

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"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 18:19,20)



SECTION 3 - LESSON 20

Hellenism And Romanism Today: *The Impact of Hellenist Seminaries*



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The profound influence of Hellenism and Romanism on Christendom today is far greater than you might suspect. It will be helpful for you to glimpse our Lord's preparation process on our own pilgrimage so that you can discern the current condition of religious practices and forms going on around you.

We've had years of firsthand experience among clergy leaders as well as those who train them. Before our Father took us to Israel to reveal the Hebraic foundations, He made sure we observed what we call the "dark underside" of Christianity.

I [Mike] attended both a Christian graduate school as well as a seminary. I was on staff at a prominent Christian college and worked as a consultant at a well-known evangelical seminary. After that I spent over 10 years as a counselor to church leaders as Sue and I administered a retreat center where we taught over 5,000 people from various faith communities.

During the years of our Lord's training period before He directed us to Israel in 1993, He wanted us to see westernized Christianity *behind the scenes*. How emotionally painful it was to recognize the Hellenized and Romanized religious systems for what they really were in His sight, and to experience the anguish and struggle of so many religious leaders who were serving a framework our Lord never intended!

There was a certain fence post in the pasture of our retreat center/farm where I spent a lot of time in tears. I'd reached the limit of my endurance propping up

clergy and church leaders whose own families were wasting away as they flitted from crisis to crisis managing their religious bailiwicks. Finally, our Father in His mercy lifted Sue and me out of the turbulence and brought us to Israel. There He opened our spiritual eyes to that which He was restoring to awaken especially the Gentile faith community around the world.

In the Lessons of Section 3, we'll share with you our observations of Hellenist/Romanist-influenced Christendom. We'll also give you an opportunity to scrutinize your own faith practices more closely. In your own faith journey you need to discern areas in which you may be sinning against our Lord by embracing the twin deceits of Hellenism and Romanism. You can't serve our Lord's Kingdom purposes and these demonic principalities at the same time!

Before you began these studies in *Restoring The Early Church*, you may have been ignorant of these influences. But now that you're aware, our Lord holds you responsible if you serve them.

The admonition Jesus gave the Pharisees who walked in spiritual blindness yet resisted the true Light that gives life still applies to us today: "*If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains*" (John 9:41).

In **Section 4. Going Back For Our Future**, we'll provide practical and useful recommendations for your faith journey. These, however, will be useless to you if you're not fully persuaded of the

following two realities. Please search your spirit about these before you press on to other sections.

- 1. You must be convinced that our Father is restoring the Hebraic foundations as He restores the Jews to Israel one last time according to His promise. Only by seeking the *rhema* of the Holy Spirit for confirmation can you be assured that this restoration is our Father's plan and purpose.**
- 2. You need to be convicted about any aspects of demonic Hellenism and Romanism in your own faith practice, and *turn from them in repentance* so that you can walk in the path of spiritual power and relational intimacy that our Lord is restoring.**

Hellenism And Romanism Today: The Impact Of Hellenist Seminaries

***“Without a prophetic vision,
the people throw off all restraint”***
(Proverbs 29:18).

My [Mike] experience at one particular seminary could encompass a spectrum of religious training institutions. As a result of my years of counseling clergy, there was little they shared with me to reveal that their own seminaries were any different from the one I attended.

In one way my experience may be unusual: the “education” I underwent extended far beyond the classroom and library as a couple of godly, older men invested themselves in me as spiritual fathers.

This phase of my journey in Jesus began in 1978 at the age of 32. One pro-

fessor in particular, Dr. Charles Schaufele, had been teaching there for years. As the semester progressed he came alongside me for personal conversations. Two things about my past caught his attention.

I'd been a Navy helicopter instructor pilot, training others to fly operational missions. This required a lot of teaching and briefing of my students before each flight. Still, the essence of teaching flying is *flying*: using the same “see and do” method as the early rabbis, including Jesus.

Personal example blended with practical skills as the disciples of a rabbi acquired his character in the course of applying his teaching. Paul's teaching pattern followed along this line. He could instruct his “trainees”, “*I urge you to imitate me*” in his way of life as well as in obedience to God's Word (see 1 Corinthians 4:15-17).

Another key duty interested Dr. Schaufele. Following my third deployment off Vietnam I'd been an Operations Analysis Officer at Naval Air Station Pt. Mugu, California. In this position I was responsible for evaluating the air station's *operational capabilities*—were we prepared and equipped to fulfill our assigned missions.

One morning he asked, “Mike, would you do a project analyzing the *fruit* of this seminary? I've been here over thirty years, and I don't know if I've wasted my time.” I accepted his request. Through the use of surveys and interviews I studied the nearby congregations to which some of the seminary's clergy graduates had gone to minister.

When Dr. Schaufele read the results of the research, that elderly gentleman sat in front of me and wept. Not one of

the graduates I'd surveyed had demonstrated a *God-vision* for what *He* desired for each congregation. Instead, these men perceived their pastoral position from the vantage point of what they'd been taught:

- Dutifully carrying out the tasks that the seminary had inculcated in them;
- Appraising themselves as the most valued person in the congregation and focusing their efforts on maintaining their central position of control over their faith community;
- Over-esteeming the value of their rhetorical preaching and the vast amount of time devoted to sermon preparation;
- Nagging themselves about their financial security and continually seeking ways to ensure greater income;
- Making sure nothing unpleasant or challenging "rocked the boat" of their congregational headship.

I'd served with many courageous, sacrificial leaders in my 10-year Navy career and was painfully surprised by the shallow, self-serving nature of the clergy I surveyed. In fact, I felt that the military did a far better job in training men to be Christ-like leaders than did the seminary!

In that office that morning across the desk from this grieving, godly man, I was deeply touched by the hurt and the sense of failure I saw behind those tears. Dr. Schauffele stared at me earnestly and said, "You haven't been around this institution long enough to be tainted by the system here. Would you write a paper on what you believe *God* requires His congregations to be doing as the Body of Christ?"

The suggestions in my paper called for faith communities to improve the personal access of younger people to older role models. How could anyone learn to do anything if they didn't first see someone *demonstrate* that skill?

I also encouraged the seminary and congregation leaders to use ***discussion*** as the *primary* means of equipping people to apply the Bible to their lives. I'd seen the fruit of discussion as I briefed student pilots before each flight. Through discussion I could discern the depth of comprehension the student had before we ever got into the air. While you're flying isn't the time to find out he doesn't even understand the procedure he's supposed to perform!

I didn't realize at the time how Hebraic my military training had been. Later, in Israel, I could clearly see why our Lord had sovereignly prepared me in the Navy for all those years. The training and responsibility I'd received there far more emulated the Hebraic foundations than anything I'd acquired in seminary classrooms. Sacrificial leaders and personal role modeling were the crux of training and developing effective leaders.

After Dr Schauffele read my paper, he asked if he could give it to other faculty members. Unfamiliar with the sacred cows of academia, I agreed. The mess I got myself into surfaced a short while later. As I sat in the cafeteria having a cup of coffee, a professor from the Divinity (clergy preparation) program came up to me. He bluntly asked, "Are you Dowgiewicz?" When I nodded, he went on, "I read your paper and you better not show up in any of my classes."

Over the next few days this scenario was repeated several times. One or two

professors, though, asked if I could meet with them privately to help change their style of conducting class.

You see, for the most part, seminary classes had been taught in the Greek rhetorical style designed to *convey content*. Teachers stood behind podiums and students were busy taking notes. There was no discussion. Questions were permitted for clarification purposes only. (This *is* a step up from the totally monologue sermon message on Sundays!)

The whole system was designed so that students could be tested on their ability to cognitively grasp the facts presented. No role modeling occurred except for the professor standing behind the podium—modeling a behavior which the fledgling clergy would imitate! No opportunities to reveal personal character or to weigh alternatives rose through interpersonal dialogue so that the students might demonstrate application of the truth they'd just learned.

Please note:

A certain reality of learning was understood by Hebraic sages and has been substantiated by educational research:

People tend to connect *content* with the *context* in which it was learned.

For instance: If you gain information in a formal structured environment such as a classroom or sanctuary from an authority figure behind a pulpit or podium, you'll use the content of what you were taught only if you find yourself behind a pulpit or podium. In fact, your likelihood of using that information in a *different* setting or context is close to nil.

In order for you to effectively impart that which you desire to become a way

of life for another person, the *content* and the *methodology* by which you present it are *inseparably linked*. If you want someone to make that which you share their *way of life* and not just facts they've cognitively acquired, you must discuss the content with them and demonstrate it for them yourself.

Jesus as well as our Hebraic forefathers clearly realized that Bible truth as a way of life can't be monologued in a classroom if people are expected to *live by it*. Yet, most seminary instruction is conducted through lecture, often from behind a podium.

The impersonal, non-participatory classroom context is the environment in which clergy have been trained to convey biblical truths. So **teaching at** people from behind a barrier is the *context* in which they offer Bible content. The hearers sit silently and listen, then depart and forget most of what they heard.

Others who have studied educational methods in depth would say that seminaries use the Greek academic model — *content and data to be parroted back by exam*. If it's *never applied* doesn't matter in this learning context. This is the key lesson with which most seminary-trained clergy are imbued: **The essence of biblical teaching is content conveyance.**

What an intense need there is today for the Hebraic early church model of **interpersonal discussion** and **lifestyle training by example**. The biblically Hebraic essence of teaching is personal training through *role modeling*. In this manner both the content *and* its application are appropriated under the caring nurture of older, wiser mentors.

Below is a spectrum of differences between the biblically Hebraic approach to instruction that *changes lives*, and the Greek philosophical focus on *words and style of oration*.

Current studies have affirmed the Hebraic view of the effectiveness of various approaches that prompt males to alter their behavior and lifestyle:

- **Role modeling** — A man is **changed** through role modeling as he emulates that which he esteems in others. “*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example...*” (2 Thessalonians 3:7); “*...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity*” (1 Timothy 4:12).
- **Confrontation** — A man is **changed** through confrontation. “*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and confronting you in order to help you change*” (1 Thessalonians 5:12,CJB).
- **Education changes no man.** Fact acquisition only adds to his knowledge, but **does not change** his life. “*Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*” (1 Corinthians 8:1); “*But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash*” (Matthew 7:26,27).

Women, by contrast, are changed by role models, by education, and to a lesser extent by confrontation. Women are wired by God to be able to make changes in their lives if they hear wisdom in a particular context; they’re able to apply

it in another setting. (Of course, that doesn’t mean they *will!*)

The Hellenist, academic teaching style demonstrated in sermons and Sunday school classes *can* be effective for women. But, their brain processes are different from men’s. This may account for the fact that throughout Hellenized Christendom in the United States, women account for 80% of churchgoers. The men have been driven away because of the lack of role modeling and confrontation. That which they’ve heard from pulpits and lecterns has had little impact on their everyday life. The very means by which their hearts are reached and their lives are changed are denied them!

Do you detect the subtle influence of Satan in a system that short-changes men in the way biblical truth is presented? If truth isn’t being lived, the enemy has far fewer worries.

For a man to mature in his faith he must have meaningful accountable contact with role models who are willing to confront him. While a number of programs draw groups of men together for a supposed mountain-top experience, the aftermath illustrates that few undergo permanent change—particularly of the type that carries over into their marriages and families.

[For in-depth discussion of changing men’s lives, see our book, [Pastoring By Elders.](#)]

If you’re still wondering about the ineffectiveness of the Hellenist lecture style of teaching, consider this. Studies indicate that a person will retain:

- 90% of what he *sees, hears, and demonstrates.*
- 70% of what he *sees, hears, and discusses.*
- 50% of what he concurrently *sees and hears .*
- 30% of what he *sees.*
- 10-20% of what he *hears.*

Think about the typical three-point sermon delivered as a monologue. How much of what is delivered over the course of 45 minutes do you think is retained by the listener? Very little. And, if you questioned listeners about the sermon right after they left the service, they probably couldn't pass a pop quiz! How much less are they likely to *apply* that which they've heard.

Notice again what the Hebraic style of teaching that requires *demonstration* or at least *discussion* produces— 90% and 70% retention, respectively. From a Hebraic viewpoint:

The fruit of teaching is determined by what is learned and applied, not just by what is taught.

The analysis paper I gave Dr. Schaufele confirmed that the seminary was using the most *abstract* approach, **Verbal Lecture**, to *teach at* clergy candidates. This is the manner in which they learned, and this is the method on which they relied in their pulpits.

Remember, the *context* in which the content is learned is exactly how the content will be used. So, if the people in the pews aren't in a podium or pulpit setting themselves, that which they heard is meaningless for life application.

Most congregations have also given

way to the Greek influence in the **program orientation** that's prevalent throughout Hellenized Christendom. Compare this with the **process orientation** of the Hebraic early Church. [See **A Comparison Of The Hebraic Foundations and The Greek and Roman Influence** in Lesson 2 for illustrations of this important difference.]

It's evident from the Gospels that Jesus was fully aware of humanity's need for visual images and living example. That's why He used Hebraic forms of teaching. Look closely at His use of parables, His role modeling, His informal style, His in-depth discussions with His disciples. Our Lord Jesus clearly understood the manner by which people learn, and He intended that lives be changed as He shared!

Jesus is the model Teacher for all who would follow Him. Spiritual fruit was matured in His disciples as they continued the pattern in which He opened up truth. Jesus confronted His disciples with thoughts such as: "*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you*" (John 13:15); and, "*A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher*" (Luke 6:40).

Later, Paul would emphasize role modeling as key to his discipling methods as well: "*Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you*" (Philippians 3:17).

The impersonal, oratory-lecture style so common in Hellenized religion today compels you to be instructed by trained professionals who have removed themselves from you relationally. You're not in a position to imitate your clergy's

walk in Jesus because you most likely don't spend any personal time with him. Thus, no role modeling takes place.

And, how can anyone effectively confront you if they're so distant from you relationally that they never see attitudes or behavior in you that need to be addressed? Anyone can put on a plastic "holy" personality in public but live in darkness of spirit in their home.

If you truly want to return to the pattern of our Hebraic forefathers as they shared their lives and discipleship, you must weigh the fruit of a person's life before you listen to his teaching: *"Remember your leaders, those who spoke God's message to you. Reflect on the results of their way of life, and imitate their trust"* (Hebrews 13:7, CJB).

Jesus and the apostles were as much role models as they were teachers. God wants His people to discern the validity of their teachers by their *lifestyle*, not just by their talk. In other words, if you can't imitate the character choices their faith produces, don't listen to their teachings.

As we've written in Section 2, Hellenist influence brought a heavy reliance on analytical reasoning: *"All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas"* (Acts 17:21). As a result, the pattern of passing around *opinions* and *theories* about profound spiritual matters arose.

Through this influence developed the pattern of Sunday school classrooms and Bible study groups so familiar throughout Christendom. People sit around and *talk* about Bible truth as a subject, not realizing that that's how the Bible will be to them: information to *talk about* but not apply.

In their endeavor to defend the Christian faith against attacks by heathen philosophers, Greek-educated Christian converts dealt with their opponents on a *philosophical* basis. The result was centuries of rationalistic and syncretistic practices in the church.

Christianity began to be considered on a *theoretical* basis. Church councils argued over inconsequential matters, such as, "How many angels could fit on the head of a pin?" Christianity embarked on becoming a *religion* rather than a Spirit-directed way of life, adopting the practices of other religions with their tangible worship symbols and reasoned rationalization for compromising with the world.

By the mid-third century the Christianity that had once walked in the power of revealed truth fitted compactly into the mold of human thought. Christian practice was no longer dependent upon divine revelation. It had devolved into a pattern of human interpretation and evaluation.

Gone was the power on which the early Christians had once drawn to conquer an empire. Lost was dependence on the active presence of the Spirit of the living God. Man's "ability" to do God's work for Him took precedence.

Hellenism is fully entrenched at all levels of Christendom. Everything we've shared with you is apparent! It's now your responsibility to determine if you can serve our God while still living under this pagan, worldly influence.

[For more on the effects of Hellenism see **Lifeyte 22. Obedient Trust versus Reasoning: The Hebraic Foundations Confront Evangelicalism.**]

A Sad Note:

A twentieth-century example of the philosophical-rhetorical defense of the faith was the Scopes Monkey Trial (1925). The biblical truth of Creation was argued against the unproven theory of evolution in a court of law. Greek rhetoric and human oration, not the Holy Spirit, were the means of defending the “truth”. The reality of Creation was by-passed as rationale outweighed conviction.

- **What has most pained you as you’ve learned the background of the seminary training so many clergy have received?**

- **Have you experienced true discipling and mentoring during your faith journey? How did that relationship bring about changes in your life?**
