

Lifebyte 37

Extending The Kingdom: *The People Movement Approach* (Part 1)



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The Hebraic “People Movement Approach” of the Kingdom

“All authority in heaven and on earth was given to Me. GOING therefore, disciple ALL THE NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE all things that I COMMANDED you; and behold, I am WITH you all the days until the completion of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20, from the Greek)

In Lifebyte 36 we discussed the influence of both the Roman Empire and the Feudal system on Christendom. These combined entities emphasized **individualist interests**, ultimately created a **Mission Station Approach** to cross-cultural evangelism, and perpetuated the **caste system** of lord, vassal and serf within religious organization.

The grievous outcome for today’s spiritual climate is a congregational shortfall of men compared to women, and an evangelism methodology that inoculates *against* the Lordship of Jesus over 90% of those who go forward at crusades.

However, in this Lifebyte we’ll focus on the very effective, Hebraic, life-changing way of impacting lives with the King of kings. Missiologists term this **“The People Movement Approach”**. This strategy has its foundations in the Hebraic roots of the *collective* Kingdom of God.

The earliest followers of Jesus were Kingdom-minded. Therefore, in the Name of their Lord and King, Jesus, they could obey His commission of service to reach beyond the Jewish people to all nations.

Beginning with their family and kinship ties, then progressing outward through their friendships and new people they encountered day by day, these disciples could reproduce His Kingdom mindset and permeate their world *as they went*, **“making disciples of all peoples.”**

Do you grieve as we do over the general *indifference* to His commission in the Nicolaitan religious system—a tragic contrast to the fiery responsiveness of those early disciples to fulfill their Lord’s command? It’s no surprise that the clergy system breeds complacency. In most congregational gatherings, people come to spectate. How few are prepared (or encouraged) to participate as the apostle Paul exhorts the followers of Jesus in Corinth to do (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Most translations of Matthew 28:19 give the impression by the command to “go” that it’s an undeniable call to immediately pack up and head out. And indeed, the Spirit *is* faithful to make clear to those He’s earmarked to head to regions far away that He will use them there. But the clear sense of the word is not to “go some place”. Rather, ***as you are going about your daily life***, make disciples. It’s an ongoing command *wherever* and to *whomever* He leads you!

Sadly, some decide to *go* without ever having walked consistently on their home turf in the actual translation of that Greek word: **“GOING”** and discipling and baptizing and teaching to obey. 85% of first-time missionary families who head abroad return before their first tour of duty is completed. The **“as you go”** framework of touching others with your life in Jesus **MUST** precede the yearning to bring His truth to other cultures where the spiritual warfare is so much more intense.

“The People Movement Approach” recognizes that God created man with a very specific need for *relational connectedness*. Our Lord made very clear how extended relational connectedness could be used to bring the Good News of His salvation covenant to all the nations of the world. Look at Jesus’ progression of how the Gospel would eventually permeate the outreaching connection of all humanity:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The call of Jesus in your own life begins with your *“Jerusalem”*: your family, relatives, and other close relationships such as neighbors, co-workers and classmates. They’re people with whom you already have an endearing or mutual relationship so that you can share what’s important to you: the vital presence of the Lord of your life!

“Judea and Samaria” are actually separate people groups. In the time of Jesus, *“Judea”* were those with whom His disciples had common cultural heritage and language. They were people who perhaps knew someone they knew, or were at least welcoming enough just because they were Jews.

Your *“Judea”* might be those with whom you’d be culturally comfortable when you met them. They might be someone who works for the same company but perhaps in another location. Maybe it’s someone from your state when you’re traveling and have an immediate connection. Or it might be someone who’s a “friend of a friend of a

friend” with whom you make contact. At any rate, you’re able to establish some sort of familiar conversation that might move on to spiritual sharing.

“Samaria”, on the other hand, was a relational stretch for those early disciples. The people of Samaria were despised as “half-breeds” because they had intermingled with the Assyrian conquerors hundreds of years earlier. Samaritans had nothing to do with the temple system in Jerusalem; rather, their holy place of sacrifice was on Mt. Gerazim in their territory.

The Jews did all they could to avoid both the land and its people. That’s why the Twelve were so surprised that Jesus would receive water from a Samaritan woman at her town’s well, or that a “Good Samaritan” would be the hero of His parable involving the wounded traveler. He knew it would be a test of their love and obedience to follow through in reaching the Samaritans after His ascension! Perhaps that’s why they needed His assurance that He would *be with them always* to empower them to do what would be humanly impossible for them!

Your *“Samaria”* might be those of other ethnic, racial, or religious background—people whom at first you might be hesitant to approach or befriend for whatever reason. While you may not be blatantly racist as were the disciples toward the Samaritans, you might not be perfectly at ease either with people who look, act, or worship differently than you do.

Yet these are the very ones whom our Lord has commissioned you to come alongside as you encounter them, whether across the street, at the local university, or yes, across the globe. It *begins* with the ones He puts in your

path or opens the way for you to meet and befriend.

For instance, Sue taught conversational English at a nearby university for 6 years. This led to wonderful friendships and social times together. Some of these women were eager to know about the Lord Sue loves, and these ongoing conversations led to a number coming to repentance and entering the wonderful Kingdom of God!

Some of these new followers of Jesus then led their husbands and children to Jesus, and shared with non-believing friends among their own countrymen. And only our Lord knows who else came to Him when these eager disciples returned to their homelands!

When the disciples were commissioned to go to “all nations”, they were being instructed to reach with the Gospel *all people groups* beyond their own limited range of contact. **“To the ends of the earth”** encompassed every area in which they might encounter people!

Those who were merchants were in an ideal profession to encounter people from afar, as were those who had gathered at Pentecost and responded to the Spirit’s call through Peter’s sermon. An *extended relational connectedness* was evidenced, whether through bringing the truth back to their homeland or carrying it with them as merchants who penetrated all sorts of cultures.

And, in true Hebraic style, just as James could write to the *“twelve tribes in the dispersion”*, so too all who were connected in spirit by the Spirit of Jesus could sense a connection that surpassed ethnic differences and united them as family in Him.

Your “ends of the earth” might involve encountering those who are

receptive or responsive when you travel to other lands. It might involve purposefully spending time in another culture with those who are already working with other ethnic groups to prepare yourself to reach others of that people group.

Or, it may be your response to spend your life as did Hudson Taylor of old, becoming “one in heart” with those He sends you to, received as one among them because of your love and willingness to lay down the comforts of your homeland to bring Jesus to them.

Remember, each of these “relational assignments” is equally important to our Lord, and must be of equal importance for us as we serve in His Kingdom.

Relational and extended relational connectedness is the primary way we can fulfill our Lord’s command, “going and making disciples.”

Let us be satisfied with nothing less than the burden for people of Jesus Christ our Lord.

You’ll remember from our Restoration Diagram that fellowship is based on the principle of *relational connectedness*. EVERYTHING about our God is relational, beginning with our Covenant union with Him to our fellowship with each other. This principle of interconnection carries forth in our outreach to an unbelieving world.



When it comes to *Fellowship In Homes* on the diagram, the relationships are initiated by the individual and family reaching out to unbelievers in their

neighborhood—people with whom they already share common concerns and perhaps even connection through children or social get-togethers. As neighbors enter into Covenant with the Father through Jesus, a “fellowship of homes” can be birthed.

**Rather than trying to *find*
a home fellowship,
you should seek to *start* one!**

The apostle Paul devoted a large portion of His counsel to the followers of Jesus in Corinth stressing the interconnectedness of those in the Kingdom of Christ. His metaphor parallel between the physical and the spiritual body highlights the dependence and importance of each part as it belongs to the whole (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

*The body is a **unit**, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form **one body**. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into **one body**—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the **one Spirit** to drink.*

The apostle goes on to address the error that any one part would envy another or disavow the purpose of another. As he makes clear, “**God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be.**”

Our Father combined the members the way He intended in order to forestall division as well as to develop concern and appreciation for one another. That

Just remember that everything about our God is relational, beginning with our Covenant with Him, to our fellowship with each other, to our outreach to the world.

connectedness demands *response* in both good times and bad:

*If one part suffers, every **part** suffers with it; if one part is honored, every **part** rejoices with it. Now you are the **body of Christ**, and each one of you is a part of it* (see also Hebrews 13:3).

A follower of Jesus does not perceive himself a self-sufficient isolationist. Like the components of the human organism, each of us is relationally connected to others in such a way that we each have a responsibility to serve. What might this interconnected “people approach” look like?

It may sound simple, but connection begins with meaningful *discussion with* people. Generally speaking, Americans are a *talk at* society—we convey facts *at* each other. In contrast, deep meaningful relationships and mutual support are developed by people who *speak with* each other. Give-and-take discussion acts as glue in their commitment to one another.

A man who is conscious of the “people approach” in his home will discuss family concerns and matters with his wife, and children when appropriate. He carries this awareness of connection forward into his business affairs and his faith community decisions. *Discussion with* people enables them to make known their values, thereby upholding their dignity.

When every decision is seen as part of a collective process, no one relies solely on himself for the answers. Only as those who would be affected by a decision give their input so that all can move ahead *together* is progress healthy and constructive. This process applies to spiritual matters as well.

If you habitually follow the process of *discussion with* in your family and faith community, then you'll find it a pattern to use respectfully in your relationship with unbelievers.

Humility is developed in those who *discuss with* and *plan with* each other. You're showing your respect for them by looking to their interests and worth (see Philippians 2:4). And, it's genuine humility rather than egocentric pride that gives you a hearing among unbelievers.

Relational Connectedness In Fellowship: A Powerful Means To Reach An Unbelieving World

The way of the Kingdom, that is, relational interconnectedness, is found in the **People Movement Approach**. Yet, the this method has been the least used means of Gospel outreach by European/American missions. But those who *have* evangelized and discipled this way have by far produced the greatest lasting fruit.

If you are indeed one of the called-out ones of your King, you have been called to make disciples for Him. In fact, the hunger to see others respond to Jesus as Lord is convincing confirmation that you are in the Kingdom!

So we strongly encourage you: As you discover the different facets of the People Movement Approach in this Lifebyte and the next, please examine how your own motivations and actions represent Jesus to unbelievers around you. Make our Lord's assignment *your* battle cry against spiritual darkness:

*"I am sending you to **open their eyes**; so that they will **turn from darkness to light**, from the **authority of the Adversary to God**, and thus receive for-*

*giveness of sins and a place among those who have been **separated for holiness** by putting their trust in Me" (Acts 26:17b,18).*

It's obvious that you don't want to show up at the Judgment Throne and find out that our Lord Jesus doesn't know you! If you are a follower of Jesus, then His Spirit is indwelling you. *He* is impelling you to fulfill our Lord's purpose and the reason for which He was crucified: **the salvation of mankind**. Your loving accomplishment of His purpose in and for you entails freeing those who are held in Satan's grasp and are headed for hell. YOU are our Lord's heart and hands and feet!

Jesus came "*to destroy the devil's work*" (1 John 3:8). And, as Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:17, Acts 1:8 and many other passages emphasize, we His followers are imbued by His Spirit with the same goal of our Lord.

Conversion: Dying To Our Sin Nature and Living By The Holy Spirit

In our book **Demolishing Strongholds** and in our video series on **The Home** we explain that from your parents you inherit a *soul* at conception. That soul—your mind, will and emotions—is controlled by your sin nature. And the aim of that sin nature is to lead you to hell.

At conception you also receive a *spirit* from God. This spirit yearns to return to Him upon the death of your body. But until you are spiritually born again, your sin nature-controlled soul dominates your spirit, and therefore your life (see 1 Peter 4:1-4).



Prior to your conversion the Holy Spirit begins to convict you of your sin (John 16:8). When your spirit is heading for conversion you begin to respond to the Holy Spirit's wooing. You become aware of your own depravity and your need for a Redeemer, and you embrace the Father's stipulations for union in His Covenant.



Our Father then seals you with the Holy Spirit. Now you are able to change your source of guidance from your sin nature within your soul to the Holy Spirit guiding you through your spirit. Over time the Holy Spirit will continue to sanctify you until your spirit dominates your soul (see Galatians 5:16-25).



As a Kingdom person, you're guided by the Holy Spirit to seek out unbelievers and develop relationships with them. Through both word and lifestyle you'll respond to the Spirit and will reflect the genuine concern of Jesus for the eternal welfare of the unbeliever.



Nothing less than this loving interest is demanded of us by our Lord! Jesus paid the price for their sins, and He wants you to let them know this and what it means for their life.

Even if you're out of the Nicolaitan religious system, its influence in your life may entice you to be lethargic about your privileged responsibility to our Lord. Or, even if your heart is bent on reaching the lost with His Good News, you may have been trained to use an impersonal "technique approach" in dealing with unbelievers.

- **Describe your motivations and actions in reaching your own "Jerusalem" and "Judea" and "Samaria" for Christ. When you think of reaching out to unbelievers what goes through your mind?**

- **If your religious experience has consisted of programs, services, evangelism techniques, etc., do you really know how to relate to others as Jesus' representative? Do you know how to love them as He would? Do you? Are you filled with the love of Jesus for others?**

What Would Jesus Do?

Charles Sheldon's timeless classic, *In His Steps*, recounts the change that comes about in a congregation of "mission station people" when they accept a Kingdom challenge by their pastor to use the "people movement approach". They are challenged to live a year in response to the question, *"What Would Jesus Do?"* As they respond to the King

in their hearts, He takes them out of their “congregational colony” and brings them into the mainstream of society. There they can relationally touch the lives of sinners as Jesus would.

(To read the book online for free, go to <http://www.kancoll.org/books/sheldon/>).

You'll find another example of the people approach in the memorable *Hinds Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard. This book also emphasizes the responsibility of relational outreach that Jesus gives to all who become Kingdom people, particularly in the last chapters. We strongly encourage you to read these inspiring classics with your family and discuss them. Both vividly illustrate the heart transformation that's needed by all of us who leave religious systems and determine to be Kingdom people.

(We recommend that you download our study guide for *Hinds' Feet On High Places*, entitled **Going to the High Places**, to accompany your discussion. Its a free download!)

If you're going to be a Kingdom person, you must, without hesitation, be ready to represent our Father's eternal concern for others as opportunity arises. This is not optional for Kingdom living as it probably was when you abided in a Nicolaitan religious system.

You also need to be guided in your spirit by that wonderful question, *“What Would Jesus DO?”* And, your answer **MUST** be the foundational directive that leads to your response of loving obedience. If you ask Him, you'll end up *doing* that which He commands you because His Spirit will impel you. And that doing will cost you time, discomfort, inconvenience, and possibly your own life—figuratively or actually.

Remind yourself *why* Jesus walked among us as the Perfect Sacrifice so that you can be burdened for the very ones He so loves: *For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners* (Matthew 9:13).

“What Would Jesus Do?”

*Your answer **MUST** be the foundational directive that leads to action. If you ask Him, you will end up doing. And doing will cost you time, discomfort, inconvenience, and possibly your own life.*

The Hebraic People Movement Approach:

Respecting Relational Connectedness

The true nature of a person isn't revealed so much by who they are as an *individual* as much as through their *relational connectedness* with others. Even the Bible takes the time to reveal the relational connectedness of the people involved—who their father was, what clan or tribe they belonged to, how their lives affected others.

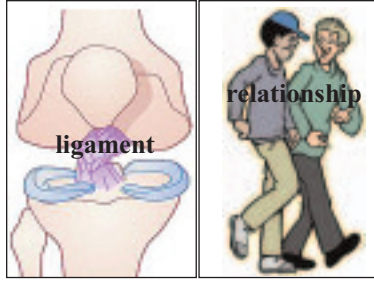
Individualism is not found in the Kingdom. So if you're going to serve the King, keep this in mind:

- You need to understand yourself in relational context with others.
- And, as you establish relationships for the sake of loving and serving our King, you must respect the relational connectedness they already have with other people—their family and friends.

Take a lesson from ligaments:

A ligament is fibrous connecting tissue linking two or more bones. Each bone is analogous to an individual. The ligament represents the relationship that

*Kingdom people think in collective terms:
“we”, “us”, “together”;
never “I” or “me”.*



binds them together. Just as a physical ligament enables the bones to move, so too the relationship between

people enables them to accomplish far more than either could alone.

The value of relationship is summed up in very common terms in Ecclesiastes 4:11,12: *“If two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

If you want to live effectively for the King with a Kingdom heart, remember this: Never perceive others solely from an individual context, but in light of their other relationships. It’s vital that you refrain from **atomistic individualism** if you’re going to represent the interests of the King. He never intended that you isolate someone from those who have invested their life and love into that person!

So, how *can* you relate to someone with whom you want to introduce the Lordship of Jesus? With your coworkers or your neighbors, you take the time to meet their family, their other key relationships, their personal history. It will take asking questions and pursuing an authentic interest in their relational connectedness. We’ll cover this more in our discussion later.

When Mike was in the workforce he would invite the families of those who worked for him over for a meal every three months or so. He also made sure Sue and our son Mike routinely stopped by his workplace during lunch time to meet his fellow

workers. Besides being their boss, Mike wanted his employees to know he was a family man, and that he respected *their* connectedness to their own family and their responsibilities to them.

When Sue taught conversational English to international students, we often had them *and their families* over for meals, recreation and discussion.

- **Throughout the day, are your thoughts more about yourself as an individual and meeting your own desires, or about other people and what you can do to reflect Jesus to them (Mark 10:45)? Explain.**

[Mike]: While I was in the Navy, the base Chaplain lived across the street from us. Sue and I were “religious” but had no relationship with our Lord. I was even more resistant to the Gospel than she was! The Chaplain had thought of asking Sue to attend a women’s Bible study, but he respected the connectedness of our marriage and refused to intrude behind my back. He himself was married and a father, and out of integrity represented Jesus through his conversations and lifestyle rather than seeking to divide us.

Instead of inviting Sue to a Bible study, he asked his congregation to pray for our salvation. About a year later Sue and I both put our trust in Jesus. When we found out what that Chaplain had done, we thanked him with all our hearts. His *contextual view* of Sue as a married woman has contributed greatly in how we’ve walked *hand-in-hand* as followers of Jesus for 30 years. We’ve refused to divide husbands and wives in their marriage connection.

The “**People Movement Approach**” in missions over the centuries has demonstrated that people become genuine followers of Jesus when a Christ-ward movement takes place *within their extended relationships*. This movement is borne on relational connectedness rather than on individualism. Unbelievers are perceived within their relational context of family, friends, neighbors, fellow workers, classmates. People who have already tasted authentic relationship with each other are far less likely to forsake our Father when they enter into Covenant with Him.

People’s collective history and prior relational experience provides strength to the spiritual commitment and progress into spiritual maturity.

An important relational emphasis is being restored to followers of Jesus today. We must see ourselves in the context of our relationships with others *far more* than we grasp onto an identity of ourselves individually. Our relational connectedness and responsibilities to those who are part of our collective relational grid must be of greater concern to our hearts and service than our own personal comfort and individualistic desires. And, this collective relational understanding must permeate our outreach to unbelievers. They’re being invited through the Lordship of King Jesus to be *part of His body*, His Kingdom.

If you yearn to see others embrace our Father’s Covenant and enter His Kingdom, deal with them whenever possible in their relational context. When a body of those who already are connected in their hearts become followers of Jesus, there is great strength in their combined commitment to Him and their relational connectedness to each other.

People become genuine followers of Jesus when a Christward movement takes place within their extended relationships.

In the time of the apostles, relational connectedness was a given. That’s why it was natural that Paul and Silas would address the jailer and his entire household *together*, even at that midnight hour:

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household (Acts 16:32-34).

The centurion Cornelius, known to be a God-fearing and righteous man, had been prepared by God in a vision for his faith to be made full by the Gospel. That he was not ashamed of his obedient trust is demonstrated by the presence of “*a devout soldier of those who were in constant attendance upon him*” (Acts 10:7) in his relational realm. This Roman officer had found a brother in the ranks of a system known more for its ferocity than its love!

When Peter responded to the centurion’s call, he found that Cornelius had called together his relatives and close friends. As writer Luke notes, there were “*many people assembled*” in the Roman’s home for one purpose: “*We are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord*” (10:33).

They had only heard about Jesus previously as a “good man” but now they were encountering Him as “*the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead*” (10:42).

We're joyfully told, "*The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message*" (10:44). The hearts of these people had been prepared to hear the truth. They knew one another well and had obviously spent much time together talking over matters of the spirit.

Having said this, you may be wondering: How do *I* approach those with whom I wish to share the Good News of the New Covenant in Jesus?

If you've taken the time to establish a *genuine* relationship with an unbeliever and with a number of folks with whom he or she is relationally connected, ask that person if you could speak with their whole family, even their extended family. Talk to the largest relational grouping of that person that you can! Share and discuss with them the Gospel of the Covenant and how the Lordship of Jesus has changed your life.

As *you* present the Gospel of the Covenant, give your hearers time to discuss and weigh for themselves that which you share. They have a collective set of values they've lived by, and it may take what we call "**incubation time**" for them to reconsider their old values and the impact of what you've presented. After all, the true Gospel is *life-changing Truth!* The communal values they have didn't occur over night, and they won't be discarded without thorough discussion.

If any of the ones with whom you share are seekers of truth, they may want to meet with you again and again. The Holy Spirit is the One Who will be opening the eyes of their understanding (see Ephesians 1:18). Don't reject the people *He* isn't rejecting! Pray for them, and wait for the Spirit to bring conviction. And, give the converts who already know them time to represent Jesus to them.

You are *not* a salesman, so you don't need to be persuasive. Be sincere and honest, "*always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence*" (1 Peter 3:15), and respect the seriousness of their considerations.

Values are comprised of learned patterns and behaviors, ideas that give people a *communal identity*. Any time someone renounces their previous family values because they conflict with God's Word, his other family members will perceive that they're rejecting *them*. Respect the personal cost of those who respond to the Spirit in obedient trust, and support those who are making this tough decision!

Again, give them time to work through things so that they're not agreeing with something that *sounds* reasonable but they haven't weighed the cost of being His disciple. *You* weren't born knowing the truth, and it's taken time for *you* to mature in your faith. Give the same consideration to others. Let incubation occur!

And, don't ever fear speaking God's truth to people out of love (Mark 13:11), even if the message is painful. If someone says "no" to your request to share, DON'T have a negative attitude toward them (see John 15:20)! Instead, be like the Navy chaplain we wrote about: Get others to intercede with you until our Lord Jesus prevails in their lives.

(For more on effective outreach, see our May 1997 Newsletter: *Taking a City*.)

Rather than reaching *individuals* for Jesus and cutting them off from non-believing relationships, you need to see that person as a *conduit* to reach their family and already-established relationships.

Just remember that a body of relationally attached people become true followers of Jesus as their *collective decisions* to enter the Father's Covenant sweeps through the group mind and spirit. Remember the examples of *group response* from the Book of Acts?

Yes, that response involves many *individual* decisions. But their connectiveness represents far more than merely the sum of their individual decisions. Their collective history and prior relational experience provides strength for their spiritual commitment and progress into spiritual maturity.

A person is part of a family, an extended family, and close friends. Begin with this understanding and you will bear lasting fruit for the Kingdom.

You are representing the King! Your approach to those with whom you share must be without domination or control. Let your relationship with our Lord Jesus be a role model for them. As the Native people describe it: give with your *palms up*. This is the *humble* way of reaching others with the Gospel of Life.

Don't let your religious knowledge be used as an implement of power over unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 8:1)! If you've been in a religious system for any length of time, you've probably been influenced by its Mission Station approach. This pattern may cause you to share God's truth in a *palms down* manner. In other worlds, much of church history demonstrates that Christendom was controlled by the ruling, wealthy,

A Native American Observation
Hebraic—People Movement Approach:
humbly shares God's truth and resources
palms up.

literate countries. There has been thread throughout European Christendom a supremacist attitude based on possession of knowledge that others don't have.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are *not* intrinsically superior to any other person, even if we are followers of Jesus. The treasure of His Light in our lives comes from *His* initiative of love. We have done *nothing* to be able to earn this marvelous gift; therefore, we must offer it the same way we received it: palms up!

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves (2 Corinthians 4:5-7).

Through ongoing confession and repentance you need to be sure your heart is pure before God and that you don't exalt yourself, but Jesus Christ as Lord. The Nicolaitan religious system has, for the most part, failed to walk in humility as bondslaves to those who have yet to believe. For centuries religious envoys separated themselves from unbelievers by color, standard of living, prestige, literacy, place of residence. As a result, missionaries in religious colonies were isolated from those to whom they were assigned to bring the message of salvation.

Nicolaitan clergy have also been trapped in isolationist chains by having been trained to perceive themselves as separate from others. Whether intentionally or not, many have feared expo-

sure of being frail sinners themselves, and have ducked accountability to those who could serve as true brothers. Be very careful, especially you men! You can only be Jesus-in-the-flesh to others as you are saturated in His motives. Then your approach will mirror His, and you will communicate with an *inner Kingdom peace* that will contrast mightily with the world's blaring, seductive methods.

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

As our King's representative, you're called to deal with people *justly*, in the same manner in which our Father has treated you: ***“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets”*** (Matthew 7:12).

Justice is a far higher virtue than charity is. The charity that has predominated in religious systems has strings attached: the perceived right of the charity giver to dominate the charity recipient. This “palms down” approach controls the recipient and makes him dependent on the giver. He never learns to grow in dependence on God in His creative provision. Instead, charity keeps the focus horizontal, on the person or organization dispensing the goods.

Be sure that whether you're sharing resources or Bible wisdom, your palms are up, preserving the dignity of the recipient—the way *you* want to be treated.

Additionally, to walk in the steps of our Lord you need to offer yourself in relationship to others. You're called to put hands and feet and heart into the lives of those whom He sends to you, not just

dump Scripture on them and hope they'll agree to your verses. So many within religious systems today, particularly those of the Mission Station mentality, want to “give them Jesus” through impersonal crusades and media techniques. But, most have no heart readiness to pour themselves out in relationship with the ones with whom they share.

This impersonal approach is epitomized by the widespread use of evangelism crusades. Little wonder the “conversions” don't last—those who “go forward” have no one to come alongside to nurture them as beloved children of the King!

During the 30 years we've followed Jesus, we've had numerous invitations from those in religious systems to “come to my church”. However well-meaning, these people were fulfilling a perceived religious obligation to deposit us in their system's pew but were unwilling to assume any personal responsibility for load-bearing relationship. Only a handful have ever asked us, “Would you come to my home so we can get to know each other better?”

As a guide for your own understanding of relational responsibility, consider the “Good Samaritan” as your example of how to serve others (see Luke 10:3-37).

A question was posed to Jesus: ***“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*** Our Lord's criteria?

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (Luke 10:27).

If you are privileged to be a servant of our Lord in His Kingdom, then those

