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**TRUTH Magazine**

Spring, 2020 Edition



For I am convinced that nothing will be  
able to separate us from the love of God  
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31-39 NIV

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



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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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**TRUTH Magazine** is published quarterly, with an emphasis on the doctrines of the dispensation of the Grace of God. This is achieved through Bible studies, articles of relevance in today's world, and news about Grace Gospel Fellowship (GGF), Grace Christian University, Grace Ministries International, Grace Publications, and other Grace organizations and churches.

The views and opinions expressed in the ads and articles are those of the authors and organizations. They do not necessarily reflect the views of GGF and/or the editorial staff of **TRUTH**.

#### PUBLISHED by

Grace Gospel Fellowship, a nonprofit religious corporation, incorporated in the State of Michigan.

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**TRUTH Magazine** is the quarterly periodical of the GGF and is included with your GGF membership. Gift subscriptions can also be purchased through the GGF national office.



# Even in a Pandemic Lockdown



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## The Message Goes Out

by Matt Amundsen  
Executive Director  
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We are in the midst of a global pandemic. At its beginning, many viewed the crisis as a distant problem since it seemed so far removed from our daily life. Yet now, you have likely been impacted by the spread of COVID-19, whether directly because a friend or loved one tested positive or perhaps you have lost your job. For others it may come in the form of dealing with food shortages or your children not returning to school this year. When I bring it to the level of our churches and the various ministries our pastors and leaders engage in, the impact is severe—such as no groups being able to gather on Sunday or any other day of the week for that matter. The concerns were and are real yet it comes down to this: How will we respond? What adjustments, if any, will we make in light of the mandated restrictions?

Each church had to discuss and contemplate what the next steps would look like. For some, early on, the mindset was to stay open. As time carried on and restrictions were put in place, it was clear that gathering would not be happening. Church boards were faced with even more difficult decisions. If we can't gather, how can we move on?

Well, I want to share some of the stories I have heard from our churches and while it is not a comprehensive list, I believe it gives an accurate perspective of the variety of ministries we partner with, from small churches in rural locales to bigger churches near the city. While we certainly don't want any of God's creation to endure what is going on with this wicked virus,

it comes down to  
this: **How**  
will we **RESPOND?**

...it was simply encouraging to witness the interaction, teamwork, and willingness to share ideas and resources.



How amazing it would be to see the “Body of Christ” grow exponentially out of this tragic time in our global society.

this IS an opportunity for the gospel of the grace of God to “go out”—most likely in a different fashion than ever before.

Certainly, the most common thread concerns the publication of the Sunday morning service, whether on YouTube, Facebook, or other platforms. Many of our churches had already stepped into the sphere of technology and were offering worship services and Bible studies to those in their congregation and beyond. Realistically though, a good portion of our churches had not ventured into this realm. On our GGF Ministry Forum group page on Facebook, Pastor Urian Rios (Grace Life Community Church of Seminole, Florida) requested that GGF churches post their links to their Sunday service and any midweek offerings. What a response! Over 20 pastors and leaders shared what is going on in their church. What this does is give opportunities for individuals to follow but also for churches to see what others are doing and assess if this is an option they could offer their church community. For me, it was simply encouraging to witness the interaction, teamwork, and willingness to share ideas and resources.

We are currently partnering with Grace Bible Church of Anaheim, California, in an effort to revitalize the church. Pastors Tim Heath and Gary Cloud have accepted the call to serve as Interim Pastors. As it stands, we made it to week number three and then the coronavirus restrictions started to mount, effectively putting our efforts on hold. The really cool thing that has happened since Tim’s last visit is that the church started a Facebook page to care for the flock AND they have begun, as families, to watch the livestream feeds of Bethesda Church of Prior Lake, Minnesota, and Grace Bible Church of Phoenix, Arizona—both sister churches within the Grace Gospel Fellowship.

Speaking of the livestream from Grace Bible Church of Phoenix, here is a testimony from Pastor Josh White:

“Hey, everyone! I just wanted to share some good news and something else I think is important and urgent for churches. Like the rest of the country we can only live-stream our services now. A guy in our church invited his co-worker to watch our service

online. I suspect she is the kind of person who normally would not come to an actual church building, but the online option is much less intimidating, and frankly, people have lots of time on their hands right now. She watched and so did her 9-year-old son. I gave the gospel during the sermon and her son accepted Christ!! I think there are so many people who are interested in “religion” but are intimidated by walking into a church. And this is our opportunity to reach them! Easter is in 2 weeks, and it’s possible this could be the highest attended Easter in the history of mankind... although it will all be online. Let that sink in... We need to make sure OUR church families are inviting their co-workers, family members, and friends to “attend service with them” from their own homes. Anyway, thanks for reading this.”

What a powerful testimony! This is the entire reason we gather, whether in person or online. How amazing it would be to see the “Body of Christ” grow exponentially out of this tragic time in our global society.

“As a former Youth Pastor, I am always intrigued by the ideas and concepts that our leaders are developing, especially when they are different than in generations past OR they just might be the same ideas used on a new platform. Our family attends Celebration Bible Church in Grandville, Michigan, which has a couple of great pastors—Jim Shemaria and Mitch Connelly. As I travel the country (not right now) I see that we are blessed with a lot of great leaders impacting so many lives! So, to share a story from this past week, Pastor Mitch offered the youth group a scavenger hunt...online! I love a good scavenger hunt, especially outdoors or at the mall, but online? I wondered how it would work, honestly. Our family logged on to Zoom and we became one of 7-8 youth group families involved. We could see everyone else and it was so cool to interact in this way. Then Pastor Mitch instructed us to find a “penny from the 1980s” and off we were to find the coveted item. We would bring it back and garner a point towards our final score. Was it quite the same as being in person? Probably not and yet there was great comradery and banter back and forth and kept the idea of a church community alive.



This is merely one idea from a sea of creative leaders around this country. What a blessing it would be to see this network of believers work together to help and encourage each other during a very difficult time. Honestly, it would be my prayer that times like this would serve as a catalyst for future partnership and cooperation in the gospel."

These are but a few examples of how the Lord is using this time in our churches. I would love to hear more!

As I wrap up our time together, I want to make it clear that our hearts break for the families and individuals who have and will continue to journey through this pandemic. Our prayers are with each of you and your families. May we take courage and encouragement from the amazing things God is doing in the midst of tragedy and heartache. May we be a people of prayer and connection. May we go back to the basics and send a note, card, or email or maybe make that phone call to a neighbor, friend, or family member. Let us make every effort to be connected, even if for a time it is at a distance. **TM**

...it would be my prayer that times like this would serve as a catalyst for future partnership and cooperation in the gospel.





# Peace in Following the Lord



by Jeremy Clark  
Executive Director  
Grace Ministries International

**T**oilet paper and peace are in great demand during these unusual times. While we are not so inclined to share the former we can do a lot to focus on the latter. When a group of people spoke with Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, He mentioned to them yet another tragedy explaining how a tower had fallen killing 18 people. Death headlined the news of the day (Luke 13:1-4). How did Jesus continue interacting with those with whom He shared the morbidity rate of this horrible event? How inclined would we be to follow His example?

It is not uncommon within Christian circles to hear the exhortation to be more like Christ. Many of us have prayed for just that. When we do, we often have in mind the aspects of Christ's character which are universally agreed upon—His compassion, kindness, and restoration of the humble. We should seek to imitate these traits since most of us lack them and it is honoring to Christ to exhibit them.

The person of Christ, like all of us, is multifaceted. The difference, of course, is that Christ is perfect in all that He has done and will do. So, when we seek to be like Christ, there is so much to consider, such as His devotion to the Father (Matthew 26:39) and His willingness to die for His friends (John 15:13).

John the Baptist came preparing the way for the kingdom calling Israel to “repent and be baptized, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Likewise, Jesus preached this gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 9:35, 24:14) announcing that many were pressing into it (Luke 16:16). Looking ahead, Jesus declared, “They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. And indeed, there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last” (Luke 13:29-30). As He anticipated these things, He shared that they would happen soon:





Matthew 10:23 - *"When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes."*

Matthew 16:28 - *"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."*

Matthew 24:34 - *"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place."*

Matthew 26:64 - *"The High Priest asked if Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and in 26:64 Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.'"*

Because of this, the disciples also looked forward to the kingdom and were eager to realize their part in it. They had left their families and livelihood remembering Jesus' promise that, *"there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life"* (Luke 18:29b-30). Anticipating this, *"the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, 'What do you wish?' She said to Him, 'Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.' But Jesus answered and said, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with'"* (Matthew 20:20-22)? Do we know what we are asking when we say we want to be like Christ?

One seldom-mentioned facet of His ministry was His proclivity to draw distinct lines, forcing people to stand on either side. His words were difficult causing His hearers to choose between distant polarities. Well into His earthly ministry He informed His disciples, *"Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division"* (Luke 12:51). Could it be that ultimate peace comes through righteous division? This is likely a spiritual calculus most of us would like to avoid if we can get a math credit in any other way. As the disciples contin-

ued to learn at the feet of the Master, I wonder if they ever considered dropping the course. Even towards the end, they did not comprehend the greatest of all events about to take place—Christ's death and resurrection (Mark 9:30-32). Thinking about it humanly, we have to admire the disciples' perseverance—sticking it out with Christ. From time to time Jesus said some inflammatory things like, "I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled" (Luke 12:49). He did not bring division because it was fun and entertaining, but longed for His people to repent exclaiming, "How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing" (Matthew 23:37b). This longing for a relationship with the willing is what caused Him to divide in order to find out who would be hot or cold—who wanted to be with Him or remain far from Him.

One had to choose whom he would serve because, "no one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). There are two ways to proceed in life. One is easy and the other is difficult. In this regard, Jesus instructed His audience to choose: "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

The choices did not get much easier when another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father" (Matthew 8:21). Likely shocking those who were listening to this conversation, Jesus replied, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22). Not only did this disciple have to choose between burying His father and following Christ, but he had to wrestle with Christ's declaration about who the dead actually were!

Jesus even used some of the potentially embarrassing aspects of His law to bring division. When the Scribes and Pharisees confronted Jesus about His disciples' lack of adherence to the elders' handwashing tradition, Jesus brought

Do we know what we are asking when we say

**we want to be like Christ?**

Could it be that **ultimate peace comes through righteous division?**

Jesus drew a line asking the Scribes and Pharisees to choose where they would stand: on the side of their tradition or on the side of His law.



them to a decision point asking, *“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’—then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus, you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition”* (Matthew 15:3-6). Jesus drew a line asking the Scribes and Pharisees to choose where they would stand: on the side of their tradition or on the side of His law.

Most of us would have already thought the conversation had gone too far being content that the woman Jesus met at the well had confessed she had no husband. Jesus, however, pushed the exchange further bringing up more of her sordid past, observing, *“You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly”* (John 4:17-18). His response ultimately led her to go into the city and declare, *“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* (John 4:28-29). That Jesus compassionately exposed her sin led her to realize He was the Christ.

Even in the moments before becoming obedient to death on the cross, Jesus divided those immediately around Him. There were two guilty men—one hanging on either side of their Savior. Luke recorded the three men’s interaction: *“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:39-43). While dying, Jesus continued His ministry of division.

As we consider this, how do we expect that Jesus handled those gathered discussing the death of the Galileans and those who lost their lives when the town in Siloam fell? He brought

their eternal destiny to the forefront of the conversation boldly stating, *“I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:5). Those standing within earshot had to decide. Would they repent and seek a relationship with Jesus or would they pursue their own will? Jesus used the news of the day to bring others to the fork in the road that matters most.

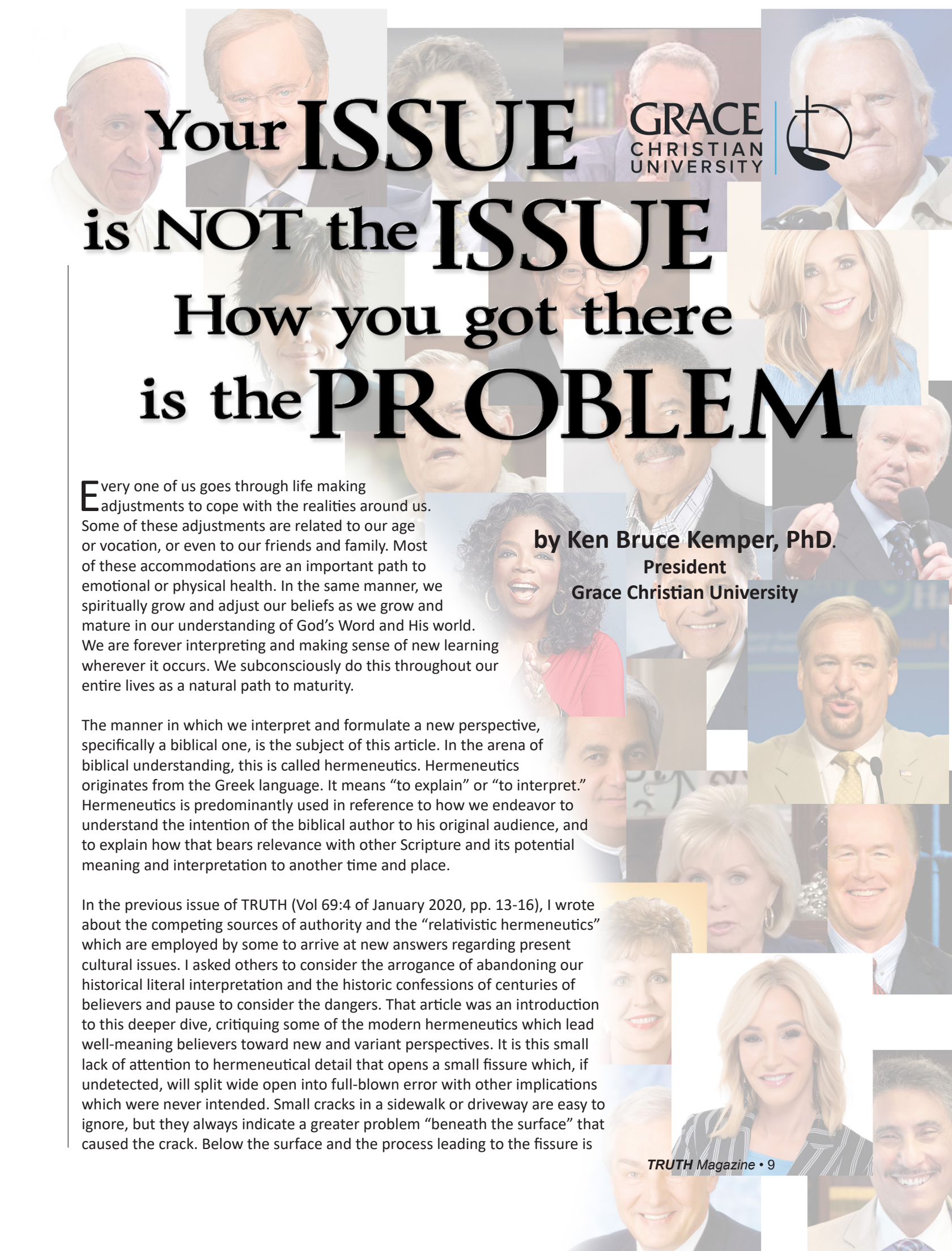
Are we inclined to follow Christ’s example? It is easy to divide others based on our own pettiness, and pursuit of personal preferences. It is also easy to passively permit people to live free from the discomfort of choosing between God and self. For those of us who have hope in Jesus Christ, the news of the day presents us with an opportunity to share about Christ’s offer of eternal life through His death and resurrection. When you get down to it, people fear because death and discomfort seem closer today than yesterday. We, however, can offer peace through Jesus which never goes out of stock.

Even as we consider whether we will imitate Christ in this often-neglected aspect of His ministry, He challenges us to cross yet another line. Jesus invites you to join His side, *“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters”* (Luke 11:23). When it comes to sharing truth that will bring salvation, you are either gathering others unto Him or you are scattering. There is no middle ground and you are forced to make a choice.

Contrary to the disciples’ expectation the kingdom did not come because Israel stumbled rejecting her king. Thus, salvation came to all the nations through a message of grace given to a new apostle—the Apostle Paul (Romans 11:11-15). Israel chose not to be God’s kingdom of priests because of her disobedience (Exodus 19:5-6) so God raised up others to bring truth to the world. Even in this big-picture view of the story of the Bible, there is lesson for us individually. God wants to use you, but He will not force you to be used. He wants you to gather, but will not prevent you from scattering.

As we think about missions and a world needing to know the message of the cross, will you choose to gather? This happens in one of two ways. We need to go or we need to send. There is no middle ground. **TM**





# Your **ISSUE** is NOT the **ISSUE** How you got there is the **PROBLEM**

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Every one of us goes through life making adjustments to cope with the realities around us. Some of these adjustments are related to our age or vocation, or even to our friends and family. Most of these accommodations are an important path to emotional or physical health. In the same manner, we spiritually grow and adjust our beliefs as we grow and mature in our understanding of God's Word and His world. We are forever interpreting and making sense of new learning wherever it occurs. We subconsciously do this throughout our entire lives as a natural path to maturity.

The manner in which we interpret and formulate a new perspective, specifically a biblical one, is the subject of this article. In the arena of biblical understanding, this is called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics originates from the Greek language. It means "to explain" or "to interpret." Hermeneutics is predominantly used in reference to how we endeavor to understand the intention of the biblical author to his original audience, and to explain how that bears relevance with other Scripture and its potential meaning and interpretation to another time and place.

In the previous issue of TRUTH (Vol 69:4 of January 2020, pp. 13-16), I wrote about the competing sources of authority and the "relativistic hermeneutics" which are employed by some to arrive at new answers regarding present cultural issues. I asked others to consider the arrogance of abandoning our historical literal interpretation and the historic confessions of centuries of believers and pause to consider the dangers. That article was an introduction to this deeper dive, critiquing some of the modern hermeneutics which lead well-meaning believers toward new and variant perspectives. It is this small lack of attention to hermeneutical detail that opens a small fissure which, if undetected, will split wide open into full-blown error with other implications which were never intended. Small cracks in a sidewalk or driveway are easy to ignore, but they always indicate a greater problem "beneath the surface" that caused the crack. Below the surface and the process leading to the fissure is

by **Ken Bruce Kemper, PhD.**  
**President**  
**Grace Christian University**

...one must  
defend the Word  
of God at the  
very point at  
which it is being  
attacked.



Good herme-  
neutics always  
looks for the  
context of a  
verse, passage,  
and book as well  
as the location  
and author

the point of this article and not an attempt to persuade others regarding any modern, emotionally charged perspective (in which one uses Scripture) regarding “capitalism” versus “socialism,” or “women’s roles in ministry.”

Rather than the discussion of specific issues, it is important to emphasize the value of a consistent practice of study of God’s Word and its application with accuracy (and humility). This article will not defend a view or “ism,” but rather defend God’s Word and its correct interpretation. Luther was known for stating that one must defend the Word of God at the very point at which it is being attacked. Today, this would be Genesis 1-3 where the Scriptures give clear explanation of what it means to be human: created in the image of God with clear indications of the ontological equality of male and female, as well as their beautiful distinctives in makeup and function as God designed prior to sin. This needs no defense, just the protection of proper historical hermeneutics which prevents the distortion of today’s non-binary attack on the very essence of what it means to be human in God’s design. The enemy knows well that destroying the definition of what it means to be human as male and female will break down God’s design for marriage, family, and the Church—God’s instruments for redeeming the lost and preserving His image of healthy relationships to a watching world.

### The Means Must Justify the Ends

It is the Word of God and its authority and the “means” which I am concerned is compromised when one seeks to come to a “new (biblical) understanding” about a contemporary social issue. To expose the actual “means” or hermeneutics employed allows others to recognize how misinterpretation or misapplication happens and avoid it themselves along with its conclusions. The gravity of the implications of employing an improper “means” is seldom recognized when one is working toward their desired “ends.” Many well-meaning biblical teachers and preachers study scholarly works by others who have employed hermeneutics that compromise normal historical-grammatical understandings. They truly do not recognize that they have stepped over the fissure and opened an opportunity for that hermeneutic to be employed for

“ends” or conclusions they would never agree to themselves. A consistent hermeneutical practice is important as opposed to using one practice for one doctrine or principle of practice, and not using it for the next practice built on similar verses. That would be hermeneutical ingenuity, not integrity. It is attractive to find any biblical path to explain “my desired viewpoint” on any particular social issue. This temptation will persist if we aren’t honest enough to identify it and correct it.

### Examples of Hermeneutical Issues

I can recall my time in college as a student in Dr. DeWitt’s class on the Pauline Epistles. I learned that in order to discover the intention of each of Paul’s individual letters, it was important to read each book repeatedly to discover what issues or occasions prompted it to be written. This is clearly important in understanding the message and context. The book must be understood as a whole. Then, one can move on to the individual themes and passages in the doing of biblical theology. Good hermeneutics always looks for the context of a verse, passage, and book as well as the location and author. In so doing, we can avoid taking a verse out of context. Once the passage is correctly understood within its context, the goal of the interpreter is to find present-day application consistent with that initial understanding. The theology of the text provides light for our path, just as it did for the original audience. That being said, there is widespread abuse of this principle that seeks to define every instruction given as only applicable to the specific situation and those being addressed in that context.

### Ad Hoc Documents

“The Principle of Ad Hoc Documents” (or treating it solely as an “occasional” communication only) occurs when a biblical reader employs this hermeneutic to limit the teaching on the topic and make it less important. (The motive is often that the verses seem to contradict the reader’s perspective or point from another passage.) This is done by deeming the passage as merely a response to a particular situation present at that time and not relevant anywhere else beyond this context. This overreach normally categorizes those passages as “confusing” and “time bound” rather than seeking to harmonize



the teaching with other relevant passages. The danger? If this is done to the Pauline epistles like it is for the feminist and homosexual issues using the same method, it would destroy our theology of Christology since it comes from Colossians and Philippians where Paul addresses local heresy about who Christ is in direct opposition to cultural-social context. Douglas Moo observes, “The isolation of local circumstances as the occasion for a particular teaching does not, by itself, indicate anything about the normative nature of that teaching” (Douglas J. Moo, “The Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder,” *Trinity Journal* 2, Fall 1981, p.219). Otherwise, why would Paul use a culturally-based command to Israel not to “muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain” (1 Timothy 5:18) and apply it to the support of the apostles and other ministers? He found the principle behind the command and applied it to believers of his day. This “ad hoc” interpretive method is often employed in arbitrary ways and the interpreter uses his own rationale to engage it where he desires. There is no lack of this among scholars writing books and articles.

### The Interpretive Center

A second dangerous “means” which is similar is the choosing of a verse or passage which is employed to interpret or contrast with the verses elsewhere that the interpreter does not agree with. This is known as “The Principle of an Interpretive Center.” The fallacy is that the one with a point to prove selects the verses they desire as “an interpretive center” declaring them a filter for the other passages. Often this principle suffers the “red letter dominance theory” which takes a quote from Jesus in the Gospels and states it as higher truth than any other Scripture. However, we must value all instruction and use each passage to help clarify and compare with other less clear verses to bring understanding.

### Metaphor Analogy

A third hermeneutical error is to apply a “frame” (as noted in my previous article) to link an issue metaphorically to another issue which already has popular agreement, when Scripture itself does not. Common issues include linking water baptism to circumcision, or linking slavery as a model for the role of women. Both of the latter issues clearly evidence the sinful abuse

of mankind to do evil to one’s fellow man. But simply because Galatians 3:28 lists them in succession, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” (NIV) does not mean that they are the same. In fact, in recognizing the context and culture to which Paul is writing would instruct us to understand God’s people as one—no matter the differences, not the similarities. The clear understanding of the wrongfulness of slavery is also present in Paul’s letter to Philemon, and the Bible’s insistence on respect for the dignity and the image of God for all men. One must employ a special hermeneutic to make this mean something like, “since all slaves are and should be free, women are now the same as men biologically (this is the homosexual argument) and function the same in all roles (the feminist argument).” What about Jews and Greeks? Yes, they are one and equal in Christ Jesus, but does this mean they are the same, with no more ethnicity? It is faith and oneness in Christ apart from the Law, and our inheritance as sons of God that Paul is instructing. It is the plain, normal reading here that makes the most sense and it often is elsewhere also.

### Cultural Bias and Relativity

Two other dangerous hermeneutical practices which are used deal with “Culturally Biased Interpretation” and “Cultural Relativity” in biblical interpretation. Anyone who has lived abroad in a different culture recognizes that all of us have cultural bias and presuppositions which are second nature and subconsciously employed. The biblical interpreter is not immune to this. To be able to see the Scriptures from a purely objective perspective is almost impossible. But as we recognize our own biases, we can work toward understanding. The “Grammatical-Historical Method” is an attempt to do this. One of the challenges of this is to test our motives when we approach Scripture. It is telling that in the scientific world, “researcher bias” is a strong danger which impacts what is often portrayed as “objective” empirical research or experimentation. There are those who try to state that all Scripture is only culturally relevant to the target audience unless it is somehow stated otherwise. In this, the Scripture is reduced to a bunch of cultural stories and truths for specific periods of time and people. It would be more accurate, I believe, to take all of Scripture as normative be-

“The isolation of local circumstances as the occasion for a particular teaching does not, by itself indicate anything about the normative nature of that teaching”



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But Christ and Paul also accurately quoted the very words of the Old Testament at times and established the ongoing relevance of principles and greater theological truths into their own day and people.



yond the culture and context unless it is clearly stated otherwise and interpreted that way by Scripture itself. Jesus would say in the Gospels, “in the Law it said ... but I say” and this would be a good example. But Christ and Paul also accurately quoted the very words of the Old Testament at times and established the ongoing relevance of principles and greater theological truths into their own day and people.

### Redemptive Trajectory

A final hermeneutical error is to employ what theologians call a “Redemptive Trajectory” which acts as an interpreter of passages in the Bible. This practice notes that all things work toward the theme that God is in the process of redeeming everything and eliminating the effects of the Fall and the curse for today. The error is that one is at a loss as to where the interpreter stands on the course or timeline of the “redemptive trajectory.” This hermeneutic states (as Rob Bell does) that God would not in modern day possibly advocate for genocide or an eternal punishment of souls in the Lake of Fire. The problem here is that once again the interpreter has made himself arbiter of what God would or would not do. The truth is that God does not desire for anyone to die and suffer, but it happens as a result of man’s sin. Most would admit to the justifiable killing of one dangerous, evil man. So, is the quantity the issue, or the justice of it? God is not controlled by the principles of His creation (man). The world awaits its redemption set in motion by the return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:18-25), and “we wait for it patiently.” This same interpretive tool of “redemptive trajectory” is employed by W.J. Webb in his book entitled, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001). Webb uses this tool to propose racial reconciliation, egalitarianism between men and women, yet does not believe it is inclusive enough to permit homosexual relations. But yet others, using the same logic (such as Luke Johnson and Stephen Fowl) write that this legitimizes same-sex relations, and promotes more inclusiveness in the “spirit of the Gentiles” from Acts 15 (Stephen E. Fowl, *Engaging Scripture: A Model for Theological Interpretation*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, Chapter 4). The problem seems to be the potential “cracks” opened by this application of the “Redemptive Trajectory”

hermeneutical method. Paul is the Greatest Biblical Interpreter of the last 2000 years.

### The Bible interprets itself

It does not use the alternative practices described above. Paul gives instructions to the local churches and expects those letters to be shared with other congregations in other cities! Paul looks back on the Old Testament and writes about how it applies to his present time (think of Abraham’s faith in Romans 4, or Israel in the wilderness in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13). Paul tells us about the work and ministry of Christ in the Gospels. He writes about what it all means to believers after the death, burial and resurrection. The Twelve Disciples were given instructions before this important reality had taken place and therefor under an earlier dispensation. If we are Pauline why would we employ hermeneutical practices to soften and distort Paul’s teaching to the church regarding such topics as poverty and work, respect for governing authorities, dietary practices, prejudice regarding ethnicity, women in elder roles, or husband-wife relationships, which he clearly addresses—while knowing full well what the Old Testament said and what Jesus did and said?

Please remember that the intention of this article is not about these issues, but the subtle change in hermeneutics to arrive at “new interpretations!” The prevalence of the problem is noted well by the distinguished biblical scholar D.A. Carson in his book coedited by Carson and Woodbridge *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1986, p. 47).

The pervasiveness of the problem erupts in the “Christian” merchant whose faith has no bearing on the integrity of his or her dealings, or in the way material possessions are assessed. It is reflected in an accelerating divorce rate in Christian homes and among the clergy themselves—with little sense of shame and no entailment in their “ministries.” It is seen in its most pathetic garb when considerable exegetical skill goes into proving, say, that the Bible condemns promiscuous homosexuality but not homosexuality itself (although careful handling of the evidence overturns the thesis), or that the Bible’s use of “head” in passages dealing with male/female relationships follows allegedly characteristic



Greek usage and, therefore, means “source” (when close scrutiny of the primary evidence fails to turn up more than a handful of disputable instances of the meaning “source” in over two thousand occurrences). It finds new lease when popular Evangelicals publicly abandon any mention of “sin” –allegedly on the ground that the term no longer “communicates” –without recognizing that adjacent truths (e.g., those dealing with the Fall, the law of God, the nature of transgression, the wrath of God, and even the gracious atonement itself) undergo telling transformation.

What I love about Carson’s quote is the way in which he describes both the widespread danger of this modern hermeneutic as well as the inconsistency with which it is applied. This same limiting hermeneutic ignores Paul’s instruction that “ALL SCRIPTURE (emphasis mine) is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Paul deals with modern issues by referring to non-cultural principles (creation) in both 1 Corinthians 11 when clearly discussing headship, and in 1 Timothy 2 when instructing his disciple on practices of the local church. In other words, Paul shows us how to interpret Scripture by his own practice. Is there not a sense of being Pauline in

doctrine and practice? The Word is for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction so we can be mature in Christ as His ministers, prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17). We work well and with maturity when we “accurately handle the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

I trust this short article which may need further exploration and amplification on the need for faithful hermeneutics can inspire pastors, teachers, and students to consider the means for building a strong theology based on the authority of Scripture. God help us to be more interested in daily reading and studying the Word of God for all it says and understanding the themes and teachings from plain reading than seeking answers to the latest cultural (or recurring) issues through books and articles by scholars with agendas to prove. Be a Berean who searches the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). In this way we can faithfully allow the Bible to describe and interpret the challenges of society rather than using cultural issues to interpret the eternal truths of God. As students of the Word, we can graciously and confidently respond with God’s desires for human redemption and transformation from Genesis to Revelation from a Pauline perspective for today’s world. **TM**

Be a Berean who searches the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).



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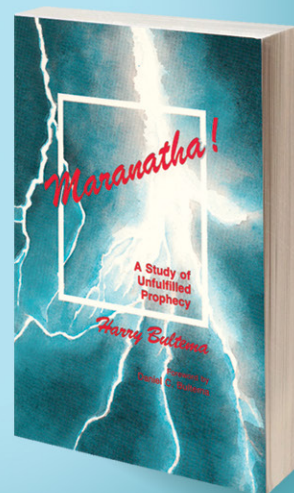
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The Lord is not slack concerning His promise,  
as some count slackness,  
but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish,  
but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9





# The Grace of God into Practice...

Knowing, feeling, and living in Christ

by **Luis Alonso Cabezas A.**  
Comunidad Biblica

I thank God for giving me the blessing of knowing the Gospel of Grace, and also for allowing me to teach it. I thank God for the missionaries, teachers, and pastors that God used to help me better understand God's plan and His Word. I think mid-Acts dispensationalists have a great tool with which we can dig into an inexhaustible mine of precious treasures of knowledge.

*"I want their hearts to be encouraged and joined together in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery—Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him" (Col. 2:2-3).*

The church in which I serve, like the other churches of Grace, has, within its distinctive features or values, a strong emphasis on the study of the Word of God, so that its members know more about the Bible than the average Christian.

However, like any blessing, it can also become a temptation or threat (James 3:1). I will present it with a series of questions:

How much information do we manage? How much do we know? Do we feel blessed as a result?

Doy gracias a Dios por haberme dado la bendición de conocer el Evangelio de la Gracia, y también por permitirme enseñarlo. Gracias a Dios por los misioneros, maestros y pastores que Dios usó para ayudarme a comprender mejor el plan de Dios y Su Palabra. Creo que los dispensacionalistas de mediados de los Hechos tenemos una gran herramienta con la cual podemos excavar dentro de una mina inagotable de tesoros de conocimiento muy valiosos.

*"Quiero que lo sepan para que cobren ánimo, permanezcan unidos por amor, y tengan toda la riqueza que proviene de la convicción y del entendimiento. Así conocerán el misterio de Dios, es decir, a Cristo, en quien están escondidos todos los tesoros de la sabiduría y del conocimiento." (Col. 2:2-3)*

La iglesia en que sirvo, al igual que las demás iglesias de la Gracia tiene, dentro de sus distintivos o valores, un fuerte énfasis en el estudio de la Palabra de Dios; de manera que sus miembros conozcan más de la Biblia que el cristiano promedio.

Sin embargo, como toda bendición, ésta puede convertirse también en una tentación o amenaza (Stg. 3:1). Voy a plantearlo con una serie de preguntas:

¿Cuánta información manejamos? ¿Cuánto sabemos? ¿Nos sentimos bendecidos por eso?

Pero, ¿Cuánto de esa información que tenemos en la mente ha bajado al corazón?

*I think mid-Acts dispensationalists have a great tool with which we can dig into an inexhaustible mine of precious treasures of knowledge.*



Our **actions**  
(our daily walk)  
will NOT reflect  
what we **know**  
(mind), but  
what we **feel**  
(heart).

But how much information that is in our heads has gone down to our hearts?

Does our life reflect what we know? What would those around us say? Is there coherence?

How many times do we find ourselves frustrated with the answer to the previous question? Why? What happens?

What makes it difficult for our knowledge to reach our emotions?

I have met quite a few Christians who know a lot, but live as if that information does not excite them. They are like beggars who find a gold mine in their backyard, but continue to beg. It seems that James had them in mind when he wrote about faith without works (James 2:17, 26). They are like dead men walking, surviving the Christian life.

Sometimes I ask myself: Could it be that we have not preached the gospel and the grace of God clearly and correctly, or is there something that they have not yet understood, or is there some struggle that continues in their lives? Let's reflect for a moment. Many times, we do the same!

Dear reader, I invite you to think of an area where your WALKING is not in agreement with your KNOWING.

How can we overcome this barrier between the mind, the heart, and our walk?

Our **actions** (our daily walk) will NOT reflect what we **know** (mind), but what we **feel** (heart). When we know a lot (mind) and that knowledge does not reach our heart and every part of our being, that is called living a lie, or said more clearly, it is called HYPOCRISY (Mt. 23:3; Col. 3:9, James 1:22).

I think we have all had that struggle, and we also see it in our churches. We have all met people with great knowledge, but who do not produce fruit. There are people who attend weekly Bible study groups, Sunday services, classes or seminars, and any other opportunity to learn more about the Bible, but who do not

¿Nuestra vida refleja lo que sabemos? ¿Qué dirían los que nos rodean? ¿Hay coherencia?

¿Cuántas veces nos encontramos frustrados con la respuesta de la pregunta anterior? ¿Por qué? ¿Qué pasa?

¿Qué es lo que dificulta que lo que sabemos también lo sintamos?

He conocido bastantes cristianos que conocen mucho, pero viven como si esa información no les emocionara. Parecen mendigos que encontraron una mina de oro en el patio de sus casas, pero que siguen mendigando. Pareciera que Santiago los tenía en mente cuando escribió sobre la fe sin obras (Stg. 2:17, 26). Son como muertos en vida, sobreviviendo la vida cristiana.

A veces me cuestiono, ¿Será que no hemos predicado el evangelio y la gracia de Dios clara y correctamente, o que hay algo que aún no han entendido, o hay alguna lucha que persiste en sus vidas? Pero, reflexionemos por un momento, ¡Muchas veces nosotros hacemos lo mismo!

Estimado lector, te invito a pensar en un área donde tu ANDAR no está en congruencia con tu SABER.

¿Cómo sobrepasar esa barrera entre la mente, el corazón y nuestro andar?

Nuestras **acciones** (nuestro andar diario) NO reflejarán lo que **sabemos** (mente), sino lo que **sentimos** (corazón). Cuando sabemos mucho (mente) y ese conocimiento no llega al corazón y a nuestros miembros, eso se llama vivir una mentira, o dicho de una manera más clara, se llama HIPOCRESÍA (Mt. 23:3; Col. 3:9, Stg. 1:22)

Creo que todos hemos tenido esa lucha, y también la vemos en nuestras iglesias. Todos hemos conocido gente con un gran conocimiento, pero que no produce fruto. Gente que asiste a los grupos de estudio bíblico semanales, a los servicios dominicales, a cursos o seminarios, y a cualquier otra oportunidad de conocer más de la Biblia, pero que no pone en práctica lo que sabe. A muchos en mi cultura les gusta recibir diplomas cada vez que toman un curso de cualquier cosa. Muchos tienen diplomas de discipulado, de teología, de finanzas bíblicas, de cursos



put into practice what they know. Many in my culture love to receive diplomas every time they take a course on any subject. Many have degrees in discipleship, theology, biblical finance, marriage courses, etc. Many of them simply do nothing but warm the chairs, but others are on active duty, praising, teaching, and even being church leaders.

*"Keep on being obedient to the word, and not merely being hearers who deceive themselves"* (James 1:22).

In James 1:22, we learn that the biblical knowledge acquired must be put into practice, however, if a survey were conducted in the homes of these people, how many of their family members would sign these diplomas, or tell us how much they have been blessed by all that knowledge?

It is very important to God that we be sanctified in each area of our being (1 Thes. 5:23). We are integral beings, we cannot separate the mind from the heart, or the heart from the body, nor these from the mind. God Himself made flesh, Jesus Christ, grew in an integral way (Luke 2:52) and led an integral life (Mt. 22:16). We must, therefore, be evaluating our Christian walk in these three areas: our intellect (mind), our emotions (heart), and our will (walk), as Paul exhorts us in 2 Corinthians 13:5; seeking as a goal that, what we know, we will then feel, and then live it.

### WHAT WAS SAUL LIKE BEFORE MEETING CHRIST?

Saul had a large, inflated head, full of knowledge; motivated and controlled by a heart full of self-centeredness and self-sufficiency, which motivated him move heaven and earth to gain more prominence before men and God.

Saul knew very well, at least theoretically, what grace was, and he taught it from Moses to the prophets, but he did not even remotely practice a small portion of what that meant.

What did God do to change that? (Acts 9)

- 1) He humbled him: He taught (his **mind**) who Jesus is, and what he was doing wrong, and why... (being).

de matrimonios, etc. Muchos de ellos simplemente no hacen más que calentar las sillas, pero otros están en el servicio activo, alaban, enseñan e, incluso, son líderes en iglesias.

*"No se contenten sólo con escuchar la palabra, pues así se engañan ustedes mismos. Llénenla a la práctica."* (Stg. 1:22)

En Santiago 1:22 aprendemos que el conocimiento bíblico adquirido debe ser puesto en práctica, sin embargo, si se hiciera una encuesta en los hogares de estas personas, ¿Cuántos de los miembros de su familia firmarían esos diplomas, y nos hablarían de cuánto han sido bendecidos por todo ese conocimiento?

Para Dios es muy importante que seamos santificados en cada una de las áreas de nuestro ser (1 Tes. 5:23). Somos seres integrales, no podemos separar la mente del corazón, o el corazón de los miembros, y éstos de la mente. El mismo Dios hecho carne, Jesucristo, creció de una manera integral (Lucas 2:52) y llevó una vida integral (Mt. 22:16). Debemos, por tanto, estar evaluando nuestro caminar cristiano en estas tres áreas: Nuestro intelecto (**mente**), nuestras emociones (**corazón**) y nuestra voluntad (**miembros**), tal como Pablo nos exhorta en 2 Corintios 13:5; buscando como meta que, lo que sabemos, lo sintamos y, entonces, lo vivamos.

### ¿CÓMO ERA SAULO ANTES DE CONOCER A CRISTO?

Saulo tenía una grande e inflada cabeza, llena de conocimiento; motivado y controlado por un corazón lleno de egocentrismo y autosuficiencia, que le hacía mover cielo y tierra para ganar más protagonismo ante los hombres y ante Dios.

Saulo sabía muy bien, al menos teóricamente, qué era gracia, y la enseñaba desde Moisés a los profetas, pero no practicaba ni lejanamente las sombras de lo que eso significa.

¿Qué hizo Dios para cambiar eso? (Hch. 9)

1. Lo humilló: Le enseñó (a su **mente**) quién es Jesús, y qué estaba haciendo mal, y por qué... (ser).



Nuestras **acciones** (nuestro andar diario) NO reflejarán lo que **sabemos** (mente), sino lo que **sentimos** (corazón).

...as a result of this process, he became known as the Apostle of GRACE,...regardless of the cost that this entailed, including giving up his own life...

A correct understanding of the love and grace of God received through Jesus Christ, which has come down to an emotional heart, convinced and saturated by such knowledge; it will result in us bearing much fruit for our Lord...

- 2) He blinded him to transform his sight: It impacted his ears, eyes, feelings, and even his convictions; He gave him a new identity: "Brother" (made him feel it: his **heart**).
- 3) He sent him to serve: "Get up," "obey," "you will be told what to do" (his **hands** and **feet**).

And, as a result of this process, he became known as the Apostle of GRACE (Eph. 3:2), regardless of the cost that this entailed, including giving up his own life (Acts 20:24). Furthermore, Paul repeated this process in others (2 Tim. 2:2). Why? Because he imitated Jesus in everything (1 Cor. 11:1).

### HOW DID JESUS DO IT?

What kind of people did He work with? What were His disciples like? How did Jesus achieve a successful learning process with His 12? As a good teacher, He knew how to impact all areas in His students: their mind, heart and walk. We can distinguish this process in chapters 7 to 9 of Luke.

1. Luke 7: He taught them to understand (**mind**).
2. Luke 8: He led them to experience (**heart**).
3. Luke 9: He sent them out to practice what they had learned (**hands** and **feet**).

How do these 3 aspects of our being work in the practice of the Christian life? I am very visual, and I tried to illustrate the 3 areas of our being as 3 different buttons, representing the **mind**, the **heart** and the **feet** or **body**.



2. Lo cegó para transformar su vista: Impactó sus oídos, ojos, sentimientos, sus convicciones; y le dio una nueva identidad: "Hermano" (le hizo sentirlo: su **corazón**).
3. Lo envió a servir: "Levántate, "obedece", "se te dirá qué hacer" (sus **manos** y **pies**).

Y, como resultado de este proceso, llegó a ser conocido como el Apóstol de la GRACIA (Ef. 3:2), no importándole el costo que esto implicara, incluyendo su propia vida (Hch. 20:24). Y aún más, Pablo repitió este proceso en otros (2 Tim. 2:2). ¿Por qué? Porque él imitó a Jesús en todo (1 Cor. 11:1).

### ¿CÓMO LO HIZO JESÚS?

¿Con qué tipo de personas trabajó? ¿Cómo eran Sus discípulos? ¿Cómo hizo Jesús para lograr un proceso exitoso de aprendizaje con Sus 12? Como buen maestro, Él supo impactar todas las áreas en Sus estudiantes: sus **mentes**, **corazones** y **miembros**. Ese proceso lo podemos distinguir en los capítulos 7 al 9 de Lucas.

1. Lucas 7: Les enseñó a comprenderlo (mente).
2. Lucas 8: Los llevó a experimentarlo (corazón).
3. Lucas 9: Los envió a practicarlo (manos y pies).

¿Cómo funcionan esos 3 aspectos de nuestro ser en la práctica de la vida cristiana? Yo soy muy visual, y traté de ilustrar las 3 áreas de nuestro ser como botones, representando cada uno a la **mente**, el **corazón** y los pies o **miembros**.





A brief explanation of each line in the graph on the previous page would be:

- 1) Knowledge (knowing something), without conviction (nothing in the heart) or action, in practice (obedience) is called **hypocrisy** (Mt. 23:3; James 4:17).
- 2) Knowledge (knowing something), without heart, and doing things for the Lord's work, but without conviction, is called **legalism** (doing works only to accomplish, but without conviction, without love) (Rev. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 13).
- 3) Knowledge (knowing something) that reaches the heart (conviction) and then, as a consequence, reaches actions, is to live by **faith** or by **grace**; and that is what allows us to bear fruit that gives glory to God, which is the purpose of our existence (Jn. 15:8; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:10).

In summary, we must evaluate ourselves every day to try to live the Christian life fully, with the three buttons turned on (mind, heart and walk), and always be connected to the source of life: Christ (Jn. 15:5).

1. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).
2. We must have the same feeling (heart) that was in Christ (Phil. 2:5).
3. We must walk, or live like Christ (Jn. 15:5, 1 Jn. 2:6).

A correct understanding of the love and grace of God received through Jesus Christ, which has come down to an emotional heart, convinced and saturated by such knowledge; it will result in us bearing much fruit for our Lord, as Paul expresses it in 2 Cor. 5:14-15:

*"For Christ's love compels us [heart], since we have reached this conclusion [mind]: If One died for all, then all died. And He died for all so that those who live should no longer live [walk] for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised."* **TM**

Una breve explicación de cada línea del gráfico anterior sería:

- 1) Conocimiento (saber algo), sin convicción (nada en el corazón) ni en la acción, en la práctica (obediencia) se llama hipocresía (Mt. 23:3; Stg. 4:17).
- 2) Conocimiento (saber algo), sin corazón, haciendo cosas para la obra del Señor, pero sin convicción, se llama legalismo (hacer obras sólo por cumplir, pero sin convicción, sin amor) (Apoc. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 13).
- 3) Conocimiento (saber algo) que llega al corazón (convicción) y luego, como consecuencia, llega a las acciones, es vivir por fe o por gracia; y eso nos permite llevar fruto que da gloria a Dios, el propósito de nuestra existencia (Jn. 15:8; Fil. 1:11; Col. 1:10).

En resumen, debemos evaluarnos cada día para procurar vivir la vida cristiana integralmente, con los tres botones encendidos (mente, corazón y miembros), y conectados a la fuente de vida: Cristo (Jn. 15:5).

1. Tenemos la mente de Cristo (1Cor. 2:16).
2. Debemos tener el mismo sentir (corazón) que hubo en Cristo (Fil. 2: 5).
3. Debemos andar o vivir como Cristo (Jn. 15:5, 1 Jn. 2:6).

Un correcto entendimiento del amor y la gracia de Dios recibida a través de Jesucristo, que ha bajado a un corazón emocionado, convencido y saturado por dicho conocimiento; debe resultar en que demos mucho fruto para nuestro Señor, tal como lo expresa Pablo en 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

*"El amor de Cristo nos obliga [corazón], porque estamos convencidos [mente] de que uno murió por todos, y por consiguiente todos murieron. Y él murió por todos, para que los que viven [miembros] ya no vivan para sí, sino para el que murió por ellos y fue resucitado."*

Y, como resultado de este proceso, llegó a ser conocido como el Apóstol de la GRACIA, ...no importándole el costo que esto implicara, incluyendo su propia vida...

Un correcto entendimiento del amor y la gracia de Dios recibida a través de Jesucristo, que ha bajado a un corazón emocionado, convencido y saturado por dicho conocimiento; debe resultar en que demos mucho fruto para nuestro Señor...

# Galatians

*Freedom through God's Grace*

PHILLIP J. LONG

Galatians is one of the earliest of the Pauline letters and is therefore among the first documents written by Christians in the first century. Paul's letter to the Galatians deals with the first real controversy in the early church: the status of Jews and gentiles in this present age and the application of the Law of Moses to gentiles. Paul argues passionately that gentiles are not "converting" to Judaism and therefore should not be expected to keep the Law. Gentiles who accept Jesus as Savior are "free in Christ," not under the bondage of the Law.

Galatians also deals with an important pastoral issue in the early church as well. If gentiles are not "under the Law," are they free to behave any way they like? Does Paul's gospel mean that gentiles can continue to live like pagans and still be right with God? For Paul, the believer's status as an adopted child of God enables them to serve God freely as dearly loved children.

*Galatians: Freedom through God's Grace* is commentary for laypeople, Bible teachers, and pastors who want to grasp how the original readers of Galatians would have understood Paul's letter and how this important ancient letter speaks to Christians living in similar situations in the twenty-first century.

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—AARON W. WHITE, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, South Charleston, Ohio

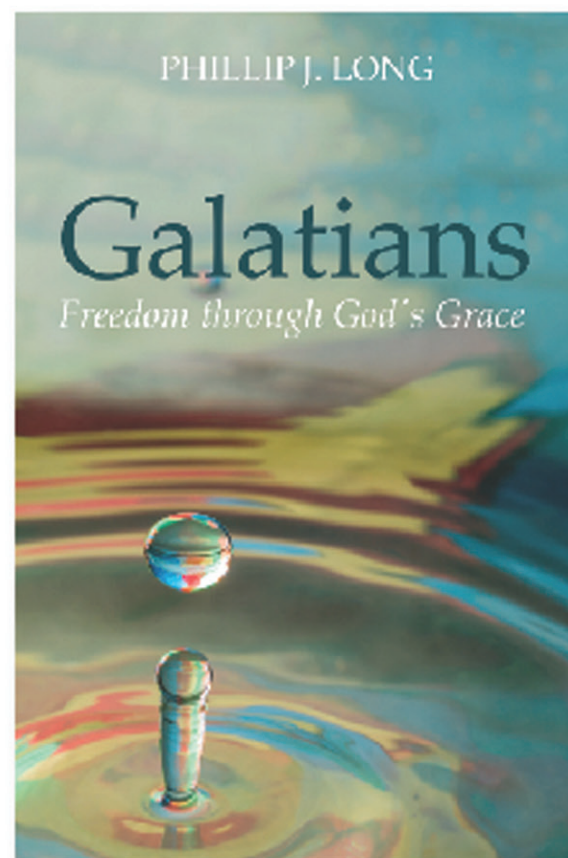
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by Timothy McGarvey

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# HE IS RISEN I WILL SING OF MY REDEEMER

In previous years our Resurrection Sunday has been greeted by snowstorms that have kept all but the hardy at home. But who could have ever even dreamed that almost the entire country would be experiencing a worldwide pandemic that would essentially lock us into our homes. Virtually every aspect of our society has come to an unprecedented screeching halt. One of the sadder aspects is that for many the traditional seasonal services also were entered into the forbidden category.

This was, as it should be, met with a tremendous chorus of opposition. It was as though the world would end if people weren't permitted to attend church on Easter Sunday. Now I know that there are those who only darken the door of a church at Christmas and Easter, but for all those who are there every time the doors are open it wasn't to be tolerated. Needless to say, even though the church services were cancelled, "church" could never be.

You see, "church" is not the building in which we meet. Church is that body that comes together to meet in a particular facility. We are the church, the Body of Christ. I am not advocating with doing away with the local "church," I am simply saying that government can never cancel church.

All of us who are in Christ are the church. We are saved because of faith alone in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Personally, I don't like the word "Easter" because it is not an accurate description of the day. I prefer to use the word "resurrection" in that it defines the day.

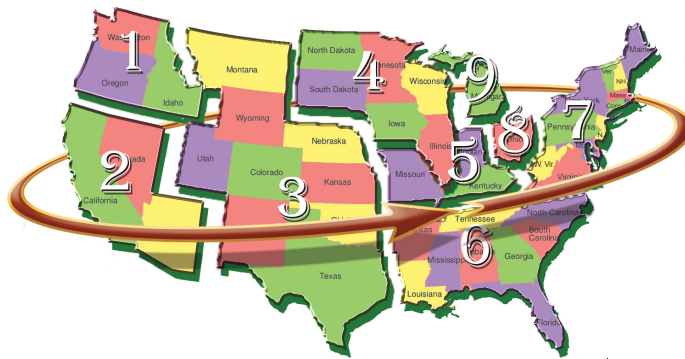
In Romans 4:25 we read this: *He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* Jesus Christ came into this world for the very purpose of saving sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). The righteous, eternal Son of God had taken on the outward likeness of man and had humbled Himself to death (Phil. 2:6-8).

For me, the second part of Romans 4:25 is what nails the significance of the day and the assurance of my salvation. It says that He was "*raised to life for our justification.*" When I was a kid we were taught that the word justified meant "just as if I'd never sinned." But now I believe that definition falls short of the true meaning. Because God's righteousness has been imputed unto me (2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:21-22), I have been made a saint in Christ. Therefore the definition should be "just as if I never COULD sin."

Because He was raised, I too shall be raised up to meet the Lord in the clouds and shall forever be with Him. I will dwell in that new eternal body that God has prepared for me and I will live forever in the very presence of the eternal, righteous God.

Covid-19 may have closed the doors of the building, but nothing can separate me from the love of God (Rom. 8:31-39). It couldn't cancel the message either. Through the wonders of technology the message went out over the internet where even local churches were being watched around the world. Praise the Lord!





## REGIONAL NEWS FROM AROUND THE GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP



**Grace Bible Church in Port Orchard, WA**, just finished hosting Northwest Grace Youth Camp's Senior High Winter Blast where one girl, that we know of, prayed to receive Christ as her Savior. We had 54 senior high students join us from four of the other churches in the region. Mike McFadden from Phoenix, AZ, spoke on the theme "2020 Vision." We had a great time and the students look forward to seeing each other again for summer camp July 26-31.



This has been a trying time for **Anaheim Grace Bible Church in California**, first with the departure of Pastor Joel Molina and his loving family to Bethesda Church in Minnesota. With the help of the GGF we had set up an interim pastor program starting with our own Board Chairman and adult Sunday school teacher, Bob Williams. He covered the three Sundays left in February. Then we had Joe Tusan from the Riverside church for one Sunday. After that we were privileged to have Pastor Tim Heath, whose father was the founding pastor of this church, here for two Sundays in March and was to return in April for two Sundays. He was to be followed both times by Pastor Gary Cloud for two Sundays. However at that time Covid-19

took over and church services had to be canceled and Pastor Cloud had to also be canceled. So as of this writing we have not been able to hear Pastor Cloud preach. Hopefully, when the quarantine is lifted, we will be able to hear from him or have a pastor candidate to hear from.



**Cope Community Church (Cope, CO) (Terry Covert, Pastor)** is for the first time ever posting our pastors sermons online. We have a new Facebook page that we are posting these on and also they are going on YouTube. I know this is the 21st century but out here in the country with a pastor over 65 we sometimes are a little behind. So what I am saying is this. The health crisis has benefited our church in a big way [at least so far] with all of the views and online interest. God can make good things happen in bad times. We all know this is true, but it is very cool when we see it first hand. Bible studies go on as well [online of course ... wow, a whole lot of technology in a very short time happening out here on the eastern plains of Colorado]! Hope this finds y'all doing well and following hard after Jesus!

**Denver Bible Church (Arvada, CO): Pastor Bob Enyart** has always been a half-brick, half-digital outreach so during the pandemic, radio, podcast, and YouTube has become our primary dis-



tribution channel for our Gospel of Grace. With the Lord's blessing and even because of the disruption of people's normal routines, God's Word is reaching people we never before would have reached.

**Grace Bible Church of Lakewood (Lakewood, CO) (Pastors Harl Hargett; Mark Smith):**

Like so many others, our building is closed due to COVID-19; but we are trying to keep in touch with the Church! We remember Christ Over Viral Infectious Disease! May we all serve one another in this time of global distress!

**Harvest Fellowship (Brighton, CO) (Pastors Steve Blackwell & Bob Hill):** Lots of changes with the lockdown. No less work than normal, but projects that need to be done are getting done. We are posting our services on Facebook live and YouTube as most everybody else! It changes how we do things, maybe for good. We are in the "thousands of hits" with the service. Debbie and I are doing the sermon together as a discussion with each other, helping our people to know us better as a couple. We have had fun doing it. Very casual. Probably for all of us, it's: "Necessity is the mother of invention." We are doing what we have wanted to do for so long, but never have had the time. May Christ be exalted. And may we have the courage (Eph 6:19-20) to share Christ with the lost and the courage to teach/disciple the new believers if the cost is high.



**Grace Bible Church of West Allis, WI:** The year 2020 is breezing by so very quickly. We have made a time-change for our Morning Service from 9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on January 5. On January 7, we sent a second Short-Term Mission's team to Nicaragua in two years. They came beside Milo and Raquel Seravalli for ten days and helped them in their work. God raised the funds, prepared the hearts of the nine people who went to Nicaragua, and they were supported in prayer by hundreds of people in the States.

On March 1, we had our Annual Ministry Review meeting. It was at this meeting that a vote was taken to approve Mark Kiel from our local assembly to become Associate Pastor of Grace Bible Church. The vote was 94% in favor of Mark's approval. We are excited as Mark becomes a part of the staff of our church on June 1 of this year!!! It will be a time of change for Mark and Colleen as they step into this role as pastor and wife, but we shall look forward to their lives impacting others for Christ in the coming years.

**GGFRN**

**GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP  
REGIONAL NEWS**



**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM ALL  
REGIONS AND ALL CHURCHES**

**Share how your church is dealing  
with the national pandemic. Tell us  
how you have continued to reach  
your communities and what have  
been the positive results.**

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BE JOYFUL IN *hope*

PATIENT IN *affliction*

FAITHFUL IN *prayer*

ROMANS 12:12<sup>NIV</sup>

