

# HA'SHEM

Truth that transforms

Issue 44 - WINTER 2009



## THE COMMUNITY CALLED CHURCH

Inside:    Shared Leadership  
             Discipline in the Community  
             Love and Don't Break the Rules

44



## HA'SHEM is Hebrew for the 'THE NAME' (Yahweh)

### DIVINE NAMES AND TITLES

Throughout this magazine you will see the names YAHWEH and YAHSHUA. Yahweh is the original name for the heavenly Father and Yahshua is the original name of His Son, our Saviour. Also the term ELOHIM (or its shortened form El) may be used. This literally means 'Mighty One' and is usually translated 'God' in the King James Version of the Bible.

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Editorial

# THE COMMUNITY CALLED CHURCH

by Alcot Walker



**T**he Bible is the story of how Yahweh in the past, called people together in community to be His special possession. Today Yahweh is still active in this holy endeavour. Some have been arrogant enough to suggest that the church as a force in society is redundant and irrelevant. But the Almighty has every intention, through His church, of calling people from their sin to a new way of living. This community called the church, the assembly or the congregation of Yahweh, far from being outdated, has a continuing dynamic purpose. The apostle Peter describes the church and its purpose in this way: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to [Elohim], that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of [Elohim]; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

In this edition of Ha'Shem we will examine some aspects of the community that Yahweh has acted in a special way to create. We begin the journey by looking at behaviour and responsibility within the church with an emphasis on leadership. The journey will conclude in the next issue of Ha'Shem.



# LIFE TOGETHER

by Alcot Walker



Today there is a growing cry in many societies, particularly in the West, deploring the inexorable increase in the break-up of families and the fragmenting of communities. This has led to isolation and alienation – the feeling that no one understands or even cares. People are locked away in small, personal worlds with, seemingly, no one to talk to and a thought that should they find someone that person probably would not understand. Besides that they are afraid that if others knew about them they wouldn't like them! We are living in an age of loneliness. T.S Eliot once said,

“What life have you if you have not life together?

There is no life that is not in community, and no community not lived in praise of [Yahweh]<sup>1</sup>”

There is a lack in the quality of people's lives because life is being lived without Yahweh and outside of biblical community. We were never meant to be on our own, and without Yahweh. Humanity began its life in community, having close fellowship with

deity and each other. When our original parents (Adam and Eve) sinned it brought alienation from Yahweh and from each other. Sin destroyed real community. From that moment Yahweh has consistently worked to restore us to that lifestyle. The first significant move to do this came when Yahweh drew to Himself the people of Israel whom He rescued from the oppression of slavery. He bound Himself to this people through the Covenant and pledged,

“I will dwell among the Israelites and be their [Elohim].

They will know that I am [Yahweh] their [Elohim], who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them.”

(Exodus 29:45-46).

In doing so He re-established the community He had purposed.

In time Yahweh made a new Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:20), this being ratified by the blood of His own Son. Through Yahshua's death and

resurrection a new Covenant community came into being. Yahweh's age old desire,

“I will put my dwelling place among you,. . . I will walk among you and be your [Elohim], and you will be my people”

(Leviticus 26:11, 12)

was more than fulfilled. For a significant difference with this new community is that Yahweh, by the power of His Spirit, would not only dwell among them but He would be in them. The fellowship that flows from this union is both intimate and dynamic, every member of the church having a personal relationship with the family of heaven.

This extraordinary community is by nature a close-knit one and is characterised by loving fellowship, and commitment to Yahweh and to each other. It is a 'household', a family in which all the members participate in its life and work. Coming into the New Covenant involves becoming part of that community of Yahweh's people, and no one should be alone or excluded. The reality is

“I will put my dwelling place among you, . .

I will walk among you and be your [Elohim], and you will be my people”

---

“You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with [Yahweh’s] people and members of [Yahweh’s] household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with [Messiah Yahshua] himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in [Elohim]. And

in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which [Yahweh] lives by his Spirit”

(Ephesians 2:19-22).

The church is a place where people can have meaningful relationships, experience transformation, find fulfilment and participate in the work of Yahshua. The church as a community is depicted in the Scriptures as an ordered organism

whose members have responsibility to build each other up (see 1 Corinthians 12). In short, it’s the place to be! It’s the answer to the crying need of society the world over.

The church is not only Yahweh’s ‘called out ones’, but we are His servants. We are here to fulfil His purposes and part of that is to reach out to those estranged from Him. However, we cannot reach out effectively as a community with Yahshua’s



# LIFE TOGETHER

Continued

message of hope until we express it in our living. Art Gish puts it like this:

"The gospel is believable only as it is expressed by a community which is demonstrating it. Our most important witness is in our being . . . It is in our life together that we prove or disprove the depth and reality of our faith. Do we love each other and our enemies; do we demonstrate a visible alternative way of life?"<sup>2</sup>

As the world persists in going its own way, leaving millions living lonely lives, void of meaning, the church

must show itself as Yahweh's alternative community. In such a community individuals should find love, acceptance, respect, companionship and friendship; indeed, all those things that offer us self-worth, purpose and joy in life.

I recently came across this statement, and although I could not discover who first said it, I completely agree with the sentiments.

"Church [as a community] is something that happens when People gather around Yahshua nothing less and so much more.

Yahshua is loved,  
You are loved,  
I am loved,  
Life is shared,

Truth is spoken,  
Grace is poured out  
without exception,  
People are set free,  
Gifts are released.  
Simple isn't it?"

And this is precisely what the community called church is! Here people don't do life alone, life is lived as it should be – together.

1 T.S. Eliot, "Choruses from 'The Rock'" in *Collected Poems*, 1909 – 35. Quoted in J. Robert Nelson, *The Realm of Redemption* (Chicago: Cloister Press, 1951), p. 64

2 Art Gish, "Living in Christian Community" (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979), p. 321

*The church is not only Yahweh's 'called out ones', but we are His servants*





The church is a place where people can have meaningful relationships, experience transformation, find fulfilment and participate in the work of Yahshua.



*It is a 'household', a family in which all the members participate in its life and work*

# SHARED LEADERSHIP

by Alcot Walker

Church and ministry leaders wince with horror and dismay when they reflect on charlatans – such as so-called Reverend Jim Jones and David Choresh - who by their actions and behaviour destroyed the lives of hundreds of people they led. Of course, these were men who started out with honourable and legitimate visions for the kingdom of heaven but became deluded. We cringe because these men presented themselves as Christian leaders and were seen by the public as such.

Outlining reasons why such people go off the rails is not the purpose of this article. However, a couple of things ought to be noted on examination of these unfortunate happenings. Firstly, that power was concentrated in one individual; and secondly, there was a complete absence of accountability. Almost always these mavericks, inflated by their own ego, become supremos exercising unreasonable control over peoples' lives with no-one to challenge their decisions.

## THE PATTERN FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Yahshua came among us to establish a New Covenant community, and He showed by the example He set how that community should be led. The leadership style of His community was to be communal.

Shared leadership was His preference as opposed to it being in the hands of one individual.

This is supported in that He called out twelve men from diverse backgrounds and groomed them to be a collective leadership. For three years He taught them to work together, to consult one another and to pray together. They served together. Going out on missions, no one went by himself – they went in twos. Yahshua would frequently take aside the three (Peter, James and John) to share with them what was on the Father's mind. What was He doing? He was engaging these men in the concept of team leadership. As we look at

the purpose of Yahweh's kingdom on earth is to be forwarded through team leadership

Yahshua's own leadership and how He worked with His apprentice ministers, we are drawn to this conclusion: the purpose of Yahweh's kingdom on earth is to be forwarded through team leadership, chosen individuals united in purpose and relationship even as Father and Son are united.

The Scriptures, particularly in the Acts, teem with examples of the type of leadership Yahshua left His followers to pursue and practice within the community called 'church'. It was a leadership that espouses teamwork, shared vision, shared responsibility and accountability. Here are just a few examples:

Acts 1:23-24 - "So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, '[Yahweh], you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen. . .'" Immediately after Yahshua's ascension the disciples had to wait for the promise Messiah had given them – the coming of the Spirit. During that time a decision had to be made about the position left vacant on the



## This kind of leadership gave the people security and so they gladly submitted themselves

leadership team by the departure of Judas, who had betrayed Yahshua. Here the apostles acted together to discover Yahweh's choice to replace Judas.

From the Day of Pentecost and subsequent events, the apostles proved themselves to be credible leaders. They had shown courage, strength of character under persecution, wisdom and foresight. Importantly they were united in purpose and exercised an authority among the community that was of the Spirit.

In the early days of the church the believers looked to the apostles, the leadership team Yahshua had put in place, for a vision of their future, for sound teaching and for direction for their lives. This kind of leadership gave the people security and so they gladly submitted themselves to the authority of their collective leadership (Acts 4:32–36).

Acts 6:1-7 - "...The Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of [Yahweh] in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them..."

Some considerable time later we again see the apostles exercising team leadership in addressing some of the issues that faced the growing church community. At this stage of the church's development the widows who were in need became the responsibility of the believing community – and they were numerous. A problem arose around the distribution of food supplies to these widows. On this occasion the Twelve gave the people specific direction on selecting workers needed to fulfil a particular ministry in the

# SHARED LEADERSHIP

Continued

congregation. Once this had been implemented the congregation again began to grow rapidly. Arriving at the decision that brought such profit to the church community the leaders had clearly spent time together discussing and praying about the issue, listening out for the wisdom of the Spirit whoever it came through. Another vivid example of how communal leadership worked effectively in the early church community is cited in Acts 15. Here the apostles and elders discussed a vitally important issue, but together they trusted the Holy Spirit to guide them to a righteous and harmonious decision (see v28).

Acts 8:14 - "When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of [Yahweh], they sent Peter and John to them". As the Gospel and therefore the church began to spread beyond the towns and districts of Judea, the team of apostles made the decision to send Peter and John to minister to the people in Samaria. Now Peter and John were accustomed to working together from their early days with the Master. Following the outpouring of the Spirit

at Pentecost they are seen together ministering in and around the Temple area. These two men had a good working relationship; their gifts complemented each other and fed into a shared vision. These are key factors for successful leadership of the church community.

Acts 14:23 - "When they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to [Yahweh] in whom they had believed" (HCSB).

Titus 1:5 - "I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you" (NLT).

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and from his life, work and writings we see that he not only followed the pattern of leadership that the Master had established, he also attached great importance to team ministry. Throughout his church planting ministry Paul ensured that elders were appointed in every local church. This shows the plurality of leadership in the New Testament congregations.

In today's church world

decisions are made and direction given in basically two ways. Firstly, through elected committees; this can often be a frustration because every little decision required for some activity in the church has to go to the committee for discussion and approval. It might take two to three attempts before the committee comes to a conclusion. Everything takes so long, and often it just comes down to voting. The second is the way of the autocrat. Strangely many people want a leader who will make unilateral decisions and just get on with the business of building the church. There is no shortage of such autocrats in the believing community. This way has turned the Pastoral role into a "one-man show". Both styles of leadership fall short of the biblical model. Leadership within the New Covenant community recognises the need for courageous, forthright and prompt decisions; but it also sees the need for collaboration and discussion that concludes with a witness of the Spirit.

**There is no shortage of autocrats in the believing community**

It is dangerous for leaders having power and being responsible not to be accountable to others



#### FURTHER EXAMPLES FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Acts 13:1-3

It was the leaders at Antioch who commissioned Paul and Barnabas for missionary work.

1 Tim. 4:14

Timothy received a spiritual gift when the body of elders laid hands on him.

Acts 11:27-30; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:17

The importance of the leadership of elders/overseers is evident throughout the ministry of Paul.

#### COMMUNAL LEADERSHIP PROVIDES PROTECTION

Acts 20:28 - "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of [Yahweh], which he bought with his own blood".

Paul spent over three years in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10) ministering to the church there and beyond. When he was about to leave he called the elders (the leadership) together and in an emotional farewell charged them to keep watch over themselves

and the flock. As these leaders were to watch over the flock they were also to watch over each other's lives; to encourage, support and correct one another. I believe Paul's statement to these leaders was to inspire them to seek to put in place a 'watchcare' system that would keep them protected and safe. This kind of 'watchcare' could only be provided by fellow leaders.

In the movie, 'Spiderman', Peter Parker, having discovered his incredible power, fantasises about the fun he could have. However, en route to college his uncle gives him some counsel, "With great power comes great responsibility." That changed Peter Parker's life. That advice can be universally applied to all areas where power is exercised – the church is no exception. A further aspect needs to be added for church leaders: with great responsibility comes accountability. Leadership within the church community must be accountable! It is dangerous for leaders having power and being responsible not to be accountable to others to whom they submit

themselves and from whom they seek counsel. Many more leaders will avoid train wrecks if they establish a leadership culture that includes an accountability circle. What do I mean? For me, an accountability circle means having a team in which all the members:

- | Are committed to the community of believers
- | Have a healthy relationship with each other
- | Have bought into a shared vision
- | Have committed themselves to watch over each other's lives
- | Have pledged to speak the truth to one another

Team leadership that espouses strong accountability values will grow and strengthen New Covenant communities. That's the challenge for church leaders in our highly individualistic and egotistic world.

**"Accountability breeds response-ability."**

Stephen R. Covey



# DISCIPLINE IN THE COMMUNITY

By Valerie Warsop



**M**y mother, a seventh child, grew up in a little Welsh village where everyone knew her family - and everyone else!

In the 1920's this was fairly normal in a small community. Mum was fond of telling me that if the friendly village policeman found a child misbehaving he would clip them around the ears with his leather gloves and tell them off sternly.

If they went crying to their parents, they would be punished again without question. Alternatively the community would also stand together through good or difficult times, celebrating or weeping together as the case may be! It was a time when adults stood shoulder to shoulder for the greater benefit of everyone and particularly for all the children; and it worked – for as long as the adults cared! However we also know that such a system was open to abuse and it became increasingly important to ensure that our children were protected from damage and harm. Unfortunately it seems that in the attempt to protect them we have asphyxiated sensible discipline and are responsible for increasing upsurges of uncontrollable violence, mindless vandalism and terrorism. And in spite of the restrictions we still have not eradicated the abuse! It is a sad fact of life that the few can spoil and change things for the majority. Sensible discipline allows children to feel loved and cared for, and appropriate boundaries promote security and well-being.

There is such a stigma attached to the word 'discipline' that we

hardly dare to speak it in any circumstance – and very few want to be involved in

dispensing it. The church, too, has suffered from the tyranny of abusive discipline, and

**appropriate  
boundaries  
promote  
security and  
well-being.**

unrighteous men and women have given all kinds of beautiful truths a bad taint because of violation and misinterpretation. It is important to remember that Yahweh "...disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (Prov. 3:12). In my opinion, a key word here is 'love' – I believe there should always be a connection between love and discipline. For discipline to be most

effective it is important not to discipline our children when we are angry, but to wait until we have calmed down, when we can administer the rebuke with justice and love. It is the same in the community of the redeemed.

In the congregation of Yahweh's people it is important that there are times of just, loving discipline in order for the church to grow and mature. A community of people live and work





## Discipline is not punishment, but it can hurt

and grow together, and spiritual achievements within the community depend upon the love and trust that exist between all the members. It is important for every member to be part of an accountability process if maximum benefits are to be achieved. Discipline is not punishment, but it can hurt; even so, in it's just and loving form it will always be for improvement and will produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

Unfortunately church discipline has been distorted by shifting responsibility from the whole congregation (every member) to an authority figure, for example, the Pastor. This puts too much responsibility on the shoulders of one person and could give rise to a variety of problems. The right to speak into a person's life has to be earned - and given. Each one of us needs to be accountable to someone who is mature, trustworthy, spiritually disciplined and wise in the ways of Yahweh. It is important that mutual love and trust exist between both parties and that permission to speak into a life has been granted. The church community is made up of imperfect people. This means there will be times when individuals will get it wrong, make mistakes; some will sin, others will experience moral failure, still others will offend, causing hurt and pain. Such situations and instances require love, forgiveness and discipline to maintain unity, order and growth.

As each member receives discipline so that person grows towards a place of self-discipline. To his son, Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, "For [Yahweh] did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (2 Tim. 1:7, italics mine). Notice that discipline appears after love in the description of the Spirit of power which

is given to us by Yahweh! Yahweh's desire for His people is that they become a disciplined community.

John Ortberg writes, "A disciplined person is someone who can do the right thing at the right time in the right way and with the right spirit."<sup>1</sup> He also says that a disciplined follower of Yahshua "...is someone who discerns when laughter, gentleness, silence, healing words or prophetic indignation is called for, and offers it promptly, effectively and lovingly..." Together these perceptive statements offer a benchmark by which you can determine the suitability of the person to whom you are accountable. It is not the automatic right of every church member to speak into the life of every other member!

Sensible discipline in the community to which you belong allows the members to feel loved and cared for, and appropriate boundaries, as in the case of our children, promote feelings of security and well-being. It takes humility and grace to be accountable to someone, just as it takes the same qualities to speak into the life of another person. The whole area of discipline and accountability must be approached with love: deep, abiding, caring, respectful love. We must never fail to acknowledge that Yahshua gave everything He had, including His life, for every individual member with whom we come in contact.

The fact that some have tried and failed with this practice does not make it any less a significant part of the maturing process of the people of Yahweh. The spiritual benefits are of immense value, where there is the courage and love to be involved.

<sup>1</sup>See 'The Life You've Always Wanted' published by Zondervan

# THE PAINFUL PATH

By Nathaniel Amayaw



I am the oldest of five children and we lived in the inner-city of Nottingham, UK. As far back as I can remember I always felt out of place. I suffered with low self-esteem, low confidence and I struggled to communicate with others. As I grew older I adopted different characteristics to fit in with my surroundings. I soon became involved in gang culture and became a drug dealer. I became a well known figure in my city and at the time I thought it was great and I thrived off my new found popularity.

Throughout my illegal activities I always had an inner voice saying, "This isn't you Nathaniel, soon you will get caught out." My conscience weighed heavy as I watched people's lives deteriorate as I sold drugs to them but I was so greedy for money that I would ignore my conscience. By the age of 26 I was actively consuming drugs, as well as selling them.

## MIRACULOUS CHANGE

I had noticed my life rapidly spiralling out of control, and in December 2002 my best friend, who led the same lifestyle as me, was brutally murdered. I felt a massive

sense of guilt since I knew that my friend looked up to me; I felt that I had been a negative influence in his life. I could take no more of this way of life and one night cried out to Yahweh from the depths of my soul, the tears poured from my eyes and I wailed like never before. My words were, "Please help me, if You are real then I need You now to come and save me." I sobbed myself to sleep. When I woke, something had changed, I felt different. I went out and bumped into a friend of mine who had become a Christian, he ministered to me for five hours and, I tell you, I met Yahweh that day! Yahweh spoke to me loud and clear through this individual and I went home and decided to pray. I felt a Presence come over me, it was a Presence I was familiar with from my childhood; immediately I recalled times when I would pray daily in my room and bask in this Presence. I spoke out saying, "It's You, I remember You from when I was young." It was then I realised that Yahweh had

been with me as a child. WOW - this blew me away.

My life changed dramatically, instantly Yahweh set me free from all my addictions and cravings. I removed myself from my old environment and associates and got a job.


**My conscience weighed heavy as I watched people's lives deteriorate as I sold drugs to them**

I went through a series of events where Yahweh revealed Himself to me in miraculous ways. I studied the Bible and received revelation after revelation. I had such a peace within me that for the first time in

my life I felt complete.

People continued to comment about how I had changed so much, but at this point I began to feel confused, I was changing so much I felt I was losing my sense of identity. The truth was I was becoming a new man. I was baptised in September 2003 and soon after started to question what was happening in my life. During a church service I went out for prayer and one of the brothers prophesied over my life saying, "Don't turn to the left or right, keep going forward for what Yahweh is





“Don’t turn to the left or right, keep going forward for what Yahweh is doing in your life is for your good.”

doing in your life is for your good.” I didn’t pay attention to the prophecy, however, and allowed myself to fall into confusion. I started hanging around old friends and decided to go to a night club, then, for the first time in over a year, I took drugs again. This choice cost me dearly, for from that moment something inside me seemed to snap. Spiritually I had opened a door I couldn’t close. This took place in November 2004, my life rapidly spiralled out of control and I became heavily addicted to cocaine. I was consumed by shame and guilt.

### **BACK TO THE PIT!**

In January 2005 I resigned from my job and walked out on my long-term partner and children who were left heartbroken. I disappeared into the underworld. By now I was using drugs on a daily basis and my health deteriorated rapidly. I could sense the evil all around me and at times could even feel it in me. It was as if I had on spiritual glasses and the things I saw in the underworld were very scary. I had left the Kingdom of Light and entered into the Kingdom of Darkness. Time seemed to go by so fast it was like a dream. I looked in the mirror one day and didn’t recognise myself. I remember saying to Yahweh, “You said You would never leave me or forsake me.” I couldn’t cope with what I had become and what damage I had caused to those around me. I isolated myself and took more drugs to anaesthetise the pain of my actions. Basically I was running away from everything. I felt I couldn’t talk to my church brethren because I thought that everyone would judge me and sense the evil within me. My life got a lot worse and I hurt a lot more people along the way. By now my mental state had taken a

turn for the worse and I had begun to have psychotic thoughts. I was powerless over my thoughts, actions and behaviour. Physically I was dying and on the very brink of losing my mind. I called to Yahweh, “You said You would never leave me or forsake me.” I was broken and couldn’t stop using drugs. I was a slave to my addiction - or should I say a slave to sin? A lot more took place during this time which I have chosen not to disclose.

I felt so cut off from Yahweh. I had such a conviction that I belonged to Yahweh and that I had a job to do for Him, yet here I was on the verge of insanity. I actually got to the stage of accepting my fate and for a moment thought I would die in my addiction. I remember thinking this was not my destiny and I resounded those words, “You said You would never leave me or forsake me.” I had met Yahshua and had experienced His love, grace and transforming power, and for what? To end up as a dead drug addict? No, I couldn’t accept that Yahweh had revealed Himself to me only for my life to end up this way.

### **RESCUE**

I decided to open up and ask for help, I was quickly signposted to an organisation that specialised in helping people with addictions. This was the first sign of Yahweh working to save me. It was suggested that I go into a rehabilitation programme and these words came to me, “Yahweh can use anyone to bring you the help you need - these people are here to help you with your illness for they specialise in addiction. Trust them.” I had nothing more to lose and everything to gain. I entered a rehabilitation centre called Jericho House for six months.

# THE PAINFUL PATH

Continued



I had the opportunity to take a long hard look at myself. The fantastic staff showed me unconditional love and that was just what I needed; together we looked at my past and I was able to look at my insecurities, fears and destructive behaviour patterns. You see they loved me when I couldn't love myself. I began to pray to Yahweh on a daily basis and picked up my Bible and began to read the word. Slowly but surely I began to have faith that I could overcome this battle.

My time in Jericho House was a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance. By this time I was sure of Yahweh's miraculous grace working in my life. He was doing a deep work inside me and though it was painful at times I knew it was for my good. I was one of nine residents all of whom had serious drug addictions, but the love and compassion for each other was amazing. You see, we came from different backgrounds but we all shared the same problem and there was a mutual respect because we had all come from a place of deep pain and suffering. We helped each other in times of need and the love in that place was remarkable. My experience in rehabilitation was truly life-saving and I left there in December 2007. Through Yahweh I was able to build strong foundations and address the underlying issues in my life.

Today I know who I am and am aware of my assets and defects and I work, on a daily basis, to improve my character. Because of Yahweh's grace I live, He lifted me out of the muck and the mire and placed my feet on solid ground. My life has changed dramatically, you see I was at a dark and scary place, but now I am living evidence of Yahweh's mighty saving power. I feel like I have a second chance at life and, more importantly, I have a deep

sense of gratitude and appreciation that runs through me enabling me to view life in a new way. I have been given the opportunity to help other people suffering from drug and alcohol addiction and I also work at Jericho House on a voluntary basis. This is a true blessing, Yahweh has made good out of my tribulations.

Because I have walked this path I am able to empathise with those who are battling with addiction. One of the greatest gifts Yahweh has given me is the ability to look past a person's actions and to recognise the cause of those actions without judging the individual. Patience, love and guidance are what were given to me and, today, I give that to others.

Yahweh has moved mightily in the life of my family, restoring and healing my partner and children. You see they were deeply affected by my addiction and behaviour, but through these times my partner Sioban met Yahshua for herself. She has been a solid rock in my life. She never lost faith in me, even in the darkest times. Sioban is a warrior in Yahweh, full of faith with such an ability to forgive that can only come from Yahweh Himself. Yahweh makes good out of everything. He has done a miracle in my family; he has healed the wounds and we are once again a strong family unit serving Yahshua together.

I believe that Yahweh brought me this far because there is a call on my life and therefore I am now preparing to serve in Yahshua's ministry.

My message: whatever you are going through in life Yahweh is able to bring you through.



# WHEN LEADERS GET IT WRONG

by Beverly Nembhard

true sorrow, confession and repentance leads to restoration.

Over recent years we have seen Presidents, government ministers, community and church leaders 'fall from grace' because of immoral behaviour. The issue of the rights and wrongs of such behaviour poses the question: are leaders infallible? There has only ever been one infallible Man who has walked on planet earth, Yahshua. He is incapable of error in defining doctrines touching faith or morals; He alone will never mislead. Leaders are apt to make mistakes and get it wrong; so when they do what happens? In this article I would like to look at the right and wrong responses of church leaders to moral failure and the consequences of those reactions, and show that there is always a way back to service.

When leaders get it wrong there are two paths they can take. The first involves acknowledgement of wrong doing, confession and repentance. The second is a refusal of counsel, followed by self-denial and failure to acknowledge their faults.

Pastor Philip<sup>1</sup> is a leader of a well respected local congregation and a prominent figure in the community. Some time ago it was made known that he had engaged in inappropriate behaviour, behaviour which is not in line with the standard set in Titus 1:6-9. The whole affair was causing rumblings in the congregation. When the error of his ways was lovingly pointed out according to the scriptures "...if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently..." Gal. 6:1, he made excuses for his behaviour, refused to listen to the concerns of his leadership team and continued with 'business as usual'. The consequences of his actions brought that congregation almost to the point of disintegration. Failure to acknowledge one's fault will inevitably evoke a sense of betrayal that could subsequently destroy the confidence of vulnerable believers. Pastor Philip's actions not only brought disgrace on himself and the leadership team, but profaned the name of Yahweh in the wider community. In the end Pastor Philip lost credibility, some members lost faith, and unbelievers were hindered from making a meaningful commitment to Yahshua. In the end souls were lost!



Beverly Nembhard

"Great men are not always wise."

Job 32:9

<sup>1</sup> Names have been changed to protect identity



# WHEN LEADERS GET IT WRONG

Continued

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King, Jr

King David got it woefully wrong, but how did Yahweh react to him? Did He reprimand him? Did He abandon him? The judicial decision of Yahweh was in the interest of David's eternal destiny. David's human fallibility came to the surface in his hour of temptation, yet he was chosen by Yahweh; a man after Yahweh's own heart, a committed and dedicated leader of Israel. At a period in his life when he should have been at the battle front, he faced the most disastrous temptation; sadly he failed the test. This highly esteemed person had an adulterous affair, ultimately leading him to instigate the murder of an innocent man.

Yahweh, in His mercy, initiated a way back for David by sending Nathan the prophet to show him that his actions were known! David responded, “I have sinned against [Yahweh]” (2 Sam. 12:13). The difference between David and Pastor Philip is that David listened, acknowledged his mistake and did something about it. It is important to note that although David repented, his action had lasting consequences on his destiny (read 2 Samuel 12:7-12). In my view, Psalm 51 is one of the most heart-rending prayers of repentance ever uttered by a leader who has fallen morally and lost sight of his pre-ordained purpose. David's return path began on his knees in deep sorrow of heart. Leaders who have fallen morally must remember that true sorrow, confession and repentance leads to restoration.

Leaders, if you find yourself in an uncompromising situation remember ‘who you are’. You are a blood-bought, redeemed son/daughter of Yahweh (1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 Jn. 3:1)! You can call to the Father for deliverance in your hour of temptation. Peter denied Yahshua three times, but Yahshua did not condemn him;

He looked on Peter with love and compassion. Peter responded with regret, and sorrow. My own view is that this would have been followed by confession and repentance (read Luke 22:60-62). Yahweh did not promise leaders (or anyone for that matter) that they would never get it wrong, but He promised them ‘a way of escape’. Paul said, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And [Yahweh] is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

Yahshua expects leaders to live upright, honest, honourable lives. For those who fall into sin the apostle John suggests “...we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence - [Yahshua Messiah], the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins...” (1 Jn. 2:1-2). When leaders get it wrong, it affects their lives; but when they respond in the wrong way it affects negatively on their congregation, their community and, most seriously, smears the name of Yahweh. For some the way back is long and hard - David set the bench mark for all who have fallen, irrespective of who they are. It is the path of humility, honesty, confession and repentance which assuredly leads to restoration.

“A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.” John Maxwell



# LOVE! AND DON'T BREAK THE RULES



Perhaps young people in today's church face more pressure than previous generations regarding building meaningful relationships and engaging in respectful courtships. The following article looks at a couple of scenarios and offers young people some help and guidance to avoid pitfalls of immorality, and so establish relationships that honour Yahweh.



By Sandra &  
Robert Walker

**"What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured".**

Kurt Vonnegut Jr

**H**umans are social beings. In Yahweh's order a man and woman are joined as one, produce children, prepare them for their roles as adults, and upon their attaining adulthood, the process is replayed by the children. This journey is dynamic, as various relationships are formed and severed throughout one's lifetime. Relationships form the core of the human experience.

Youth is a time of growth and discovery. The human brain reaches maturity in the early twenties, so it is not unusual for teens and

other young persons to make errors of judgment in forming relationships. It is helpful for youth to be able to confide in at least one mature saint who through encouragement, support and prayer will help them avoid mistakes. Our assemblies also have a responsibility to minister to our youth who are usually seeking answers.

Many studies have proven the negative effects of social isolation. We have an innate need for a sense of belonging, and of being loved and valued by someone. Equally in today's world (primarily in westernized societies) there

# LOVE AND DONT BREAK THE RULES

Continued

has been a breakdown in the structures that foster healthy relationships and lasting and meaningful friendships. We live in a system emphasizing superficial and temporary relationships based not on agape – true and pure love, but on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Unfortunately the following categories form the base for many relationships:

1. How potentially gratifying the other party seems
2. How appealing or attractive the other party looks
3. What benefits the other party brings (wealth, prosperity, position etc).

With this weak foundation, the resulting relationships are usually also weak, and cannot stand the test of time.

Studies show that among Christians today the divorce rate rivals that of non-believers. Could this be as a result of the shaky foundations of relationships? How can we avoid the pitfalls of improperly formed relationships?

**Maizie** A 22 year old, Maizie has been saved since she

was 10. She met 25 year old Marcus in college two years ago. He is not saved, but they have grown to like each other very much. Their friendship has developed into a very close one. Last weekend Marcus invited Maizie to dinner, and there he proposed to her. He's not quite ready for them to be married, but thinks he should be ready in a year. He doesn't think anything is wrong with pre-marital sex as long as you are with one faithful partner, and even more so if you're getting married anyway. Maizie is perplexed. She loves Marcus, but his lifestyle is very different from hers. He has not accepted Yahshua and he doesn't think that should make a difference. Will their marriage last? Is this Yahweh's will?

**Byron** has been saved since he was 18. He enjoys fellowship with the brethren and his greatest desire is to please Yahweh in all things. Byron regularly hangs out with his friends who are also saved and is not interested in forming an intimate relationship until he believes Yahweh wants him to. Byron is facing a problem as he is often ridiculed for not having a girlfriend. He has even been accused of being gay.

Should Byron succumb to the pressure and find a girlfriend? Should he make up a story to make them think he has a girlfriend? Should he continue to be single and celibate?

The command in Romans 12:2 is, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of [Yahweh]" (KJV). Both Maizie and Byron would be greatly helped if they were to achieve this. In the interim wise counsel should help to guide them.

Doing group activities is a good way to get to know brothers and sisters in the faith, but should not be seen as mere 'spouse hunting'. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul tells us that our union should be with another person in the Body. If one has reached the level of maturity for marriage, time spent with the potential partner should be structured to avoid isolated settings where one may be drawn into tempting and compromising situations. Being engaged for a year may also open the door for such pressures.

Finding one's life partner is not a light decision. When Yahweh's face is earnestly





## Relationships form the core of the human experience.

sought He will reveal His will and help us to make the right choices. He alone sees tomorrow and knows how our personalities will change with time. It is not for us, therefore, to choose the person we think will make us the perfect husband or wife based on looks, personality, position, or any temporal thing – these attributes may change with time. Instead we should place our needs before Yahweh, and set our minds and hearts to wait on Him, praying sincerely

about any potential partner we may meet in the Body of Yahshua, and be willing to accept His final word. This approach may sound like an act of faith – it is. Faith is the core of our lives. Many have approached their relationships from this angle, and have been blessed with healthy lifelong marriages. On the contrary, to depart from this basic approach is almost always a recipe for disaster, the result being broken, and miserable, unhappy homes.

In reality not everyone will marry, so while you are young enjoy your friendships without becoming sidetracked by the desire for a partner. Seek to absorb yourself with Yahweh and His work. Motivate your friends to do outreach work or other types of ministry together. It is frightening how quickly these years will fly, and in the end only that which you did for Yahweh will last.

# LOVE AND DON'T BREAK THE RULES

Continued

Start a  
Discussion  
Hub!

## A topic for discussion:

**Robert and Sandra stated in their article:**

"If one has reached the level of maturity for marriage, time spent with the potential partner should be structured to avoid isolated settings where one may be drawn into tempting and compromising situations. Being engaged for a year may also open the door for such pressures."

The word 'maturity' gives the impression of being old, or at least serious about life and able to handle anything it throws at you.

- | Is there such a thing as the right 'level of maturity' for marriage?
- | How do you know you have reached 'the level of maturity' Robert and Sandra talk about?
- | When you're young and in love can you think maturely, that is wisely, sensibly, responsibly, prudently (just a few of the synonyms my computer has thrown up!)?
- | What do you think is meant by "drawn into tempting and compromising situations"?
- | Does this sound like young people are not able to keep themselves pure and therefore shouldn't be trusted?
- | How do people who are not Believers maintain their marriage, some staying together for fifty or even sixty years, often getting married at a level that perhaps would not be considered 'mature' by today's standards?

Please send your contributions to Ha'Shem "Discussion Hub" at the address on the inside cover. All appropriate comments, ideas, suggestions and substantiated facts will be published in the next issue of Ha'Shem.



So what are you waiting for?

Join in the discussion and  
let your voice be heard  
NOW!"

# TOUCHING THE WIDER COMMUNITY

by Esther Lodge



Connecting people to Yahweh and to each other and helping them to grow in fellowship and relationships are two of the things the church does. Opening doors or creating environments for this to happen regularly in those neighbourhoods where the church finds itself should be in our minds consistently. Many opportunities do present themselves to us to support and help meet needs within the wider community. We urge you to be alert to these opportunities and be courageous enough to take them up. The end result is usually that people are drawn closer to each other and to Yahweh.

Esther Lodge reports on an interesting opportunity in her town.

It is an idea that could readily be emulated to promote something similar where you live in order to bring people together.





# TOUCHING THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Continued

## Mothers Making Friends Through MOPS

Esther writes...

After living in Freeport, Illinois for a few months Lynn Jackman longed to return to Southern Illinois, but a chance encounter connected her to MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) International and made Freeport feel a little more like home.

Lynn came to Freeport from Marion, Illinois in June of 2005. Her husband's job moved them from the area where she had lived for thirty years. "I had a built-in buffer from infancy" Lynn said, "and when you lose that, it's hard." Not long before leaving Marion, Lynn quit her position as Program Assistant for the United States Department of Agriculture to become a stay-at-home Mom. Lynn explained that it felt crazy to go through all these changes within three months. "I didn't know a single living soul when we moved up here," Lynn recalled. The loneliness got to her at first. This outgoing mother of two preschoolers said that she often found herself wandering

in Wal-Mart (store similar to Asda) surrounded by people, yet feeling alone. "There was nobody to call to help with where to eat or shop. The

Parkinson. Chris explained that MOPS is a group devoted to connecting moms to each other, celebrating motherhood and inspiring




days stretched out in front of me. It was kind of lonely," Lynn said.

On a visit to her realtor's house Lynn made a new acquaintance, Cheryl Smielewski, her realtor's neighbour. Cheryl, also a mother of preschoolers, invited Lynn to a MOPS meeting. A second invitation came when she struck up a conversation at a local swimming pool, with a former MOPS coordinator, Chris

women. After the second invitation, Lynn decided to attend a meeting.

Lynn's first impression of MOPS surpassed her expectations. "It was a lot more than I thought it would be. I thought there would be five women." In reality, around 30 women of diverse ages filled the room. Finding a table, Lynn sat down and the women began to introduce themselves. Though she could not recall the topic



“I didn’t know a single living soul when we moved up here”

of the first meeting, Lynn remembered the ‘homely’ atmosphere and the women she had met.

More than two years later, Lynn looks forward to another year at MOPS. She said that these women form her new support system that she lost in the move a few years before.

“There’s always someone there who has done it before, who is more than willing to help you out,” Lynn explained. Today, Lynn encourages mothers she meets to visit MOPS. “There’s such a diverse group at MOPS that everybody can find their niche,” Lynn said.

Outside of the meetings, Lynn and her MOPS friends have formed a knitting group and a book club. On Wednesdays they take over the Galena St. McDonald’s play area. The local pools and parks are also frequented by groups of MOPS moms. For Lynn, connecting with others who understand what she goes through as a mother and as a woman is the most important part of belonging to MOPS.

### The Meetings

Meetings start in September and run through to May. The MOPS group Lynn attends is held the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 9:15am to 11:30am at Crossroads Community Church. “It’s free to all moms, thanks to sponsorship from Crossroads Church,” Lynn said. Normally the membership fee is around \$20. The group is open to mothers of children from birth to five years of age.

Each meeting follows a similar format. As women arrive they are greeted and encouraged to sign in and enjoy refreshments. “We have food, fellowship and time to get

to know one another.” Piles of cookies, fruit and other goodies fill a table, along with hot and cold drinks. Smaller groups of four to six women take turn bringing the refreshments.

A craft table is often open. Crafts vary from making a purse out of a placemat to planting your own herbs in a canning jar.

“We have a different speaker each time we meet,” Lynn said. Speakers cover relevant topics such as tips on potty training, choosing a pediatrician, or how to make and decorate a birthday cake.

A team made up of MOPS members plans the meetings. Standard positions exist such as coordinator, mentor mom and craft coordinator. “New positions can be created,” Lynn said, “if you feel you have something to contribute.”

### The History

MOPS began in Wheat Ridge, Colorado in 1973 with eight moms. As word spread, the group grew rapidly. By 1988 MOPS had expanded beyond the United States and changed its name to MOPS International, Inc. Reaching out to women around the world, MOPS circulates a newsletter, produces a radio program and publishes numerous books. In some areas there are MOPS specifically for teen mothers. The MOPS website, [www.mops.org](http://www.mops.org), provides information on how to locate MOPS meetings, start a new MOPS programme or find encouraging stories and relevant information for mothers.

# GLOBAL PRAYER

By Ruth Sherrington-Powis



Global Prayer is put together to help us to focus on issues that concern the Global Church Community.

Yahweh's people are found across the world in communities differing in size and culture; however, these communities are all here to love and reach out to the world with the Good News of Yahshua.

The apostle Paul encourages the believing community to pray for each other, for the message, for the lost, for those struggling and for those who are on the frontline building Congregations. We do need to pray for one another especially when we recall Yahshua's words... "In this world you will have trouble!" (John 16:33)



“...that He would gather together in one the children of [Yahweh] who were scattered abroad.” John 11:52 (NKJV)

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# Focus on the Prodigal

## PONDER POINT

The well-known story of the prodigal son is found in **Luke chapter 15** and is the climax of three parables with parallel themes – restoration of that which was lost. The word ‘prodigal’ does not actually occur in the New Testament but is a term that has been attributed to the young son because of his wasteful, extravagant and riotous living. The term in Christian thought has been extended to apply to one who has left the fellowship of believers and then returned to ‘the fold’. Somehow I find it hard to equate the term prodigal in its true sense to some of the most genuine people who have left the believing community and yet still maintained a dignified lifestyle. Have they been wasteful and recklessly extravagant? One could try to spiritualise this concept, but a closer look at the word ‘wasted’ in the context of the parable, reveals the Greek diaskorpizo which means to scatter, as in the scattering of grain in the winnowing process. The heart of the Father is to welcome back to the community of believers those who have ‘scattered their substance’ far and wide, that every stray grain might become part of the end harvest. There is a call going out to return to the Father’s house and be fully restored as sons and daughters.

# PRAYER POINTS

**Pray that those who were once a part of the community of believers might:**

**Purpose** re-evaluate their life situation and rediscover their purpose in life;

**Return** be challenged by the Holy Spirit to return to a place of worship and service;

**Overcome** be motivated by the Holy Spirit to address situations and overcome barriers that would prevent their return;

**Direction** determine anew their direction and head for the arms of the heavenly Father;

**Integration** be successfully integrated into the household of faith along with those who have remained 'in the Father's house'.

**Pray for those who are part of the community of believers to:**

**Grace** manifest the grace of the Father towards those who return;

**Acceptance** exhibit acceptance without reservation and resentment;

**Love** pray that all may be united through a bond of love in the unity of the Spirit.

For more inspiration on how to pray read the parable in Luke 15:1-32

Send your prayer requests, along with your name, church and country to:  
Ha'Shem Magazine , 'Global Prayers',  
92-94 North Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4EE ENGLAND  
or Email: [admin@CongYah.co.uk](mailto:admin@CongYah.co.uk)