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TRUTH Magazine

Fall 2017 Edition

Happy Thanksgiving

As you gather with your family and friends,
don't forget to thank the Lord for the many
blessings He has given you.



Truth Edition

Working Together to Advance the Grace of God
and Impact the World for Christ



GRACE GOSPEL
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TRUTH Magazine

Endeavoring to set forth God's purpose and grace according to 2 Timothy 1:8-11

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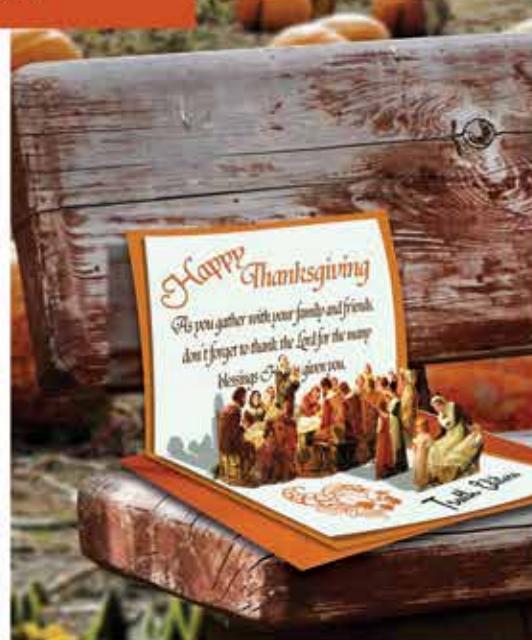
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WORKING TOGETHER IN ZAMBIA

by Phil Long
Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages
Grace Bible College



One of the key initiatives the Grace Gospel Fellowship is pursuing focuses on the benefit and impact of partnerships in ministry. When I heard that Phil Long, a professor at Grace Bible College and my good friend, was teaming up with a crew of pastors and leaders to teach at a Bible conference in Zambia, my radar went up and I sensed this was a good opportunity for us to further this effort of working together. As I introduce the team it is clear that many different perspectives are represented which gives us tremendous balance in how we approach ministry and people in general.

Those who participated on the Zambia Ministry Team were:

- Jim Moore—former GMI missionary and current GMI and GBC Board Member
- Phil Long—professor at GBC and teaching staff at Rush Creek Bible Church in Byron Center, MI
- Robert Nix—President of Berean Bible Institute in Slinger, WI
- Joel Molina—GGF Council Member and Pastor at Grace Bible Church in Anaheim, CA
- Cliff Tulsie—GGF Council Member, GMI Board Member, and Pastor of Lakeview Bible Church in Carter Lake, IA
- Russ Kopp—Church lay leader and his daughter, Leah

Matt Amundsen, GGF Executive Director

Jim Moore came to my office almost a year ago and asked if I would be interested in traveling to Zambia to do pastoral training. He had just returned from a very positive meeting with the Zambia church leadership where the Grace Church of Zambia had clarified their vision and goals and had created a list of ministry priorities and needs—one of the major needs being pastoral training. Many pastors and elders do not have the opportunity to receive any formal Bible College training, so I immediately said yes, and shortly thereafter Jim began working with the Zambian church leadership to plan one of the largest church conferences of the Grace Church of Zambia. What made this conference unique was the participation of the leadership of the Zambian Church. Not

“...and shortly thereafter Jim began working with the Zambian church leadership to plan one of the largest church conferences of the Grace Church of Zambia.”

only did the national church leadership do most of the planning, they also provided some financial support for housing, food, and travel for many of the participants.

After visiting Livingstone and Victoria Falls, we spent the day before the conference visiting several ministries around Kabwe. We visited the Zambian Grace Church offices for an orientation to the conference led by the chairman of the Zambian Grace church, Chrispan Mundia, and Eric Mango, currently serving as a missionary in Malawi. We also toured the grounds of the Zambian Grace Bible Institute.

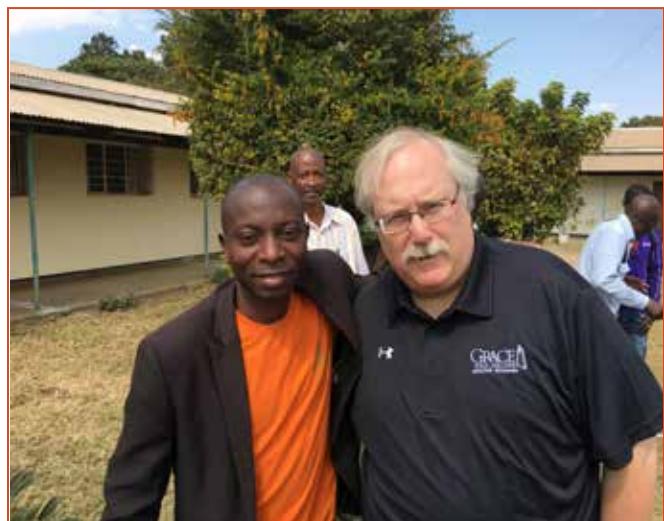
In the afternoon we visited Safe Haven, a ministry for young people who are deaf that has been led by Roy and Sarah Mwanza for the last several years. Roy drove half the group in his truck and we followed in a less manly SUV down a very rutted dirt road through several small collections of houses which were certainly “off the grid.” At one point we needed to get out of our vehicle so it could make it over a set of railroad

tracks. Roy and Sarah host about 16 children in a small house with another 16 away at school. Roy has some cattle, pigs, many chickens and rabbits, and even a few pigeons (for fertilizer and food). They have a wide range of vegetables and fruit trees as well. The main house has solar panels and two wells (one for drinking and another for irrigation).

Even though Roy and Sarah have provided wonderfully for the children, the need is great. The solar panels do not provide sufficient power, so they are in need of a few more, as well as a new converter to charge the batteries. Roy has a good pump for his drinking water, but the irrigation pump needs to be replaced. The ministry is supported by some local ministries and some gifts from American churches and organizations (Grace Ministries International, for example), but Roy and Sarah have more needs. Roy’s truck is very old and in need of repair, or better yet, replacement. He needs to navigate the dirt road every day to get the kids to



Jim Moore—former GMI missionary and current GMI board member—teaching a seminar in Zambia



Professor Phil Long from Grace Bible College impacted the lives of many Zambians with his teaching



Working with a translator takes some getting used to the first time

school and he relies on his truck every day. Pray about these needs.

The Sunday before the conference we attended services at Grace Centre. Cliff Tulsie preached on Luke 8. After the service we traveled to the Grace Church in Kamushanga. This was a combined service with more than 350 people from nine Zambian churches and representatives from both Malawi and Zimbabwe. The service had been going for a while when we arrived at 10 AM and we were warmly greeted with singing and dancing...*lots* of singing and dancing. As the “special guests” we were ushered to our guest seats (this was a very unusual experience for me, although I think I could get used to it).

After several sets of announcements and a long time of introductions and offering, Jim Moore presented a short report on last year’s leadership conference. The result of that meeting was a clear vision statement for the Zambian church as well as eight priorities for ministry in Zambia. This was a very important presentation which seemed to be well accepted by the members present.

Robert Nix preached on Philippians 1:20-21, “to live is Christ, to die is gain.” I followed Robert and preached through Ephesians 2:8-10. We used Chrispan as an interpreter, although many of the Zambians understand English. If you have ever preached with an interpreter, it is quite the experience. Sometimes I would say a short sentence and Chrispan would translate with far more words than I expected, sometimes with a short phrase. I assume he was correcting something I said which was culturally horrifying. I also learned my humor does not translate very well.

After the five-hour service we were invited to



The group who attended the conference in Zambia

Pastor Winter’s house for a traditional Zambian meal and a Zambian meal includes *nshima*. It looks like a lump of mashed potatoes, but is actually white corn-meal and water. You are supposed to pull a chunk out and roll it into a ball, then mix it with whatever else is served with it, called “relishes.” These included a dish of cabbage, something that looked like spinach, and a bowl of caterpillars (I was warned and so avoided the experience...Joel thought they were pieces of beef). I will admit I did not fully indulge in the culture and used a fork to eat my *nshima*, but others enjoyed theirs Zambian style.

The Conference

Grace Church of Zambia rented rooms at a Catholic school for the meetings and housing for those who traveled to the conference. The grounds were ideal since they provided rooms for people to stay during the meetings as well as a kitchen facility for meals.

Seventy pastors, elders, and church leaders attended from Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Congo. Each morning began with worship led by Eric Mango and a devotional from one of the African leaders—Joseph Asong and Kennedy Simtowe. The conference offered four parallel sessions each day with a lunch break. The five teachers ran 62 workshops over the five days. Everyone taught through their material twice, so that the leaders could choose multiple topics. There were 12 sessions on Ephesians which did not repeat.

Russ Kopp focused on discipleship in his sessions. “Like the United States, discipleship has a strong interest in the churches in Africa. In the first session, I asked the group of pastors, elders and leaders, ‘Do you have a plan for discipleship?’ And, the answer was, “No.”

Similar to the United States, the term ‘discipleship’ is a common and recognizable word; we just seemingly don’t know what a comprehensive plan looks like. In the next few days, I hope to facilitate foundational principles of discipleship that will help these men and women go back to their churches with new energy and commitment toward living forward in Christ.” Russ began with the simple observation that a disciple of Jesus is “someone who has chosen to follow Jesus.”

When Jesus walked the earth, that was the invitation and direction He provided to those He personally recruited as His very first disciples. His core message is discovered with two simple and profound words “Follow Me.” These two simple words will transform a life anew and toward a deeper level of understanding how to love like Jesus loves. Jesus blended into the culture and the religious institution of that time by assuming the role of Rabbi. A rabbi would gather a group of followers, calling them disciples, to follow in their footsteps and learn the rabbi’s teachings and lifestyle. This form of apprenticeship is an excellent way for the disciple to immerse himself with the life and teaching principles of the rabbi. As the disciple follows in the footsteps of the rabbi, he becomes more and more like the rabbi he is following. As Jesus once said, “Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

Robert Nix said, “I had a wonderful opportunity to share three sessions today. We looked at prophecy and mystery, the distinct apostleship of Paul, and what it looks like to follow Paul in this dispensation. I was extremely impressed by the African pastors and their questions. Many of them knew what the issues were and were able to relate well with what was being discussed. I find it interesting that there is real concern with the importance of the Grace Message and building up believers in the faith. These sessions covered topics such as God’s Prophetic Program to the Nation of Israel and the importance of recognizing the distinct ministry of the Apostle Paul.”

Zambia veteran Joel Molina seemed to know everyone and was always talking to some old friend from his time serving in Kabwe as a missionary. About this conference, Joel said, “*Takwaba uwaba na Yesu* sung in an African way demonstrates the joy in worshipping together through cultural diversity. Indeed, there is no one like Jesus. It was a tiring two days of teaching and interacting with pastors and elders in the sessions but rewarding to see them grow in their knowledge of God and His Word. One pastor told me that he is thankful

“¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

for the opportunity and privilege to attend the conference and to receive teachings that enable him to know and understand God’s Word better.” Pastor Joel’s sessions focused on issues critically important for doing pastoral ministry in Zambia. To do this, he emphasized three nonnegotiable points. First, the entire Bible is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is simply wrong to say that only part of the Bible is inspired or only part of the Bible is God’s Word. Second, the Bible is the Word of God. It is misleading and untrue to say that the Bible contains the word of God but not the Word of God. Finally, the Bible alone is the sole and final basis in all matters pertaining to our faith and practice.

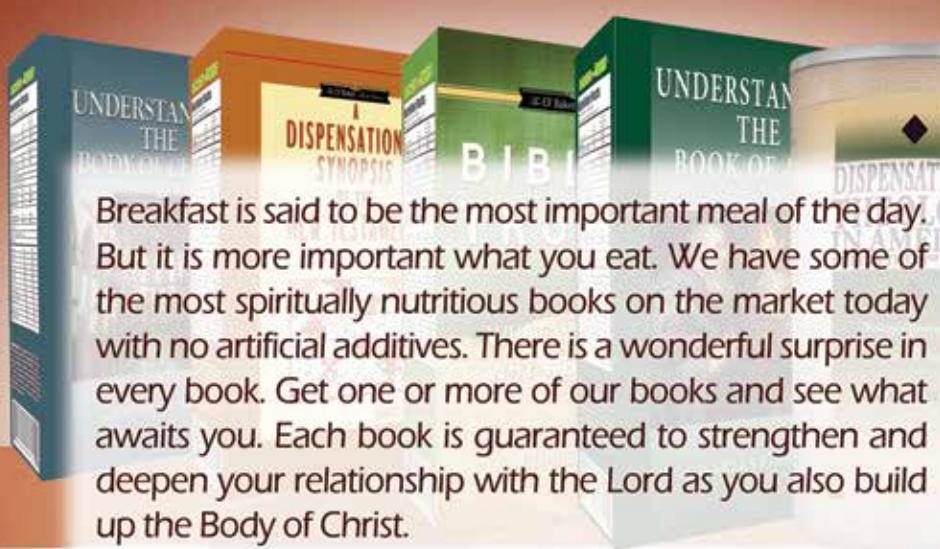
Cliff Tulsie taught five sessions on Christian Counseling. Cliff said “It was a real joy and privilege to share today with the pastors and church leaders about how to develop a theology to do Christian counseling. They were very engaging and receptive and shared how this topic and skill was highly needed in their ministry. We talked about how ‘good theology makes for good psychology’ and how the Scriptures are able to address all the issues that counseling deals with. It is so fulfilling to see their hearts for ministry and the people that they serve. Please continue to pray that we are effective and that these spiritual leaders can see the true value and relevance of what we are teaching.” Cliff’s sessions connected biblical doctrine with practical living. Christian counseling can be very personal but often lacks good theology. Christian counseling is the process where two or more people meet together in the presence of Christ, learn how the truth of God’s

Word can set them free from whatever is entangling them (Hebrews 12:1), and then can conform them to the image of Christ as they walk by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, following the work of Neil Anderson.

My sessions were somewhat different since I was teaching through the book of Ephesians. This allowed me to teach on both doctrine and practice following the flow of the book. I especially enjoyed several stimulating discussions on Paul's description of spiritual darkness in Ephesians. The pastors and elders had many questions on how to deal with serious false teaching in their communities and often made a connection between spiritual warfare and some local evangelists who were preaching a "health and wealth" gospel. I certainly think the "health and wealth" gospel is a serious problem in America, but the claims made by false teachers in Zambia are quite pernicious. In fact, it was hard for some of the pastors to compete with them and they felt some despair. By paying close attention to the text of the Bible, it is possible to give an answer to those who preach "another gospel!"

I was quite pleased with the level of thoughtful reflection on the text of Ephesians from the group. I was being taught as much as I was teaching. In several of my sessions we had stimulating discussions. When I was teaching through Ephesians 3, a number of questions about the meaning of prophecy were asked since many pastors in Zambia take the title of prophet without any biblical reason for their claim. A great deal of interest was expressed in the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4. As is often the case, the mid-Acts position of baptism raises some questions about church practice. These questions seemed to be magnified in Zambia. Other very specific issues were raised by the pastors which I have never encountered in America, such as the practice of raising a bride-price to get married. I am thankful for the pastors as they helped me to understand the unique issues pastors face in Zambia.

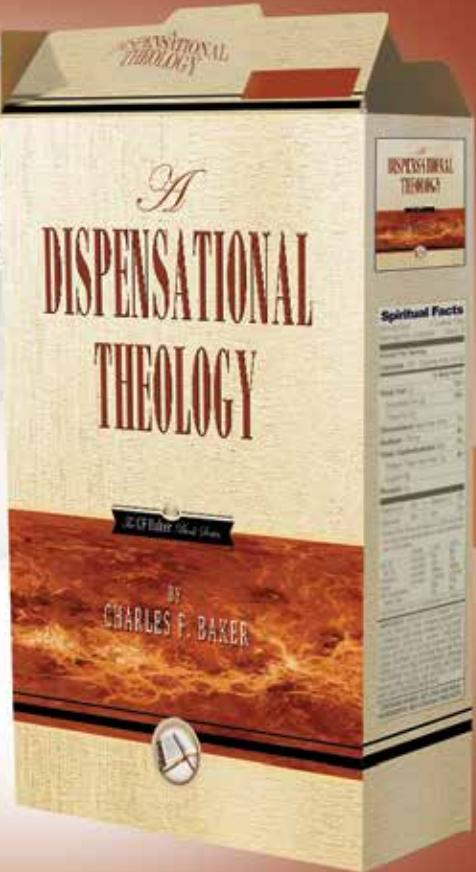
Even as we were finishing up our sessions, there was talk of future conferences, perhaps focusing on a wider range of church leadership or youth. I am thankful God allowed me to have this experience and I look forward to a chance to return to Zambia. ■



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GRACE

Part 2

Our Message
Our Theology
Our Practice

Ken B. Kemper, President
Grace Bible College

This is the second half of a larger two-part article begun in the last issue of TRUTH Magazine (Volume 67, Issue 2, July-September 2017). The full context is the three overlapping and interdependent aspects of grace for our times: the message, theology, and practice of grace. In the last issue, the message of grace was explored, as well as a good portion of the theology. In this second part, we begin in the midst of the theology of grace. It was previously discussed that our theology of grace is distinct in nature from churches that are not mid-Acts dispensationalists in some important ways. It was also brought out that our theology is based on a crucified, resurrected Savior who lives in the heavenlies as our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) and the reality of the indwelling Holy Spirit who intercedes for us before God the Father (Romans 8:26-27). This was not a reality for believers prior to this dispensation of Grace. Additionally, the Church is not just earthly disciples looking to inherit the kingdom as recorded in the Gospels prior to Christ's death, but it is a new reality of stewardship in God's household of faith.

Grace Theology is about Identity

As we continue our exploration of the theology of grace, it can be stated that our theology is strongly about identification. Paul explains to the Roman believers that they were identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:1-7). This is the spiritual baptism of identification which attributes grace to all believers who by faith come to God, trusting in that once and for all act of Christ as the propi-

tiation (satisfaction of God's righteous wrath) for the sin of mankind (Romans 3:25). The believer of today is identified as "complete in Christ" (Colossians 2:10), which according to our Grace theology means one can do nothing of his own to add to what Christ did fully on the cross (Hebrews 9:26-28). Our identity as fully righteous before God (Titus 3:5-6) is a key element of our Grace theology which is not present in other theologies outside of the Pauline epistles.

Phillip Yancey (What's So Amazing About Grace? 1997) states this reality this way, "Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more...and grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us less" (p. 71). Our theological emphasis of grace addresses the cultural confusion and identity crises of our times. Grace theology asks believers to trust the reality of the Scriptures: that a believer's identity is that of a forgiven saint who is complete in Christ and not someone "on a journey toward faith." Others purport this "faith journey," which is more similar to some non-Christian faiths, and they also call on people to be nonjudgmental toward anyone else on their individual journeys. These ideas are not based on Scripture or the truth of who God is and what He did. Rather, they are based on popular pluralism (everyone is right) which holds nonjudgment and private faith as higher values than truth.

Grace Theology is about the Church

Our theology of grace informs and guards our understanding of what is the corporate gathering called

the Church. The distinction of truth for corporate application to the Church today versus what was true for Israel in the Old Testament or in the Gospels in a different dispensation is vital. Paul writes about this in his first letter to the believers in Corinth. In chapter 10, he recalls Israel's history and how God "endured" and yet punished them as a warning for their instruction. "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did" (10:6, and similarly in 10:11). "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall" (10:12). He follows with some pointed admonitions about temptation and the faithfulness of God for the present dispensation of the Church, the Body of Christ (10:13). This is also true regarding the practices of the local assembly.

Our theology helps differentiate today's church structure and leadership from that of Israel of the past and from the earthly reign of Christ in future prophecy. It is our theology which gives instruction for the use of spiritual gifts (Romans 12:3-8), the lack of adherence to the law for any righteousness (Colossians 2:20-23), and the importance of the celebration of the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 11:17-26). It is our Grace theology which describes the absence of sacraments for the present Church age due to the nature of our standing in Christ as complete. I recall a missionary friend who was trying to understand our Grace position and fellowship asking me if we had a "charismatic group" within our fellowship. It was easy for me to respond, "No, because they would no longer be a part of our group doctrinally." Our theology and understanding from Scripture for the present dispensational character of the Church as a distinctive Pauline revelation after Pentecost is our distinguishing attribute. Our theology guides our form of assembly and vision of ministry to the world.

According to the Apostle Paul, and contrary to social trends among America's youth, the Church is incredibly important and valuable. I often quote Ephesians 5 where Paul writes; "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (verse 25). The church, like our wives, are worth dying for! If I love God, then logically I love what God loves – the church! I realize the reference in this passage is to the Universal Church as Christ's Body, but the local church is simply (by Pauline definition) the local manifestation of the Universal Church, not a separate entity.

Our Theology is Inclusive and Unifying

It is important to realize that the basis of our Grace theology is God's inclusive plan for unity with people of all types. Paul has a very clear, and yet often missed, emphasis in this theology of grace of inclusiveness and unity. He explains this to the Corinthians when they had divisions (1 Corinthians 3:1-9); to the Philippians when they were self-serving in attitude (Philippians 3:1-8); and to the Romans when they were calloused in unity (Romans 15:1-7); as well as in other books with different emphases. Ironically, this major emphasis which shows us how grateful we should be for this theology of grace is often replaced by an emphasis of our "correctness" and the "exclusion" of others from fellowship if they do not see everything in exactly the same way we do! This is a huge failure on our part when we allow our arrogance to override our theology. Would not our theology be much more attractive if it were held and taught with "grace" and demonstrated our high value for fellowship and acceptance? This leads to the last area, our practice of grace.

Our Practice of Grace

This is the really fun part of doing theology – how it works! How unfortunate it is that many of us do not understand that we LIVE our theology every day. What you live out is the clear example for all of what you really believe deep in your heart and mind. It is not just what you espouse in an article such as this or teach in a class. We see the evil in this world, and readily recognize that such people do not have a strong theological belief in God and His nature, human dignity, responsibility, or accountability; which are present throughout the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. We see promiscuity and deception because people do not believe in a holy God and His desire for our respect of others or of our own bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Even more alarming is the present day absence of any theological belief in the authority of the Bible to explain reality versus one's desire for their own personal liberty. We live in a world based on popular pluralism which simply hopes to exclude no one - therefore is "nonjudgmental," and cannot take any one theology seriously - except the belief in self and personal rationale as the supreme arbiter of truth and good.

Christians, and even those espousing a theology of grace, may write and teach about scriptural truths, and yet practice something quite contrary. When we

How unfortunate it is that many of us do not understand that we LIVE our theology every day. What you live out is the clear example for all of what you really believe deep in your heart and mind.

do this, it exposes our rhetoric as self-seeking (to be looked upon as spiritual and biblical) rather than grace-filled. I am sorry that even some of our past “grace” writings and teachings were characterized by this type of attack on other brothers for nuances of differences under the guise of “truth seeking.” Let us not fail to realize that “grace” is not simply a message or a theology to believe. This would be contradictory to the truth of Scripture! Paul clearly shows that the Bible is “God-breathed and useful for teaching [doctrine], rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” We love these things as Bible students and teachers, but the passage goes on to say, “SO THAT [this is a common purpose clause in Scripture to show the ‘why’] the man of God may be thoroughly equipped [mature], for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

There are some strong, salient implications for our practice in grace:

- *Our theology is to mature and grow us to be more like Christ.* What we believe is translated into Christlikeness due to the power of grace in our lives through the indwelling Holy Spirit. He works in us (Philippians 1:6) because it is His purpose for saving us—to transform us (Romans 12:1, 2). If we are not increasingly kind, accepting, forgiving, committed, truthful, and humble, we aren’t living our theology. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of our theology in our own lives (Galatians 5:2-23). Far too long into my faith journey, I came to realize from Scripture that this is practiced and evidenced in relationships. We will never know if we have grown in grace except through genuine relationships which are honest and growing. It just may be true that our “best” theologians are not those sitting in ivory towers teaching or writing, but those who are practicing what they know of the grace of God relationally with others in the Body of Christ. This is clear from Paul’s explanation of growth in Ephesians 4: “Speaking the truth in love we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ” (verse 15).

- *Our theology is to make us more and more useful to serve Christ and be His ambassadors in the world.* Our maturing is not for our sake, but for God to use us to impact others! I often challenge students at

Grace toward this goal. They are caught offguard when they hear that I don’t put high value in the singing and expressing heartfelt devotion to God in chapel or church as a sign of maturity. My mom told me in my teen years when I defended a friend who promised allegiance, “Talk is cheap, Kenny, and easy to say.” I realize that to merely speak allegiance is elementary and anyone can do it, but a sign of growing up in Christ is being His tool to minister to others. Anything less than this is immature, possibly even carnal, because it is self-serving and does not recognize the “grace” given for serving. Paul says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ [by grace] to DO good works” (Ephesians 2:10), and “Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people...eager to DO what is good” (Titus 2:14).

- *Our theology is not opposed to effort.* Grace is repeatedly juxtaposed with works for earning God’s favor and redemption throughout Paul’s writings. We have already noted this in Ephesians 2:8- 9, but in Romans 4, the faith of Abraham is held up as an example of “crediting for righteousness.” It is clearly “to the man who does not work, but trusts in God”...and it is “apart from work” (4:5, 6). He goes on to show that the law did not justify anyone, and the promise (given prior to the law of Moses) was an act of grace, and an example of faith (4:14-16) in the manner in which we also have faith – apart from the law or works to save. Dallas Willard points out grace is opposed to earning, not effort. Earning is an attitude (self-reliant and contrary to grace which is God-dependent) whereas effort is an action. This is an interesting distinction which helps me understand my personal dissatisfaction with those who would have us never take any action because we are “Grace believers.” I agree that we are saved by grace, and Paul points out in Colossians 2 (verses 6 and 7) that we also mature by grace, but this is not an excuse for complacent resolve to never take any action at all. No, on the contrary, Paul clearly admonishes efforts to “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12), as “God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose” (2:13). There is a resultant practice

of our faith through the grace given us. The practice of our spiritual gifts ('charis' which translated as both grace and gift) is a divine empowerment of God for use and action to build up the Body of Christ (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 13)! To give no effort as an excuse because the grace of God is "sufficient" is to deny the whole purpose for God's redeeming and gifting us for His use!

● *Our theology of grace is not a license to sin.*

There are many who cannot understand that it is God's action alone that saves and our action is only to believe. They therefore draw an incorrect conclusion that they have no responsibility at all for their actions. Thus, there is a lack of incentive to holy living. Paul addresses this in Romans 6, and concluded that to live sinfully does not befit a regenerated saint. The Holy Spirit desires to increasingly transform personal and practical holiness to mirror positional holiness by His sanctifying work (2 Corinthians 5:15). The grace believer lives by the internal motivation of gratitude for God's act of redemption rather than by the external motivation of reward or punishment as in past ages. It is interesting to note that motivational studies have repeatedly proven that external motivation is short-lived and shallow compared to internal or intrinsic motivation. By the way, God knew this all along, before social scientists began to study it! Our theology is a motivation for gracious, thankful living, rather than fearful or tentative living. Our theology motivates us to initiate effort to minister to people, preach the message of grace, teach, and live out God's grace in this world.

● *Our theology is never an excuse for laziness.* It is true that our position in Christ is all by grace, and is completely God's initiative. Paul stated that because of grace he worked hard (1 Corinthians 15:10). This is, as stated above, inspirational for commitment and dedication to what God is about in this world. He is about loving all people. He is about the advancement of the Church. He is about redeeming and transforming people who will in turn, as they mature, do the same. Understanding this burdens the heart for what God's heart aches for, and it mobilizes the mature believer to act by the power of God to advance the priorities of God in this world today.

Summary: Consistent Grace

Consistency exists when our message, our theology, and our practice are clearly apparent to all. If our distinctives are proclaimed or practiced without

grace, we simply appear as "old condemning critics" even if there is truth to our teaching. According to the most recent Barna Group study about present cultural trends, being a serious Bible student is looked down upon by a growing sample of the younger American population. Bible students/Christians are perceived as "judgmental and mean." Whether or not this perception is correct is not the point, but it is the very presence of this perception that is important to understand as we seek to teach a new generation the value of our message and theology. The presence and vitriol of these arguments online, as well as in print, between atheists and theologians is a "turn off" to a growing percentage of young Americans who dismiss committed Christian faith due to the language of the arguments and the lack of "grace" exemplified. This shows a need to clearly disagree, but to do so gracefully and respectfully.

Our practice of inclusive grace to invite others to study the Scriptures and learn for themselves about God's incredible grace and love for all mankind is kind. To allow the Holy Spirit with honesty to bring about conviction of lifestyles is trusting God to do His work. We must engage others to help them learn from the Word. We can offer guidance in a grace hermeneutic to assist others to see how the Bible is understandable when studied from our dispensational perspective. Our practice cannot be separated from our message or theology, either. We need to base our practice for the local church and our individual conduct solidly in the body of truth for today. The popular vegan culture, which some believers have stated to be God's design for Christians, is not an instruction of this dispensation any more than are the Jewish kosher principles! The understanding of spiritual gifts and their place in personal and church life must also be consistent. The temptation to gravitate to what can be seen and experienced is humanly attractive, but at the same time, it is also quite deceptive. Our practice cannot be undiscerning, or a denial of truth in any way. Rather, we must graciously hold to the Truth and trust God to illuminate the Scriptures while building relational integrity with others.

The grace of God is amazing! Our message, our theology, and our practice is – by God's enablement – capable of transformations where it is applied. It is God's grace and may we believe, seek to understand, hold to, and practice it with great appreciation. Amen. ■

Expect a BreakThrough

Jeremy Clark
Executive Director
Grace Ministries International



In missions a year is a long time. Sometimes frustratingly so, having worked the soil, prepared the field, and sown the seed expecting abundance only to be disappointed with an underwhelming yield. Providing a measure of comfort is the knowledge that God Himself experiences the same. Having prepared a field and even having constructed a winepress in anticipation of a substantial harvest, God planted a vineyard “with the choicest vine” expecting “it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes” (Isaiah 5:1-2). His people, Israel, failed Him over and over, but God would not be deterred from His ultimate desire for “all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4b). At other times, events moved quickly and more productively. While ministering during His short time on earth to this same nation of Israel, Jesus paused and made an observation to His disciples, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35). In this case, the yield was overwhelming. All that was needed was the workers.

Last year afforded me the opportunity to observe two ministries in their infancy. This year provided the occasion to watch these ministries converge and enhance each other. Paraguay is Grace Ministries International’s newest field where GMI missionaries Alex and Deltha Gulart served by themselves from June 2015 to last October when their coworkers, Jerry and Sandi Bomers, arrived. In February 2016, sitting in the

Gularts’ 18th floor apartment overlooking Ciudad del Este and much of Foz de Iguazu on the Brazilian side of Paraná River, Alex, Deltha and I chatted about their dreams for the ministry in Paraguay and beyond. We talked conceptually about planting an international church downtown while making mention of a few individuals, such as Luis and Mabel, who had been meeting with Alex and Deltha for Bible studies in their home.

BreakThrough is a Taekwondo and martial arts team which formed hastily but purposefully last January when team leader, Jon Young, worked together with GMI to organize a mission trip to Costa Rica in just six short months. He assembled a team, they trained, raised their funds and performed in front of thousands culminating in two outreach events hosted by each of the churches there affiliated with GMI. Over one hundred people who had never visited either church attended these events and clearly heard the gospel. It was a success. The model worked and the ministries on the ground in Costa Rica were blessed. What now? The team dreamed, refined their purpose, and targeted the GMI work in Paraguay for their next overseas ministry opportunity.

When *BreakThrough* decided on Paraguay there was no church facility though new people continued to visit the Bible studies and meetings in the Gularts’ home. With the addition of the Bomers, the missionary team literally and figuratively redoubled its efforts. While *BreakThrough* wove together the finishing



Christian Mohrhardt broke over 60 ceramic roof tiles with his head during the BreakThrough performances.

Image credit: Artie Bowman

touches of their six demonstration sequences earlier this year, the missionary team in Paraguay signed a lease to rent a building in the middle of Ciudad del Este. As *BreakThrough* continued to develop routines and high-flying breaks designed to wow the masses, the missionary team in Paraguay was also busy transforming their relatively small mass of people into a functioning local church. At just the right time, the two ministries met. The church, desiring to get further established, also wanted to grow. *BreakThrough* wanted to help with both of these goals in any way it could.

Two or three demonstrations into the 13 which *BreakThrough* performed, Alex, seeing a bigger picture, noticed a theme which he developed and conveyed at the conclusion of each of the remaining presentations. Bringing the team up front, he brought to light a few noteworthy items he thought would interest the crowds. Starting with the team leader, Jon, he mentioned how he was adopted from the Philippines as a baby by an American family and then how he had suffered many travails serving in the U.S. Amy in the most recent war in Iraq. Morgan had injured her knee less than two weeks before the trip, but dedicated herself to helping the team in any way she could though unable to perform. Berea, only 14 years old—younger than many of the students in front of whom she performed, dismissed the pursuits other teenager girls her age might think worthwhile in order to train for her second trip with *Breakthrough*. Ronnie, who broke boards with his feet and flawlessly executed countless precision techniques during the demonstrations, is legally blind. Even within the team, no one had



Ronnie Mackensen, who is legally blind, breaks two boards with his feet in rapid succession.

Image credit: Artie Bowman

put these things together and probably had not given any of these “weaknesses” much thought. It is just the way it is and as Christians we have a duty to walk worthy of our calling notwithstanding the difficulties we face (Ephesians 4:1). The message Alex shared was simple. When relying upon Christ’s strength, His grace is sufficient and our weaknesses are something we can boast about because Christ does the heavy lifting in our stead (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). There was no excuse for anyone watching the demonstrations to shrink back from pursuing greatness in the Lord, let alone a relationship with Him.

In the months leading up to *BreakThrough*'s arrival, Grace Bible Church slowly took root. It was as the missionary team had dreamt—a church for all the nations. It was a time when people came and went and a faithful core emerged. Aside from being a global congregation, there were adherents of all kinds of Christian and non-Christian backgrounds and beliefs attending services and meetings. Ciudad del Este borders both Argentina and Brazil attracting people from all over the world. Given the international demographics of the city and the novelty of this new church plant proclaiming God's grace, the missionary team welcomed any ministry which could help them reach thousands and generate contacts in this key South American city.

Perhaps only 5% of the population of Paraguay has accepted the gospel—that Jesus Christ our Lord died for our sins and rose again to give us life. That percentage is likely smaller in Ciudad del Este. During their demonstration, there is a segment where *Break-*

“...as Christians we have a duty to walk worthy of our calling notwithstanding the difficulties we face (Ephesians 4:1).”

Through member Berea Clark jumps on the neck of her teammate, Steven Bonczyk, flipping all the way around him as she lands upright on her feet and Steven on his back. It all happens so fast, but a still shot of this move reveals how Berea swings precariously from Steven's neck by her legs while her nose misses the ground by just a few inches. To most of us, the obvious risk does not seem to supersede the reward of returning both feet to the ground from which they left a few blinks of an eye before. Now let's up the ante. What if our cost-benefit analysis took into account all the people who would hear the gospel because of stunts like this? Consider another example: *BreakThrough* member Christian Moarhardt broke over 60 clay roof tiles during the course of the week and a half in Paraguay...with his head. After the trip Berea shared, “Never in my life did I think I would be able to share the gospel to thousands, most of whom were Catholics, Buddhists, and Muslims. It was truly amazing to see so many people hear and be exposed to the gospel for the first time.”

Over 3,500 people living in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay heard the saving gospel of Jesus Christ from August 2-13. *BreakThrough* shared this life-changing message through thirteen 45-minute, high-energy

demonstrations performed in schools, parks, and other public areas. The presentations depicted man's sin and our need for salvation through faith in Christ's death and resurrection telling the story both through martial arts and the Word of God. Their ability to create this powerful platform for the gospel blessed the members of *Breakthrough* immeasurably.

Grace Bible Church and the GMI missionary team working in Paraguay dutifully realized their part in hosting *BreakThrough* and facilitating their ministry which multiplied the immeasurable blessing—as if that were possible. Numbers fluctuate and change, but during this week and a half in early August over 50 attended a Sunday church service, another 30 attended a Thursday evening Bible study, and then over 20 students gathered for Monday night youth meetings. In addition to putting up the members of *BreakThrough* in their apartments, the missionaries shuttled church attendees to and from services and meetings selflessly giving their time which was reflected in the genuine hospitality of their church. Illustrating this attitude, Luis who has been with the ministry since the beginning along with his wife, Mabel, joyfully greeted those who arrived at the church to worship with this newly formed congregation.



Berea Clark swings from Steven Bonczyk's neck barely missing the ground
Image credit: Artie Bowman



BreakThrough members (left to right) Morgan, Steven, Christian, Berea and Ronnie stand in front of a group of students at the end of a demonstration with GMI missionary Alex Gulart.

A year is a long time in missions. During this past year in Paraguay two new GMI missionary families joined the Gularts with the arrival of the Bomers last October and Talo and Patty Vergara in August while the *BreakThrough* was still visiting. Not only has the church grown numerically, but they have a place to meet which is already at or exceeding capacity. For *BreakThrough* a year allowed them to refine their mission, plan and demonstrations. The Lord prepared them well as they shared the gospel with thousands.



GMI missionary Alex Gulart addresses the congregation of Grace Bible Church during BreakThrough's visit.

For all of us, a year is a long time. Barring the Lord's return another year is inevitable. As you consider your church or the ministries in which you are involved, are you dreaming about what another year, or two, or five might bring? Are you revisiting your vision or purpose while refining your focus? Are you putting your trust in Christ's strength? Not every year are we going to be able to look back and say the yield was abundant. However, we can always look back and say we did everything possible to make it so in the Lord. ■

Through the ministry of *BreakThrough*, the GMI missionary team has seen the following results:

- At least two new people have started attending Grace Bible Church in Ciudad del Este.
- Enough English speakers have associated with the ministry in Paraguay that an English Bible study has begun in the Bomers' apartment.
- Due to the contacts at the schools generated by the *BreakThrough* visits, youth group attendance has doubled averaging nearly 20.
- The women in the church developed a stronger sense of community because of *BreakThrough's* women's self-defense class.
- Doors were opened at four schools which the missionary team had never before visited. One of the government schools invited the Gularts to speak to the students about purity.
- At least six youth are visiting the church from an impoverished neighborhood where *BreakThrough* performed. This visit helped to solidify the connection between the church and this area of the city.

SWADDLED BY GOD

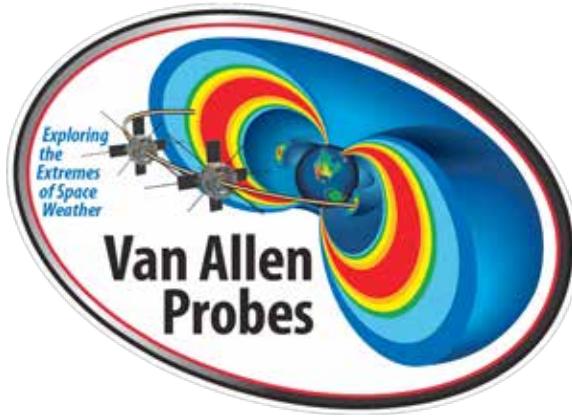


cd
says

On frosty nights, sometimes I lie in bed under a warm blanket with only my nose exposed and thank God for His protecting care. A Bible verse that comes to mind says, “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths...” (Luke 2:7 NKJV). The word swaddling is used in a positive sense of security and protection from harm. Several mothers I’ve talked with say that their small ones usually love to be swaddled.

When the Apostle Paul addressed the crowd at Mars Hill, one of the points he made was, “...(God) made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...” (Acts 17:26). As “scientific knowledge” increases, we have a better understanding of how the Earth is swaddled to make and keep it habitable for mankind. All other bodies in our solar system are extremely unfit for human habitation. General names of what God provides for Earth’s swaddling are radiation shieldings, atmosphere, hydrosphere, and lithosphere.

RADIATION SHIELDINGS are needed as protection from deadly space rays. Below is a Wikipedia depiction of the Two Van Allen belts. The belts are energetic charged particles, most of which originate from the solar wind, captured and held by the Earth’s dipole magnetic field. By trapping the solar wind, the magnetic field deflects those particles and protects the Earth’s atmosphere from destruction. Without a magnetic field there would be almost no atmosphere. Radiation shielding is a major concern for all space exploration, especially missions involving living beings. Ozone (O_3) at high altitudes beneficially reflects ultraviolet radiation even though it contributes to respiratory health problems at ground level.



ATMOSPHERE includes subdivisions such as thermosphere, exosphere, mesosphere, ionosphere, stratosphere, and troposphere to name a few. Space station “garbage” is ejected rather than carried back to earth. It’s incinerated by reentry heating. “Shooting stars” are fragments entering the atmosphere at extremely high velocities. Larger fragments make it all the way and are called meteorites. That’s how the Earth mass is increased approximately 60 tons daily. Earth’s orbital speed averages 66,700 mph. Imagine what an impact even a small rock would have without atmospheric swaddling, far greater than any armor-piercing explosive projectile.

Asia Adventure

May 18-June 1, 2018



*Visit Malaysia, Cambodia & Thailand
Contact Tim Heath [\(509\) 423-0030](mailto:theath@tcmusa.org)*

HYDROSPHERE includes atmospheric water vapor and all bodies of water. Rays from space are harmful to humans. Clouds, ice, land, and bodies of water all reflect and react differently with rays from space. “He (God) commands it (the weather) on the face of the inhabited earth. Whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen” (Job 37:12,13). “The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns. All the rivers flow into the sea yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again” (Eccl 1:6,7). What a succinct description of cleansing by the hydrosphere.

LITHOSPHERE is an approximate 60 mile thick mantle of rock. Mine depths are limited to a few miles by increasing temperature. The Mariana trench is ≈6.6 miles deep, the lowest point we have reached. Underground water is filtered by the lithosphere and is made potable in fountains, springs, and wells. The mantle has tectonic plates that move, collide, and “subduct” involving continental drift, earthquakes, always effecting geologic changes. Continental drift is noted in Genesis 10:25 when the earth was divided during the days of Peleg. The lithosphere is significantly deflected by gravitational forces of the sun and moon which also drive the various tides. The Bible refers to the “fountains of the great deep” (Gen 7:11; 8:2). The lithosphere is certainly not static.

CONCLUSION: On Mars Hill, Paul didn’t end with, “...(God) made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...” but continued “...that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:26-31).

Christians in God’s day of grace have ultimate protection as members of the “Church which is His Body” (Eph 1:22,23), the new entity revealed to Paul by the risen Lord Jesus, previously “hidden in God” (1 Cor 2:7). We are “sealed in Christ Jesus with the Holy Spirit...” (Eph 1:13), perfect security and protection by God Himself. ■

Our O'Hair articles now focus on the last years of his life and ministry. Serious health problems will cause a change in the scope of ministry. While not as prolific as previous decades, O'Hair still made valuable contributions to the Grace Movement. Enjoy the next several editions of TRUTH as we cover the last eight years of Pastor J.C. O'Hair's life.

J. C. O'HAIR AND THE ORIGINS OF THE GRACE MOVEMENT

by Dale S. DeWitt
and
Bryan C. Ross

The Booklet *The Gospel of Christ*

The heading above contains a booklet title: *The Gospel of Christ* with and without Ritualism, with and without Signs, with and without Water Baptism. The booklet addresses major denominational beliefs on the three items in the title. It laments arbitrary pick and choose selections of Old and New Testament miracles, rituals, and washing scenes for modern church practice. Struggling with each other, the denominations claim their practices belong to the church and for some even to salvation and eternal life. The groups O'Hair engages are the Roman Catholic Church (priestly sacramental rituals), Pentecostals (miracles and signs), Lutherans (infant regenerative baptism), Churches of Christ (baptism "necessary" to salvation with repentance and faith),¹⁰ Presbyterians (infant baptism into the covenant of grace), and Baptists (immersion baptism as a public witness to salvation). All, he thinks, offend or confuse Pauline concepts of church unity and salvation by grace. O'Hair's thinking on baptism, ritual, and miracle claims was only in part about these explanations. More broadly he saw the thick walls separating Christian bodies—rituals, practices, and meanings on how eternal life and full salvation are gained—as a tragedy.

¹⁰ 78

The basic offense is the corrupted simplicity of the gospel of saving grace without works, rituals, or signs. O'Hair's concern for the church was its biblical unity and origin in sovereign grace and faith alone, and its actual disunity in practice, a disunity especially aggravated by baptism beliefs. In these persistent concerns lay the reasons for his no ritual, no miracles, and no water baptism teaching—the subjects of *The Gospel of Christ*. The booklet was an ambitious call for a new reformation which would drop all such appendages to the gospel and assure a fully biblical, Pauline church focused on living the provisions of the faith without problematic miracles and rituals. The booklet notes how hard it is to accomplish such a project, although in concept it is easy: drop all sectarian and denominational appendages to the gospel and preach only salvation by grace and faith.

The Gospel of Christ also seeks to explain specific biblical texts claimed to support traditional salvation additives by showing how ritual, miracle, or baptismal interests ignored or misread biblical contexts. Thus the book also seeks to show how attention to whole biblical portions, read within actual dispensational contexts, could have avoided such misuses of Scripture. For example, if water-regeneration groups had read John's Spirit-water scenes in context. . . ; if Catholic exegesis had paid attention to Hebrews' view of the end of Old Testament priesthood, sacrifice, and wash-

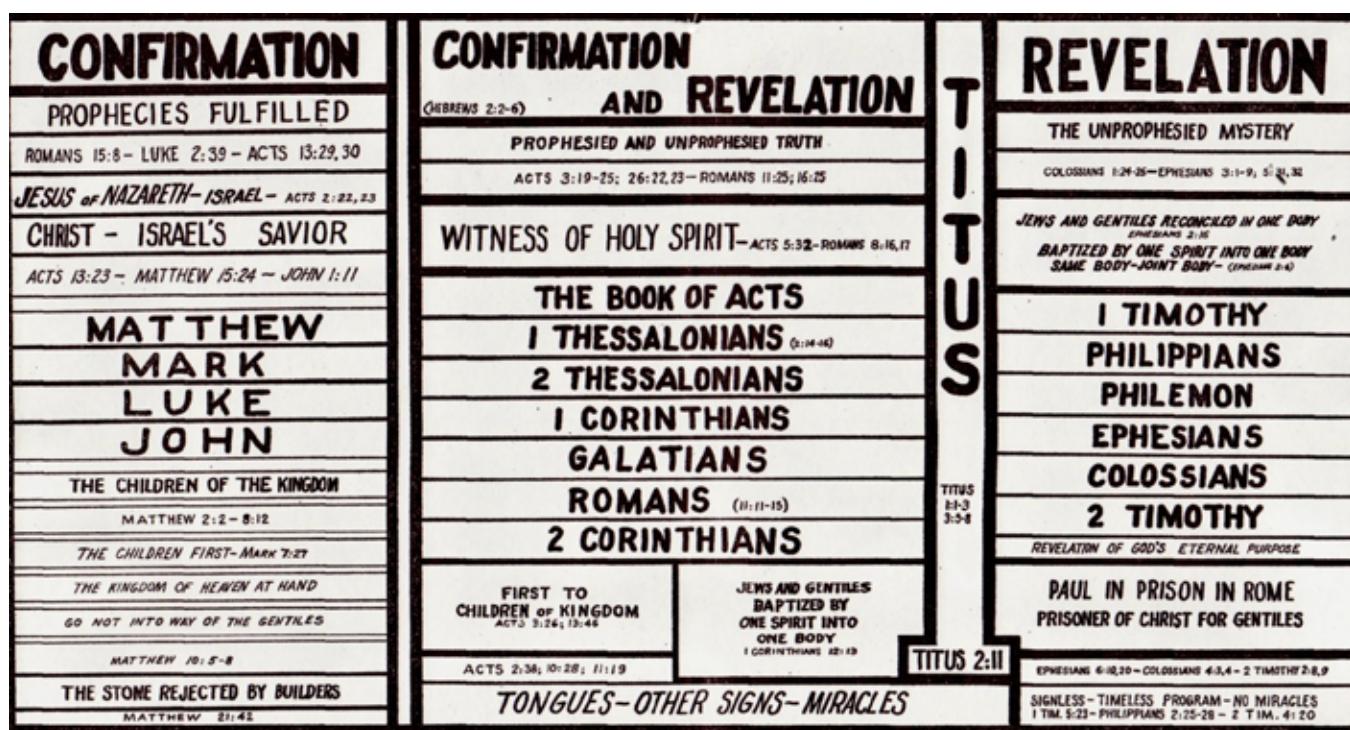
ings . . . ; or if Pentecostalism had paid attention to the relation of signs and wonders to Israel and its kingdom . . . ; more care in exegesis would have resulted, and distortions of salvation by grace and faith alone could have been avoided.

Another special feature of this booklet is a chart illustrating O'Hair's finalized view of how the disputed ritual, miracle, and baptism texts are linked with Israel and the kingdom in earlier parts of the New Testament, and then decline with the rise of the Gentile mission and body church. Rehearsing the theme of the pamphlet *From Melita to Miletum*, he argues that Israel's miracles and baptism have disappeared in Paul's later Prison and Pastoral Epistles. O'Hair employs distinctions he had been discussing since 1920; here he exhibited them in a chart to visualize the biblical contexts of these now divisive practices. The basic distinction lies in the difference between Israel and the available messianic kingdom on one hand and the new church of Jews and Gentiles together on the other. The lists of biblical books for each phase of New Testament revelation recalls Haldeman's suggestion of placing whole biblical books in their correct dispensational contexts as a principle of interpretation.

O'Hair links this distinction with two other phases on either side of the chart's center. Israel and the kingdom belong to the "confirmation" (of Old Testament prophecies) stage in Jesus and the Twelves' mission. The church and Gentile inclusion belong to the "reve-

lation" stage of new truths found in the epistles; the chart shows the biblical books associated with each. The two groups of linked concepts appear respectively on the "confirmation" and "revelation" sides of the chart. The middle column's concepts and books are a combination of "confirmation and revelation." Thus the chart visualizes an *overlap of messianic kingdom and body church in a transition* developing in the later chapters of Acts and Paul's related earlier epistles. As the chart shows, "The Witness of the Holy Spirit" is a bridge suggesting continuity between Israel's kingdom and Jew-Gentile church phases respectively by the Spirit's presence in both. Even so, this bridge of continuity does not mean all works of the Spirit are exactly the same in all parts of the New Testament. Rather the Spirit's works have their own contexts in the respective kingdom and church portions. Continuity also exists on the Spirit's works in salvation, on the new life of believers, and on Christ as mediator of all blessings. However, O'Hair was not mainly interested in continuities but in dispensational differences and progressing revelation.

As often with dispensational charts, this one also leaves the impression of thick walls of change and sharp contrasts to show the "right division" of Scripture. The chart minimizes continuities while suggesting the common presence of Christ and the Spirit; this tension between continuities and discontinuities could have been more fully explained. O'Hair could also have



shown and even emphasized continuity from the Old Testament through the New Testament on the person and work of Christ in his atoning death and resurrection, as he often does elsewhere. He could also have added the continuities of the old and new covenant sequence and their common concern with righteousness, both the old and the new. This omission opens him to the commonly heard charge of diminishing attention to Christ in order to highlight Paul. To what extent the unfolding Grace Movement understood and overcame the basis of this criticism is an open but important question.

The “confirmation” stage represents fulfilled prophecy—Israel’s priority over Gentiles, prophesied messianic miracles, and continued practice of Israel’s law and rituals; these features are to be continued in the prophesied New Israel of the future. The “revelation” column represents the later Pauline epistles: the Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles—First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus. In the transition phase visible in Acts 13–28, the kingdom offer to Israel was ending with Israel’s blasphemies and judgment, and the kingdom delayed until the Second Coming. Instead, the church was emerging as the people of God in the Dispensation of Grace without further prophetic fulfillment and without Israel’s law, rituals, or priority over Gentiles. The absence of the phrase “as it is written,” in the Prison and Pastoral epistles illustrates decline in prophetic fulfillments.¹¹ Nor do the later epistles provide for water baptism and miracles to continue. Instead, miracles cease as three sick Pauline associates—along with Paul himself earlier (2 Cor 12:7–9)—are left without miraculous healing. The chart’s blockish-looking placement of Titus means only that O’Hair thought Titus was a good place to begin studying the unique revelational aspects of the later epistles.¹² He was impressed with Titus’ words, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (2:11, AV, cf 1:1–3; 3:4–7), a text highlighting his view of these epistles.

In this way the chart exhibits O’Hair’s primary concerns about the church—its sectarian divisions, intrac-

“...he also recognized and emphasized dispensational changes of the New Testament era.”

table denominational conflicts, wrongful use of Israel’s rituals in salvation, and fraudulent attempts to revive charismatic gifts with out of context examples. These conclusions are on the negative side, but certainly no more negative than the sixteenth century Reformers’ determination to cut away five of Catholicism’s seven sacraments while redefining the remaining two (baptism; Lord’s Supper). O’Hair’s method of upholding the church, however, was based on other grounds than the Reformers’ efforts. He rather argued that water baptism, signs, and wonders passed away because they belonged to Israel’s former positive standing with God—a standing temporarily lost through unbelief until the Second Coming. This tragic story is told in the second half of Acts; its theology is discussed in Romans 9–11. As unbelieving Israel declined and fell, the current church began to form without the prophets’ promise of a New Israel, kingdom, renewed law, social changes, and miracles or cleansing rituals, while the kingdom’s Christ, its salvation, new covenant, and Holy Spirit were continued in the Dispensation of Grace. O’Hair did see these continuities; he also recognized and emphasized dispensational changes of the New Testament era.

The chart and its accompanying commentary appear to be a climax statement of O’Hair’s emphasis on the emergence, uniqueness, and finality of the Pauline revelation (“the mystery”), and on Acts’ story of Israel’s fall. The booklet and its chart finalize O’Hair’s views of dispensational transitions—a set of concepts he began discussing in *A Dispensational Study of Bible Characters* (1930s). At times *The Gospel of Christ* feels like nothing but a repetition of ideas found elsewhere in O’Hair’s writings, and in a sense it is. The booklet is nonetheless climactic in the chart and its explanations which together visualize his contribution to dispensational thought. The booklet explains how O’Hair viewed change with continuity in the apostolic age in a way similar to the shift from promise to law in the Old Testament’s Exodus. ■

¹¹J. C. O’Hair, *The Gospel of Christ* (Chicago: J. C. O’Hair, c 1955). This emphasis (p. 53) is slightly softened when he cites “two seeming exceptions, both in Ephesians (4:8; 6:2).” 2 Timothy 3:15 might have been added, where Paul speaks of the knowledge of salvation available from the Old Testament.

¹²Ibid., p. 64.



Region 3: West



Bethel Union Church (Akon, CO): Pastor Peter Tel—We had a good summer with a large VBS and an inspirational Wyoming Grace Youth Camp. We just started our combined youth group with Cope Community Church with a “hot dog and s’more night.” We are gearing up for our kids’ ministry on Wednesday nights as well. We started a men’s prayer meeting on Monday nights and are having good fellowship there. We are praying for God’s movement in our church, community, and missions.

Grace Bible Church of Lakewood (Lakewood, CO): Pastors Harl Hargett and Mark Smith—Please take a moment to pray for those in our congregations who are facing “life and death” issues such as cancer, or ugly consequences or circumstances. GBC of Lakewood has had many of our members so afflicted. We’re a strong praying church, for sure, but we also want to be strongly connected with our larger faith community!

Harvest Fellowship (Brighton, CO): Pastors Steve Blackwell and Bob Hill—A group of our high schoolers went to Cambodia for three weeks and ministered to adults and children there. It was exhausting but profitable. It had quite an impact on those who went. We are gearing up for fall classes, discipleships, and ministries. As I write this, I feel so privileged to have answered a visitor’s question: “Where do you stand on baptism?” The following Saturday morning, we began a Bible Study in their home with a couple of other families. The growth is incredible and my own excitement is watching their eyes opening to God’s grace. They are all now serving in the church and people are getting to know them. Thank you, God, for an extra summer boost for all of us, because we were losing three longtime, solid serving families to job transfers, which is heartbreaking. “Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” 2 Tim 2:3. I think we all feel those pains. ■

Region 4: Upper Midwest



At **Grace Bible Church**, West Allis, WI, It has been a busy, busy summer with family, ministry, and the kitchen project of the parsonage (Pastor Les’ family home). It is finally coming to a close and we should be completely done by the end of September. As you remember we began on May 6 with a kitchen demolition party. We were without a kitchen sink, dishwasher, stove, and refrigerator in the kitchen during the next three months. The cabinets were all in, the new countertops were installed, and the new floors put in place. These are the things that one can see, but behind the obvious is the electrical work, plumbing, and restructuring of the kitchen. It has been a team effort for our church. A number of men have given many hours in their busy summer and sacrificed getting this project done. We are thankful!

Pastor Randy held a summer series of classes on *The Difficult Doctrine on the Love of God* by D. A. Carson. The book was deep in theology and the classes were stimulating in the practical application of the love of God and the justice of God.

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confidant of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” Philippians 1: 3-6 (NIV).

We are winding up for our 85th year of existence at our church. The planned dates are October 14 and 15. It will be a Saturday and Sunday event with a simulated passing of the torch to the next generation. It is our hope and prayer that we shall continue to stand strong on the Word of God and the whole counsel of God's Word. What a privilege to stand strong for our Savior and carry the torch of salvation and holy living to those younger than us.

We have a team of ten short-term missionaries led by Pastor Randy who are preparing to go to Nicaragua in January. We are hopeful that this construction trip will invigorate our people to get even more involved in praying for and supporting our Grace missionaries throughout the world. ■

Region 5: Lower Midwest



St. Louis Bible Fellowship, (St.

Louis, MO): Pastor Rick Owsley—was blessed to have Dr. William Federer in our worship service recently. Dr. Federer is a leading authority on America's Christian Heritage & the author of "America's God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations." Tyrell Shoemaker, our Director of Children's Ministry is returning to Chicago to assume the position of Program Director for Inner City Impact. We hate to see Ty & Rachel leave, but we are excited for this wonderful ministry opportunity.

We will be ordaining a new elder and two new deacons in October. Our one-minute spots on a local radio station continue to draw visitors nearly every Sunday. Our elders just approved the funding to resume our weekly 15-minute radio broadcast, "The Message of Grace."

The **Quincy Bible Fellowship** with Don Hosfeld as pastor decided with sadness to sell the building and look to the next ministry chapter.

Afton Grace Bible Church—Pastor Ivan Burgener—has arranged for a visit from Ken Kemper of Grace Bible College.

Things to Come Mission (TCM) made known an urgent need for a replacement printer for textbooks in Africa. God arranged for the funds to be provided shortly thereafter. Joel and Leah Sanders are missionary candidates with TCM currently serving as interns at Grace Church in Indianapolis. Joel is also preaching alternate Sundays at Grace Gospel Church in Linton, IN, which is currently without a pastor.

The GGF Region 5 meeting was at Ryan's Buffet in Effingham on Saturday, 9/30/17. Many people could not attend previous Thursday meetings because of work. ■

Region 6: Southeast



Greystone Bible Church, Mobile, celebrated their 75th Anniversary this year. A great time of fellowship, church history, and

shared memories was had by all. Many former members came from out of town to share in the service. A great turnout was experienced for the service and luncheon. Pastor Glen Beauchamp and his family, who moved from California, are blessed to be part of a church with such a rich history.

Greystone Bible Church, along with other GGF southern Alabama churches, participated in the Southern Grace Youth Camp this past June. It was an incredible time for the kids to have fun and learn more about Jesus Christ.

July marked the first anniversary of Pastor Glen's ministry with Greystone. It has been a terrific year and we are praying for God's continued guidance and blessings for another great year. ■

Region 9: Western Michigan



Grace Bible Fellowship in Jenison had the opportunity to send several individuals to participate in short-term mission trips this summer. Several GBF members form part of the Taekwondo Break-Through team that ministered in Paraguay in early August. We also had the opportunity to send a work team to help with renovations at **Faith Bible Church** in Olney, IL. We are excited to participate with sister churches in the U.S. and around the world. GBF also welcomed a new Youth Director, Taylor Achterhoff, to their leadership team. We are looking forward to seeing God work in and through us as we kick-off the fall season of ministry! ■

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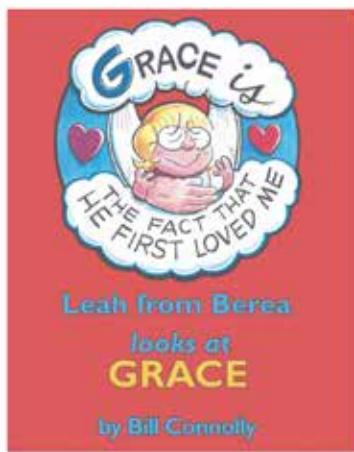
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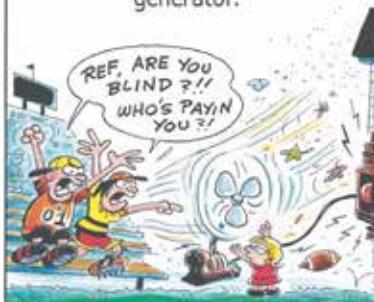
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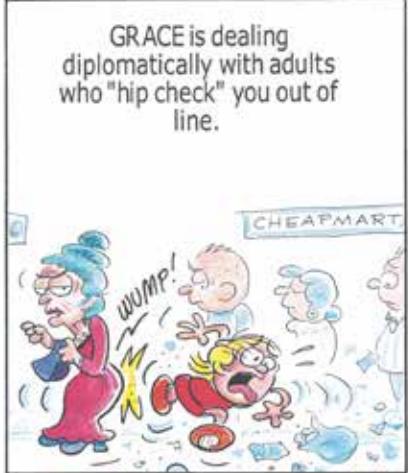
GRACE is... rather than scolding rabid sports parents - harnessing their wind to power the school generator.



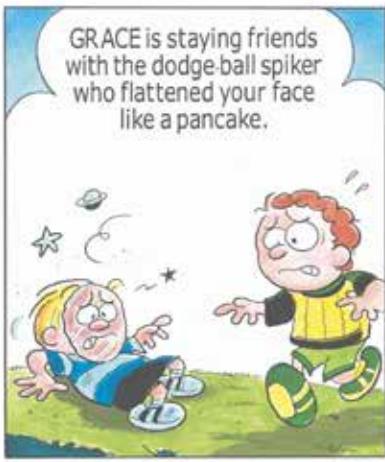
GRACE is getting picked first for the team- even though you're the school's worst "tackle-badminton" player.



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