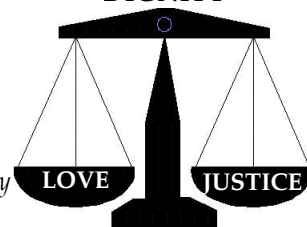


Y e s h u a M I S H P A C H A H

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.

UPHOLDING HUMAN
DIGNITY



Matt. 25:31-46

Acquire the Character of Jesus

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I was reading a recent newsletter from Voice of the Martyrs, I was struck by the testimony of a Pakistani Christian as recounted by VOM director, Tom White. The article, entitled "*Riding Behind Religion or Walking by Faith*", harmonized with our heart's desire: to prepare people to be light in the dark days.

Pakistani Christian : "Every morning I get on a bus in our city. As the bus begins to move, I walk down the aisle and hand out gospel tracts. These have a simple message of Jesus our Savior, Who He is, and why He came. People on the bus have nothing to do. Many read them. Sometimes the Muslim men beat me...I might bleed, but I have a handkerchief. So I find another bus and begin again."

How many Christians in the US have the loving courage to care if people they meet grasp their need for Jesus? Is it so difficult to walk around your neighborhood and pray for opportunities to represent Him? Do you pray for the people you work with, and, in light of the economy, for God to give wisdom to those who make the business decisions? (See Pro. 21:1.)

Years ago as a counselor to church leaders, a pastor told me, "It takes me til the end of February to undo what the greed of Christmas does to my people. For three months each year they lose their spiritual focus as they concentrate on giving and getting presents." As this season of unabashed materialism descends on this nation, do something different. Give people you love a free subscription to Voice of the Martyrs. Call them at 1-800-747-0085.

What VOM is revealing about the courage and patient endurance born of suffering in our brothers and sisters around the world will be needed here in the US. Our persecuted family has an identity with Christ that is foreign to most western Christians. We need to understand what they have learned, and prepare the ones we love "...to walk by faith."

Each VOM story is like the light of Christ that shines into my soul to highlight anything that hinders my devotion to Jesus. I praise God for the privilege to repent and ask Jesus to give me His understanding, that I may grow more like Him.

American Christians: An Identity Crisis

What we are writing in this letter will need your prayerful consideration. Call it our Christmas present to you. The suffering experienced by our brethren around the world will confront us here before many of us go to our graves. But to most American Christians it seems out of the question that God would permit persecution here.

Don't let yourself be deceived. How will we answer to God for: •the broad acceptance of homosexuality, adultery and promiscuity? •the idolatrous greed? •the multiple millions of aborted babies? •the shattered homes of divorce? •the impoverished fatherless children?

With an estimated 600,000 congregations in this nation, where is the spiritual power and influence of the Church? Has the Hellenistic church taught the people to *ride behind religion* rather than leading the way to *walk by faith*?

The particular assignment God gave Sue and me is to "*prepare people to stand for Jesus as the 'days of darkness' descend on this nation.*" It's critical that each follower of Jesus acquire His *identity*. Later in this letter we want to show you the way to identity in Christ.

Through ministries like VOM we can learn much from our persecuted family around the world and the identity in Jesus they have found. Possibly this is the Christmas present we all need. Recently Tom White was in Turkey. Christians there are arrested for even giving a Bible to others. One of those traveling with Tom commented,

"The persecuted church knows where they stand in their culture. They witness for today...They are not wasting their energies in trying to get the world to love them. **They are not caught in an identity crisis.** As they mature in the Lord, they will be persecuted for their witness, a witness of giving out salt and light for the gospel."

What a drastic difference in discipleship that prepares people in other countries to forfeit everything in order to identify with Christ. Hellenist self-fulfillment teaching in the US encourages people to *ride behind religion* — not to *serve*, but to *demand* from God.

Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come

Paul's admonishment applies to academically trained only Bible teachers who disdain the suffering Jesus calls His own to endure: "Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be [friendly with the world]. **The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ**" (Gal. 6:12). Paul makes plain what we are to expect if we lay it all down and find our identity in Christ: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted** while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:12,13).

Our brothers and sisters around the world pray for Americans because Christians in the US are so duped. Yesterday, our local Christian radio station reported that missionaries are coming to the States from Third World countries because the church here is so much in error and in such need of truth.

Our Persecuted Family: Identified With Christ
"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Pro. 31:8).

If you're wondering, "Why are you sending a letter like this at Christmas time?", it's because I love Jesus and want to contend for Him. If you're going to celebrate **Christmas**, commemorate what matters to **Him**. Don't serve your selfishness by showing up at a church service singalong satisfied with the status quo. Put your gifts where they can do the most for Jesus.

There is an important principle for this season that Jesus Himself develops: "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may **invite you back** and so you will be **repaid**. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, **you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous**" (Luke 14:12-14).

Be stirred into action for those who can't pay you back as you remember this warning from our Lord: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me'" (Matt. 25:40-43).

Please let the preceding passages convict you. The Lord Jesus is speaking to **you** about what **you** and your family should do. He's also warning **you** of the consequences of disobedience. How much clearer can He be?

Be stirred into action for those who can't pay you back.

"If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this, does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?" (Pro. 24:12).

So that you will know and be able to act accordingly, we want to share a few VOM stories about those who today are suffering for Jesus:

Bangladesh: Salina's father came to know Christ...[He] shared the Good News with the rest of he family, and they too accepted Jesus....However, Salina's Muslim neighbors and relatives were very angry with them... Men arrived at her door armed with sticks and clubs. They grabbed her father and started beating him. The attackers took Salina and her mother and for five days raped and beat them.

Today they are even more resolute in their faith and continue to walk with Christ. Unfortunately, Salina's case is not an isolated one. Six mothers and 21 daughters are among a group of converts who were raped by radical Muslims.

Pakistan: Gulnaz Bibi was a young Christian woman who had sulfuric acid thrown on her for refusing the sexual advances of a Muslim man. When we met with Gulnaz, covered with massive scars, we arranged to bring Safeena, another Christian woman, to encourage her. Safeena had been repeatedly brutalized by Muslim men. Gulnaz, blind in one eye and disfigured from head to waist, turned and took Safeena's hand. As Safeena was wiping away tears, overcome by Gulnaz's appearance, the acid-burned woman said, "This is nothing. Jesus was persecuted with nails. He is the one who gives us courage. We learn from His examples."



Vietnam: The 13 million Hmong Christians are beaten; their houses are burned down; and they are placed in prisons and slave-labor camps...**The Hmong Christians in Vietnam outnumber the Communist Party.** Their gratitude for obtaining a merciful salvation from God is put to work by sharing the Good News with others whether or not they receive mercy from men."

If you think that political solutions are the answer in the US (or Israel for that matter), consider this: Hmong Christians, as well as Christians in several other nations, outnumber their persecutors. They are grateful for the grace given them and want others to experience that same gift of God. "You can never win to Jesus those you oppose."

A key point: Each of these stories ends with the persecuted having an even greater love for their persecutors. They are pleading: *Don't* take up an offense for them against the Muslims or the Communists! *Pray* for their persecutors, *help* the persecuted, but *don't hate* the persecutors. My daily prayer for our persecuted brothers and sisters is this:

1. Lord Jesus, empower them to endure to the end in their trust in You.
2. Empower them to love and forgive their persecutors.
3. Through their trust in Jesus, bring their captors into your Kingdom.
4. Prosper the work of Voice of the Martyrs and others who help our persecuted brothers and sisters.
5. Show us how to support their work as they meet the needs of the prisoners and their families.

Voice of the Martyrs is doing all it can with its limited funds to help these persecuted brethren of ours. Caring for the less fortunate is foundational to their ministry, and this passage should stir all of us: *"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering"* (Heb. 13:3).

Weigh on the scale of God's love and His Word: Is it better to give gifts to people who have so much, or to help a sister have her face restored? Should we overstuff our closets, homes and bodies, or use our resources to help persecuted families who have been forbidden to earn a living?

As you call to subscribe to the Voice of the Martyrs, ask our Father what to send for your persecuted family members. The VOM address is: P.O. Box 54, Caney, KS 67333. We know that there are other worthwhile ministries who bring relief to the persecuted.

The key message is to GET INVOLVED!

<i>Pray for their persecutors, help the persecuted, but don't hate the persecutors.</i>

The Navajo Holocaust Survivors

Loving courage in the face of mistreatment as recounted in the VOM newsletter confronted us again as we viewed a PBS show about the Navajo Code Talkers. The program revealed the holocaust-type atrocities the Bureau of Indian Affairs has inflicted on the Navajo. The recruitment of Navajo men for World War II and their willingness to go was made doubly significant when you realize that just a few years earlier, during the 1930's, the BIA had slaughtered most of the Navajo sheep, almost starving the people. I marveled at the *character* of Jesus in those men!

As we watched the show with wet eyes, we understood why God has sent us to help the Navajo first.

Identity With Jesus Is Biblical "Common Sense"

Shortly after Sue and I returned from Israel in 1994, I received a letter from a woman we'd known from our retreat center ministry. She wrote that as she was working one day she kept hearing the Holy Spirit saying, "Mike Dowgiewicz is Thomas Paine." She didn't even know who Thomas Paine was, so she went to the library and sent us a brief history of the man.

As I read it I cried and cried. While writing this newsletter I took a break and turned on the TV. Who was the show about? Thomas Paine. Paine wrote about politics and religion. His writings greatly influenced the leaders of the Revolutionary War.

Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, did much to help clarify the issues of the Revolution and the cost of freedom. *"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the summer patriot will, in this, shrink from the service of his country...Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered."* Washington ordered the pamphlet to be read aloud to his soldiers. Paine's bold, clear words encouraged the Continental Army during the darkest days of the war.

We hope that our writings encourage you to be as pure as you can in your loving obedience to Jesus. To throw off the tyranny of Hellenism we must embrace the fiery cost of permitting our Father to transform us into the character of His Son, Jesus.

Many of you are paying the cost of *walking by faith* in Christ. You have been rejected by those who *ride behind religion*. Hang in there! Don't let yourself dwell in despair! As the darkness is descending on this nation, words of encouragement and conviction can "pierce the darkness." Later in this letter we'll reveal how our Lord wants to use this specific point in time in *your* life.

"Here am I. Send me!"

Sue and I don't write from a vacuum. We didn't dream up this ministry to meet a perceived need. We were recruited by our Father, Who told us what He wanted us to do. Near the end of our time in Israel we went to a retreat center, where our Father clarified our call to the US. I was sitting in a chapel during the wee hours of the morning, complaining to our Father about choosing *us* to carry this message. The Holy Spirit directed my eyes to a devotional next to me. The message for that day:

'Woe to me! I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.' Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt

is taken away and your sin atoned for.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' (Isa. 6:5-8).

I sat there sobbing, realizing it's *God's sovereign selection*, even of unlikely people like me. I remember saying to Him in the middle of my tears, "You do this to *everyone* You choose, don't You?" His selection overruled my unworthiness. We've seen our Lord recruiting the most unlikely people to live out the Restoration message. *We're the foolish who confound the intellectual. All we know is to trust our Lord!*

Our Father gave us a very unpopular message to share in the midst of so many who are *riding behind religion*. Consider Isaiah. What was the nature of the ministry that he (and we) were recruited into? He was told:

'Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.' Then I said, 'For how long, O Lord?' And he answered: 'Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged' (vv. 6:9-11).

*We're the foolish who confound the intellectual.
All we know is to trust our Lord!*

Our Lord warned us in Israel that our ministry message would not be popular. Sue and I glean a lot of encouragement from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They prophesied right up to the downfall of Israel. We know Who sent us to share light in the darkness. What's interesting is that our Father's way for all of us is nothing more than *Biblical Common Sense* — love the Lord our God, walk by trust in His Son, Jesus, and keep His commands.

"I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace" (Rom. 11:4,5).

One thing you realize throughout history: God always retains a *remnant* who are truly His own. Sue and I yearn to encourage the remnant of today who are paying the price of obedience. We also hope to convict the disobedient to find grace in repentance. If you fear God and are endeavoring to study and apply His Word, we want to share how you can cooperate with our Lord more effectively.

Primary Applications Bring Christlike Character

The inner ring in the diagram to the right describes Scriptural applications that *change your heart*. The Word

Applications of the inner ring require you to put your old nature "on the altar" and allow the Holy Spirit to change your heart.

along with your application penetrates your mind, will, and emotions to conform you to the character and motivation of Jesus. Our Father's goal is to see the identity of Jesus in each of His children, *"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers"* (Rom. 8:29). To "conform" someone with another is to make him identical in goal and motive. Think about this.

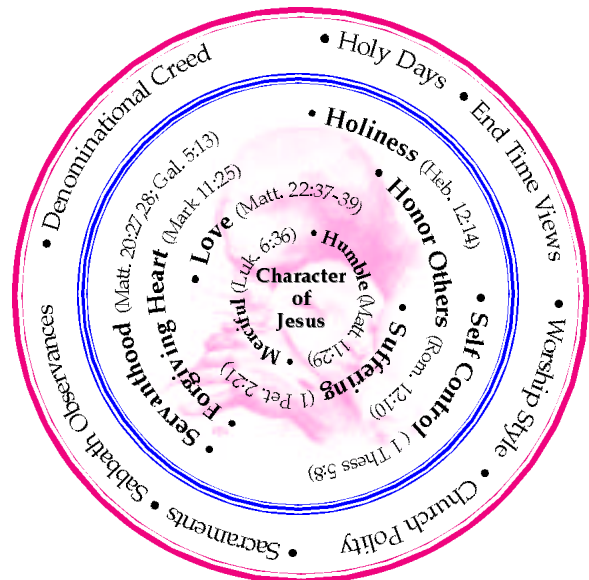
Applications of the inner ring require you to put your old nature "on the altar" and allow the Holy Spirit to change your heart. With each choice you are dying to your old self and becoming more like Jesus. Over time you'll find that you have fewer of your old human inclinations and rationale. The character of Jesus begins to rule your heart, your attitudes and your behaviors.

If you have embraced the Hebraic foundations, then your greatest victories and your most splendid achievements are always those that happen deep within you. Every choice of the human heart to love, and every conquest over self-love, is another step toward acquiring the character of Jesus. The earlier we learn this in our walk and teach it to our children, the easier it will be to face life's difficulties.

In time you'll find what our persecuted brothers and sisters understand all too clearly: *"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to*

Two Rings of Biblical Application

- Inner Ring: Develops the character of Jesus
 - Second Ring: All other biblical applications
- (This not an exhaustive list of applications, but indicators.)



him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic" (Luke 6:27-29). The love of Jesus comes along with the character change into His nature, and equips you to love your persecutors.

The inner circle represents those *biblical applications* that help you to reflect Jesus 'in the flesh' to those you encounter. Through understanding and applying the Bible, you prove to yourself that *nothing exists* that our Savior's love can't overcome. The character of Jesus is achieved by learning to accept, day by day, the specific conditions and tests *that God has designed for you*. Your *choice* is to lay down your own will and accept His, or not to. (See Isa. 28:27-29.)

This refining fire is done in the midst of people with whom you have to live and work, and in the unplanned circumstances that confront you.

The lessons of undergoing and triumphing over evil, of becoming acquainted with grief and pain, and of finding them transformed into something precious is the goal of the inner ring. The most unjust and cruel atrocities as well as the seemingly pointless and undeserved sufferings *have been permitted* by our Father. They are a glorious opportunity for us to respond to them in such a way that He is able to produce in us, little by little, His Son's character.

This refining fire is done in the midst of people with whom you have to live and work, and in the unplanned circumstances that confront you. Every acceptance of His will becomes an *altar of sacrifice*. Each surrender and abandonment of yourself to His will is a means of furthering you in your development of Christlike character.

As your character is changed in the inner ring, the issues of the second ring become *expressions of your relationship and identification with Jesus*. The sequence is critical: First the *inner ring*, then the second ring.

The second ring *without* the work of the inner ring represents other applications that are important, but don't transform your old nature. You could practice many of these secondary applications but experience *no change* into Christlike character. This is the way of so many in the Church today. That's why, to the world, second-ring-only people don't look any different than unbelievers. NO ONE can see any character of Jesus in them, just a *ride behind religion*.

One of the most grievous losses in the Kingdom is that many who now camp in the second ring *once started out* in the inner ring. But rejection and betrayal by others in their faith community, scorn from unbelievers—these incited them to protect themselves from further hurt. Drifting into larger churches, they could remain anonymous. This is how many mega-churches today got their start—letting people sit in pews as they silently ached in their wounds. Once, they were *walking*

by faith. Now they are *riding behind religion* with no one to confront or comfort them.

The Second-Ring Teachers

How do you recognize Bible teachers who have never permitted the work of the inner ring to produce Christlike character? Oh, they fake out many with their false piety, their spiritual platitudes and tight smiles — all a fruit of Hellenism that *appear* to represent "holiness". But our Hebraic ancestors who put their loving-trust in Jesus were regular people seeking to obediently follow Him. They didn't need religious airs.

Teachers who specialize in applications of the second ring are *threatened* by the **call to repentance** and **walking in righteousness**. They can't teach what isn't in their character or way of life, so they attack as legalistic or grace-less those who live repentant in obedient trust. Second-ring teachers *fear* Christlike transformation.

Teaching That Pacifies You To Stay the Same

Many Hellenist Bible teachers today have been academically trained but haven't suffered for their beliefs. The vital ingredient of *suffering* in your walk validates the reality of the power of God to sustain, to provide, and to enable you to persevere. Those who are full of head knowledge but devoid of the hope and testimony that His refinement brings teach the second-ring issues as if they were foremost. The Bible warns, "*Knowledge puffs up...*" (1 Cor. 8:1b).

Second-ring teachers violate Hebrews 13:7, "*Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*" Teaching without personal role modeling is deceptive because it will never change lives. Jesus and Paul, however, encouraged their disciples to *follow their example*.

Through slick Madison Avenue-marketing, many are attracted to their teaching. Media personalities and conference celebrities can influence millions without any personal contact to verify that their teachings match their lifestyles. You have no idea if they are living what they're saying. How many have been duped over the years and found out later about the adultery or embezzlement? But the second-ring teachers know that millions like it that way—knowledge with *no responsibility to live it*. Paul warned about those who tickle hearers' ears to appease their worldly lifestyles (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

Teachers who have never gone through adequate spiritual "boot camp" to embrace suffering and rejection walk in their old nature. Elders who pastored in the early Church had held jobs. Their trust had been

Biblical applications of the second ring should be an expression of your *identification with Jesus*.

put on the line to withstand rejection by the world. Today's teachers who haven't been tested in the workforce can teach second-ring issues as on par with or more important than inner-ring transformation. Thus has emerged *riding behind religion*.

Biblical applications of the second ring should be an expression of your *identification with Jesus*. Sadly, the second ring is as far as the Hellenist teachers dare penetrate toward the center of the inner ring. And too many educated but untested teachers convince seekers that this is all there is. Even Bible study for knowledge sake *without application* can lead to a life of shallow, religious form-keeping. The Bible warns that *knowing* is not *doing*.

The Busyness is Godliness Myth

In the absence of the inner character changes our Lord desires, second-ringers imagine that busyness for God is pleasing to Him. All of us must push through the Mary-Martha paradigm: “[Martha] had a sister called **Mary**, who **sat** at the Lord's feet **listening** to what he said. But **Martha** was **distracted** by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to **do the work by myself**? Tell her to help me!’ ‘Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are **worried and upset about many things** but only one thing is needed. **Mary has chosen** what is better, and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:39-42).

Martha's preparations weren't the problem; her attitude was! Distracted, worried and upset, she thrust blame on Mary for the tizzy she'd worked herself into. Both women made a choice. One seized the opportunity to come apart and be with Jesus, while the other shouldered the burden of making the event her priority. Be honest. Do you begrudge people their peace while you feel overwhelmed by your busyness? What choices have led *you* into your frantic pit?

I believe that Jesus was apperceiving for Martha and for today's second-ringers God's warning from Isaiah: “This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, **but you would have none of it**’ (30:15). Permit yourself to be still with our Lord. Wisdom, understanding and guidance is your reward: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (Isa. 30:21). Your walk will be strengthened as a result of your *quietness and trust*.

Center-ring people live an obedience-based, love-grounded life of trust. As the character of Jesus is formed in them, they're able to do the work of Jesus —doing only what their Father desires. “Jesus answered, ‘The work

of God is this: to trust in the one he has sent’” (John 6:29).

Second-ringers, however, are activity-based. They see needs and desired outcomes, and pursue them without regard for whether it's God's will. They've been taught that “spiritual busyness” is pleasing to God. Religious systems need busy, involved people to keep things running smoothly.

Remember our father Abraham. “What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’” (Rom. 4:3). As you read the account of Abraham you come to realize that *out of his trust* he lived a life of obedience. His trust justified him. He didn't work out of false guilt or fear that he wasn't pleasing enough to God.

Paul goes on to write to second-ringers, “When a man **works his wages** are not credited to him as a gift, but as an **obligation**” (v. 4.4). I believe that this verse applies to people who get caught up in religious activity out of obligation, rather than in obedience to God's direction. Striving with self-effort, they miss God's guidance and the power of His grace.

Jesus warned those who fail to let the inner ring of the Spirit do His work, as well as those who relied on their religious accomplishments, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” (see Matt. 7:21-23). Our foundation is the trust we have in Jesus. All the rest is commentary!

Those in the inner ring who have cooperated with our Father to see their old nature be filled with that of Jesus are not haggard.

Paul encourages inner-ring disciples, “To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his trust is credited as righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). Trust in Jesus unites us with our father in the faith, Abraham. Trust-based obedience brings glory to our heavenly Father.

Those in the inner ring who have cooperated with our Father to see their old nature be filled with that of Jesus are not haggard. The words of Jesus have penetrated: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest [in quietness and trust is your strength]. Take my yoke upon you [Christ's character and motivation] and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls [in repentance and rest is your salvation]. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30).

If you never get deeper than the second ring, you won't learn just *to be with our Lord*. To the busy I ask: Isn't it time to repent and let our Lord begin to circumcise your sin nature? Aren't you tired of working without God's grace?

A Communication Barrier Exists

A communication barrier looms between those who have cooperated with our Father to see their old

Center-ring people live an obedience-based, love-grounded life of trust.

nature be filled with that of Jesus, and those who never get deeper than second-ring issues. Second-ringers may know the Bible, but the *'sword of the Spirit'* has never penetrated and changed them. This results in a motivational difference. One serves God; the other serves their religious forms and programs.

Acting on Biblical Common Sense

Many people wear bracelets engraved with "WWJD" — What Would Jesus Do? But what would Jesus give as a gift to celebrate His first coming?

- Bibles to co-workers or neighbors as gifts.
- A kept promise to pray for their specific needs?
- Provision and prayer for His persecuted family?
- What is He telling you?

Press in to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. It's painful to release those self-identity issues. Repent and cry out to our Father for help. If you have focused too heavily on second-ring issues, thrust yourself into the nature and character of Jesus as you never have before. Don't squander the time that's left before the dark days of chastisement come upon us.

Give yourself a *Christmas* present: Embrace your present suffering as a step in your character development, and *stop grumbling!*

To our Lord Jesus and our gracious Father be the glory,
Mike & Sue

As you think about what you can do to help others, ponder this update of Martin Niemoller's commentary on the Nazi takeover of Germany:

- They came for the older people, and I didn't object — I wasn't old.
- They came for the unemployed, and I didn't object — I had a job.
- They came for the minorities, and I didn't object — I wasn't a minority.
- They came for the Jews, and I didn't object — I wasn't a Jew.
- They came for the followers of Jesus and I didn't object — I didn't follow Him.
- Then they came for me — And there was no one left to object.

Thanksgiving Report from James & Joyce Skeet

Joyce and I have prayed for years how to begin reestablishing the once-powerful leadership of the Navajo headmen through the principles established by the early church headship. Our prayers, visions, hopes, and dreams were being birthed as I sat with four Navajo men to discuss the restoration of male eldership authority amidst a needy, chaotic, effeminate culture. As a group of men we realized that this was not merely a time of discussion, but a time to put the leadership of the elders into action! The four Navajo men agreed to stand with Joyce and me to equip our people for active participation and to become a load-bearing community.

Our Navajo men have agreed to intentionally grow in deeper relationship with each other to help each other walk in a Christ-like character. That begins with each man being in the Word and establishing peace in his home. We will serve each other in a load-bearing capacity, helping each other learn what needs they have and how to help meet these. Lastly, we have agreed to seek vocational activities that help build our relationship with each other, so that others may see our Father's provision.

In order for the Navajo men to be raised up into proper authority and leadership, they have to be found faithful gatekeepers. The Navajo men came with their families for a time of tribute to restore the eldership that was set in motion. It was a powerful expression of scripture being lived out to appoint elders in every community represented among us (Titus 1:6).

As the men sat together, there was an incredible sense of security, calmness, and stability that swept over the women and children. The families once again wanted to trust the leadership of the men, because these were men concerned with righteousness through their trust in the Father. With this mantle of godly authority they voiced their responsibility to look out for the needs of all, not just their own. The ceremony ended with a special time to consecrate our family in particular to be blessed by the Navajo people and be set apart for ministry to the Navajos for God's purpose. We asked my father, our clan elder, to bless and confirm that Joyce and I were called to serve the Navajos.

The meeting was a profound time. The Hebraic message is now conceived among the Navajos to reach into the interior of our Navajo community. We want to focus our efforts to equip the men to be relational and to trust revelation from the Father. With repentant hearts, they are moving ahead to apply the Word of God to restore the walls of dignity among our Navajo friends. We have also witnessed new resourceful and provisional gates beginning to open. Please join us as we revitalize the Navajo community to establish a theocracy in Jesus for this generation of our people. Navajo headmen have been reestablished. We could not have done this without your prayers and support.

Please pray: 1) For completion of our Hebraic message film project. 2) Provision and prayer support for leadership visits with one another. 3) Resources for home school materials. Several Navajo families are seeking our wisdom to begin this adventure. 4) Revelation for the Navajo men as they come together to take the next steps. 5) Materials and resources for vocational, construction, and "specific needs" projects.

Covenant Pathways — Restoring Dignity Among the Navajos

PRAISE

1. We rejoice in the stream of revelation from those who pray for us, which our Lord has been giving to guide our ministry.
2. What a wonderful report by James and Joyce Skeet of our Lord's work to raise up godly male leadership among the Navajo people!
3. We relish the divine encounters we're having to represent Jesus to others. This mobile home park is our "Jerusalem."
4. Sue's mother is now able to get around with a walker, and her pressure wound has shrunk to dime-size. We're grateful that she's progressing well in therapy!

PRAYER

1. Sue is writing a Hebraic-based booklet for wives and women. With epidemic numbers of Christian women filing for divorce, God has given Sue some unique insights into being "daughters of Sarah".
2. Sue and I have a few more weeks, the Lord willing, before we finish our booklet, tentatively entitled *Success Means Successors*. The short booklet incorporates: (1) Our research in Israel (2) A clearer understanding of the Hebraic relational framework we received from the Native Americans (3) The crucial biblical mandate for a collective, intergenerational responsibility to raise up successors in the faith.
We're burdened to reach parents who can still help their children follow them in the faith. As we shared before, 77% of children raised in Christian homes don't succeed their parents in trusting Jesus.
3. We depend on our Lord for His creative provision. Please intercede as new financial demands are placed on us, particularly in regard to our new living expenses and media costs.
4. Beseech our Father to break through the obstacles in the heavenlies that are keeping the Spanish *Demolishing Strongholds* from getting into people's hands. We are up against a whole new principality in penetrating the spiritual darkness of the Spanish-speaking community.
5. Please ask our Father what part He would have you play in participating with the Skeets and their work among the Navajo, as well as sharing in the needs of our persecuted family around the world.

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