

August 29, 2011

Changed hearts bring changed methods

***"From now on I will tell you of new things,
of hidden things unknown to you.
They are created now, and not long ago;
you have not heard of them before today.
So you cannot say, 'Yes, I knew of them.'" (Isaiah 48:6,7).***

It occurred to us recently as we were going through the book of Isaiah how often God tells the prophet to warn the people that He is *doing a new thing* (see also Amos 3:7). **What if God were doing a "new thing" today? Would you know it?** Such a large part of Christendom, particularly within Roman Catholic and many Evangelical expressions, perpetuate a theological doctrine in which God *ceased all further revelation* when the Bible was canonized, that is, when the 66 books in it were agreed upon.

Years ago we attended for a season a congregation whose very creed was based on the Westminster Confession and stated this very point that God was no longer revealing anything. During our participation there, Mike shared with the leadership several prophecies the Spirit had made known to him. After a few months he was brought before the Elders and ordered to quit saying, "God told me." Mike then asked them to review the prophecies he'd given them. In their subsequent discussion these men admitted that each prophetic word had been accurate, and that *only God* could have given these messages to him. Therefore they reversed their previous ruling and told him he *could* say, "God told me" when indeed He spoke a message through Mike — but they still clung to their own wayward theology that God *doesn't* reveal new things today through His Spirit!

Our assertion:

The **Hebraic Restoration** is a prophetic move of our Father to restore followers of His Son Jesus to the obedient trust-based lifestyle of Abraham. Jesus followers we've heard from who've diligently tested whether what we share is from Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21) are bearing fruit to His glory today. They're rejoicing as they realize that our Father has been doing a "new thing" all over the world since He gave Jerusalem back to the Jewish people in 1967 in fulfillment of Jesus' words, "*Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*" (Luke 21:24).

We've warned Gentiles (non-Jews) in particular through previous writings that Paul prophesied the times we today live in: "*I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in*" (Romans 11:25). As our Father is completing His promise in the Hebrew Scriptures to restore the Jewish people back to Israel, He is also displaying His mercy to us Gentiles: to reveal to His children

the true nature of the "Church" Jesus is building for Himself. The "collective called-out ones" are being restored to the trust-based lifestyle of Abraham, the patriarch chosen by God because he would "*direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just*" (Genesis 18:19).

Making the Hebraic foundations a way of life in loving and obedient trust in Jesus as Lord is first and foremost an *individual and family* responsibility. God's Word never calls for a husband or father to outsource his wife or family for others to spiritually train. That role modeling and instruction is to take place daily *within each home* as they are guided through the Spirit. Older men who have demonstrated wisdom and compassion are to lead and support these men in training their own families. NOWHERE in God's Word are professional clergy, religious programs or even an organized religious system ever called for or depended on for this essential spiritual responsibility.

It's within the current religious structure that both Roman Catholic and Evangelical men especially seem to have the hardest time embracing the "*new thing*" our Father is restoring. If these men *refuse to believe* that there is any further revelation by God, then with the full support of their clergy system **they have put God in a theological box of their own making.** Perhaps these men are as blinded by their own theological traditions as the unbelieving Jews of Jesus's day. They couldn't accept how the prophesied Messiah came to them—as the LIVING Bread that came down from heaven, Who called on them to *spiritually* eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to partake of eternal life.

Jesus was the fullest "prophetic revelation" they'd ever seen because He was—and IS—the Living God incarnate! But He didn't fit in their religious box, especially when He promised them the indwelling Holy Spirit (see John 7:83,39). And so many today refuse to believe that God the Spirit would actually continue to DO and SPEAK through His own as He did in the first century—the same Spirit of Christ, Who is the same yesterday, today and forever. How tragic for them and for our lost and needy world!

Read for yourself John 6:26-66 to grasp the full context of this profound teaching of Jesus, which connects the dots in the previous chapter that God *isn't confined to the written text!* The Jews had diligently studied Scripture because they thought that within the framework of that text they could possess eternal life (see John 5:36-39). Yet right before their very eyes was the testimony of Jesus as fulfillment of the Holy Writ, having evidenced Himself as God Incarnate through His miracles as well as John the Baptizer's witness. How many today are blind and deaf to the Spirit of the Living God through His work and His words in and through His Spirit in His responsive ones?

***"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins.
If he does, the wine will burst the skins,
and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.
No, he pours new wine into new wineskins"*** (Mark 2:22).

"You sound like an 'evangelical,'" Mike often chided Bruce over the phone these past few years. Bruce and his wife Jan have been on our mailing list for some time. Both had been trained in an evangelical institution when they were young. But this summer their lives were being changed as they went through our Hebraic Article, ***Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships***. The Spirit used this material in such a powerful way that we can *hear* the difference in them about their marriage, so we asked them to share their testimony.

Having heard from some of you who still use "old fruitless methods" to go through the materials we share, we thought you might enjoy some insight into the Odems' new approach that's bearing wonderful fruit already in their relationship with one another. They've used our materials for a number of years during their almost 3 decades together, and you may even see yourself in their relational dynamic as it's being transformed into a responsive "we"!

Bruce and Jan's testimony:

"After several failed attempts of Bruce trying to *teach at* Jan by his intellect rather than serving her so that both of them could approach this study of *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships* (MGCR) on equal ground, they discovered something essential: **"It takes two to become one!"**

Jan saw this as an opportunity and says, "Wow, I actually wanted to try again to anchor this material into our lives! I had to ask God to give me a right heart so I wouldn't let the toxic memory of the past failed attempts stop us. I wanted our relationship as wife and husband to be *changed to what Christ desired*, so I agreed to work with Bruce on this. This time we took one page at a time and underlined what each of us saw as most important."

Bruce says, "When Jan handed me her first page of notes, my eyes were literally opened to something I'd never seen before. Jan saw, felt, wanted and desired *love* in the journey more than anything else. She needed to be needed and to be shown love, in stark contrast to just being *told* she was loved!"

Jan responds, "This method is really working! I'm able to share what I'm learning and feeling while my husband is *actually listening* to me." During the two weeks it took to complete the study, both of us were feeling a bit isolated from the "outside world"; but we knew that if we were to be changed, this was a small price to pay. Jan recalls that in her own heart she became encouraged as she was being changed into a loving wife, the woman God had always intended her to become. And Bruce was becoming joyful inside and out as her husband!

When Bruce was willing to acknowledge and appreciate Jan's God-given dignity, intellect, importance, and valuable contribution both as his wife and as a sister in Christ, this made the way for beginning a new relationship of mutually growing as one! Looking back, as we started what was the 4th try at going through MGCR, we were now

determined to become what Messiah Jesus wanted us to be. We didn't know what that looked like, but we were convinced we didn't want to stay the way we had been. *Both of us had demolished strongholds that had previously prevented us from walking side by side as one, and that, plus steadfast determination, were key to being able to grow any further.* We wouldn't be sharing this with you if we hadn't *both* sought to take every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah by first demolishing the strongholds in our individual lives.

Jan says, "Going through the study by this method of *making known the important values I held* gave me the expression of **LOVE** toward my husband with a whole heart and a desire to be with and around him. I was free to **LOOSE** my communication with him by confronting him without fear of putdown. Neither of us had to point out much in the other that needed to go. Messiah's presence was so evident that we both became very submissive to *one another* in receiving and putting into practice what we shared."

Bruce adds, "I couldn't 'teach' my way through this one. I had nothing left in my evangelical arsenal to shoot at her." Jan saw what had been missing from Bruce in his relationship with her: She was being overlooked in the main ingredient of the process, which was **love demonstrated** in action, respect, security, and mutually growing *together*. Bruce was looking only at the goal of "getting into the Kingdom". And in doing so he was leaving out what Messiah Jesus says, "If you want to be great in the Kingdom, learn to be a servant!" Jan was truly being his helpmate to help Bruce see that he was the only one who could release her, encourage her and help equip her by giving, showing and living out authentic **LOVE** from his heart, not just by his words.

Bruce saw from Jan's first page of notes that he needed to repent of blaming her for not wanting to study these things—but who could blame her? Who would *want* to sit and listen for hours to a blowhard *talk about* love rather than *show* love? When Bruce took personal responsibility for the pain he had caused Jan and repented of that sin and genuinely asked her forgiveness, she was more than willing and ready to be loved.

Jan adds that "**LEARNING** to grow with Bruce wanting to know what I have to say does matter! It has sure helped me be much more willing and submissive. Through my own tears of repentance and forgiveness of sin, God has worked in my heart. Just knowing and experiencing life that is peaceable as a couple makes me well up with tears of joy, laughter, and thanksgiving! To **LIVE** in freedom, that is the fruit we are coming to know."

Toward the end of the study Jan nicknamed the whole experience "Camp Isolation." Her testimony is, "I was changed at Camp Isolation. To God be the Glory, great things He has done!" As to why would anyone want to go through this Mutually Growing Christlike Relationships study? You'll discover as we did that the intimate relationship that Father has for a husband and wife is truly like that which we experience from our loving Servant King Jesus. **Ephesians 5:21-30:**

Submit to one another in fear of the Messiah. Wives should submit to their husbands as they do to the Lord; because the husband is head of the wife, just as the Messiah, as head of the Messianic Community, is Himself the one who keeps the body safe. Just as

the Messianic Community submits to the Messiah, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. As for husbands, love your wives, just as the Messiah loved the Messianic Community, indeed, gave Himself up on its behalf, in order to set it apart for God, making it clean through immersion in the mikveh, so to speak, in order to present the Messianic Community to Himself as a bride to be proud of, without a spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without defect. This is how husbands ought to love their wives like their own bodies; for the man who loves his wife loves himself. Why, no one ever hated his own flesh! On the contrary, he feeds it well and takes care of it, just as the Messiah does the Messianic Community, because we are parts of His Body. (CJB)"

Please prayerfully consider what Bruce and Jan have shared. Think about the methods you use in your own spiritual development—how you go about that ongoing process. Is ever-increasing Christ-likeness the testimony others can attest to in you? If not, it may be time to consider what becoming a "new wineskin" looks like. Changed hearts call for changed methods. And, changed methods may lead to changed hearts.

Mike & Sue

PS Our dear sister Patrice in the inner city of Cleveland has a very real need for a computer and monitor so she can receive the materials from our website that have been helping her reach others in her neighborhood and surrounding areas. She had been using her computer in her home to teach others the Hebraic foundations. Could you be part of answering her need? Please let us know. Thanks!