

**January 22, 2009**  
**God Requires Love, Not Tolerance**

Dear Friends,

During the Inauguration we found it hard to pull ourselves away from the TV. We were encouraged to see an individual who has overcome so much in life take on the responsibility as the President of this nation. The crowds demonstrated much hope, yet we're well aware that we as followers of our Lord Jesus can never put our trust in a man.

The method of leadership which Mr. Obama seems to be choosing is one of making wise plans through *open discussion*. If you've been making the Hebraic foundations your way of life, you too have used this method. This is how you prayerfully establish the biblical applications (halakhahs) for a life that pleases our Lord. The cornerstone of this method is found in Matthew 18:18-20:

***“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.”***

Yet, as we watched all the festivities, in our spirit we also recognized that this presidency *may be* the precursor to the persecution of the followers of Jesus in this nation. But be assured that if this happens, it won't be a bad thing! We've written previously about China and how the followers of Jesus grew dramatically in both spiritual depth and number after they began to be persecuted by their government. When the church buildings were closed down, persecution separated those who were comfortable with religious form and ritual from those who would follow Jesus even to death. Authentic faith really began to spread when those who trusted Jesus started to meet in homes as family in Him.

How does this tie into the Obama presidency? In Matthew 13:24-30 Jesus relates the parable of the man who sowed good seed in his field while his enemy surreptitiously sowed weeds. While there seems to be much good in President Obama's style of leadership, the weeds he sows *may eventually* lead to the persecution of the followers of our Lord. How might this happen? Unless something changes, what will come from the Obama presidency is pressure to be **tolerant of everyone and everything**. It's very much akin to the present-day rule of **"political correctness"**—you're forbidden to say or do anything that riles others by the world's standards.

Sadly, this nation is primed for the **rule of tolerance**, especially among church goers. For some time now, those who have enjoyed spiritual lethargy have been trained by their clergy to tolerate sin both in themselves and with each other. *Compromise* has become an accepted way of life within many segments of the organized church system.

Anyone who confronts the sin of another is branded as "intolerant" or "legalistic." Over the past few years we've asked church goers from a variety of denominations about the last time they heard a sermon denouncing sin, and a subsequent call for repentance. Few could remember. In fact, most have *never* heard a sermon that identifies sin in their midst and God's standard to repent! This is especially true among those who ascribe to or have been influenced by the people-friendly "**Church growth movement.**" Some segments of this corporate-modeled system have even written manuals decrying ever mentioning "sin" because that might make those who attend feel bad about themselves and not return!

One example in particular stands out. Satan has been using the increased **tolerance for divorce** throughout Christendom to deter people from being true to God's Word. Remember, He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), since it breaks covenant promise and defiles His purpose and plan for marriage to produce Godly children. Yet, throughout Christendom no one is being found guilty of the *sin* of divorce. The person who breaks the marriage covenant is guilty of sin, unless by review of the elders the actions of the other spouse are so despicable that there was no other recourse. Does repentance stir our Father to forgive? Absolutely! But "Christian" books and articles penned especially by divorced women acclaim how much happier a divorced woman can be, or how much more satisfying a second (or third) marriage is. We've encountered women who have blasphemed our Lord by proclaiming that God told them to divorce their husbands so they could serve Him better! Yet for the most part, tolerant religious leaders have remained silent. Why? Because *they* lead this nation in divorce!

**Let's take a moment to look at this nation from our Father's perspective.**

Every day multiple thousands die, yet so few among the churchd (never mind the worldly or "backslidden") are being welcomed in heaven. Can you envision how grievous this is for our gracious God Who accepted the sacrifice of His own Son so that ALL who trusted in Him could be welcomed into His Presence? Instead, He witnesses droves of self-serving, compromised church goers who are deceived into thinking they belong to Him because they embrace certain religious rituals, creeds and programs.

But people who've never embraced the scriptural stipulations of His Covenant, beginning with *repentance*, have no viable relationship with Him. Consider this: How can people *repent* in response to God if no one is warning them about sin and their *need* for repentance? From our Father's view, the painful testimony of much of Christendom in the United States is self-satisfaction with self-serving, self-focused religion.

And the bitter fruit of deceived lives? The refusal to bear His sorrow for those who are plunging headlong toward hell. How this grieves His heart! Yes, our loving Father mourns. Revisit in the Older Testament the recurring voiced pain He endured through adulterous Israel — and picture how even more painful is the spiritual adultery of self-proclaiming "Christians" who bring down His Name by their sinful life choices.

A condition of embracing our Father's Covenant is to *love Him*. The Hebrew word for the

love He commands is *ahav*, a passionate desire to cherish your Beloved and to be in His presence. This kind of love overflows with emotional connotation. It's a responsive devotion which ***produces the fruit of obedience***. The Hebrew letters of *ahav* mean “**a window into the Father's heart**.” If you truly live in Covenant with Him, our Father reveals to you His very heart. Are you carrying with Him in your spirit the burden of His heart, the salvation of ALL mankind? If not, then be jolted that you aren't walking in Covenant union with Him. Please look again at our Hebraic Article, **The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation**. What may you be missing in your relationship in Him?

A little background. We were finishing our time in Israel, having been given the Hebraic foundations by our Father. I (Mike) perched quietly on the rock wall in front of the church building called Dominus Fleuit, which commemorates where Jesus wept on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city of Jerusalem. I could feel our Father's deep sorrow as He impressed into my spirit one of His purposes for sending us back to the United States: to address the tragic consequences for ***children of divorce***. I recognized at the time that I didn't fully understand the extent of the problem.

Shortly after our return we read a newspaper article that was based on a 35-year study of children whose parents had divorced. The one factor they all had in common was that they never felt they could intimately belong to another person. Even 35 years after their parents' divorce, most are still plagued by an inability to belong. Not long ago, another fact emerged from Christian pollster George Barna's surveys that augmented our realization of our Father's grief for the children of broken homes. Church goers — people who claimed to be living in Christ — had a higher divorce rate than unbelievers, and clergy were in the forefront of occupations of those who had broken their marriage covenant.

Stop for a moment and try to envision our Father's response to this gross toleration for severing marriage covenants. Picture His grief over the devastated children of divorce who go through life emotionally handicapped, feeling expendable in their relationships. Remember, the Author of marriage intended that this covenant fully reflect a couple's Covenant with Him, and that a husband and wife help each other grow into Christ's likeness together as a mirror of Lord Jesus' love for His Bride, the collective Church. But throughout Christendom, especially in western culture, marriages are being severed and children are being doomed to both emotional misery and the role modeling of expendable, impermanent relationships.

It's not that the children of divorce aren't in proximity to other people. Many do marry. But to intimately *belong* to another person means that you're free from ALL emotional prisons (strongholds) that you've erected to protect your mind, will and emotions — your soul. This is one of the reasons our Father impelled us to write **Demolishing Strongholds**: so that others could experience the true freedom which only Jesus as Lord of their life can give. And the greatest of these freedoms is to love Him and to freely love others without regard for whether you are loved in return. This is the essence of the *agape* love enjoined in a follower of Jesus and made possible by His transforming

power (Matthew 22:37-39; Ephesians 5:25).

**Tolerance Isn't Love; It's The Fear Of Confrontation**  
*National "Tolerance" Will Ultimately Lead To Persecution*

We want to affirm that a follower of Jesus is never allowed to be *intolerant* of another person. God doesn't allow His people to be *against* other human beings who are made in His image and for whom Jesus died (see Ephesians 6:12). Instead, He calls us who would be true to our Lord to be *for* the salvation of ALL mankind as declared in His Word. This very goal is what separates us from the ways of this world and evidences that our Father has revealed His heart to us.

A striking example of standing *for* something rather than *fighting against* is found in the trials of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who stood **for their convictions** and impacted an entire heathen empire. To the world, a follower of Jesus will always appear "intolerant." Even if you don't overtly say anything "Christian", the very fact that you don't go along with your old sinful ways makes you appear intolerant. Paul speaks of this transformation in us who once embraced the ways of this sinful world (see Colossians 3:1-11). Peter also references this repudiation of the old in order to live according to God's ways (1 Peter 4:1-4), concluding, **"They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you"** (v.5). It doesn't matter how people respond to your faith; your first response must be with the love that the Father and Lord Jesus have for them.

Never lose sight that our Lord is *holy*. If we are to live true to Him and His Word, then we must embrace **ALL** the commands that lead us to live righteously on His behalf. We must rid ourselves of **ALL** toleration for personal sin so that we may experience authentic fellowship with Him in Spirit and in truth (see 1 John 1:5-10). Try this. Using your concordance, look up the word "rid" and see the array of sins that He calls us to flee. Then purpose to *responsively do that* out of your love for Him and your desire to please Him.

**As soon as you begin to establish biblical applications (*halakhahs*) for your way of life, you will appear intolerant to others among the church as well as those enslaved by the world.**

There is coming on this nation an insidious battle. It will be over whether you will be *tolerant of sin*. Countless studies reveal that inside every human is a desire to be accepted by others. Thus, few are willing to confront, so most people lean toward tolerance. Toleration of unrighteousness offers a false sense that you belong to others: "I'm OK, you're OK, we're all OK." It doesn't matter to most who inhabit pews on any given Sunday morning whether the person next to them is out of fellowship with our Father because of unconfessed sin. But throughout so many congregations in this nation, unconfessed sin is a *testimony to tolerance* rather than the authentic love of Jesus that confronts sin so that repentance and restoration might take place (see Matthew 18:15-17).

Being willing and able to biblically confront is acquired as Christ-like character is instilled in us through applying His Word out of love for Him and for others. It is *for our Lord* that we stand firm in our biblical applications (convictions) and face the rejection and hatred with which the world will respond to us (see John 15:18,19). As we wrote in our book **Growing Relationships Through Confrontation**, confrontation doesn't pit you against another person. Rather, biblical confrontation causes you to address those factors that are *detrimental to the relationship* — things that are hindering your love from growing. Is the Spirit at work in each of us who follows Jesus prodding us to experience what our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world have found, that ***the life of a Jesus follower is confrontational by its very nature***? Even your refusal to participate in sinful pursuits confronts people with a righteousness they don't want! Yet your holy stand coupled with your Father's love for them may plant a seed for future harvest.

### **How May President Obama's Emphasis on Toleration Lead to Your Persecution?**

As well intentioned as President Obama seems to be to lead this nation out of its economic mess, it is also his stated intent to sign policy that **proliferates the murder of unborn babies**, and to **make this nation fully accept homosexuality** — an abomination in God's sight (see Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9). These two hideous sins will be the spearhead Satan uses to foster tolerance at all levels. Someday soon it will be illegal to be *against* either abortion or homosexuality, for objection to these will be (and even now *are*) considered crimes of hate. On the heels of prohibiting biblical exposure of these as sin in God's sight will be the toleration and promotion of all types of sexual perversion.

Don't think that those who are among the church and their leadership can or will stand up against this evil. Many Protestant clergy have already given way to adultery and divorce themselves, while numerous Catholic seminarians and clergy are plagued by homosexuality.

The call to be true to Jesus will fall on those of us who have left "religion" behind out of loving obedience to Him and His Kingdom purposes. We have ***joined Jesus with a willingness to suffer outside the religious system so that we can live holy lives through His blood. With hearts filled with love for Him, we've left the religious camp, willing to bear the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come, the heavenly one He has prepared for His followers'*** (paraphrase of Hebrews 13:12-14; see also Hebrews 11:8-10; 12:22).

### **Are YOU Burdened for the Eternal Destiny of Others?**

*This proves you've experienced our Father's heart!*

You may download the September-October 2008 ***Mission Frontiers***, **["Today's Iranian Revolution: How the Mullahs Are Leading the Nation to Jesus."](#)** We're sharing this so you may be encouraged by the fruit of what *one man* in Christ can accomplish when he's burdened for the souls of others. For the time being, most of those who are applying the Hebraic foundations to their lives are isolated and scattered. But, as you

will learn from the article, ALL of us who would be true to our God must have a heart like that of Haik Hovsepien.

In the late 1960s Haik received a call from God to go as a missionary to the northern province of Mazandaran in Iran with the specific purpose of starting a work among Muslims. That was no easy call! Yet many years later, as oppression has fallen upon the Iranian people by the Mullahs, thousands are now turning to Jesus. Haik's seemingly small work paved the way for those who are now following Jesus with all their heart. It's crucial as we live according to the Hebraic foundations of the earliest followers of Jesus that we heed Zechariah's words, ***"Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice..."*** (4:10). It's time that each of us, in some small way, be burdened with our Father's burden — the salvation of others. This is our privilege and duty to Him: to leave behind always looking for the blessings of His hand to benefit our lives here on earth. Rather, let's purpose to grow in spiritual maturity and begin to fulfill His purpose for us as Kingdom servants.

**Keep at the forefront of your motives this glorious focus:**

Through His death and resurrection, our Lord Jesus opened the gates of heaven — the gates to eternal life with Him and our Father! He made it possible to live in His Presence forever! Based on this wonderful truth Paul could write with assurance, ***"After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words"*** (1 Thessalonians 4:17,18). This is where our true encouragement must lie. Each of us needs to look beyond our grateful delight in the things our Lord does for us each day. Purpose to focus on eternity *with Him*, and to be burdened for everyone else to whom we can reveal the Good News of Jesus.

Your pilgrimage to your salvation goes far beyond your own concern with where you end up for eternity. Your journey is enmeshed with our Father's heart for where *others* end up forever — heaven or hell. Haik Hovsepien's burden for the souls of others paved the way for the thousands who are right now becoming followers of Jesus in Iran. You need to be that one person today who aches with our Father's burden for those you can reach in your own relational sphere.

Yes, you can! Cry out to Jesus until His cross becomes yours (see Mark 8:34-38). Oppression on an order never before seen in this nation is coming in the near future. It's then that your investment in the lives of others as Jesus' representative will produce the fruitful harvest we see in China and Iran today. It's time for you to rise up with His loving power and do your part in expanding the Kingdom of our God!!!

***"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16)***

As our Lord's people, we're called to continually live repentantly and righteously so that we may see His spiritual power released in response to our prayers. Cling to that great Biblical promise that our God will act on behalf of the righteous! We don't need to wage political warfare to fight against President Obama and his stance on abortion or

homosexuality. This President doesn't need the Christian Coalition battling him, for as the attached article shows: Every time Christianity becomes *political*, it is devastating for all. The *political connection of Christianity* in fact hinders the salvation of many.

Instead, President Obama needs the *fervent prayers of righteous people* so that the world can see the power of our Lord to change his heart. ***"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases"*** (Proverbs 21:1). Tolerance of sin is never an option for a follower of Jesus. Repentance which yields to our Lord answering the prayers of the righteous is our only effectual recourse. If persecution accompanies fervent prayer and love-impelled obedience, then let it be so. But don't let us lose focus on what we have — eternity with our Lord forever.

*Mike & Sue*

Jesus first,  
Others second,  
You last.