound sand*” until they come to their senses.

Review the four types of fools so you can better spot them.

### 1. Simple Fool (*peti*)

The ignorant or immature simple fool is vulnerable to error but is teachable. The *peti* who is willing to seek help should be welcomed when he sees his own need for correction and is willing to learn and apply wisdom to his life.

The essence of teachability is captured in “*Be persuaded by those leading you and submit to them, for they watch on behalf of your souls as ones who will render account, in order that they may do this with joy and not groaning, for this would be profitless to you*” (Heb. 13:17, from the Greek). A teachable person makes it a joy for those who render account for him. As you talk with someone who expresses an interest in being a part of your home faith community, ask yourself, “Will this person be a *joy* to have in our midst?” If you see reasons why he or she won’t, you owe it to them to give them feedback. Everyone deserves the chance to repent and change.

If you consider yourself mature, ponder this:

Real teachability is recognized in how we deal with those who differ with us. The landscape of Christianity is strewn with people estranged from those to whom they’ve never fully listened. A false understanding of “faith” creates a fear of ever being wrong in what you’ve believed. Too often people put their faith more in what they have been taught than in the One Who is worthy of faith. As a result, few ever fully listen to anyone else.

If Apollos hadn’t permitted Aquila and Priscilla to “*explain to him the way of God more adequately*” (Acts 18:26), his further ministry would have never materialized. What if the Sanhedrin had listened to Stephen instead of “*yelling at the top of their voices, so they wouldn’t have to hear him*” (Acts 7:57)?

Stop and consider for a moment the old adage, “*Don’t judge a person until you have walked in his moccasins.*” To consider another person’s viewpoint takes great teachability and mature faith. One of my professors at seminary, Dr. Roger Nicole, told me once over a cup of coffee, “There are many differences that now divide Christians. To truly be strong in your own convictions, don’t immediately take a position that the other person is wrong just because he doesn’t agree with you. To be sure that your own heart is open to truth, study

his position. If you find that you can’t accept his position, you’ll be stronger in your own conviction, and better able to articulate your position to him.” His advice has many times kept me from walking away from differences too early (see Phil 3:15).

### 2. Hardened Fool (*kesil* and *ewil*)

This type of fool is stubbornly set in his ways: “*As a dog returns to its vomit, so a [kesil] repeats his folly*” (Proverbs 26:11). The *ewil* adds insolence and anger to his unwillingness to change. These individuals will not change when confronted. Oh, the *kesil* will graciously acknowledge the wise counsel they receive, but they *don’t change*.

How can you recognize them? Most of their lives have been a series of dead ends. They cover their foolish trail by blaming others for their problems. It is crucial to you that you don’t listen to their slander and gossip against people from their past. As was recently pointed out to me, the word for slander in Hebrew is *haSatanas*, and the Greek word is *diabolos*—Satan and devil. When you listen to slander, Satan himself comes to you in disguise. Brothers, DISCERN!!!

If the hardened fool is already in your midst, he or she will keep you from seeing them for who they really are through flattery, and/or they will play you off against someone else. You’d be surprised how often Satan uses the hardened fool just at a time when you are having tensions with someone with whom you should be in fellowship!

The hardened fool will slanderously agitate you against the other person. This type of fool is often influenced by the demonic stronghold of rebellion, in which *factious* and *divisive*, along with *unteach-ability*, are key symptoms.

We’ve found that wherever hardened fools are permitted to remain, they influence others to become like them. We have heard too many horror stories of once warm and caring home groups being destroyed by the tolerance of hardened fools. Confront these individuals before they ever enter the pasture. If you do meet with them before they are permitted into your flock, call some people from their past to verify what they’ve shared. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

### 3. Mocking Fool (*letz*)

Described in Proverbs 21:24 as “*The proud and arrogant man—“Mocker” is his name; he behaves with overweening pride,*” this fool disrupts spiritual discussions and heckles people who embrace wisdom. He may defend himself as a “devil’s advocate” or open-minded person who wants to see all sides, but

in reality is looking for attention or acclaim.

Mocking fools often enter the Christian community through an intellectual approach. They have no relationship with Jesus, nor are they interested in intimate relationships with others in your home fellowship. *They are only seeking a platform to air their knowledge.* Their conversations revolve around what they've read and studied rather than any personal testimony that glorifies our Father. In reality, they are blind and naked in their puffed-up mindset.

These individuals often have difficulty believing the supernatural acts of God. The prophet Habakkuk described them well, *"You mockers! Look, and marvel, and die! For in your own time, I am doing a work that you simply will not believe, even if someone explains it you"* (1:5). They hold to a view that God finished His work when the Bible was canonized, and that He is no longer speaking to His people. They depend more on their understanding of the written Word than on the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to change lives.

Paul confronts these men when he says, *"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught*

**Mocking fools have no relationship with Jesus, nor are they interested in intimate relationships with others in your home fellowship.**

*by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"* (1 Cor. 2:13,14).

When I meet a mocking fool, I get the sense that he wants to draw swords with me to see who knows more. I can tell you this from numerous observations: *Men lose the respect of their wives when they befriend the mocking fool.* The *letz* tries to humiliate other men in front of their wives and families. Their knowledge and prideful attitude make them difficult to confront. Pray for discernment!

#### 4. God-denying Fool ( *nabal* )

Denying that God has an influence in his life, *"The fool [nabal] says in his heart, "There is no God"* (Psalms 14:1). This type of fool isn't necessarily an atheist. Rather, he denies in his heart that the *God of the Bible* is the only true Lord. He disavows both the activity of God around him *and* the validity of His Word. Besides trying to enter your home group, *nabals* have infiltrated many key positions throughout Christendom.

Because the *nabal* doesn't acknowledge God at work around him, he/she has no personal testimo-

ny that glorifies our Father. Of the types of fools to be resisted, this one is the most disguised and difficult to discern. They have all the right words and talk convincing "Christian-ese." The prey of the God-deniers are leaders of faith communities whose motive is to run a religious program or activity, but evidence no viable relationship with our Lord Jesus. It's sad that so many leaders of home fellowships view their group in that light and permit the *nabal* in so readily.

You may wonder why a person like this hangs around Christians. This fool is the one the *spirit of lawlessness* (see 2 Thess. 2:3,4) is using to gain access and control over so many faith communities. God-denying individuals slowly steer people away from a *biblical basis* to their faith enactment. They introduce unbiblical practices into faith communities until the members find themselves serving only their own interests, not those of the Lord.

The God-denier relies on the abhorrence that so many Christians have over the word "law" in the Bible. Their anthem resounds, *"We are under grace, not law."* They have duped many in Christendom into believing that we live in an "age of grace"—when what they really mean is that we live in an age of *license to sin*. Their understanding of the work of Jesus on the Cross contends that their sins are already forgiven and that God wants them to be happy. Therefore, He'll excuse any wandering from His standard, the Word.

By negating our Lord's view of His law, they have created an *age of lawlessness* within so many faith communities. How else can you account for the epidemic of divorce among Christians, particularly among clergy? Divorce is no longer perceived as a violation of God's law and the fracturing of a covenant union. It's considered little more than a relationship that didn't work out — a painful circumstance that now frees them to find someone with whom they *can* "be happy."

For the past two years clergy have been among the top two occupations for divorce. I believe Daniel foresaw this time when he prophetically wrote, *"Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time"* (Dan. 11:35).

I also believe that at the proper time our Lord will restore many of these men, but not to clergy-hood. As they gain age and wisdom they will become the *zakens*, the sages of the Restored Church. They will be the older men of wisdom to whom the young men of the future will turn.

## “Correctly Dividing the Word”

In some respects, the increase in lawlessness has come from an unexpected source: certain translations of the Word itself. Study the sample comparison of passages to see how some translators have dulled our understanding of God’s view of law and lawlessness:

A popular translation:

*“The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 13:41,42).

The literal translation from the original Greek:

*“they will collect out of his kingdom all the things leading to sin and the ones doing lawlessness.”*

A popular translation:

*“In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness”* (Matt. 23:28).

The literal translation:

*“but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”*

A popular translation:

*“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold”* (Matt. 24:12).

The literal translation:

*“because of the increase in lawlessness”*

The words “wickedness” and “evil” do nothing more than to imply that something isn’t right. But, the word “lawlessness” implies a law or standard that *has been violated*. I hope you can see the subtlety. **Sin is a violation of God’s law.** His law is part of His *grace* to us! That is, His laws give us the *freedom and boundaries* of our relationship with Him and with each other. Again, the laws of God help us to mature in Christ. Keeping them helps us to avoid the cold hearts of those who are distancing themselves from God’s law.

Paul asserts the purpose of the law: “*What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet’”* (Rom. 7:7). The Spirit enables those who follow Jesus to keep the law without *legalistic perversion*, that is, trying to be justified through our obedience as many of the Judaizers attempt to do.

On the contrary, the Spirit encourages us to obey God’s law out of *love* for our Lord and for our fellow man. For instance, I find in the law that coveting my

neighbor’s goods is a violation of both God’s law and my neighbor. My coveting will breed distrust between us, not love. So I keep this law because of my love for both God and for my neighbor (see Matt. 22:36-40).

Keep this law because of love for both God and for your neighbor.
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**Because of the the nature of sin in the world, every faith community will face Satan’s attempts to penetrate and destroy it. Every faith community will also encounter the problems created by the sins of those in the community. A healthy faith community is not problemless, but uses the biblical processes our Lord has given to us to confront both Satan and sin.**

The faith communities in the New Testament were not without their problems. Many of the letters of the Newer Testament are exhortations to confront the problems that disrupted the harmony and fellowship of the faith community — even to turning an unrepentant sinner over to Satan (see 1 Cor. 5:5).

Today, biblical confrontation has been discarded for the *‘love excuses sin’* mentality embraced by a large segment of Christianity, a scenario warned against by Jude (v. 4). It would be difficult to convince these people that they have given way to the influence of the God-denying fool. I want to warn those who embrace and teach lawlessness: It will be terrible for you when you arrive at the Judgment Throne and are told, “**Go pound sand!**” (see Matt. 13:41,42).

We hope to write more about the nature of fellowship in homes in our forthcoming newsletters. We encourage you to read *Pastoring by Elders* and discuss with others the interaction within the earliest faith communities. As darkness descends on this nation, the gathering of our Father’s children in one another’s homes will increase substantially. To restore what once *produced much fruit*, we need to restore *fathering* to our homes and faith communities. *Selah*

Our love,

*Mike & Sue*

Someone once asked us why we don’t write entertaining “fluff.” Our answer is, “There isn’t time. The children of today won’t become grandparents before the darkness is upon us. It may be sooner than that.”

Ask the Spirit to give you light as you read Jude 17-23.

## Praise

1. How gracious our Lord was to bring forth evidence of a changed life and assurance from *rhema* in His Word that Sue's recently-deceased father was welcomed into His Presence!

2. Our Father is preparing the way for us to be on the road again in April and May to share His restoration truths with families and faith communities. So far, our route will take us East to NC, North through CT and NY over to WI and NE, and back to AZ. Please let us know if He is stirring in you to have us share! In late June we hope to make it to Northern CA and WA.

3. We're thankful that our Lord has strengthened and encouraged Rene and Diane Macias in their near-completion of the Spanish *Demolishing Strongholds*. Their entire family has sacrificed on behalf of this project, and we are so very grateful!

### Spanish Demolishing Strongholds

The Lord willing, we're sending the book to the printer shortly. In order to introduce the Spanish-speaking community to it, we're offering the first printing at **\$5 per copy**. Orders of any amount must be made to **Connections at 1-888-229-3041 along with payment by January 31, 2002**. Consider ordering copies for missionaries or mission agencies working in Spanish-speaking countries or neighborhoods.

## Prayer

1. Please continue to pray for the Spanish version of *Demolishing Strongholds* all the way through to its printing. Satan does not want his footholds in the lives of people exposed. He is relentless to stop anyone or anything that reveals them, and many followers of Jesus are eagerly awaiting this tool!

2. Please pray for wisdom for us as we attempt to create a new part of our website, "*Living to Glorify the Father*." Uplift those who may share their stories of obedient trust so that others can be encouraged.

### NavRugs Needs Your Prayers!

Many weavers among the Navajo are praying that our Lord will raise up buyers so that they can live in the dignity of self-provision. Will you join them in prayer for creative means to market their beautiful rugs? Contact James & Joyce Skeet at **1-866-NAVRUGS** or visit their website: **NavRugs.com**

## Restoration Ministries Materials

by Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

<i>Restoring the Early Church</i>	\$7.95
<i>Prodigal Church</i>	\$1 each for 10+
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Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

Box 25 205 North Murray Blvd

Colorado Springs, CO 80916

