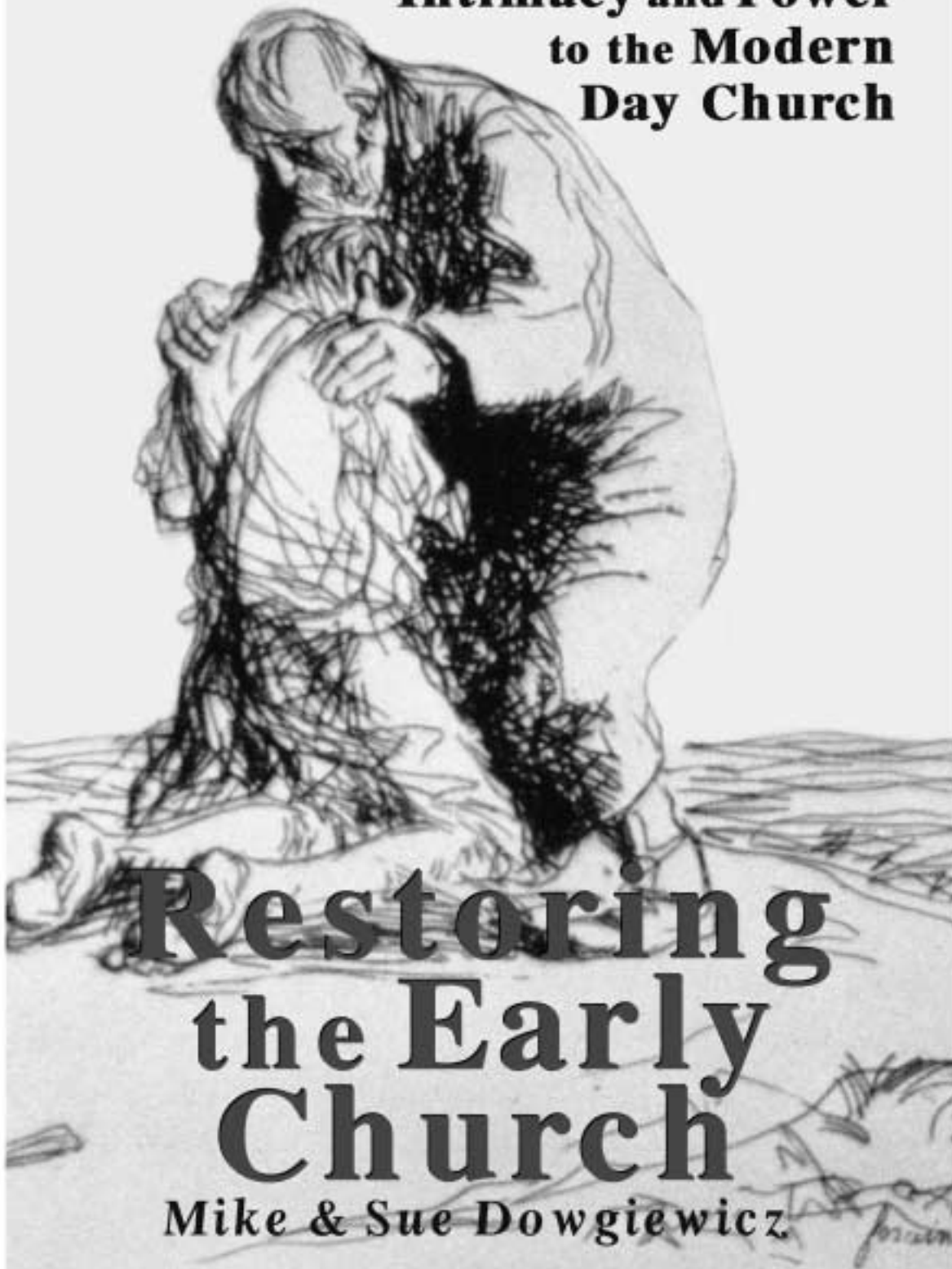


**Returning
Intimacy and Power
to the Modern
Day Church**



**Restoring
the Early
Church**

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

SECTION TWO

THE TRANSITION FROM OUR HEBRAIC ORIGINS

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

What a magnificent beginning for the newly-birthed Church! Having witnessed the ascension of the Lord into the heavens, the apostles and a hundred-plus others had anxiously awaited the promised Holy Spirit to clothe them with spiritual power. With that anointing Peter preached the first sermon to the God-fearing Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, and three thousand were added to their number that day. As they continued to meet in the temple courts and in one another’s homes, the Lord responded by increasing their number still further.

The Good News could not be contained. As the Jewish believers shared their excitement, the message of grace spread. But not until persecution assailed them did the flock scatter and the Gentile nations hear what had long been promised to those “not of Jesus’s flock” (see John 10:16). As this section will detail, however, the Hebraic roots which nurtured the fledgling Church were gradually discarded in favor of the more prevalent influence, Hellenistic (or Greek) philosophical thought. The simple organization of neighborhoods of believers ministering to those around them faded as man’s system of management and power overtook the various cultures into which the Gospel had spread. The most powerful system known at that time, the might of Rome, would ultimately become the standard of ecclesiastical organization for the centuries to follow.

Don’t be surprised that the Church was vulnerable to an evolution process that ripped her Hebraic roots out from under her. Even the Jews at the time of Christ had been confronted with exalting their traditions to a level regarded as more sacrosanct than God’s Word:

*Jesus] replied, ‘Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but **rules taught by men.**” You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the **traditions of men.**’ And*

*he said to them: 'You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe **your own traditions!**'(Mark 7:6-9, emphasis added).*

Today believers must ask themselves, "Did God plan for the Church to become syncretistic and adopt the pagan elements and practices that fill so many of its activities today? Was there a complete foundation for the Church laid by the New Testament writers who drew upon the Hebrew Bible and incorporated the teaching and practices of those who feared God?" Once you are able to detect the extent to which Greek thought and Roman organization have infiltrated the church to this present day, you can then prepare your heart to return to that which the first believers held so strongly: an intimate and obedient relational walk with their Lord; strong, devoted marriages with families trained in their homes to treasure their God; load-bearing, relational fellowships of believers walking out their faith in ministry to one another and to a needy world; Spirit-empowered church-planters linked devotionally to senders; and newly established pockets of believers becoming equipped to reproduce themselves through God's power.

Chapter Five

THE LOSS OF OUR HEBRAIC ROOTS

Christianity's Response to the Jews

“If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you” (Romans 11:17,18).

At this point you may be asking yourself, “How was the Hebraic influence lost?” The following three chapters review the dissolution of our Jewish roots after the time of Christ as inroads were established by Greek philosophy and Roman organization. (Others have written more extensively concerning these areas. To study this topic in depth, please refer to the bibliography.)

“From the biblical period to the present day one would be hard-pressed to find a single century in which the Church has not in some significant way contributed to the anguish of the Jewish people.”¹ Although the term “anti-Semitism” did not come into use until 1879 (it was coined by a German political agitator), it soon became associated with hatred of all things Jewish. The Jewish community worldwide cannot forget the atrocities perpetrated against them by the Christian church in the name of Christ. To the disgrace of humanity, expression of Jew hatred continues, from subtle degrading comments to gross violence. For instance, the prosperity that new freedom was supposed to bring to the people of the former Soviet Union has failed to materialize. Out of their poverty and misery, the people are again seeking a scapegoat. As reported in an article entitled “Jews Need Divine Help As Anti-Semitism Rises”, Jews in the former USSR are suffering “harassment, physical violence, vandalism and desecration of their synagogues and cemeteries. As many as one hundred and thirty-seven publications blame Jews for all of Russia’s ills.”²

The influence of our Jewish roots seems to have disappeared early in the history of the church. Why has no serious attempt been made to reestablish our Hebraic heritage before now? Many factors have affected this. A large and influential segment of the church has clung to a *supersessionist* attitude: the Body of Christ has become the “new Israel,” *replacing the Jews* as the chosen people of God. Next, there is potential embarrassment to the church establishment if the vitriolic anti-Semitism of some of the early Church Fathers is revealed. These men have been held in such reverence by Christianity that disputing even one point of their teachings could brand someone a

heretic. Other points of their teachings might then come into question. Since the New Testament model of the Church was lost in the early centuries after Christ's ascension, many of today's church practices came about as a result of the writings of the "Church Fathers". Many of these men had been influenced by Greek philosophy; some of their writings were also virulently anti-Semitic.

***"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies,
you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea
flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out,
and let those in the country not enter the city"*** (Luke 21:20,21).

Fear and intimidation characterized the means by which the Romans ruled their subjects. The penalty for rebellion was death, often by crucifixion. The Sanhedrin, or Jewish ruling party, feared that Jesus would "rock the boat" of their orderly little world, a fear that was indeed justified. Far better, as Caiaphas had said, that one man die for the people than the whole nation perish.³ The Romans would not hesitate to wipe out the entire Jewish population of Jerusalem if they caused too much trouble. If this "Messiah" led enough followers into believing that they would be freed from Roman oppression by his kingship, then all the Jews would suffer the consequences.

This was serious. Not only were there three million Jews living inside Palestine at that time, there were also four million others scattered around the Roman-dominated world. All, in a sense, were vulnerable to retribution by their military oppressors. The non-Messianic Jews, those who did not proclaim Jesus as the Anointed One of God, were divided into two camps: the spiritual Jews, who believed that if they prayed, fasted, and performed good works, God would intervene on their behalf; and the Zealots (called *Sicarii*, or "daggermen"), who relied on insurrection against the Roman occupation to bring about freedom.

Within four decades after the ascension of Jesus, Rome's contempt for the Jews turned to violence when the Jews of Jerusalem displayed open hostility against their authority. Florus, the Roman procurator, had stolen large sums of silver from the Temple. The Jews responded with bold anger. Eleazar the priest put an end to the daily sacrifice for the emperor's health. The Zealots overran the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, driving out the soldiers. The First Jewish Revolt against Rome had begun. The Zealots, however, could not hold out for long against the military power of Rome. With the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Temple—the heart of Judaism for worship of God and atonement by animal sacrifice—was destroyed, fulfilling Jesus's words, *"I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down"* (Matthew 24:2). An estimated 100,000 Jews had died by sword or famine, or had been enslaved.

The brewing unrest of the Zealots did not go unnoticed by the Jewish Christian community. Perhaps remembering Jesus's words recorded for us in Matthew 24:16, *"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains,"* followers of Jesus headed for safety in Pella in the Perea region, about 60 miles northeast of Jerusalem. The Zealots and other Jews who had opted to stay and fight the Romans in Jerusalem perceived as traitorous those who had fled, widening the division between the two groups. This flight marked a turning point in the relationship between Judaism and the Church. Up until the

destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the Jewish Christians had been regarded as a sect within Judaism. Only after the First Jewish Revolt did the Church gradually become recognized as an entity separate from the Jewish religion.

The loss of their Temple, however, did not minimize the worship of the Hebraic Christians. Their forbears in exile had experienced the *home* as the small sanctuary spoken of in Ezekiel 11:16: *“Therefore say, ‘Thus saith the Lord God: Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a **little sanctuary** in the countries where they have come”* (KJV, emphasis added). In the privacy of their homes Jewish believers could thus pray, study, and await the time when the Temple would be rebuilt and the Messiah would return to reign over His people.

“They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

The advent of a “second messiah” in AD 132 deepened the division between the Jewish believers and the Jews. Simon “Bar Kochba”, a Jew, believed that he had been raised up to crush the Roman armies. He was backed by the formidable Rabbi Akiva, who had traveled all over Palestine reawakening a love for Judaism. Through Akiva’s renown and the “brains and sword” of Bar Kochba, thousands of Jews were caught up in the revolution that they hoped would establish God’s kingdom on earth.⁴ This Second Revolt, however, ended in disaster for the Jewish people. A half million were slaughtered by the Roman military machine; the Holy City was leveled. Jews were no longer permitted into what was left of Jerusalem. And the “second messiah”, the one in whom the Jews had put their hope, died a failure.

The Jewish believers who had returned from Pella or who had remained behind during the First Revolt again refused to fight. They had but one Messiah, Jesus. Allegiance to another so-called messiah would mean renunciation of the One they worshiped. Jesus had warned them, *“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it”* (Matthew 24:23). In their choice of Bar Kochba over Jesus, the Jews had openly declared their rejection of the Messiah from Nazareth. The split was complete.

Tremendous stress was placed upon Jews and Christians alike in the aftermath of the Bar Kochba revolt. Roman edicts were enacted forbidding observance of Jewish laws or teaching. The scattered believers had to be circumspect about their Jewish roots if they wished to survive. Although the Roman policies relaxed during the mid-second century and Jews were allowed to open schools and make pilgrimages to the destroyed Temple site in Jerusalem, many of their holy books had been burned. The people themselves had been widely dispersed. In order to maintain continuity with their faith, they taught and worshiped in their homes, following the Jewish calendar that had been established by the rabbis. Significantly, they maintained Hebrew as their holy language to communicate with God.⁵

**“So then, God has granted even the Gentiles
repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).**

The influx of Gentiles and the refusal of Christians to participate in the two Jewish Revolts played decisive roles in de-Judaizing the Church. Paul had told the Gentiles that they could not become Jews by circumcision of the flesh nor were they required to.⁶ As the early Church Fathers began to propagate doctrines against the Jews, the Hebraic connection was lost. Note fourth century bishop John Chrysostom: “The synagogue is worse than a brothel...it is the den of scoundrels and the repair of wild beasts...[It is] a place of meeting for the assassins of Christ...a den of thieves...a house of ill fame; a dwelling of iniquity, the refuge of devils, a gulf and abyss of perdition.”⁷ The violent hatred against the Jews expressed in the Crusades, the Inquisition, and even in the Nazi Holocaust did not grow out of a vacuum. The roots of anti-Judaism sprang from a deep-seated repudiation of the Hebraic origins of Christianity.

With the loss of the Temple, Judaism itself changed. *Rabbinic Judaism* sprang up, replacing prophetic revelation of Scriptures with interpretation based on reason.⁸ As for the Church, following the death of the apostles a mostly Gentile leadership arose, particularly in the influential cities of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Since much of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) had been available since the third century BC, Greek-speaking Gentile believers abounded, far outnumbering the Hebrew-speaking Jews of the mid-second century.

For a period following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, His disciples continued to meet daily in the Temple courts.⁹ Since they conformed to the law of Moses and continued to circumcise their sons, followers of Jesus were accepted as another sect of Judaism. This wasn't unusual. Jesus Himself had interpreted Mosaic Law to meet the needs of man's spirit and the demands of daily life. His frame of reference for the Torah pointed to God's relationship with man. The Law, while impossible to keep by man's own strength, nevertheless was *good*. It delineated the way of life that was pleasing to God. Obedience to the Law brought prosperity: “*So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good*” (Romans 7:12). The Law was incapable, however, of justifying a person before God.

Jewish believers observed the Sabbath as God's gift to man for replenishment and rest. Even Easter was celebrated during the Passover. These were Jews following their Jewish Lord. After the two revolts, however, observance of the Sabbath shifted away from the centuries-old Jewish tradition of Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. Since Sunday had generally been recognized as the day of the Lord's resurrection, coming together to celebrate and worship on this day (or more likely, on this evening) was not met with resistance, especially since by mid-second century, the church was mostly non-Jewish. To the Jews, however, this change of the Sabbath day constituted a violation of the very Law of God, further widening the schism between the two faiths.

Fewer than thirty years after the second revolt, further division emerged in the form of what we today would call “replacement theology”: The church took upon itself the blessings that God had given to His people Israel, and relegated to the Jewish people the curses of the Old Testament. This development was not entirely unexpected. The

Greek allegorizers had considered a literal interpretation of the Bible to be vulgar and earthy, too coarse for their “spiritualized” approach to religion. Therefore, the search for “hidden, deeper meanings” could harmonize Scripture with Greek philosophy and conveniently exclude any covenantal promises made to the Jewish people.

Further propagating Jewish exclusion was the writing of Church Father Justin Martyr, an eager student of philosophy who had pursued the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek Stoics. Around AD 160 he produced *Dialogue With Trypho, A Jew*, focused on refuting Jews who objected to the Sonship of Christ. The destruction that had been heaped on the Jews, noted Justin, was deserved, for “*Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him*” (Acts 7:52). Justin’s condemning treatise confirmed in Gentile hearts that God was through with the Jew, that His promises to Israel were, in fact, to the Christians. It was then not a far step for the spiritual de-Judaizing of the church to take a more ominous turn. The Jews who had clung tenaciously to the faith of their fathers found themselves the objects of discrimination, rejection, and ultimately, violence.

In the third century, Church Father Origen wrote, “And these calamities the Jews have suffered, because they were a most wicked nation, which, although guilty of many other sins, yet has been punished so severely for none, as for those that were committed against our Jesus.”¹⁰ The collective guilt of the Jews thereby justified the vitriolics poured upon them by fourth century church leadership. Not only were the Jews of Jesus’s time held responsible for His sufferings, but all subsequent generations of Jews would be considered criminal.

For Christians the edict of Roman Emperor Constantine in AD 313 proclaimed toleration, freedom of worship, and even a return of property that had been confiscated from them. This was excellent news for believers who had held to their faith during earlier times of intense persecution. Unfortunately, this edict did not benefit the Jews. They were compelled to accept baptism into Christianity or be forced out of their homes. Jerusalem, the Holy City, was once more forbidden to them. Their homeland of Palestine had become “Christian”; they had become aliens in the land promised by God to their father Abraham.

Succeeding centuries found no improvement in the lot of Jews, particularly in Europe. There the policy remained: Convert and be baptized, or be expelled or killed. Needless to say, numbers converted, although some “relapsed” when it seemed that pressure was off. However, of the three million Jews who had occupied the European theater in 70 AD, only a half million remained by the dawn of the seventh century.¹¹

By the end of the twelfth century, many heresies had entered the church. Convening the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Pope Innocent III reinstated all the dreaded anti-Semitic laws that the Christianized Roman Empire had formulated almost a millennium earlier. Jews were ordered to separate from Christians; they could no longer even live near one another. Jewish holy books were torched. Rabbinical schools were closed, again reinforcing the Jewish home as the center for learning and religious instruction. All Jews were required to wear a badge of distinction, a yellow circle. (This would be the precursor of the yellow Star of David to be worn by all Jews under the Nazi tyranny.)

The Council intended that this repression of the Jews would serve as a warning to errant Christians who were straying from the Catholic fold. It would also be seen retroactively by the Jews as a foreshadow of the ghettos to come.

Expulsion of the Jews in Europe: The Hidden Tragedy

For many years Jews had populated the worlds of finance and trade. The Western church, bowing to Hellenistic dualism, had long considered with disdain anything to do with filthy lucre. Many Jews who had been forced from agricultural enterprises due to confiscation of their lands became adept financiers. As moneylenders and trade intermediaries between Moslems and Christians, they grew exceedingly prosperous. With so much untapped treasure for their coffers, Gentile noblemen and civil authorities all over Europe came up with the same idea: Expel the Jews. The noblemen could confiscate the Jewish land and at the same time cancel out their debts to the evicted moneylenders.

These expulsions did not occur simultaneously; a sampling of dates and their locations will give an idea of how universal the situation was. To the Jew it became increasingly a matter of, "Where can I go?" Official government policy twice expelled the Jews from France, in 1306 and 1394; from Hungary between 1349 and 1360; from Austria, Lithuania, Spain, and Portugal in the fifteenth century; and from numerous localities in Germany between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Jews were also forced to leave Russia during the three hundred years between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed, where could the Jew safely rest his head?

To understand why "Christian" people would not only tolerate these expulsions but even encourage them, you must understand an unfortunate aftermath of the aforementioned Fourth Lateran Council. It was at this thirteenth century gathering that the doctrine of transubstantiation became church dogma. This doctrine affirmed that the elements of communion were miraculously transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ by the priest at the Catholic Mass. To a superstitious and fearful populace already suspicious of the perceived focus of Jews on blood sacrifices, it took no stretch of imagination to accuse Jews of kidnapping and torturing sacramental wafers to blaspheme Christ.

The year 1298 found 100,000 Austrian and German Jews obliterated. The cause? A Communion wafer that had turned red was discovered. The Jews were accused of pounding the "body of Christ" until it bled. (Centuries later, it would be discovered that a certain bacterial growth caused the whitish wafers to turn red when exposed to damp cellar conditions.) Hysteria reigned.

In thirteenth century rural England, a young boy was discovered missing. Three weeks later his body was found in a cesspool into which he had apparently tripped and drowned. Local peasants, however, were convinced that the Jews had crucified him, and even had the "confession" of a tortured Jew to prove it. Nineteen Jews were hanged without a trial. Ritual murder accusations became recurrent, not only in England but throughout Europe. Ultimately, Jews would become scapegoats not only for ritual murders, but also for well poisonings and the virulent bubonic plague that would wipe out a third of Europe's population.

By the fourteenth century, superstition mixed with fear resulted in the accusation of “blood libel” against the Jews. The Jews, a people forbidden by the Torah to consume blood of any kind (Leviticus 3:17, *“This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: ‘You must not eat any fat or any blood’”*), were accused of blaspheming Christ by mixing Christian blood into their Passover celebration elements. Jews were sentenced to death without any proof beyond an accusation.

Playing on this underlying fear, in the 1930’s the Nazi newspaper *“Der Stuermer”* vividly portrayed rabbis as villainous bloodsuckers preying on hapless German children. Even as recently as twenty years ago, Saudi Arabian newspapers carried repeated charges by King Faisal that Jews celebrating Passover consume Gentile blood¹², words sure to inflame the volatile Arab hatred for their Jewish neighbors.

Thus, by the end of the fifteenth century, Jews had been expelled from much of western Europe, except for pockets in Italy and Germany where political disunity had prevented a unified attack against them. Despite their exile, Jews continued to be vilified in literature. Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* both portrayed Jews as bloodthirsty villains. Jewish blood, however, was about to be spilled in ways unimaginable.

Spanish Inquisition (1481-1808)

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1,2).

Contrary to common misconception, the Inquisition was not focused solely on the Jewish people. Protestants were persecuted for refusing to adhere to Roman Catholic doctrine. Jews were apprehended for worshiping a foreign god. Even some Catholics were arrested and stripped of their land and possessions if they failed to satisfy the all-powerful Inquisitors. Anyone who failed to confess Christ as He was presented by the Roman Catholic church was branded a heretic and was scrutinized and interrogated. How could the church fall into such evil misrepresentation of the doctrines of Christ? Only true Christian believers could be accepted into Christ’s eternal presence, the priestly hierarchy reasoned. Far better that they suffer for a little while here on earth in the hope of causing their spirits to see the Truth than lose their souls for eternity.

Recognizing, however, that confessions gained under duress might be suspect, the Inquisition priests developed categories of punishment for those who might not be utterly sincere. Individuals who confessed to being “secret Jews” were allowed the privilege of strangulation prior to burning at the stake. Those who refused to accede to the accusations, or who even boldly held fast to their Jewish identity, were repeatedly tortured in order that they might be “convinced” of the truth of Christianity. If, after all that, they still refused to convert, the “heretics” were publicly burned in a ceremony well-attended by the “faithful.”

Attacking dead heretics with equal zeal, the Inquisitors exhumed the bones of suspected “secret Jews” and burned them as well. It is little wonder that few Jews “went pub-

lic” with their faith. In Spain, however, there were enough who practiced Judaism in secret that a term was coined for them: *Marranos*, meaning “swine.” They kept their identities well-hidden from all but the most trusted of family and associates. Many Marranos, in fact, were able as “outward” Christians to rise to power in public office and even marry into aristocracy. They, too, finally came under the wrath of the Inquisition. The danger and the pressure to convert became overwhelming. It is estimated that 30,000 Marranos were burned at the stake. Most finally escaped Spain for the borders of more tolerant nations such as the Netherlands, North Africa, and England. The toll on the Jewish and the Christian communities during the three and a half centuries of the Inquisition was great: 400,000 faced trial. Not until 1834 would the Inquisition finally be abolished throughout Europe.

One point pertaining to Martin Luther (1483-1546) must be mentioned. The great reformer represents an extreme example of one who, having once loved Jews, turned into a Jew-hater. During the early years following his break with the Roman papacy, Luther determined to accomplish what the Catholic church had failed to do: Draw large numbers of Jews to the faith. Relying on the impact of the printed word, in 1523 he penned a pamphlet, *“That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew”*. Faulting the church and the shameless lives of its leadership for alienating the Jewish people, Luther argued passionately for the right of Jews to compete in the marketplace. (Up until this time, they had been relegated to the position of moneylenders.)

After years of growing frustration and anger at his failure to convert the Jews, Luther’s response was not unlike the attitude of the third and fourth century Church Fathers in their Jew excoriation. Alerting Christians to be on their guard, Luther warned, “Verily a hopeless, wicked, venomous and devilish thing is the existence of these Jews, who for fourteen hundred years have been, and still are, our pest, torment, and misfortune. They are just devils, and nothing more.”¹³

Luther’s fury against the recalcitrant Jewish people found expression in a tract entitled *“Concerning Jews and Their Lies”* (1543). Labeling the Jews as “venomous” and “disgusting vermin,” he recommended that the following steps be taken against them: Their synagogues should be set on fire; their homes should be destroyed; all Jewish holy books should be confiscated; rabbis must not teach, under threat of death; passport and travel privileges should be revoked; Jews should be forbidden to charge interest on loans; young Jewish men and women should be forced into hard manual labor.¹⁴

Unfortunately for the Jews, these anti-Semitic writings became well known not only throughout Germany but wherever Luther was revered. Four hundred years later, the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 9-10, 1938 that resulted in the death and destruction of hundreds of Jews and their property, was deemed a fitting birthday remembrance for Martin Luther. Is it any wonder that at the 1946 Nuremberg Trials, virulently anti-Semitic news publisher Julius Streicher used the following defense: “He had said nothing worse against the Jews than had been pronounced some four hundred years earlier by Martin Luther.”¹⁵

Ghettos and Pogroms

The dank, overcrowded urban spaces that we refer to as ghettos originated in sixteenth century Italy. The Reformation that had brought freedom of faith to many believers escaping the excesses of Roman Catholicism witnessed the initiation of yet another reprisal against the Jews. The Italian Counter-Reformation reinstated the oppressive, anti-Semitic medieval laws. These mandates resulted in an onslaught of persecution and death that would last until the eighteenth century. In Eastern Europe entire Jewish villages were massacred in a single day. Vehement in his hatred against the Jews, Pope Paul IV instituted legislation that would segregate Jews into arenas under papal control, ghettos. He reasoned that since God had condemned the Jews for the sin of crucifying Christ, the church must respond in an equally unloving manner. The ghetto idea spread quickly throughout Europe, surviving until the late 1800's.

In a sense, however, the ghettos worked to preserve the purity of the Jewish faith as well as to provide a modicum of self-protection. Jews had long been accustomed to separation from the Gentile world. It was during this period of relegation to the ghetto that Hasidic, or ultra-orthodox, Judaism developed. Permeated by joyful worship and hopeful expectancy, this sect eagerly awaited the Redeemer Who would bring peace and joy to all the world. This was not to be, however, even in the centuries to come. Just as Hitler had gained credence for his anti-Semitism through Luther's writings, so would the Nazis find their basis in the ghetto for confining the Jews to concentration camps.

The ghetto idea was carried to extremes in nineteenth century Russia, where the Jewish people were confined by the "Christian" monarchy to an area of wilderness known as the Jewish Pale. This in itself did not cause the extreme anguish that another imperial edict brought about: Jewish boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen were ordered to serve in the military. This was bad enough; however, the Orthodox church saw this conscription as the means of rooting out the faith of Abraham. The captive audience of children was exposed to ruthless torture to force them into conversion to Christianity. To the families back home, there was no suffering more intense than losing their children to the faith of the enemy.

In order to understand the fear and hatred of Christians against Jews during the nineteenth century, you need to consider the astonishing impact of industrialization and international trade. Jews had been involved in merchandising for generations, and had risen rapidly in the arena of economic opportunity. The old European aristocracy represented an outmoded way of life; their influence was dying. The poor, replaced by mechanized labor, resented the prosperity of the Jews. As European stock markets faltered, blame was heaped onto the financiers, the Jews. Anti-Semitic Protestants and Catholics alike agitated public sentiment against them. The stage was set for a new German doctrine: Aryan racial superiority.

Fearing an international conspiracy, Russian forces slew Jews by the thousands. *Pogroms*, violent waves of attacks against the Jews, swept forward throughout Russia between 1881 and 1920. A forged document, "*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*," supposedly written by a non-existent International Jewish Congress, detailed plans for the destruction of Christian organizations and a Jewish world takeover.

Published worldwide, this counterfeit document inflamed suspicion and hatred toward the Jewish people. As pogroms, persecutions, and famines increased, especially among the Jews of Eastern Europe and Russia, hope of freedom in the “New World” shone as their only chance for life. Waves of Jews poured into the Americas, particularly to the trade center of New York. Two million Russian Jews would find refuge in the United States.

Not only Russian Jews were eager to escape their homelands. In 1884, a Jewish officer in the French army, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely convicted of treason based on spurious evidence. An uprising of the French populace against the Jews ensued. Other European nations became incited by an official Jesuit publication, “*Civiltà Cattolica*”, which promoted anti-Semitism and encouraged exclusion of Jews from all of Europe. The Vatican concurred with this opinion.

In the US and South America, Catholics condemned both this article and the false imprisonment of Dreyfus. The French president, the military, and the judicial bureaucracies, however, refused to budge. Despite massive evidence of Dreyfus’s innocence, they would not reverse their decision. French mobs ransacked Jewish shops. Algerians, allies of the French, followed suit, joined by Arabs. Finally, in 1906, with world opinion ringing against them, the French court declared Alfred Dreyfus innocent. But the damage to world Jewry had been done.

The brew of Russian pogroms, western migrations, and the international notoriety of the Dreyfus case fanned into life an idea that had been awaiting birth for two thousand years: Zionism. A homeland for the Jews. Reclamation of the Land promised by God to Abraham. Those unable to find passage to the New World could seek their dream in Palestine. This was a land of primitive farm collectives (*kibbutzim*) and of overpopulated city spaces. But it was the land of their fathers and in they flocked.

The 1917 British signing of the Balfour Declaration brought new life to hopes of a permanent Jewish homeland. This decree supported the establishment of a home in Palestine for the Jews. By this time, 55,000 Jews had made their way there. (By the eve of World War II, that figure would swell to 450,000.) Although penniless, lacking medicine and often food, nevertheless they were home. Their joy was squelched, however, by the issuance of the 1922 White Paper. Caving in to Arab opposition, the British severely limited Jewish immigration to their ancient land and laid plans for an independent Palestine to be ruled by an Arab majority.

Meanwhile, in Europe the rise of Nazism and the ideology of Aryan superiority were beginning to advance. These ideas did not spring suddenly upon the people, though. The populace became gradually desensitized to the plight of the Jew in a carefully planned and enacted three-stage thrust. The first stage found the Jews being mocked as they had been through history: tormented by youths, humiliated by placards, occasionally subjected to violence. Thus inured to the Jews as individuals, the Germans were ripe for the next stage: suppression of categories of non-Aryans. Since German reason accepted the “truth” of Aryan superiority, the subsequent reality of the next stage, death and incineration, became a blur of ethical indifference.

And where was the church during this demonic dynasty of destruction? Beyond some vocal protests and quiet humanitarian efforts of individuals, there was. . .silence. The papacy, careful not to offend the German might, refrained from issuing moral responses. The Protestant churches, for the most part, turned their eyes the other way. Six million Jews and several million Gentiles would encounter death in gas chambers, slave labor camps, and factories.

Chapter Six

GREEK PHILOSOPHY IN THE CHURCH

How Did Plato Displace God?

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

We in the United States may speak English, but we think “Greek.” Competition, “personal best,” mind over matter, rationalism and reasoning rather than a trusting faith, the “higher ground” of the spiritual—these ideas came from the Greek/Hellenistic civilization. This influence has permeated western culture for so long that it is like our breath: because of our lifelong familiarity with it, we don’t smell it. The Bible, however, was written to reflect Hebraic thought. Loss of the Hebraic understanding of the Scriptures has significantly diminished our ability to understand God and relate to Him.

The basis for humanism, which is increasingly influencing the church today, is found in the Greek philosophical spirit. The common thread for both belief systems requires man, not God, to be the measure of all things. Greek philosophy and humanism place man as the ultimate evaluator of everything. The outgrowth of this view is that there are no God-given standards. Everything changes and evolves. Ethics and morality are based upon the whims of man, not on the holy will of God.

Western societies have been inundated by the philosophies and culture of the ancient Greeks, particularly by that of Plato. The Greek influence has severely limited the scope of believers with respect to God as revealed in His Word and has diminished our capacity to apply biblical truths to our vital relationships: God, marriage, family, friendships.

As the ranks of the early Church swelled in number, the impact of its Hebraic roots shriveled. Believers became increasingly vulnerable to a wide array of destructive influences and philosophies. Roman military might had brought with it an admirable road system and a relatively speedy communications network. The Gospel message that had permeated Jerusalem could easily and safely flow outward to the Gentile nations of the world. Unfortunately, the purity and power of that message were altered by the dominant cultural influence of the time, Greek philosophy. The early centuries following the two Jewish revolts of AD 70 and AD 135 saw a Greek, man-centered worldview begin to reshape the church. Let’s examine how the various aspects of Greek religious thought came about and how they have affected the church.

Many centuries before Christ's advent, the Greeks had been known for their wide array of mythological deities who seemed beset by the same personality quirks and behavioral foibles as mankind. Followers of these gods feared their superhuman capabilities and presented offerings and worship to avoid personal calamity and retribution. By the seventh century BC, philosopher-mathematician Thales tried to dissuade the educated populace from such fables. Guided by the natural senses and by reason, Thales argued, all of nature could be understood through scientific observation and measurement. Nature was the life source of energy that controlled all of earth's activities. Nature alone was responsible for what could be experienced and examined. Supernatural deities had nothing to do with it. (The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century followed the same line of reasoning. Scholars at that time denied any divine intervention into life. Rather, they elevated rationalism and science as man's guiding power. The Humanist Manifesto that so controls American education today reflects this ancient Thalian fallacy.)

The difficulty in Thales's approach was this: If reason were the determinant for truth, *whose* reason was to be followed? The philosophical chaos that ensued led to the Sophist rationale of the fifth century BC. Since the Greeks had no sacred texts from which to derive absolute standards, truth was therefore relative. Thus, maintained the Sophists, people should seek to be all they could be in the here and now. (Isn't this the goal of contemporary culture in the United States?) Knowledge was beneficial only insofar as it benefited the individual, *i.e.*, "What will I get out of this?"

Needless to say, the civic authorities were not thrilled with this thinking. What would happen to the collective society if everyone did his own thing? Out of this argument emerged Socrates. There must be absolutes of good, of justice, of virtue, he insisted. Once the mind is trained to seek these standards, then man can, through rationalization, develop his own reasons and means to attain these ideals. (Keep in mind the foundation for this reasoning, that man is basically good. The Bible teaches that man, with his sin nature, is bent on evil when left to his own devices.)¹

Socrates's disciple Plato recognized the limitations of each man's ability to discern what goodness and justice really were. Turning instead to the concept of *dualism*, he postulated that life was divided into two components, the transcendent arena of eternal truths and the temporal realm of the physical.² The former was an ideal, higher than could be realistically achieved, but a worthy goal to aim for. The earthly concerns of the temporal, such as food, shelter, and vocation, were vulgar and common but unfortunately necessary for existence. This viewpoint was in juxtaposition to the Hebraic view of man created in God's image for relationship with Him both on earth and in eternity.³ God had called the physical body "good"; joined with the spirit, it defined "man". God placed such great value on His physical creation because it testified to His greatness: "*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse*" (Romans 1:20).

Plato's dualism entered the church through the writings of the Church Fathers, a number of whom were Greek philosophers who had converted to Christianity. They attempted through their writings to reconcile Platonic thought with Christianity. The dual-

ist concept brought about the myriad of church rituals wherein one had to sanctify, or make holy by prayer, that which God had already created and declared to be good. For instance, no longer could a group of believers simply share in the breaking of bread and passing of the wine cup as the early Church had enjoyed. Dualism viewed bread and wine as too “earthly” to be the body and blood of Jesus; the physical elements had to be spiritualized.

As noted earlier, at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 bread and wine were declared to become the body and blood of Christ through transubstantiation in order to represent the “sanctity” of God. Only the priests, those who had separated themselves from the world’s defilement, could carry out this consecration. Transubstantiation added to the host of sacramental controls that only the clergy could conduct on behalf of the congregants. The system of clergy control through sacraments would keep worshipers enslaved for centuries.

Hebraic people would never have considered what dualistically influenced Christians regularly do: Ask a blessing on their food, or “on the hands that made it.” If God has made what is to be eaten and has provided it for our benefit, it must be good! Hebraic prayer focused only on blessing God, the Creator and Provider of all our needs: *“Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine.”* He alone is worthy of thanksgiving and praise.

By relying unquestioningly on centuries of revisionist writings and by failing to appreciate the Scriptures, today’s Christian colleges and seminaries have remained gripped by the Greek influence. The result has perpetuated a Platonic philosophical approach to the Scriptures. Plato’s dualism can be seen in the seminarian pursuit of a “spiritual calling”. Seminaries infer or teach that those who choose to engage in a full-time ministry as an occupation are somehow more worthy than those in secular vocations.

Because of Plato’s influence, the Greek culture viewed manual labor as degrading. The Hebraic culture, conversely, recognized the worth of a manual trade, remembering that before the Fall, Adam and Eve had been given a vocation in the Garden.⁴ Even rabbis were expected to participate in a trade: Jesus was carpenter; Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla were tentmakers; noted Jewish teachers Hillel and Shammai were woodcutter and carpenter, respectively. Heed the Hebraic encouragement of A.W. Tozer in his classic, *The Pursuit of God*:

The ‘layman’ need never think of his humbler task as being inferior to that of his minister. Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called and his work will be as sacred as the work of the ministry. It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it. The motive is everything. Let a man sanctify the Lord God in his heart and he can thereafter do no common act. All he does is good and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For such a man, living itself will be sacramental and the whole world a sanctuary. His entire life will be a priestly ministration.⁵

Greek philosophical thought has impacted those seminary teachers who depend on Greek reasoning skills rather than on faith and divine revelation. Ed Silvano, one of the leaders of the current revival in Argentina, states in his videotape series, *“How To Reach*

Our Cities for Christ,” that the introduction of the G.I. Bill following World War II has significantly reduced the power of God in the church in the United States today. As seminaries scrambled for federal money, they introduced to their curricula Greek-inspired courses of study: psychology, sociology, and philosophy.⁶ Many seminaries have replaced God’s power with man’s wisdom, disregarding Paul’s warning to the Greek Corinthians: “Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks that he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight” (1 Corinthians 3:18,19).

Silvoso bemoans the problem many new believers encounter when they read about the miracles of God in the Bible and wonder why they don’t see them now. For instance, a young believer rushes into the church office: “Pastor! See what the disciples were doing in Jesus’s time? It says here that He gave us the power to do these things too!” “Just a minute,” patronizingly intones the pastor. “Let me explain a few things.” And by the time he explains the Scriptures, they don’t say anything like what they were written to say!⁷

The Greek reasoning in our seminaries has produced patented answers for why God has changed and isn’t in the business of doing miracles through His people any longer. Because of this incongruity, we in the churches often find ourselves in the confusing situation of trying to comprehend a Jewish Book taught by teachers who rely on Plato and other Greek philosophers—ideologies that nullify faith in the miraculous. The resultant pattern of teaching deals with biblical truth as *theoretical* and *conceptual* rather than as realistic and applicable.

**“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces.
You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.
‘Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!
You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and
when he becomes one, you make him twice as much
a son of hell as you are’” (Matthew 23:13,14).**

Church Fathers such as Origen, Justin, and Clement had been powerfully swayed by Hellenistic thought. Converts to Christianity, their combined influence fashioned a new theology based on the philosophy of Plato. Their emphasis on *pietism*, withdrawing from worldly concerns in order to focus on spiritual matters, was passed along for centuries within the church. Personal withdrawal contradicted community participation that exemplified the Hebraic outworking of faith.

Justin Martyr, mentioned earlier concerning his anti-Semitic writings, reflected a dualistic worldview of the body imprisoning the soul. This approach enjoyed wide appeal among second century Greeks. The great learning center of Alexandria, Egypt drew many, including Clement, who did not hesitate to draw upon unbiblical sources to formulate his own mix of Christian and Hellenistic thought.

Origen, Clement’s best-known pupil, was called “the father of Christian theology.” Origen had been enveloped by Hellenistic teaching that regarded the flesh as evil and

the spirit as good. Note a key Hellenistic tenet recorded by theologian Kenneth Scott Latourette: “The goal of every man’s striving must be salvation by the emancipation of the spirit from the contamination of the flesh.”⁸

As Origen studied the New Testament, he found that he could allegorize the Old Testament away from its historical, “earthy” perspective. The truths that God had revealed to His people Israel could instead become a *type* of the truths that would be shared in the New Testament with those not exposed to the Law. The promises made by God to Israel could then be transferred to the Church as Christ was “read” into each text. The biblical curses became the due legacy of the Jews. Such interpretation nullified God’s focus on the Jewish people as His precious and chosen people. Only that which could be carried forward into the “Christian” realm of New Testament thought would have validity. Eager theological students from all over flocked to Alexandria to be impregnated with these teachings, which they then propagated throughout the known world.

***“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will
abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits
and things taught by demons”*** (1 Timothy 4:1).

Because of God’s words at creation, “*It is good,*” the Hebraic people viewed the world as a desirable entity. Even though sin had come into the world, the universe had been created by a God who had humanity’s best interests at heart. The Hebraic people followed no dualistic dichotomy. Many of the extremes of self-denial and discipline that later entered the church were based upon the Greek polarity of the physical and the spiritual. Ascetics hoped that by vigorously subduing the flesh, they could free themselves from the evil they perceived in the physical realm and draw closer to spiritual perfection.

Paul rejected the ascetic attitude of his day: “*Do not handle, do not taste! Do not touch! These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence*” (Colossians 2:21-23). Nevertheless this attitude became deeply embedded in the history of the church. The observance of Lent became a period of denying oneself earthly pleasures in order to identify with the suffering of Christ. The love that had motivated Christ to sacrifice Himself for mankind was lost, however, on those who displayed great pietistic zeal outwardly but failed to demonstrate love for their neighbor.

How could believers so willingly stray from the truth as it had been presented in the Word? Initially, the majority of Christians opposed Origen’s teachings. The Alexandrian system of allegory that explained away the context and content of the Word arose out of the need to integrate Greek philosophy with the biblical text. These writings were venerated as highly as the Scriptures; therefore no pressure was exerted to stay true to the meaning intended by the scripture writers. As students from the Alexandria schools spread and established their own arenas of instruction, these interpretations gained ground steadily, ultimately achieving near-universal acceptance.

By the early fifth century the use of allegory had become engrained in ecclesiastical thought. This was due particularly because of the influence of Augustine. This late fourth century theologian also promulgated the idea that church authority superseded that of the Scriptures. Therefore the educated clergy class were endowed with even greater power over the common man. Christian doctrine was no longer spiritual wisdom imparted to each believer by the Holy Spirit through the apostolic founders of the Church. The increasing reliance on Greek thought removed the Holy Spirit from His true place as the Life within and the power for ministry.⁹

Biblical Christian faith and practice were meant to reflect the work of the Spirit in the inner man, not to propagate mere dogma to which intellectual assent was given. When the philosopher-theologians sought to make spiritual life intelligible to the natural mind through reason, they removed trusting faith as a scriptural mandate for the Christian life. For the church, power from on high was replaced by doctrine, a code to adhere to, an empty shell by which one could only hope to achieve salvation. How unfortunate for us all that Paul's words have gone largely unheeded: *"For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"* (1 Corinthians 1:19,20).

"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" (1 Corinthians 2:2-5).

When Greek oratorical skills replaced Judeo-Christian role modeling, the church lost the Hebraic approach to life's difficulties: *practical application of biblical truth*. Through the influence of John Chrysostom, a fourth century theologian from Antioch, oratory (and anti-Semitism) rose to new heights. Greek rhetoric, the structure and style of what is taught, became the main teaching pattern in the church. Today, modern seminary homiletics, hermeneutics, oratory—all the related fields that today's pulpits so depend on—find their origins not in the first century Church but in the Greek teaching tradition.

At the retreat center we frequently asked people what the previous Sunday's sermon was about. Almost no one could remember, as the message did not meet them in their needs and concerns. Our biblical predecessors presented truths that changed behavior and/or attitude to conform to God's will. At the seminary attended by the authors, a poster in the hallway showed a man with a funnel going into his head: All the religious courses taught at the seminary were being dumped in for cognitive recognition.

Most seminaries also teach future pastors that the ideal sermon contains an introduction, three memorable points, and a conclusion. Does this sound familiar? If so, ask yourself: "How much of what I hear, sermon after sermon, do I retain?" And more importantly, "How much of this type of teaching has impacted my life in such a way that I am more conformed to the character of Christ?"

During his first semester at seminary in 1978 at the age of 32, Mike had a class with a godly professor who had been teaching there for decades. As the semester progressed the

man took a fatherly interest in him. In their talks together he learned about Mike's past. Two things caught his attention, prompting him to ask Mike to do a special class project for him. Mike had been a Navy helicopter instructor pilot, training others to fly operational missions. Although this required a lot of teaching and briefing before each flight, still, the essence of teaching flying is *flying*: using the "see and do" method. (The early rabbis used this same concept of training, relying on personal example as they taught their students practical skills. Paul, in the mold of the rabbis, could say, "*I urge you to imitate me*" (1 Corinthians 4:16).) In addition, following his third deployment to Vietnam Mike had been an analysis officer at Naval Air Station Pt. Mugu, California, evaluating on an ongoing basis the air station's operational capabilities.

In his office that morning the professor asked, "Mike, would you do a project analyzing the fruit of this seminary? I have been here over thirty years, and I don't know if I have wasted my time." Mike accepted his request. Through the use of surveys and interviews he studied the nearby churches to which some of the seminary's pastoral graduates had gone to minister.

When he read the results of the research, that elderly gentleman sat in front of Mike and wept. None of the surveyed graduates had demonstrated a *vision* for what God desired for each congregation. They had merely maintained the status quo, concerned about the quality of their rhetorical preaching, their own security, and making sure nothing "rocked the boat." Mike was deeply touched by the hurt and the sense of failure he saw behind those tears. The professor stared at Mike 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 a Bible-based church should be doing?"

Most of the suggestions in Mike's paper regarding the biblical church called for more role modeling, mentoring, and facilitating in the body. He encouraged church leadership to provide time for discussion of truths taught during the service so that people might have a greater probability of applying the teachings to their lives. After the professor read the paper, he asked if he could give it to other faculty members. Unfamiliar with the sacred cows of academia, Mike assented. What he got himself into surfaced a short while later. As he sat in the cafeteria having a cup of coffee, a professor from the pastoral degree program came up to him. He bluntly asked, "Are you Dowgiewicz?" When Mike 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 to be repeated several times. One or two professors, though, asked if Mike could meet with them to help change their style of conducting classes. You see, for the most part, the classes had been taught in the Greek rhetorical style designed to convey content. Students were then tested on their ability to cognitively grasp the facts presented. No behavioral changes were ever called for to demonstrate application of the truth.

Please note: What was understood by the early rabbis and has been substantiated by educational research is that people tend to connect content with the context in which it has been learned. In other words, if you learn something in a formal structured environment such as a classroom or sanctuary, your likelihood of using that information in a different setting or context is close to zero. The *content* and the *methodology* by which it is learned are *inseparably linked*.

Most seminary instruction is presented in a formal classroom setting, often taught from behind a podium. This impersonal, non-participatory classroom context is the environment in which pastors have been trained to convey biblical truths. Others who have studied educational methods in depth would say that seminaries use the Greek academic model, i.e., *content/data to be tested*. What is needed today is the Hebraic synagogue/church model, *lifestyle training by example*. Many seminary-trained pastors have been taught to assume that the essence of biblical teaching is content conveyance. Conversely, the biblically Hebraic essence of teaching is personal training through discipleship, appropriating both the content and the method under the caring nurture of role models and mentors. Examine the spectrum of differences between the biblically Hebraic and the Greek philosophical approaches to instruction.

HEBRAIC

(Direct Experience
from Most to Least)

Direct Participation

Student learns by *doing*.
Responsible for the outcome of his practice.

Dramatized Experiences

Student directly involved through *participation*: role-play, discussion, skits, simulations.

Demonstrations

Student learns by *watching* someone show 'how to do it.' Observation rather than participation.

GREEK

(Increasingly
Indirect Experiences)

Audio-Visual Combination

Student learns through combination of *audio and visual* elements: TV, movies, explained exhibit.

Audio or Visual Presentation

Student learns by *seeing or hearing*: CD, radio, tape, internet; display or bulletin board.

Verbal Portrayal

Abstract learning through diagrams, reading a book, hearing a lecture or sermon.

Educational 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 sees and hears concurrently.

30% of what he sees.

10-20% of what he hears.

Mike's analysis paper confirmed that the seminary was using the most abstract approach, Verbal-Portrayal, to *teach at* pastoral candidates. In reality, however, a pastoral vocation requires concrete methods in order to disciple and train others. The results of Greek influence can be seen in the *program orientation* prevalent in the church today. Compare this with the *process orientation* of the Hebraic synagogue/early Church.

HEBRAIC

Active—appeals to the heart

Process Oriented

- Emphasizes direct participation
- Emphasizes age and wisdom
- Role modeling, mentoring, discipleship indispensable
- Leadership by personal example
- Character of leader essential
- Personal relationships essential

Biblical Application

- Doers of the Word
- Bible—reality that must be confronted
- Goal—to develop Christlikeness

Ministry Activity

- Small intimate groups
- Leader as a facilitator
- Cooperative, participatory planning
- Spiritual gifts shared
- Frequent scheduled and unscheduled gatherings

Fruit

- Love, acceptance, forgiveness
- Transparency encouraged
- Active participation
- "How you serve" vital
- Each believer trained to serve
- Produces mature believers

GREEK

Cognitive—appeals to the intellect

Program Oriented

- Heavy program emphasis
- Emphasizes education
- Relies on speaking skills, oratory, programmed materials, information conveyance
- Leader's personal life immaterial
- Personal relationships optional

Biblical Application

- Belief without cost to self
- Bible—data that must be taught
- Focus on rules—do's and don'ts
- Emphasizes distinct denominations

Ministry Activity

- Large impersonal groups
- Leader-directed and controlled
- Organizational roles important
- Acquisition of knowledge emphasized
- Reliance on scheduled gatherings

Fruit

- Mutual toleration
- Transparency discouraged
- Passivity and lethargy
- "What you know" vital
- Trained professionals utilized
- Produces spectators

It is evident from the Gospels that Jesus, Who was fully aware of man's need for visual images and living example, used the Hebraic form of teaching. Look closely at His use of parables, His role modeling, His informal style, His in-depth discussions with the disciples. Jesus understood the manner by which people learn. He was the model teacher for all who would follow Him. Fruit was developed in His disciples as they continued what He began. 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, emphasis added); "*A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be **like his teacher***" (Luke 6:40, emphasis added). Paul could likewise say, "*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; emphasis added).

The impersonal rhetoric-lecture style so common in congregations today compels you to be instructed by trained professionals who are removed from you interrelationally. You are not in a position to imitate your leaders' Christian walk because you probably don't spend much personal time with any of them. How then can you obey the biblical command to weigh the fruit of a man's life before you listen to his teaching: "*Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the **outcome of their life** and imitate their faith*" (Hebrews 13:7, emphasis added)? Jesus and the apostles were as much role models as they were teachers. God wants believers to evaluate people, especially their teachers, by their actions, not just by their talk. In other words, if you cannot imitate their faith, don't listen to their teachings.

Paul warns Timothy that in later times there will be teachers who are "*hypocritical liars*" (see 1 Timothy 4:2). Today's news certainly carries enough about the outcome of the lives of such hypocrites: "*And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve*" (2 Corinthians 11:14,15). Great responsibility comes with the role of teaching. More demands are placed on time and availability. The priority of maintaining an intimate dependency on God is tested to ensure that the counsel shared emanates from God's throne and not from man's potentially deceitful heart.

The Greek influence brought a heavy reliance on 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). Through Greek thought was developed the pattern of *opinions* and *theories* about profound ethical questions. As noted earlier, 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. Biblical Christian practices began to be considered on a theoretical basis, and *theories can be changed*. Christianity embarked on becoming a religion, adopting the practices of other religions with their tangible worship symbols and rational explanations.

By the third century the church, once founded on revealed truth, fitted neatly into the mold of human thought. Christian practice was no longer dependent upon a theocracy, a people led by 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 a dependency on the active presence of the Spirit of the living God. Man's "ability" to do God's work for Him took precedence. Conditions were ripe for the "visual replacements" that would come with Constantine in the fourth century. (This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter).

Note: A twentieth century example of the philosophical-rhetorical defense of the faith was the Scopes Monkey Trial (1925), in which the biblical truth of Creation was argued against the theory of evolution in a court of law. Greek rhetoric and human oration, not the Holy Spirit, were the means of determining "truth". The reality of Creation was bypassed.

***“Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all
your soul and with all your strength”*** (Deuteronomy 6:4,5).

Even as the church moved away from its Hebraic roots, the basic doctrines remained the same: God was the Creator of the universe, omnipotent and all-wise. Christ indwelt His body. But all of this was only in a *theoretical* sense. As a result of the dualistic influence of Plato (spirit is good, matter is evil), the divinity of Christ became overemphasized and His humanity understated. The stress on His divinity led to the church developing a view of the incarnate Jesus as distant and impersonal.

The Greek influence also exposed the church to a pantheon of gods depicted with personal human qualities. Thus church leadership developed an array of deceased “saints” who were “deified” and prayed to. These saints replaced Jesus as intermediary between God and man. The truth voiced by Jesus was spurned: *“No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). No longer were believers encouraged to trust in the Holy Spirit to intercede for them (see Romans 8:27). The manifestation of His gifts steadily diminished as emphasis on body life and mutual ministry disappeared. The church no longer experienced the limitless resources of Christ in their midst but restricted itself through human reasoning to the confines of man’s mind.

Since Greek thought portrayed the physical realm as evil, the human body represented a constant source of temptation and sin. Marriage, far from being the holy and honorable sacred bond of the Hebrew Bible—*“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord”* (Proverbs 18:22)—took on a negative essence. Church history demonstrates how Greek dualism contorted the biblical Jewish concept of marriage, God’s provision for intimate companionship. The ideal became the ascetic monk, whose vow of chastity illustrated the supreme denial of worldly desire. By focusing wholly on the spiritual realm, one could “draw near to God.” It became only logical that priests, who were the example of holiness to their flocks, should also imitate the celibate Christ. Thus they vowed to deny themselves the pleasures and responsibilities of family life.

The Hebraic people loved to experience life, and spirituality meant passionate involvement in service to God and humanity. All that God had created was designed to be enjoyed without shame or guilt within His boundaries. Greek thought, on the other hand, focused on a metaphysical misunderstanding of spiritual devotion and piety. Believers today often think of “being spiritual” as denying themselves some pleasure in life. Those who “contemplate” the awesomeness of God’s holiness are somehow regarded as more pious. Activities, occupations, and pleasures involved in the physical world are considered suspect, “blue collar,” less important. This is why clergy are often exalted over workers in other occupations.

In later centuries another area of dualist influence arose within the church: the development of doctrines regarding Jesus’s mother, Mary. Revisionists taught that Mary, in order to bear the sinless child Jesus, must have been immaculately conceived (*i.e.*, not by human means) by her mother. They further alleged that she lived in perpetual virginity, neither having sexual relations nor bearing other children. In contradiction to this later fabrication, the Bible tells us that Joseph *“had no union with her until she gave birth to*

a son” (Matthew 1:25, emphasis added). Revisionists explained her offspring as cousins of Jesus, or children of Joseph by a previous marriage. The Scriptures themselves surely do not stretch for an explanation apart from what would have been clearly understood then: *“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?”* (Matthew 13:55-56, emphasis added).

“He desecrated Topheth...

so no one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to Molech” (2 Kings 23:10).

Hebraic society regarded children as *“a heritage from the Lord”* (see Psalm 127:3, KJV). This position contrasted with that of the heathen tribes all around Israel who sacrificed their children to their gods. Hellenistic Athenians also had a low view of children, judging them an intrusion into their pursuit of happiness. Most limited their families to two, one, or even no children in order to avoid overpopulation and impoverishment of the natural resources.¹⁰ Modern American society, as did the Athenians, seeks to preserve the earth *from* its inhabitants rather than tending it on behalf of God to bless its dwellers.

Yet another manifestation of Greek thought is found in the “quality of life” argument pushed today for everything from abortion to euthanasia to infanticide. If an individual, whether infant or elderly, was considered incapable of achieving a certain standard of success, it was the duty of the Athenian or Spartan parents or family to eliminate him or her. That individual should not be allowed to become a burden on society. Therefore, abortion and infanticide were rampant. There was no intrinsic worth in the individual to guarantee his right to existence. Unproductive or inconvenient lives were expendable.

If man is just a collection of evolved tissue, then his worth to society can be assessed by objective measurements and observations. The Nazis, influenced by the Greek denigration of human life, gassed people at mental institutions and homes for the aged before they began widespread extermination in concentration camps. Is the attitude of American society succumbing to this totally unbiblical approach as well?

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23,24).

At present a subtle element of Greek influence seeks to elevate mankind above their “earthly prison” through various forms of praise and worship. The authors are not taking issue with the lively and expressive praise and worship that have become so popular in recent decades. We want to address two tendencies observed in worship that are biblically unacceptable to the heavenly Father. The first is a Greek syncretistic influence that persuades worshipers to adopt secular music patterns designed to induce a soulful high, the use of music to conjure a particular mood for worship.

Closely connected to this is a disregard for the importance of personal holiness in approaching God, the folly of “worshiping” with unconfessed sin and iniquity. It is delusion for believers to trust that the “holiness” of their priest or pastor will usher them into

God's presence. Each person must examine his or her own heart. The Lord chastised the people of His day, *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain"* (Matthew 15:8,9). Should He do any less with His people today?

"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? He who has clean hands and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:3,4). Apperceiving what the Scriptures require in your approach to God necessitates that you put aside manmade conjuring and confess your sins in order to once again see the power of God in your congregation. Just because some form of "spiritual" expression makes you feel good doesn't necessarily make it pleasing to the Father. Remember that Eve yielded to what looked and seemed good but defied the command of God: *"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it"* (Genesis 3:6). Peter's words are true, and believers must keep them in focus as we approach God: *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light"* (1 Peter 2:9). Let us agree with Ephesians 4:24 to *"put on the **new self**, created to be like God in **true righteousness and holiness.**"*

Chapter Seven

THE ROMAN CONQUEST OF THE CHURCH

Is the Reformation Unfinished?

***“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you
as my priests; because you have ignored the law of
your God, I also will ignore your children.
The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they
exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful”*** (Hosea 4:6,7).

Ever since the stoning of Stephen, Christians had been counting the high cost of following Christ. Living for God as disciples of Christ had brought ever-increasing persecution from both the Jews and the Romans. From his throne in Rome, Nero had sought scapegoats for the military and economic distresses of his empire. Christians became easy targets for the burnings and crucifixions which followed. Under the Roman Emperor Trajan (AD 98-117), those accused of the crime of being Christian faced interrogation. Ones admitting “guilt” were executed. Those denying the charge were freed only after reciting a prayer to the Roman gods, worshiping the emperor’s statue, and cursing Christ. The faithful of the early Church understood what it meant to sacrifice self, dying daily to all that was of the flesh and willing even to offer up life itself for the sake of the Gospel.

By the fourth century few were willing to pay the price that faith had demanded of their spiritual ancestors. A pivotal moment for the church occurred when it entered into alliance with the Roman Empire. In AD 312 the Roman Emperor Constantine called on the Christian God for victory during a crucial battle with his opponent Maxentius for control of the Empire. Triumphant, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan the following year, ending the persecution of the church by the Empire. Endorsed from the throne, Christianity became the favored religion. In time it became so identified with the Roman Empire that everyone born in the Empire was automatically considered “Christian.”

With the dangers of persecution removed, membership in the church became attractive to growing numbers who entered for worldly reasons. These new churchgoers were readily accepted by their society, a far cry from the attitude toward the peculiar believers of the Hebraic first-century Church. The children of the Empire were counted as children of the church. Infant baptism became universal. The hierarchical structure of the church, which through syncretism was already a clone of the Empire, merged effortlessly with the political government. This consolidation was to culminate in the establishment of the papacy; the Roman Pontiff would replace Pontifex Maximus (Caesar) as supreme authority.

The merger of church and state represented the second major turning point for the church. The first turning point, the widespread influx of Gentiles and Hellenistic thought into the body, had resulted in the loss of the church's Hebraic roots and the rise of anti-Semitism. The period after the AD 313 Edict of Milan brought tremendous destruction to the faith as it had been practiced in the first century. With imperial approval the church embarked on achieving unity through stronger organization. Ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority formed the basis for religious cohesion rather than dependence on the Holy Spirit to unite and equip the body of believers.

In one form or another, the Roman model continues to represent the organizational structure of most denominations today. In any church affiliation where the will of God and spiritual guidance are removed from individual responsibility and are determined by and/or enforced by some form of intermediary, the Roman Empire still exists.

The history of the "organized" church during the centuries following Constantine is well-documented. Whether the church or the Roman Empire triumphed is perhaps debatable. The state-supported church consolidated its position until its dominion was practically absolute. Many revisionist writings appeared at this point, attempting to validate the hierarchical structure acquired from the Romans. For instance, ecclesiastical leadership crowned Peter and the other apostles with a hierarchical authority that neither the Bible nor the early Church writings substantiated. This state-church became so far removed from the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, and so politically dominant, that it led into the corruption and ignorance of the Dark Ages.

The Roman church powers recognized that people's minds could be controlled if their education were controlled. Since all education was conducted in Latin, a language of which the masses were ignorant, then only the select few had access to reading materials. Since the printing press had not yet been invented, access to the Bible was exceedingly limited. The Roman church further forbade the printing of any Scriptural material in a language other than Latin. Therefore the populace at large was totally dependent upon the educated clergy for any religious instruction.

Sacerdotalism, the system of ordained priests who mediate between God and mankind, became firmly established. This practice emulated the pagan pattern of an elevated hierarchy of priests. Creating titles for and conferring authority to those who were hand-picked by the leadership, the religious establishment added ceremonies that outdid one another in solemn pomposity. The ecclesiastical authorities constructed massive cathedrals, filling them with statuary and art. Having lost sight of the kingdom of God, the established church schemed and persecuted but missed its prime directive: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Many of the "visual images" seen in the church today—statuary, candles, feast days, sacraments, ceremonies, processions—were copied from the heathen and adapted for church use. One example is the celebration of Christmas on December 25th. That day was also the culmination of the Roman celebration for the god of agriculture. The pagan holiday was marked by partying, feasting, and gift-exchanging. Early believers, finding no basis for this in the Word, refused to participate. Rebuffed and affronted, their Roman

neighbors publicly maligned the Christians contemptuously, calling them “cannibals”. These accusations resulted in grave persecution of the believers. In time, however, that which had once seemed repulsive to Christians was adopted. Thus we have the widespread celebration of Christmas. (The irony is that today, in most cases, if you *don’t* celebrate Christmas with parties and gifts, you appear un-Christian.)

***“Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth
in order to draw away disciples after them.
So be on your guard!” (Acts 20:30).***

From Constantine onward, the glory of the church was found not in intimate relationship with God but in its riches and forms. Church leaders were held in awe as great men on the earth; over the centuries even heads of nations bowed to them. Their power represented the authority of men, enforced, if need be, by the sword. But the imposing church organization, with all the might of its authority, still found itself powerless to exercise spiritual control over the hearts of sinful men. Rome could neither unite people in true worship nor guard the soundness of the faith that had been passed on to them.

Testifies Alexander Hay, “What the New Testament evangelists had accomplished in their material poverty and defenselessness through the weapons of faith, prayer and the Word of God, the humanly organized Church with its wealth and power was impotent to do.”¹ Grasping the sword of human power made it increasingly necessary to use that weapon even to the extremes of Inquisitional ruthlessness and cruelty in complete contradiction to the Spirit of Christ. Dependence on human wisdom excluded more and more the Spirit-revealed wisdom of God, resulting in ever-increasing darkness.

Following the traditions of contemporaneous pagan religions, Constantine built temples in which Christians could gather. Since public buildings were provided for worship by the emperor, believers moved from meeting in homes to congregating in structures designed to imitate the temples inspired by the writings of Plato. Stained glass windows, lofty steeples, and high vaulted church ceilings: Plato’s writings spoke of light and space that would point man upward as he strived to reach the presence of the “unknowable” God. The very edifice of worship was designed to draw the focus “up” toward some elusive spiritual truth just out of grasp.

Prior to Constantine, there had been no such thing as church buildings or “Christian” architecture. “The Christian faith was a living room movement, and was the first and only religion ever to exist that did not use special temples of worship; it is the only living room religion in human history”.² The early Hebraic Christians understood that God could be known; they had a relationship with Him directly. They saw no need for stained glass windows and steeples to point upward to a God beyond their reach. The high ceilings and vaulted windows conspired to induce an awe founded on tangible apparatus. (Is this why we so often whisper when we enter a church building?) So it was, that in AD 323, almost three hundred years after the birth of the Church, Christians began to meet in a building we now errantly call a “church.” These structures, named after New Testament believers (saints), paralleled the pagan temples named after their gods.

In the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great invented an order of worship, designating it the only one for all the churches in Christendom. For Roman Catholics, that “order of worship” has remained basically unchanged. (During the Reformation, Martin Luther and John Calvin developed a pattern of worship that has remained the standard for most Protestant churches to this day: welcoming prayer, hymns, announcements, prayer, offertory, sermon, hymn, benediction.)

In the manner of pagan priests, a paid, professional clergy class evolved in Christianity, in time setting themselves apart from the daily lives of the people. The priesthood of all believers was forsaken. The church lost the intimacy its gatherings had exemplified in the synagogue model: openly worshiping God, candidly sharing with and edifying each other, and freely ministering service to others in the church and in the world. With the merging of Roman hierarchy and Greek thought, congregational gatherings voided themselves of expressive thanksgiving and worship of a relationally loving God Who interacted with His people. The needs of personal lives and daily concerns were replaced by ethereal messages about a remote and uninvolved deity. Christians fell into “spectator Christianity,” lulled into allowing the professional clergy, the sacerdotalists, to approach the Almighty on their behalf. With the development of sacraments, the clergy found the key to absolute control over the people, since clergy alone were “ordained” to perform the rites.

The structured organization of ritualism and sacerdotalism necessarily meant the demise of the free exercise of spiritual gifts. Today many believers regard the general manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit as something peculiar to the early Church. Several denominations even have doctrinal statements to that effect. How far the church has strayed from the priesthood of believers equipped by the Holy Spirit to minister to one another.

During this period, as in the centuries to follow, the Lord was never without faithful witnesses. There has always been a remnant of believers striving to remain faithful to the teaching and practices of the early Church. As best as they could, they kept themselves from all compromise with the world, walking and serving in the wisdom and power of the Spirit. Many faced persecution and martyrdom, but as the centuries passed, the door to free expression of Truth began to crack open.

The Reformation Unfinished

***“I consider my life worth nothing to me,
if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—
the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24).***

One of the persevering firebrands for the faith who refused to be silenced was John Wycliffe, a fourteenth century preacher and theologian. “His intolerance of Church abuses, begging friars, unlearned clergy, politically motivated bishops and inaccessibility of the Scriptures in the language of the common people, as well as the Church’s demands on the monarch and its involvement in civil law and order, resulted in his championing the separation of church and state.”³

One hundred and fifty years later William Tyndale would be so consumed with zeal to put the Word of God into the hands of his English countrymen that he would pay the ultimate price with his life. Once the Bible had been translated into the vernacular of the people, the Holy Spirit Himself could then breathe life into the sacred text for those earnestly seeking the truth.

By the early sixteenth century, the church establishment had approached what we today would consider insanity in persecuting those clinging to faith rather than religion. A case in point: In 1517 in Coventry, England, five men and two women were burned at the stake for the heresy of teaching their children the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English. At great risk to many lives was birthed the great spiritual awakening, the “Reformation”. Yet, as history has proved, the sacrifices of men and women obedient to their God were used by Him to rekindle faith in Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. As T.S. Eliot expressed in *Murder in the Cathedral*, “Martyrdom is no accident. A martyr is always made by the design of God for his love of men, to warn them, and to lead them back to his ways.”⁴

The Reformation period saw the restoration of much that had been lost for centuries, especially a focus on the relationship between God and man. Because of the continuing powerful influence of the writings of Origen and Clement, however, the simplicity of the early Church order and practice failed to materialize. The right of all believers to take part in ministry through the gifts of the Spirit was minimally regained at best since there was still an ongoing distinction between clergy and laity. Laity were permitted to hold certain positions of authority, *i.e.*, “elder”, in some denominations, but even the great reformer, Martin Luther, felt that the illiterate laymen of his time were ill-prepared to minister. This became his impetus to translate the New Testament into the German vernacular of his people in order that they could be trained up to study the Word of God for themselves.

The Reformation awakened a zeal for learning and for exploration but failed to restore spiritual unity in the church. The various faith communities that were organized continued to depend primarily on human forms of government. Protestant clergy were simply replacements for the Roman Catholic priesthood. The churches that emerged, so far as their clergy structure was concerned, were reformed Roman Catholic churches rather than fully participative, Spirit-led churches. Some of the reformers understood the early Church pattern but deemed it impossible to return to. Vested interest once more kept this from happening. Once again the “ambulance was placed at the bottom of the cliff.”

The reformed Church had not only lost the (enforced) union which the Church of Rome's human organization had provided; it had also failed to regain the true spiritual unity of the Hebraic early Church. The unity of the Church of Rome had been derived from its centralized, autocratic, totalitarian organization with the Pope at its head.⁵ The Protestant Church, lacking such authoritarian structure, paved the way for the factions and denominational splits that plague it to this day.

During the period of the Protestant Reformation, some signs of the re-Judaization of the Christian faith began to surface as certain Hebraic biblical principles were rediscovered. The Reformers, for example, put great stress on the precept of *sola scriptura*, Scripture as the sole and final authority for the Christian—a view firmly rooted in Hebraic soil.

An important point to consider: Armed with the well-documented history of the Reformation, whose participants attempted in great earnest to change the church, we in the twentieth century can now see that any attempt at reform without a full return to the Hebraic foundations of the early Church will miss the mark. The early Church determined to equip believers in relationship with one another to serve and disciple and evangelize. The reformed church feared to depend entirely upon God, upon the leadership of the Lord, and on the power of the Spirit to change individuals, families, and societies as did the early Church. Everyone who attempts to regain the interrelational dependency on God and fellow believers that characterized the early Church will encounter the same opposing forces.

Concluding Comments

The church that has emerged structurally and spiritually over the centuries has few points of similarity to the Church founded by the apostles. In seminaries today, revisionist writings strive to prove that the church as it stands is the form given by the Lord and the apostles. It is interesting to note what happened to the five basic ministries given by the Lord to the Church for its function and witness: apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, pastor (see Ephesians 4:12,13). The apostolic foundation became buried under a human structure that ruled by ecclesiastical force and decree, lording it over the people. The servant leadership of the apostles was forfeited for power and prestige. Although several denominations today claim "apostolic lineage," their method of leadership defies the admonition of Jesus to the Twelve: "*The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves*" (Luke 22:25,26).

The ministry of the evangelist or church planter, in its full sense, was lost as the pastoral function absorbed the ministries of preacher and teacher. The elders became "clergy," and the other members of the church, "laymen." As a result, the gifts of preaching and teaching to be distributed by the Holy Spirit as He determined (see 1 Corinthians 12:11) became prerogatives of the clergy. The rest of the church, deprived of its priestly privilege, has been (and continues to be) largely silenced.

It is a sad history. Instead of returning to the place of surrender and faith and free access to the Spirit's power, the church sought strength and protection by solidifying human organization as it conferred power on human leaders. Paul and the other New Testament evangelists had used spiritual weapons of prayer, faith, and holiness to overthrow the strongholds of human reasoning. Tragically these spiritual weapons have been laid aside.

"They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers"

(Nehemiah 9:2).

Whatever the denomination represented by the reader, we need to honestly examine the history of the church and consider if this is truly what God wanted: churches paralleling the institutions of the world (some with pastors functioning as CEO's), compromising in order to avoid persecution and martyrdom, blending in with the culture to make worship palatable and entertaining. This needs to be the generation that repents for both ourselves and our forefathers for having embraced the Greek and Roman influences. We have failed to exercise the courage to return to the Church established by Jesus and the apostles.

Daniel confessed the ancestral sins that had brought defeat and captivity to the Jews. Turning to God in earnest prayer, as followers of Christ need to do today, he confessed the sins of the whole nation for generations as if they were his own iniquities.⁶ Daniel recognized that the *"good hand of the Lord"* would not be with his people until those sins were confessed and their effect was repudiated.

In the same way today, believers must repent for the centuries-long sins of the church for turning away from the theocracy of Jesus. With His forgiveness and grace, we may then fully cooperate with Him in fulfilling His words: *"I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH"* (see Matthew 16:18).