

# Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

*The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"—our Jesus.*

Dear Friends,

God is very interested in restoring the people who led the early church—the elders. By this I mean the gray-haired older men of wisdom.

## Elders

### Don't Show Up Retired at the Judgment Throne; You May Not Like It. . .

Toward the end of our stay in Israel in 1993-4, Sue and I spent several days at a retreat center near Emmaus. Their little library contained works by writers from many countries. One particular history book written by a British author blamed the millions of deaths in World War II on the US and Great Britain. The writer quoted Winston Churchill, "All that it takes for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing" (paraphrase.) Churchill's warning reminds me of a Proverb, "Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked" (Pro. 25:26).

The US used *isolation* (remember the word **isolation**) as an excuse to stay out of the war. The British relied on *appeasement*, even to the point of removing Churchill from Parliament because he so adamantly warned the people about Hitler. The master of appeasement, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, repeatedly disregarded intelligence reports and Nazi aggression across the Channel.

Today, Satan uses isolation and appeasement to keep the Church from our Father's goal for unity and

the fullness of Jesus. There exists an incredible isolation from older mentors within our faith communities. And we have experienced appeasement of the clergy class, the very group who for centuries have stood in the way of God's reforms and restorations. Please read on.....

### Jehovah Rapha—God our Healer

The Greek word for *salvation* in the New Testament can also mean *healing*. Salvation from God's perspective deals with a broader issue than just eternity. For instance, Jesus encountered the outcast tax collector, Zaccheus, in a tree and went to his house. As the man confessed his sins, "Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham'" (Luke 19:9). The Lord was restoring him, *healing*, if you will, the breach between Zaccheus and the rest of the community of Israel.

As I was going through some old files I found a copy of our January 1995 newsletter. I had forgotten the vision God had given me which I had reported at that time: "In the vision I was worshiping with many people. We were all exuberantly praising the Lord with tremendous gratitude. I knew it was not a church service that had brought us together—it was our *gratitude* to our Father. The Father spoke to my spirit, 'Mike, the people and their thanksgiving to Me are a result of the truths I have given you. You shared these and helped someone—and that person in turn helped someone else. Mike, the name of this group is **Jesus the Healer.**'"

We're seeing the healing and reconciliation that the message of Restoration is bringing to families and churches, as well as among races and ethnic groups. Yet, while we were still in Israel the Lord impressed upon us that a *critical* part of the Restoration was restoring the older men to their rightful place of respect and leadership as God ordained in the early Church.

**"Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord"**

(Lev. 19:32).

Respect and deference for older people is visible evidence of a humble heart. The Bible tells us that humility pleases God. And our treatment of and interaction with older people is one of our Father's litmus tests of our humility.

We commented on what retirement has done to the Church in the US in *Restoring the Early Church*: "The authors have concluded from research that the current concept of retirement encourages older people to abandon family responsibilities (**isolation**) when they reach a certain age. A national plan for retirement first began in Germany following World War I. Facing hyper-inflation, the government needed a way to convince people to save their money rather than spend it. They developed the idea of "saving for retirement," choosing the age of sixty-five for job severance. This age was chosen because actuarial tables indicated that only one per cent of the population would live beyond that age. (They neglected to tell the pop-

place that ninety-nine per cent of<sup>2</sup> them probably would not live to collect that savings.) Over the decades, saving toward a compulsory retirement age has become standard in most industrialized nations, even as longevity has risen dramatically throughout the world.

To save for the future is biblical: *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise. It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest”* (Pro. 6:6,7). But this concept has become grossly distorted in the United States. Rather than an admonition to save for old age, “retirement” has become a withdrawal from family responsibilities (**isolation**), a relocation to the “sun belt”, a pleasure-oriented senior citizen culture.

This destructive “retirement system” has not only uprooted older women from helping younger women (*“Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children”* Titus 2:3,4). It has also fostered the very life of self-indulgence the Bible warns against: *“But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives”* (1 Tim. 5:6). An ever-increasing number of lonely senior ladies exist without purpose in convalescent homes and cavernous old homesteads (**isolation**). Because some have forsaken their God-given responsibility to younger women, has God permitted them to be treated as *“dead even while she lives”*? It is not too late to change this situation. At the retreat center we would ask hundreds of young married women, “Do you prefer to *love* or to *control* your husband and children?” Over 90% stated emphatically that they would choose control because they could manipulate predictable, desired outcomes. Without the help of older women, we don’t expect to see this situation change.

After sharing at one of our semi-

nars that Proverbs 31:10-31 applies to an older man and his wife, a young woman several months pregnant came to thank me for that insight. Her husband had been harping at her to demonstrate the attributes of a “Proverbs 31 Woman,” while this biblical composite actually portrayed a prosperous senior lady whose husband was an elder at the city gates!

**“They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, ‘The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him’”** (Psalm 92:14,15).

Six distinct Hebrew words denoting “man” appear in the Old Testament. God addresses the individual to whom He is speaking by using a very particular Hebrew word for man. Robert Hicks, in his book *The Masculine Journey*, describes these terms as six stages in a man’s pilgrimage. The first stage, the **Creational Male** (*adam*), connotes mankind in general, both male and female.

The **Phallic Male** (*zakar*) recognizes the innate sexual drive which motivates a man toward an intimate relationship.

The term *gibbor* refers to the **Warrior Male** who seeks to excel and conquer. He is known by what he does, and often his family is pushed aside as he forges ahead. Often this man is in his 20’s and 30’s in our culture.

Eventually the man becomes a **Wounded Male** (*enosh*) whose wounds are received as he passes through the Warrior stage. Life hasn’t become the success he’d hoped it would be. Only through wounding can a man begin to understand the needs of those around him. Often this wounding takes place in his forties.

The Hebrew term *ish* defines the **Mature Male** and reflects a man who has passed through his wounded period to become a person of dignity and integrity. At this stage of his life,

a man is known by his character, by who he is. He has tasted the mercy of the Lord and can thus extend this compassion to others. He senses a renewal of life purpose and is willing to confront what he perceives is wrong in relationships and society at large.

A man addressed as a *zaken* or **Sage** is a gray-headed, older, wise man or elder or shepherd, revered for his judgments and sought for guidance and understanding. The Jewish sages of old passed along wisdom in the practical realm, not the theoretical. They provided skillful advice for solving the current problems facing the community. In biblical times, becoming a sage represented the culmination of a life worth living. Contrast this high regard for the elderly with the disdain they now encounter. Contemporary seniors panic that they may be thought of as “old.” They fight age with every modern weapon available: cosmetic surgery, frenetic exercise, scientific diet.

If today’s church is going to regain the relational warmth of its past, believers must seek out and reactivate the elderly. A sufficient number of sociologists over the years have stated that when the US lost the three-generation family in the home, *i.e.*, grandparents, parents, and children, the destruction of the American family began. Although statistically the elderly have increased in number in the decades since World War II, the church today reflects a paucity of seniors in influential positions of leadership and direction. The authors were part of a congregation of two hundred in which we, in our mid-forties, were among the oldest!

This culture has lost its reliance on the wisdom and experience of older people. Our scientific, technically advancing society does not see how emotionally naked it is, nor does it perceive the need for the character development that the counsel of older people provides. The magnitude of destroyed relationships in

this society is too great to grasp. The process has happened in such an insidiously subtle way since World War II that we are like the frog put in a pot of cold water and slowly brought to a boil. We were cooked without knowing what happened.

Compare the respected sage of biblical times with today's elderly man stretched out in his recliner mesmerized by the TV, playing cribbage with other senior citizens, or heading off to Florida, separating himself from his extended family (again, *isolation*). The older woman, on the other hand, is so consumed with appearance that she's out jogging or playing tennis in order to accommodate the most stylish fashions!

The church lost much by forsaking its Hebraic roots. *The people who are needed the most right now* are not in our churches, nor even in our homes. They have retired and moved away, leaving believers helpless and bereft of the wisdom of experience. Christians desperately need what their Hebraic predecessors had going for them lest we become a community prone to the foolish and wicked ways of the world." To many older people we chuckle, "You've made enough mistakes now to be useful."

While walking around our neighborhood with my family this week, I saw a sign on a building entitled "Intergenerational Learning Center." The decades since World War II have been so destructive that we need to relearn how to relate intergenerationally. We now have a generation of churchgoers with less than a 50% probability of keeping their marriages together. We have over 300,000 congregations in the US, more per capita than any other industrialized country. Then why do we lead the world in single parent households? *We have lost our mentors.*

For several years at the retreat center we conducted a singles group that represented over a dozen churches. On many occasions, as I listened to different personal situa-

tions, I would ask the single person to share his or her problem with a grandparent-age couple in their congregation. So often the needy person would come back with the sad statement, "I couldn't find anyone who wanted to get involved" (*isolation*).

***"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherds and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"*** (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers were part of the synagogue system before the beginning of the Church. These functions were being developed until such time as within the Church they would receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, these five functions will bring the Church *unity*, and the maturity to attain the *fullness of our Lord Jesus*.

The shepherds who pastored the synagogues and the early Church were the *zakens*, the elders who exemplified the qualities about which Paul reminds Timothy and Titus. Pastoring (shepherding) before the time of Greek philosophical influence and Roman ecclesiastical organization was done by the elders. The Lord is restoring this vital function and anointing so that *His goals* for *His Church* may be accomplished.

We've been privileged to meet some wonderful elders who are *pastoring* God's people. They bear the biblical signature of God as they fulfill their call. These men do not desire preeminence in their congregations. Rather, they have a genuine concern for people that is reflected in their relational closeness to those they are pastoring. The fruit of their leadership is seen in the maturity of a flock that puts its faith into action.

The fruitfulness of the flock is recognized as each person becomes a stepping stone through whom our Father cares for the hurting and the underprivileged, and brings others into His Kingdom.

As Jesus restores His Church, fruitfulness will be the test of true pastoring. To state it succinctly: Pastoring is represented by a genuine concern for those with whom an elder has an intimate relationship. True pastoring tangibly reflects our Father's personal concern for each of His children.

Through the Nicolaitan spirit, Satan raised up a "clergy class" which has dominated the Church for so long that many fear to expose the unbiblical basis for its existence. Through fear of confrontation the Nicolaitan spirit remains *appeased* and in solid control of our churches. [We wrote about this spirit in our July 1997 Mishpachah Yeshua]. The role of clergy was born from the womb of the Greek philosophers and the Roman organizational system. The Nicolaitan spirit causes clergy to measure success by congregational size and personal prestige. You can recognize these individuals because they are "pastoring" more people than they can possibly know personally (*isolation*). Our Father has removed His grace from this class of individuals who dominate churches today. The ever-increasing signs of the removal of His grace are evident:

- Clergy represent the third leading occupation in rate of divorce.
- The class is riddled with burnout and marital unfaithfulness.
- They die 10 years earlier than the national average for other occupations.

***"Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"***

(Job 12:12)

We are working closely with a growing number of men whom God has touched to see the biblical role of elder restored. Cavin and Larry Harper of Pinecrest Lodge have

offered their retreat center as a<sup>4</sup> by the children of divorce. He has meeting ground for those so interested. Our goal is to restore older men and women to their rightful places in the “restored” Church. Part of our endeavor is to locate men 40 years and over who are in the Mature or Sage stage of their life. [We are also looking for women of comparable vintage!] We want to give these people the “right of first refusal.” This process will entail repentance for having failed our Father by lack of availability to Him to fully develop them into mature and sage individuals. By His grace we can cooperate with each other to take our rightful places in the faith communities our Lord is restoring.

[From *Demolishing Strongholds*:

“God is looking for a faceless people who are humble, with only the face of Jesus shining through.” His recruiting is excellent!!!]

**“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children”** (Prov. 17:6).

Malachi tells us that our Father wants each generation to train up godly offspring. Satan has schemed to keep us from God’s goal of training grandchildren to be the “crown” of their grandparents by removing the grandparents from their rightful place of leadership and influence in families and in faith communities. The satanic plot has infused older people with a wrong understanding of retirement, placating them with pleasure seeking. He has fed on their insecurity by giving them a sense of uselessness in a technological society. And through the influence of Humanism, he has turned their children and grandchildren over to the influence of “professionals” (*isolation*).

To undo our entrapment in Satan’s plots, God’s people, no matter what generation, must repent for participating in the devil’s schemes. Our Father has witnessed the destruction and havoc Satan has plotted. He has seen the tears shed

heard the cries of divorced people who once loved each other but gave up their covenant relationship. By failing to heed what God has established as true and good, we have failed the generations to come. But we can undo this through His forgiveness and mercy—just look at the Book of Judges!!! The fruit of the next generation can still be saved by the generations that are alive today. Together we can do it. God is not looking for someone to blame—don’t you, either. Instead, stand in the gap, pray, and equip yourself for the ones you can still influence with hope!

**“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God”** (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

The message God gave us in Israel can be summed up in this: **Reconciliation + Restoration = Healing**

This healing involves individuals, families, faith communities, races, ethnic groups—all relationships that need to be reconciled and restored. The healing begins in a consummated relationship with our Father through the shed blood of His Son. This covenant intimacy becomes real through the indwelling of His Spirit and is manifested in the restoration of the vital relational functions which the early Church valued: the 53 “one-anothering” actions that appear in the New Testament.

**“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk**

**in it, and you will find rest for your souls”**” (Jer. 6:16).

If you are over 40 and would like to be informed about what we are endeavoring to do, **call us**. We would like to establish a network of older followers of Christ who recognize that God hasn’t “sent them out to pasture.” (One of our favorite mentors was Charles Schaufele, a godly teacher who died “in the saddle” on the way to a speaking engagement at the age of 86! He was the first to tell us, “I don’t see the word ‘retirement’ in the Bible!”)

This is a rallying cry! If you are younger, please pass this on to your parents, grandparents, or older friends in the Lord. Urge them to come before the Lord with available hearts and yielded personal plans. Role models and mentors are desperately needed by a generation of isolated parents and lonely children!

Getting older also,

*Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz*

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