

A Follow-up To *The Gospel of the Covenant* Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

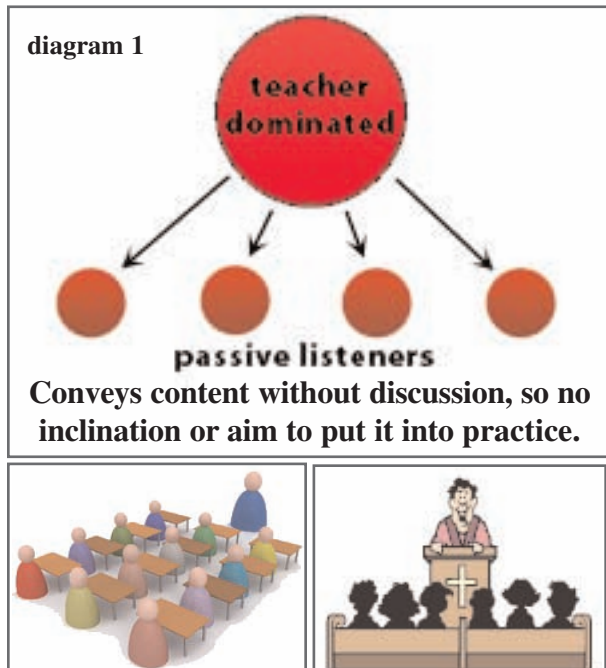
De-Hellenizing Mental Muck: Lesson 4

Education and Christianity Taught You **What** To Know and **How** To Know

When children start school or begin to attend religious services, they enter a *teacher-dominated system* that's intended to convey content (see diagram 1). Regrettably, this approach which focuses on *passing along information* represents the only style of learning experience most Christians have known.

The teacher-dominated system prevails in both education and Christendom, and derives from Hellenism. It's a major barrier to understanding and adapting the *Hebraic* process of *mutual discussion leading to application*.

The ineffectual fruit of teacher domination is hearers trained to be *passive learners of facts*. They can read a book or listen to a message but feel no responsibility to *take action* based on what they learn. That's because teacher domination seduces minds into *inactive, lethargic complacency*.



Being taught the Bible *without mutual discussion* leading to application induces an anti-Christ allegiance: *misplaced devotion to creed, congregation, or denomination*.

The result: a defensive posture that thwarts the *love-based, all-inclusive outreach* our Lord Jesus commands those who are His (Matt. 28:19,20).



diagram 2

The Hellenistic teacher-dominated system has *fractured Christendom* rather than united it.

Applying Our Father's Instructions Is *Both Interpersonal and Action-producing*

To truly put into practice the way of life our Father wants in you means you need to *unlearn* how you learned. The mental passivity created by the teacher-dominated system in Christendom is thoroughly ingrained and entwined in the substructure of your mind. So for you to *unlearn* how you learned will require persistent, mutual effort with those close to you in the faith if you are to overcome your unresponsive complacency.

We've mentioned in previous materials that just about all of our Father's instructions in the Newer Testament are given in the plural. He purposes that two or more people would *discuss these together* with the intent of applying them to their life situations and relationships. It's only when we *take action* that we reveal

our love for Him. Our Lord Jesus clearly underscores this mutual cooperation:

*“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that **if two of you** on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For **where two or three come together** in My name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:18-20; see also Philippians 2:12).*

Our Lord proclaimed the above to *collectively* give His followers the authority to apply His Father’s instructions to prohibit (bind) or permit (loose) actions and responses in our lives. But in order to understand this particular declaration you need to appreciate the **tribal backdrop** into which Jesus spoke. During the first century, the earliest believers were *Israelites*, descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The first Hebrew, Abraham, was a tribal leader chosen by the one true God Who had entered into covenant with him. From the descendants of Abraham came the entire Hebrew nation of Israel.

As we noted in our article, **Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations**, Israel as an entity was formed on their relational progression from *individual*, to *family*, to *clan*, to the *twelve tribes* that comprised the *nation*. With this tribal understanding of themselves, they were conscious of their *communal responsibility* to each other. As we see in the Older Testament, God viewed them as *collectively* responsible to keep His instructions and commands.

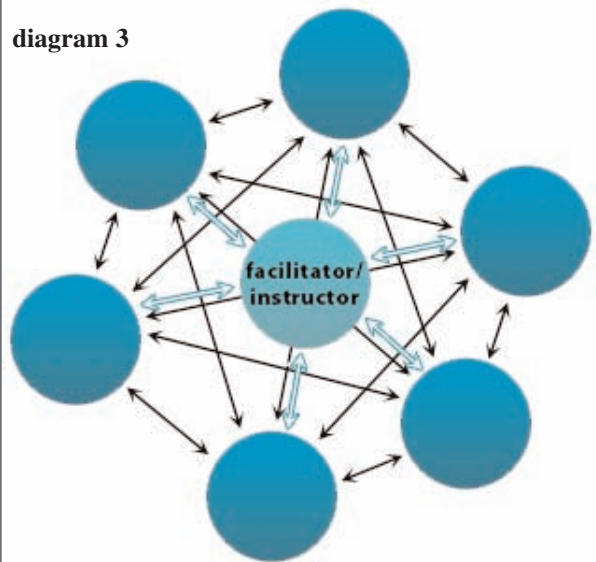
Before Hellenism turned Christianity into an impersonal teacher-dominated

Further Reading: Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations—Part 3, *The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church; Spiritual Tribalism*

religious system, believers sat in **talking circles** to be instructed and to discuss what they heard. You might say that Native Americans have long utilized the **facilitator/instructor talking circle** (see diagram 3). And today some schools are beginning to incorporate the facilitator/instructor talking circle in the classroom.

The Hebraic facilitator/instructor talking circle conveys information by focusing on discussion, understanding, and application.

diagram 3



**Hebraic Participative Discussion:
People Who Care About Their Lord
And Are Concerned For Each Other**

In our book, **Christian Halakhahs,
Loving Jesus Through The Way You**

Apply His Word, we recorded how the Jewish people who comprised the first followers Jesus had long been accustomed to gathering together to pray and to study the Hebrew Scriptures. In these groups of people who knew each other well, they regularly discussed the Word of God in order to determine *how He wanted them to apply it* (see 1Thess. 4:1.)

The deliberations were democratic in the sense that everyone could readily take part. One person was recognized as the facilitator, the *nasi* (NAH-see), of the discussion group (see diagram 4). Rather than lording himself over the others or forcing his own opinion, the *nasi* facilitated the dialogue until the group collectively reached an understanding of God’s will on the issue at hand.

Matters were normally settled by the confirmation of two or three or by a simple majority vote, whichever was appropriate for the situation. This process underscored the Biblical axiom that “*in the multitude of counselors is safety*” (Proverbs 11:14; 24:6). There’s one vital element we need to mention if you’re to regain the Hebraic understanding of participative discussion:

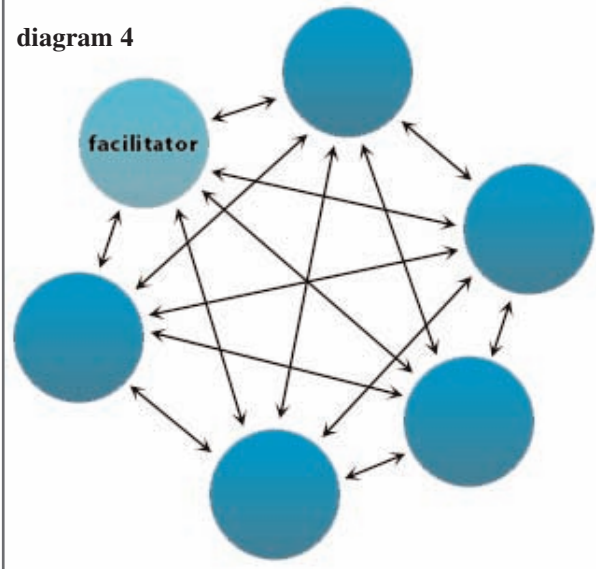
Their passionate devotion to and obedient trust in our Lord Jesus along with their intense relational commitment to each other.

You Will Need To *Unlearn* In Order To *Relearn*

Western Christendom is primarily made up of “*unidimensional*” relationships in which superficiality reigns. In other words, many have a nodding acquaintance with each other, but few really know one another in depth. They are use to being *taught at* in a religious service together, but most have no heartfelt intent to make what they learn a *way of life*. There’s little or no interpersonal

A facilitator-guided group uses participative discussion with the intent to apply our Father’s instructions. The emphasis is on “what’s right,” not “who’s right.”

diagram 4



commitment to put our Father’s instructions and our Lord’s commands into practice in their daily lives. And at the same time they have minimal *relational load-bearing* with each other (see Galatians 6:2). Unidimensional relationships usually occur when the connection between individuals is based primarily on a common activity they do, i.e., “we attend the same church.”

In chapter 12, *Load-bearing Relationships*, of our book, *Restoring the Early Church*, we wrote:

“If you examine the levels of relationship you have with the various people in your life, you might be shocked to find how shallow so many of them are. How many of your conversations ever get beyond issues: politics, the high cost of living, the decline of morals,

crime, the alcohol and drug problems of young people nowadays?

But how many of your conversations dig beneath to the things that pain you and hinder your walk with God? True load-bearers “*rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn*” (Romans 12:15). They pray and fast with each other to discern God’s answers to the painful or confusing situations afflicting them. They also have an open-heart attitude that doesn’t flinch at godly admonishment: “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend*” (Proverbs 27:6).

Such “wounds” emanate from deep personal commitment and compassion that are born out of times of shared sorrow and joy. On several occasions during retreats and seminars we presented the following two statements:

- Name three people in your congregation you would turn to in time of deep trouble in your life.
- Name three people in your congregation you would ask to do an activity with.

So often when we analyzed the results, the responses verified how *shallow and uncommitted* the relationships were within faith communities. Few could come up with three names for either category (apart from the pastor, who appeared regularly under the “time of deep trouble.” But seldom was the pastor named as someone with whom people shared social activity.)

Of those who did list six names, we investigated further. Many admitted they probably wouldn’t in reality contact some of those people; they just seemed like people who would be understanding or fun. So in light of this data, Christian relationships that can “*carry each other’s burdens*” are relatively few.

As an initial step in your own *unlearning/relearning* process, please list

names for each category:

- Name three people in your congregation you’d turn to in time of deep trouble in your life.

- Name three people in your congregation you would ask to do an activity with.

We spent 11 years administrating a retreat center. When our son Mike was around twelve he was asked to draw the lines of communication that regularly took place at our dinner table. His drawing looked like diagram 3, facilitator-guided discussion. Try this with your family:

- Draw two dinner tables. First, draw your table when you were a child, using arrows to show the lines of communication that took place. Then draw your current table doing the same. What do you notice at each table?

In our next lesson we’ll discuss practical steps to help you mutually make our Father’s instructions your way of life. Keep in mind that if you’ve been the product of teacher-dominated instruction, you’ll need *unlearning* and *relearning* so you’ll have confidence in the God-given Hebraic process. It’s not easy to unlearn the passivity the teacher-dominated system has instilled in you! But when you realize the sinfulness and fruitlessness of your own passivity, it may spur you on to want to change.