

# TRUTH

m a g a z i n e

Jul-Sep 2013, Summer Edition

*"This is the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it."*

*Psalms 118:23, 24*

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Part Two of Dale DeWitt's, "The Origins of the Grace Movement"

also:

GGF news from around the nation

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



GRACE GOSPEL  
FELLOWSHIP

# TRUTH

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Jul - Sep, Summer Edition, Volume 63, Issue 2

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

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The publishing of TRUTH, a quarterly magazine emphasizing the doctrines of the dispensation of grace, is to provide individuals and churches with Bible studies, articles of Christian concern and devotion, and news about Grace Gospel Fellowship (GGF), Grace Bible College, Grace Ministries International, Grace Publications, and other Grace organizations and activities.

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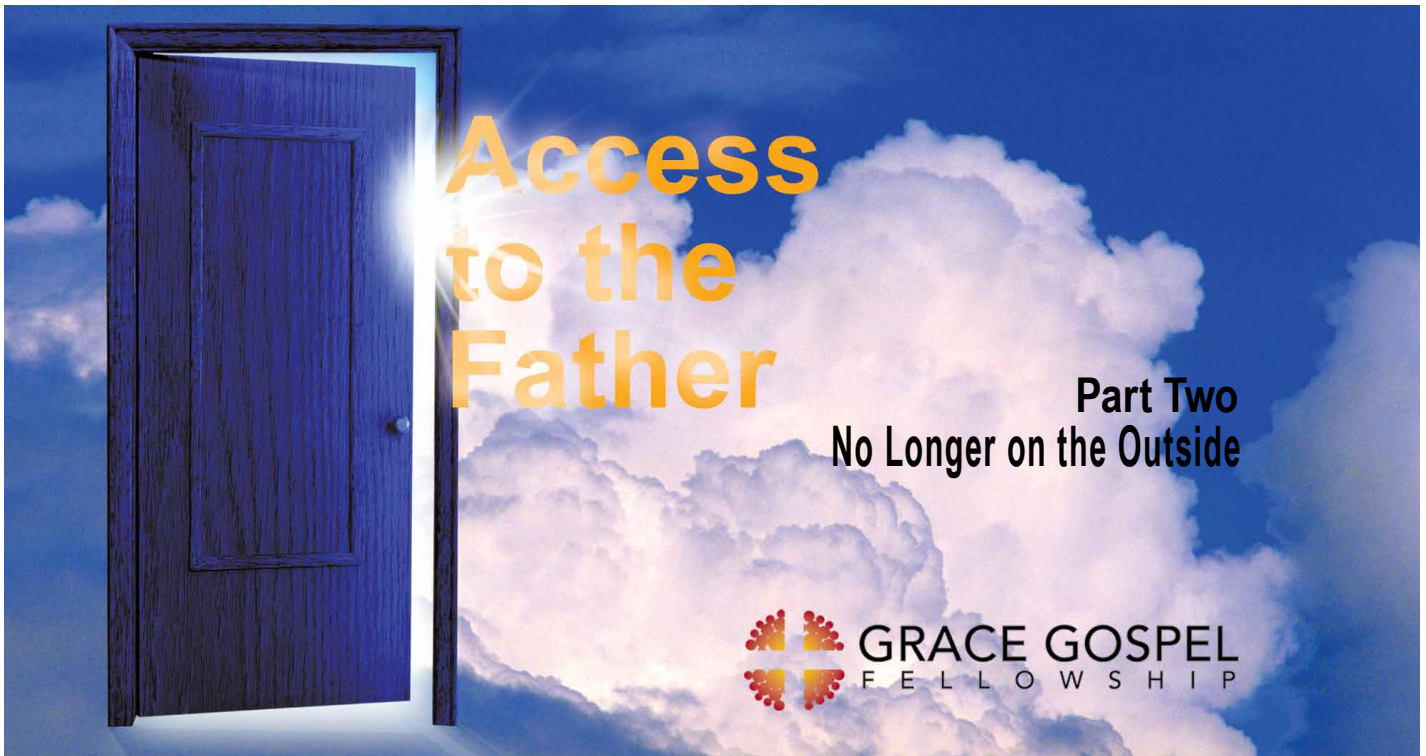
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by Frosty Hansen  
President of Grace Gospel Fellowship

**E**qual access, racially, was not a concern for me, growing up white in a white Seattle suburb, geographically and experientially separated from the Deep South and its Jim Crow Laws. It wasn't until nearing the end of my high school experience that the Civil Rights movement finally gained traction locally and transported the first black students to my high school, part of an exchange program with South Seattle's Garfield High. I became acutely aware that equal access might be a problem for people in my world.

Equal access for the disabled was never a concern for me, blessed with sound mind and body. I was able to go anywhere and do anything. It wasn't until my first pastorate that my heart awakened to the struggles of the disabled. God brought quadriplegic Dan Taber into my life; one of God's great gifts was my twenty-seven-year friendship with Dan who left his broken body for glory in 2006. Through Dan I became aware equal access within our church buildings was a major problem for many disabled and elderly.

We live in an era during which equal access to God, spiritually, should not be a concern for anyone. My last article discussed the access we have to the Father because Christ has broken down the barrier that once separated fallen humanity from God:<sup>1</sup> "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence through

faith in Him" (Eph 3:12). That is one of three verses where Paul uses the Greek word, *prosaogoge*, defined as "a leading or bringing into the presence of someone or something; freedom to enter through the assistance or favor of another."<sup>2</sup> Christ ushers believers into the presence of the Father by virtue of his sacrificial death on our behalf.

But is this access truly equal? This is a vital question that must be examined from both a theological and a personal perspective. Answering it begins in Ephesians 2:18 where Paul writes, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." Although this verse may appear identical to Ephesians 3:12, a key word demands deeper investigation. Paul says we *both* have access.

### Insiders and Outsiders

The significance of the word "both" would not have been lost on Paul's primary audience. They knew all too well from personal experience that a great division had existed between Gentiles and Jews. So, it meant something special to them when Paul said "you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Eph 2:13). They were aware that the people

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of Israel were *insiders*, while the Gentiles were definitely *outsiders* far removed from God and His blessings.

The schism between Jew and Gentile was nothing new: Secular history and the Biblical record—from the Old Testament, Gospels, and Acts—contain numerous examples of the deep contempt and distrust which existed between these two groups. When Paul mentions that the Gentiles are “called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision” (Eph 2:11), he most likely is referring to an insult a Jew might hurl at a Gentile. And the animosity cut both ways; there was no love lost between Jew and Gentile.

But the division went further than personal prejudice. God Himself made the distinctions between the two, a fact that Paul refers to in Ephesians 2:11-12, urging Gentile believers to remember how things once were. The barriers were erected centuries earlier when God called Abraham and his descendants to be His special people.

Christians today don’t have the same grasp on a past reality; one that Gentile believers clearly understood in Paul’s day. We have been blessed with twenty centuries of God’s grace extended toward Gentiles, in which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ” (Gal 3:28). While Christians in 2013 tend to assume any division between Jew and Gentile must have resulted from the prejudice of sinful human hearts, that is not how Paul’s original readers would have interpreted the words of Ephesians 2:12.

*Remember*, Paul says, “at that time you were without Messiah.”<sup>3</sup> The hope of a Redeemer who would restore their kingdom was announced through the prophets to Israel. To be without Christ was to be without redemption and without access to God.

*Remember*, at that time you were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” The nation chosen by God as His holy theocracy was Israel.<sup>4</sup> Gentiles had no citizenship with the people of God, and therefore no claim on Israel’s King of Heaven.

*Remember*, at that time you were outsiders, “strangers from the covenants of promise.” The word covenants is plural because God repeatedly entered into covenants with Israel. The covenant of circumcision (Gen 17:4-14) would itself become a mark of closeness for Israel and rejection for those outside the covenant, including a descendant of Abraham (an Israelite) who was not circumcised: “And the uncircumcised male... that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant” (Gen 7:14). That was just one of many covenants and promises of which the Gentiles had no part.<sup>5</sup>

*Remember*, at that time you were “having no hope.” Like their Patriarchs, Israel placed its hope in an unseen, future inher-

itance: “These all died by faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:13). Israel had a future hope; the Gentiles were hopeless.

*Remember*, at that time you were “without God in the world.” Israel was the community that knew and worshipped the One true God, to whom His promises were made and among whom He dwelt. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “You worship what you do not know, we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews” (Jn 4:22). Though the Gentiles could come to the God of Israel for salvation, it was *through* Israel that He could be known.

Perhaps we can gain a better grasp of the contrast between the two groups by breaking down some of Israel’s blessings alongside this listing of Gentile liabilities:

Advantages of Israel (Rom 9:3-5)	Disadvantages of Gentiles (Eph 2:11-12)
The adoption as sons	Uncircumcision
The divine glory	Without the Messiah (Christ)
The covenants and the Law	Excluded from the commonwealth of Israel
The service of God	Strangers from the covenants of promise
The promises	Having no hope
The Patriarchs	Without God
The Messiah (Christ)	

In times past, Israel had the privileged position of exclusive access to God. Those who were Gentile by birth could only draw partially near to God through conversion and acceptance of the God of Israel.

A visual reminder of this division was part of Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem where a series of courts divided worshipers, with the Court of Gentiles the farthest from the Temple building. Access to worship was limited so that even Gentile converts could not draw any closer than a 4½-foot wall that separated them from Israelite worshipers. Inscriptions on that wall threatened death to any foreigner who drew closer. Paul almost lost his

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*“We live our lives contravening spiritual truth, viewing those with whom we differ politically, theologically or ethnically as if they were ‘afar off’ in comparison with our nearness to God.*

*This should never be!”*

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life when he was accused of bringing Trophimus, an Ephesian, past that barrier (Acts 21:28-29).

### A New Creation

That’s how things once were, both in terms of human relationships and spiritual standing for Jews and Gentiles, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). Those words brought hope and encouragement to Gentile believers. Though a physical wall still stood in Jerusalem, Paul proclaimed that through Christ the spiritual wall that once divided Jews and Gentiles has now been demolished.

What did that mean? Did the breaking down of the middle wall of separation (Eph 2:14) now allow the Gentiles to move up a notch to the same level of blessings that once belonged to Israel? The passage does say that Christ “made *both* one” (2:14), “reconcile[d] them *both* to God” (2:15) and that “we *both* have access” (2:18). Is it simply that we who were far off are brought to the same place as those who were near, or is there something more involved? Paul answers that question in Ephesians 2:15-16, “...so as to *create* in Himself one *new* man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”

The Creator has created something new. Instead of a once-divided group of believers where the Gentiles are promoted to the previous level of Israel, there is a new creation called the Body of Christ in which all previous privileges and disadvantages alike vanish. In this new community of believers neither Jew nor Gentile can be discerned; “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all” (Col 3:11).

Equal access is assured because we are part of a unique new creation in Christ. The “both” are now one, as the old distinctions are gone. Those who were once far away are one with those who were once near, coming equally as “fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Eph 3:6).

That brings us back to Ephesians 2:18 and “...through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Access to the Father is the same for every believer who comes through Christ,

placing faith in His vicarious death on the cross. It is because of Christ’s death, the just for the unjust, that we come near to God. “He made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).

Access to the Father is also by one Spirit; “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13). Every person who places faith in Christ becomes a part of the new creation, the Body of Christ, by the baptizing work of the Spirit and is sealed for the day of redemption.

### A Personal Perspective

That is the theological perspective on equal access in the Church. The redeeming work of Christ and the baptizing work of the Spirit bring all believers into one new Body in Christ. Salvation for all is by grace through faith in Christ. We all stand before the Father accepted in Christ, holy and without blame.

Ephesians 2 tells us that all believers—those who come to the Father through Christ and are placed into the Body by the Holy Spirit—have equal standing before Him. There are no differences based on the keeping of the Law or any particular code of ethics. Ethnic and gender barriers are down. Class structures have no bearing on our acceptance. Even the finer points of our theological understanding do not change the standing of a child of God.

But is this access truly equal from our personal perspectives? Quite often the reality of equal access within the Body of Christ is similar to my earlier experiences with inequality among the races and with the disabled. We live our lives contravening spiritual truth, viewing those with whom we differ politically, theologically or ethnically as if they were “afar off” in comparison with our imagined nearness to God. This should never be!

The building of a modern “middle wall of separation” does nothing more than frustrate the work of Christ by which He has “made the both one.” Whether someone agrees or not, with my doctrine, my worship music preference, my politics, my stand on immigration reform, should never become a divisive issue. Also, physical mobility, mental comprehension, racial or social back-

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grounds have nothing to do with our oneness in Christ. Equality in the Body is based solely on our faith in Christ and nothing else: “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.... If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor 5:15-16).

This should be our personal perspective of equal access. The wall is down! The old divisions are gone! We are part of the new creation—one Body in Christ! If I may paraphrase, “For through Him all have equal access by one Spirit to the Father.”

In the next issue of Truth we will conclude with the third verse where Paul mentions our access. □

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> “Access to the Father,” Truth Magazine, Apr-Jun 2013.

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Blue Letter Bible, 1940), see “access.” Vine defines the word as “a leading or bringing into the presence of someone or something; freedom to enter through the assistance or favor of another.”

<sup>3</sup> The word Christos (Greek) means “anointed one” and is equivalent to the Hebrew term Messiah.

<sup>4</sup> Ex 19:3-6; Dt 7:6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Including what we refer to as the Old Covenant (Ex19) and the promise of a New Covenant for the nation of Israel (Jer 31:31-37).



by Kenneth B. Kemper  
President of Grace Bible College

I have prayed for and heard others pray for discernment, as we worked through difficult situations and met together to make decisions. But I've struggled to truly comprehend what it is we actually mean when we talk about discernment. Discernment is a quality spoken of often in Scripture, but seldom studied. Let's explore what we are asking of God when we pray for discernment.

God said of the nation of Israel, when they were in rebellion, that “They are a nation without sense; there is no discernment in them” (Dt 32:27-29).

Solomon, as a newly appointed, young ruler, asked for wisdom of the Lord to rule, and “God said to him, ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked.

I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be” (1 Kgs 3:11, 12). When Solomon sought Hiram's assistance for timbers and artisans to erect the house of God, “Hiram added: ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth! He has given King David a wise son, endowed with intelligence and discernment, who will build a temple for the Lord and a palace for himself” (2 Chr 2:12).

The humble psalmist cried, “I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes” (Ps 119:125). And, Solomon wrote, “When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order” (Prv 28:2). Daniel stated, “He changes times and seasons; He deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning” (Dn 2:21).

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*“We might think of discernment as lending propriety or gracefulness in the use of intelligence for a given situation or reality.”*

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This review of biblical examples indicates a strong parallel and synonymous overlap between discernment and wisdom and understanding. The Scriptures support that discernment is not simply about having intelligence (understanding) or gaining knowledge, rather it is the proper context for using knowledge and understanding. It is the appropriate application of knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence—often shaped by past experiences—to appropriate situations. We might think of discernment as lending propriety or gracefulness in the use of intelligence for a given situation or reality.

Christian leadership author Dan Allender has challenged me with some thoughts about how we seek to discern, and the value of such a pursuit at the individual or corporate level:

One of the least utilized tools for developing individual and corporate character is discernment. It is not that we don't discern and make decisions, but often it is not seen as a formal, intentional process in our decision-making. Instead, we let the exigencies of a meeting bring forth the data (exploration), debate a few of the options, then either default to a postponing a decision, let the leader decide, or make a group decision. What happened to discernment during the process? It is usually lost in the wash of busyness.

Often a group will pray and ask for the Holy Spirit's aid in the process, and the individuals as well may ask God for help. But these prayers are still not sufficiently communal. They require little of those in the group except bowing their heads and nodding their assent. The process of discernment requires time and trust. Certain questions must be pondered, such as: which option most honors the unique character (calling and story) of this person or organization? Given the current situation, what will allow this person or organization to best live out that unique calling and mission? This process is necessary, but tragically, it can become a form of coercion or manipulation. It is crucial for people not to pronounce the will of God for another person or to impose their will as a divine prerogative [*Leading with a Limp: Turning Your Struggles into Strengths*, WaterBrook Press, May 2006].

Allender sees more than appropriate application in view, rather a very practical leadership perspective:

Discernment is another word for dreaming on behalf of others. It calls us to ponder what this person or that situation would be like if God were the center of desire—the sole purpose for what we are deciding to do. Discernment is

meant to serve the ultimate desire of being a living sacrifice for the glory of God. It is not merely an effort to answer the question of effectiveness, affordability, or viability. In answering the question of what is most honoring given our current situation, we must be careful that the questions of practicality are not seen as an absence of faith, but as the context in which we live out our trust.

Through discernment, a radically personal and intuitive process joins with a radically interpersonal and prophetic path. It requires that I submit myself to spiritual reflection—including journaling, *lectio divina* [contemplative praying of the Scriptures], and spiritual direction. It calls me to open my heart in conversation with God and others to discern my motivation and benefit from the wisdom they offer. Then it calls for me to humbly offer my understanding of what is best to do, not asserting with dictatorial certainty that God has revealed himself or that I know the will of God [*Leading...*].

The Apostle for this Age of Grace writes for the believers in Philippi, “This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God” (Phil 2:9-11). Notice how the preamble to discernment in these verses is love abounding (corporately) and knowledge and depth of insight. That is so enlightening for us as we seek discernment. I also love how Paul “frames” the backside—or result—of discernment: purity and integrity before God, and the fruits of righteousness brought about by the power of Christ, which always brings glory and praise to God! If we look at the outcome of our efforts to discern, does it bring this result? If not, it wasn't divinely discerned, but was based on my own clever intellect, which according to Proverbs is in contrast to trusting in Him with my whole heart (lean not on your own understanding; 3:5, 6).

What do we face individually (and corporately) that must only be approached with discernment? Do we really desire God's leading and will? Do we just want to somehow sanctify our own desires or ambitions? I am honestly asking myself this last question in prayer. I must; to guard God's work in my life—and the College—from my sinful self. What do you need to dedicate to the process of discernment before acting? To what do we need to commit together corporately to seek God's discernment?



# Witnessing GMI's Last Days in Congo



by Jeremy Clark  
Executive Director of Grace Ministries International

**N**ot much comes easy in Congo. Even now, in the library of the Pastors' School in the village of Kama as I begin to write, I am sitting in the dark. My computer is plugged into a battery that was charged during the day by solar panels. While planning my trip to come here, several questions came to mind. The one, however, that kept recurring was how does a church in such a poor country, with such a painful history of war and conflict, grow to have nearly 350 congregations, 290 schools, village hospitals, a university, and other training schools?

For one, the people are resilient, hardy, and committed to the work here. They love their Grace Church of Congo and want to see it grow. They also love their missionaries who have equipped them well to be ambassadors in Congo; there have been some great ones over the years.

There have been a lot of difficult or inconvenient aspects to my trip; over two weeks away from home, the language barrier, sleeping in the heat under mosquito netting, lack of running water and, oh yes, electricity. But by far the most difficult part of my time in Congo has been fielding questions about why third generation GMI missionaries, Bill and Sue Vinton, are leaving Congo to begin working in Malawi.

After decades of maturing, Grace Church of Congo has many well-trained pastors, leaders, and teachers. On the other hand, Malawi is a relatively new work that will benefit from Bill and Sue's wisdom and experience.

They have meant so much to their brothers and sisters in Congo and have been an incredible encouragement. During a public meeting one pastor told me that the Vinton's leaving



is as if GMI is taking food right out of a child's hand as he is about to eat it. In that same meeting another man produced a worn booklet with black and white photos of GMI missionaries from decades ago. He asked me, "Don't these missionaries have children? Couldn't they send their children to Congo?" They love and will sincerely miss their missionaries who have done so much to help them spiritually and physically.

Looking back at my photos from just three days in Kindu, I notice that Bill is on the phone in almost about every one of them. A few days before we left Bill and Sue's home in Bukavu for Kindu, they received news from Missionary Aviation Fellowship that the flight schedules they had meticulously planned were no longer going to work. The situation was complicated; several different flights had been lined up in order to get people, literature and supplies transported between Bukavu, Kindu, Kipaka, and Kama. Throwing up their hands in despair was not an option; they were on the phone quite a bit during those few remaining days rescheduling the flights and coordinating the transportation of materials. It was going to work out. To "paraphrase" Bill "paraphrasing" his grandfather, Baba Vi, who lived his entire adult life as a missionary in Kama, "Don't talk to me about problems. There are no problems, only challenges."

During my tour of the ministries in Kama, what I thought to be a "problem" was a building housing the Bureau for the Department of Evangelism. I was greeted by men who make up the leadership of this department. Walking through the building's three or four rooms I was struck by how little or no furniture there was. Yet as they gave me the tour they described each empty room and the function each served; it was surreal. There was no furniture! These are not offices, I thought, but empty rooms; how can you call this an evangelism building? Later, I went over the results of their evangelism efforts since January. According to my calculations—through their distribution of the "Book of Hope," tract evangelism, showing the God-Man DVD, and preaching—tens of thousands heard the gospel and over six thousand had been saved. For them, sparsely furnished rooms hardly qualified as a problem, in light of the harvest God provided.

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*Top of opposite page: A staff meeting at the Department of Evangelism (not a stick of furniture in the room); This page from top to bottom: Bill and Sue Vinton in their Bukavu office; Bill and others unload an MAF plane; A 1000 Kids for Christ team meeting in Kindu; Students plus children at Pastors' School in Kama.*



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*“After a time without missionaries among them I trust they will see that their churches are still growing, that evangelism is still taking place, and that their schools continue to educate students. This will give them that much more confidence.”*

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Also, while in Kama, I witnessed eighty-six students (forty-three couples, plus children) crammed into one classroom of the Pastors’ School; students in a three-year program to receive training as pastors and pastors’ wives in local churches. Some traveled over 250 miles to move to Kama so they can study. It is a difficult journey and a difficult life for these students. Their sacrifice and diligence is inspiring. They will play a key role in the future of their Grace Church of Congo.

When I left Kama, to begin my return journey to the States, Bill and Sue stayed behind in order to teach these students a class about the life of Joseph. You are not going to find many bookstores in Congo. When you do, it is not likely you are going to find a book about the life of Joseph in Swahili. So, what are you going to do? Write your own book. Right up to the moment Bill and I left for Kindu, it seemed that he and Sue, and Pastor Mutchokozi were revising, editing, printing and binding their “Joseph” books. It was a lot of work just creating these books for their students, but they still had to teach the course. In order to do this they spent as much time as they could reviewing the material they had written in order to give their students the best possible presentation they could. Good things are going to happen when a group of dedicated students come and sit under dedicated teachers.

On the trip from Kindu to Kama the plane stopped at Kipaka for a couple of hours so we could visit the hospital and the Grace church there. The congregation warmly welcomed us and had us sit in the front of their sanctuary. Their choir had rehearsed and performed a song prepared especially for this occasion. As they sang, my interpreter translated the lyrics. It was a song recounting some of the history of the work of GMI in Congo. It told about several of the missionaries, where they had worked, and what they had accomplished. Many of the young men in the choir were likely not old enough to have had a recollection of some of the events about which they were singing, but this history was important to them.

The relationship between Grace Church of Congo and all the missionaries who have served alongside them is a story of perseverance and dedication, both on the part of the Congolese and that of the missionaries. Everyone finds a way to make it work no matter how difficult things get. The Congolese and the missionaries who served there have gone through so much together, but have seen the Lord give the increase. Because of

this, it is difficult for Grace Church of Congo to say goodbye to Bill and Sue. After they leave, GMI will not have a missionary presence there. Sure, missionaries will still travel to Congo from time to time to minister with their Congolese brethren, but it will not be the same.

## Epilogue

Since returning to the States, I have been asked a few times what surprised me most about my time in Congo. One of the first things that comes to mind is the resourcefulness of our Congolese brothers and sisters. Grace Church of Congo did not end up with 350 congregations and 290 schools because individual missionaries planted, built, staffed and maintained them until now; numerically, that would simply be impossible. The Congolese believers in the Grace Church understood the need, were willing to be equipped, were passionate about the work of the Lord, and trusted God to bring about the growth.

In recent years Bill and Sue have been our only missionaries in Congo. They have had an excellent testimony and have worked very hard. Have they alone been pastoring all these churches or running all these schools? Of course not. I make this observation because it causes me to be optimistic about the future of Grace Church of Congo. After a time without missionaries among them I trust they will see that their churches are still growing, that evangelism is still taking place, and that their schools continue to educate students. This will give them that much more confidence.

Congo is GMI’s oldest field and we look forward to how the Lord will continue to work there. I count it a privilege to have had Bill and Sue give me a glimpse of the ministry there. It is an experience I will never forget. At about the same time I was concluding my trip to Congo, Eric Mango, our first GMI Partner (and coincidentally raised in Congo), was taking his first survey trip to the country of Namibia. It is a place he has had a burden to visit for a long time. Of all the places he visited in Namibia, people he met, and information he gathered, the most encouraging part of his trip was leading a taxi driver to Christ. GMI is going to open new fields. Whether one of those fields is Namibia or another country, I wonder what our legacy for the Lord will be when we release that field. I thank the Lord for what he has done in Congo and for all the missionaries who have faithfully served there equipping the Congolese for this moment. □

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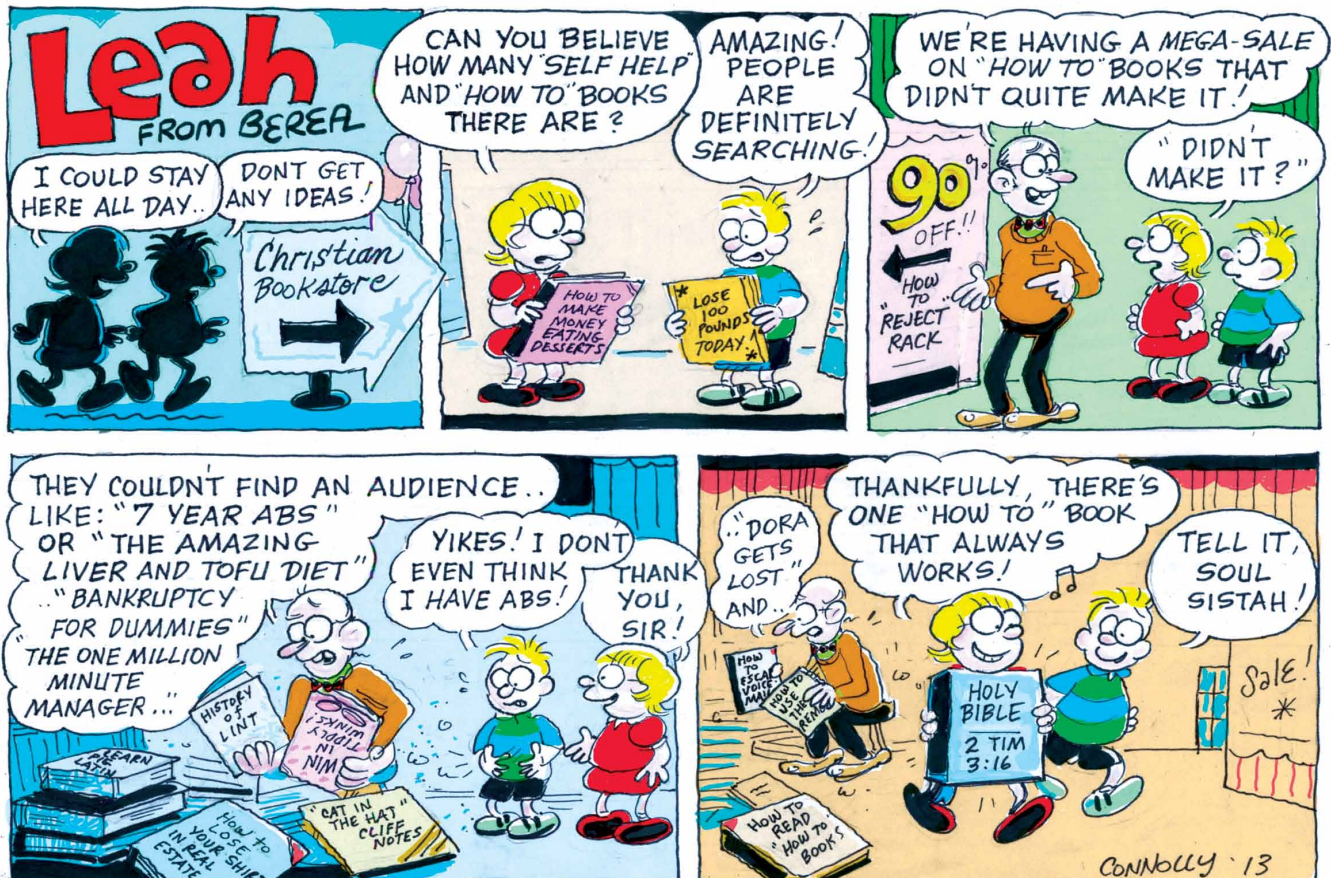
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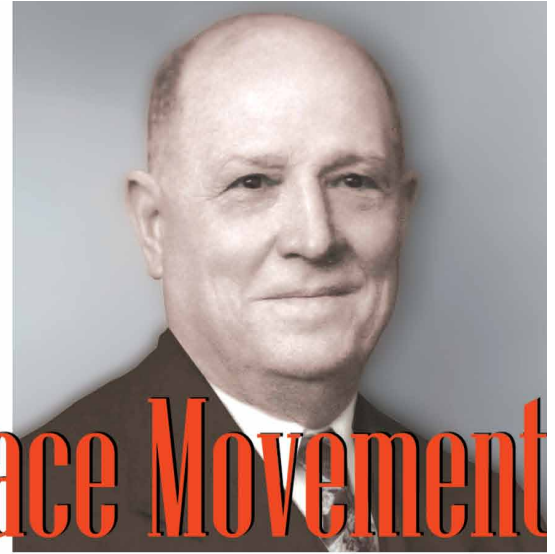
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to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery



**Editor's note:** We conclude DeWitt's look into the beginnings of the grace movement in America (mid-Acts Dispensationalism). Part Two contains discussions of O'Hair's early pamphleteering. DeWitt's objective, recalling from last issue, never intends to delve into doctrine. His goal is to use surviving documents and related resources to uncover the fountainhead of the movement, the one source who tends to first develop Scripturally based constructs that clearly show the distinctiveness of the Apostle Paul's calling and message for "emerging from the kingdom and Israel to the Church and its mysteries" (O'Hair, *A Dispensational Study of the Bible*).

Originally, Truth Magazine intended to print the appendix along with DeWitt's article, which lists all known early O'Hair pamphlets (existing and alluded to). Due to the nature of the material, it will only appear online with the full article. This is a generally accepted "industry" practice. We inadvertently referenced the appendix in Part One and apologize for any confusion that may have caused the reader.



# The Origins of the Grace Movement

by Dale S. DeWitt

The Early Theology of John Cowen O'Hair

## Part Two

research assistants –  
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### Pamphlets of the 1920s Era

Slightly before and during the 1920s—his earliest years in itinerant evangelism and as pastor at North Shore Church—O'Hair published at least forty-eight pamphlets and several dispensational charts of which some pamphlets are explanations; this is more than those listed on the back cover of *Have Ye Received...* (about 1930). Only a few—perhaps nine—were likely written before he entered the pastorate of North Shore in the summer of 1923. These forty-eight pamphlets can be classified by general subject matter as follows, although the classification is not discrete since some titles and contents overlap the categories:

- 13 are on Christ, salvation, the Christian life, or the Second Coming;
- 13 are on dispensational themes; three of these are on baptism; four are on signs and wonders;
- 11 are on other Christian groups, cults, or Modernism;
- 8 are on miscellaneous subjects;
- 3 are on social issues.

This classification scheme gives an approximate picture of O'Hair's main themes and interests during the 1920s—approximate because the categories overlap and even more classifications are possible. In identifying interests and emphases, allowance was made for his dual roles as evangelist and teacher—a more or

less atypical combination of gifts for evangelists of the 1920s. Within the general category of "dispensational themes," the three pamphlets on baptism and four on miracles are notable. To service the limited scope of this study, we will isolate examples from each of the five classifications identified above in order to see O'Hair's rationale with regard to evangelism and premillennialism; signs and wonders; baptism; dispensational ideas; and the beginning of the Church—all important to the theology of the grace movement.

### Early Evangelistic and Millenarian Pamphlets

"Evangelistic" and "millenarian" are considered together because in this era Second Coming preaching usually had evangelistic intent. Two pamphlets, certainly predating 1923 and probably the 1920 Indianapolis meetings, are *At His Coming: Premillennialism*, and *The Christ Who Died for Us*. A small pamphlet of only twelve pages, *At His Coming* was written while he was living in Oak Park outside Chicago. In the author-line he calls himself, "Evangelist J. C. O'Hair," indicating his activity of this period; after 1923, he calls himself, "Pastor." The pamphlet contains the usual Niagara and Prophetic Conferences' and Scofield Reference Bible's form of premillennialism, along with the by-now (1917-1920) controversial pretribulation rapture teaching. It closes with a plea for salvation in light of Christ's return. *The Christ Who Died for Us* is a salvation pamphlet of thirty-seven

pages. It urges personal faith by developing a picture of Jesus' divine identity, his fulfillment of prophecy, his unity with God the Father, his miracles and atoning death, and the glory and wonder of salvation. This pamphlet is full of the spirit of grace; it quotes texts of grace and speaks of Christ in all his works, names, deeds, and salvation sayings.

These pamphlets are noted because they come from very early in O'Hair's ministry and because they identify the priority in his thought and activity of evangelism and Second Advent premillennial preaching and teaching. Neither emphasis is distinctive to the grace movement; but with the whole of evangelical Christian orthodoxy, these two themes form a major theological basis for the more distinctive elements. This point emphasizes the widely recognized reality that any form of dispensational theology belongs to generic evangelical premillennialism. O'Hair's comments in the taped message suggest that the leader of the Indianapolis meetings of 1920, James Nipper, was acquainted with O'Hair's emphasis on God's grace in Christ and a completed salvation; he may have seen this salvation pamphlet. Nipper and O'Hair's common presence in rescue mission evangelism circles makes this more than likely.<sup>21</sup> During this era Wheeler Mission, and many other rescue missions, were centers of evangelism and Second Coming preaching.

## The Signs and Wonders Pamphlets

O'Hair reports that at the time of the Indianapolis meetings (1920) a story circulated about a Pentecostal minister who had died. The burial was postponed while the congregation prayed both in tongues and without tongues as another Pentecostal minister tried to raise the dead minister; the attempt failed. It also seems possible from the account that some holiness people in the meetings were resisting the Pentecostals' agitation for tongues and healings, and were wondering if their received holiness theology might be making them vulnerable to Pentecostalism—beyond their second blessing theology. These two dynamics seemed to concern Nipper and were among the reasons why he asked O'Hair to speak on the subject, and why O'Hair then developed and delivered his message, *Why Tongues and Signs and Visions Ceased after Paul Reached Rome*. That is, fraudulent claims to raising the dead, and pressure from Pentecostals for miracles, were part of the Indianapolis situation in 1920.

An early signs and wonders pamphlet is *Divine Healing: Does God Heal the Body?* The pamphlet discusses the current interest in healing, whether healing is in the atonement, the meaning of Jesus' miracles, and some inconsistencies among

<sup>21</sup> In the transcript of his taped "Message," p. 8, O'Hair refers to a tour of rescue missions which he made with Mel Trotter at Trotter's invitation. He says this tour lasted for two years (p. 8); it seems to have occupied part of his time during 1918-1919, the same period during which he pastored the Madison Street Church.

Pentecostal healers; it also points out the reality of sick or deformed and unhealed apostles (Paul) and their legates (Trophimus, Epaphroditus and Timothy), and the cessation of the sign-gifts by and after the time Paul reached Rome. This pamphlet too, like *At His Coming* and *The Christ Who Died for Us*, comes from his itinerant evangelist period, and perhaps before the Indianapolis meetings. Thus along with these two pamphlets, *Divine Healing...* illustrates two aspects of O'Hair's early theology: 1) the pre-Indianapolis emphasis on salvation as already complete by grace alone; and 2) the pre-Indianapolis engagement of Pentecostalism's healing and tongues practices. He sees these themes as coordinated: A full and complete salvation exists in relationship with Christ and does not need tongues or healings to complete it. Whatever remains to be completed lies in the Christian's future resurrection at the Second Coming. Miracles were signs for Israel during its kingdom probation period (Gospels and at least early Acts), were declining after Acts 19, and ceased when Paul reached Rome.

It also seems likely that at least one of these pamphlets figured in James Nipper's prior awareness of O'Hair's concern about signs and wonders. That concern began before the decisive Indianapolis meetings, which were nonetheless an important step in his development on this subject, especially with his new awareness of the Bishop pamphlet [mentioned in Part One]. O'Hair may also have become aware of Graham Scroggie's 1919 pamphlet, *Speaking with Tongues: What Saith the Scriptures?*

In an apparent follow-on, O'Hair soon produced a pamphlet entitled *False—Fraudulent—Fanatical Healers*. Allusions in the pamphlet point to healing evangelist Bosworth who was conducting a tent revival in Chicago. Either Bosworth or other current healers were claiming it "an act of unbelief on the part of a Christian to engage a physician or use material remedies or medicine in times of sickness."<sup>22</sup> O'Hair wanted to know whether this was valid. He begins by stressing the kingdom in Jesus' mission to Israel where miracles were appropriate as seen in other periods of Israel's history (Moses; Elijah)—a pattern also visible in the later ministry of the twelve apostles to Israel.<sup>23</sup> He then makes the telling observation that even people supposing themselves to have been healed by a healer inevitably die. He denies that bodily healing was provided in the atonement, cites the parallel healing activities of Peter and Paul, explains that the healing powers of the twelve overlapped the new dispensation of grace, and again concludes that Epaphroditus, Trophimus and Timothy—all noted in Paul's later epistles—went unhealed, while Timothy is instructed to take some wine for his infirmities. The latter point returns to one aspect of his signs and

*Continued on page 12*

<sup>22</sup> *False—Fraudulent—Fanatical Healers*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> The idea of three clusters of miracles in Israel's history sounds like B. Warfield, *Miracles: Today and Yesterday, True and False* (New York: Scribner's, 1918). O'Hair only infrequently cites sources directly.

wonders message at Indianapolis—the cessation of miracles when Paul reached Rome. This pamphlet of forty-one pages is a sequel to Indianapolis; but after how much of a time lapse cannot be determined—certainly not more than five to eight years at the most.

Two more important pamphlets on signs and wonders belong to the mid- or later 1920s. In *The Former and Latter Rain* he engages the Pentecostal claim that the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 together with the recent interest in reviving miracles are the fulfillment of Joel 2:23—a prophecy of a future early and latter rain. Instead, O’Hair takes the Joel text (with Zec 10:1 and Hos 6:3) in its natural sense of the two Palestinian rainy seasons—both to be renewed at the time of Israel’s future salvation and restoration to its land. The other piece of the 1920s, *What Is Holy Spirit Baptism?*, was not available at this writing, but is repeated with a brief summary in a later article in O’Hair’s periodical, *Bible Study for Bereans*, in January, 1937; in the summary O’Hair says Holy Spirit “baptism” is simply the baptizing work of the Spirit, by which believers are united with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection; the phrase does not relate to signs.

These pamphlets are further extensions—modest in size and argumentation—of the decisive moment in Indianapolis when Nipper asked O’Hair to prepare a talk on signs and wonders. O’Hair’s issues over renewed signs and wonders probably began before the Indianapolis event; but that event advanced the matter decisively in O’Hair’s thinking; on this subject, he was moving toward what became the theology of the grace movement.

## The Baptism Pamphlets

The second stage of the decisive event at Indianapolis was the question asked of O’Hair by a Pentecostal minister: Do not your three reasons why tongues, signs and miracles ceased when Paul reached Rome also apply to water baptism? The evangelist answered the man that he was wrong about this and more or less quickly dismissed him. (O’Hair was still practicing or approving water baptism at the time.) It was about this exchange that O’Hair later said, “I dismissed the man, but I couldn’t dismiss the question.” At that moment in Indianapolis in 1920, the most distinctive, visible, and controversial feature of the grace movement’s theology had its beginning.

He does not seem to have embarked immediately on a sudden aggressive crusade against water baptism. But he does appear to have spoken more widely about it and probably quite frequently. He also likely began explaining the matter at North Shore Church soon after taking its pastorate. These early articulations were probably cautious in light of his newness there and the likely reality, as he reflects in the earlier quote, that there were people of diverse views and experience with baptism in his congregation.

He does not define the time lapse between Indianapolis and Grand Rapids more exactly than “shortly after.” Within a three-year period is probably a safe rough estimate, but perhaps on the earlier side. In a reflection on the later controversies of the 1930s, stemming in part from his ongoing Grand Rapids teaching visits, he says, “I am not trying to start a new theory on water baptism, or upset any believers’ faith in any Christian essential. I am simply seeking for light for myself and for others who are interested in the subject.”<sup>24</sup>

As disingenuous as this may sound at first, the *Buried with Him by Baptism* pamphlet, with its mild spirit and confession of lingering questions on baptism, is evidence that he meant this statement as written.<sup>25</sup> This early pamphlet argues simply that “buried with him by baptism” refers not to water baptism but to the work of the Spirit, in which union with Christ in his death and resurrection is created—a view of the phrase that, if adopted, might bring serious Christians into confrontation with historic denominational traditions. As noted above, this pamphlet is not a sermon for his North Shore congregation; it reads more like a paper or sermon manuscript for an uncommitted audience aware of heresy charges beginning to bubble up against him.

More assertive is the slightly later pamphlet, *Seven Questions about Water Baptism*, in which he seeks to engage a wider range of denominations on their baptizing practices—especially immersionists of various stripes. The pamphlet is a straightforward series of questions; it lacks the caution and reserve of *Buried with Him by Baptism*. The seven questions are:

1. Does “baptism” mean immersion? The answer is no: there is no clear evidence for immersion anywhere in Scripture.
2. Does John’s baptism belong to the body of Christ? The answer is no: it belongs to the law’s ritual washings for Israel and its anticipated kingdom, not to the body of Christ.
3. Which water-baptism belongs to the present day believer; that demanded by Peter on the day of Pentecost, or that granted to Cornelius the Gentile? The answer is the latter because the order of related baptism events alone—faith, then the Spirit, then baptism—is compatible with baptism in Paul’s practice; he may be thinking of Acts’ Pauline baptizing scenes here. He does not seem aware of a possible tension between this answer and that of question 2.
4. How about baptismal regeneration? Texts in John appealed to in support (4:14; 7:38) use water only as a symbol of something else. If Paul thought water baptism was regenerative, he would have baptized as many as he could find; he would not have said, “Christ sent me not to baptize. . . (1 Cor 1:17).

<sup>24</sup> *Buried with Him by Baptism*, 22.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-19.

5. How about water baptism and the great commission? The commission includes signs and wonders along with baptism (Mk 16:15-18); all together belonged to Israel, the kingdom, and the ministry of the twelve apostles.
6. Have all who have been baptized with water by immersion put on Christ? The answer is no: traditional churches have many baptized members who do not know Christ personally.
7. How about the expression, “buried with Him by baptism” (Rom 6:4)? If baptism here is water, then it effected a moral change in the recipient, since a moral change is what Romans 6:4 explains.

This pamphlet seeks to involve all immersionists; those who say baptism is not necessary to salvation, those who say it is necessary for salvation, and those who say any form of baptism is regenerative. Here O’Hair’s change from baptizing to non-baptizing reaches its more engaging expression. The Indianapolis moments are becoming a developed theology, capable, he thinks, of delivering the whole of Christendom from its massive baptism conflicts and the confusion these inflict on the whole church. He seems to be thinking now of a whole-church renewal that will once for all deliver Christendom from its awkward dilemma; millions of unsaved “saints” made such by reliance upon their baptisms. His view is strikingly reminiscent of Karl Barth and Paul King Jewett’s attacks on infant baptism.<sup>26</sup>

## The Dispensational Pamphlets

### Early Dispensational Studies:

*A Dispensational Study of the Bible—Genesis to Revelation*, consists of a series of fifteen lessons on the seven dispensations. The lessons follow closely the Scofield Reference Bible’s outline of the seven dispensations, and Scofield’s theory that a dispensation consists of a new revelation with a test of man, man’s failure, and a judgment that ends each dispensation. The first seven lessons set the context: the Trinity and its functions in the dispensations. Lessons nine through fourteen are on the first six dispensations. Lesson fifteen is on the new covenant and the church. Lesson sixteen is on the last dispensation, the millennial kingdom. The segment on the new covenant is the most interesting and distinctive. He begins by noting that the new covenant includes the missions and messages of Peter to Israel and Paul to the Gentiles. The apostles and disciples of Jesus lived “. . . when the Holy Spirit made His official entrance to start His part in the building of the Church of Christ. . . . They lived in that early transition period when God was revealing step by step one of

His dispensational changes; emerging from the kingdom and Israel to the Church and its mysteries.”<sup>27</sup>

At this stage of O’Hair’s thought, he believed the whole of Acts was a transition period. Still, he goes on to say, “To give Peter’s message to Gentiles of this day is not to rightly divide the Word of truth. Peter still had Israel’s Messianic Kingdom in mind on the day of Pentecost and for some time after. . . .The mysteries concerning the Body of Christ had not been revealed to him.”<sup>28</sup>

He adds that the mystery was not made known to other ages and cites Ephesians 3 and Colossians 1:24-28 in support, following the Scofield Reference Bible’s teaching that “In [Paul’s] writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk, and destiny of the church.”<sup>29</sup>

These thoughts fit with the quotations above that sound like he is feeling his way toward the more thorough-going dispensational theology that emerged in the 1930s. His *A Dispensational Study... follows Scofield entirely, except for his thoughts on the Peter-to-Paul movement of the Acts record. Surprisingly, the pamphlet does not discuss baptism as an element in the simple Peter-Paul contrasts he draws. Nor are there any controversies over baptism reflected here like those after 1930. The pamphlet probably dates from 1924-1926—the earlier stage of his pamphleteering between 1923 and 1930. This date is further suggested by the list of only about twenty-two pamphlets available compared to the forty-one available by about 1930.*

Two other pamphlets of this period, which contain sharper distinctions, but cannot date later than 1928, are *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* and *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*. We know these pamphlets are early because in his book, *The Controversy*, C. R. Stam reports that these two pamphlets were instrumental in his family’s initial encounter with O’Hair’s thought.<sup>30</sup> The event was a visit to the Stam home (New Jersey, about 1926) by a family friend who spoke of the “one body” and “one baptism,” and later gave them copies of the two pamphlets. Thus these two pamphlets seem to come from about 1927-1928, since they are also alluded to in *Have Ye Received the Holy Spirit Since Ye Believed* (1929).

In *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* O’Hair argues that God had a special purpose for Israel and that Christ never did anything but participate in and confirm that purpose. He collects

*Continued on page 14*

<sup>26</sup> K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism*, trans. E. Payne (London: SCM Press, 1948); P. K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

<sup>27</sup> J. C. O’Hair, *A Dispensational Study of the Bible*, nd, un-paginated; the quote comes from Lesson 15, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Lesson 15, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Scofield Reference Bible, 1252.

<sup>30</sup> C. R. Stam, *The Controversy* (Chicago: Berean Bible Society, 1963).

Old Testament and New Testament texts on this theme and argues for Paul's difference from Jesus' earthly mission to Israel by gathering texts on Paul's Gentile mission. In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, O'Hair extends the thesis of *Jesus Christ, a Minister of the Circumcision* by collecting all Acts' Israel texts, all Israel texts from Paul, and all Paul's statements about his commission and mission to the Gentiles. This pamphlet produces a sharp contrast between Israel and its situation in unbelief, and the Pauline Gentile mission. The pamphlet shows O'Hair moving toward a view—of the Pauline revelation of the Church and the time of its beginning—more like that of the 1930s and after; but he is not there yet.

### Pauline Revelation and Beginning of the Church Pamphlets:

In another pamphlet of the 1920s, *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, O'Hair makes this statement, which might surprise more recent believers of grace movement conviction:

I have always believed and taught that the Church began at Pentecost, and... I know with that view there arise many questions and problems; the same is true, if we postpone the beginning of the Body of Christ to the time that Paul reached Rome.<sup>31</sup>

The author-line of the pamphlet says "J. C. O'Hair, 1011 Wilson Avenue, Chicago, Ill.," so, it comes from no earlier than the beginning of his pastorate at North Shore Church (1923). The pamphlet shows movement toward the "mid-Acts view" of the Church's beginning; he is almost, but not quite there. In the same paragraph cited above from *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, he only thinks of two views of the Church's origin—Acts 2 (a traditional view) and after Acts 28 (E. W. Bullinger's view, which O'Hair rejects). In *The Program of Jesus*, dating from about the same time, O'Hair expresses—although only once—a similar view of the origin of the Church (pp. 7-8). Otherwise this pamphlet is filled with contrasts between Jesus' mission to Israel and Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and the beginning of the otherwise unknown but newly revealed Church. He does not try to reconcile the Pauline revelation of the Church with its beginning at Pentecost. He rather draws forceful contrasts between the Sermon on the Mount in Jesus' "program," which he sees as an extension of the Mosaic law and a remarkable ethics, and the equally forceful atonement-and-salvation-grace preaching of Paul. But again, perhaps surprisingly to later grace believers, the Sermon on the Mount is seen as an ethic that becomes possible in believers once they have experienced regeneration by grace and the resurrection power of Christ working in them.<sup>32</sup>

In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul* cited above, he is even closer to the Church as a Pauline revelation and its implied origin with

Paul at a point later in Acts—well beyond Acts 2. The section of the pamphlet where this thinking appears most forcefully is "WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN?" The question shows he is searching and open, even though there is not yet a direct and formally stated answer beyond Acts 2. So it is nothing less than stunning to consider the last two paragraphs under this heading:

[Jesus'] second promise is now being fulfilled—'I will build my church.' When did Christ begin to build that church? If he began on the day of Pentecost, the minds of those Jewish disciples were so saturated with Israel's kingdom hope that there is no evidence of any knowledge on their part of the Body of Christ, made up of members who were raised up to sit with Him in the heavenlies. . . . All who were being added at that time were Jews. . . . Peter, the minister to the circumcision gave them the promise and assurance of a place in the kingdom, but if he himself was in the Body of Christ he was ignorant of the fact. . . . Before the close of the book of Acts we know that Jews and Gentiles had been baptized in the Holy Spirit into the one body. . . . God never confuses the kingdom and Israel with the Body of Christ. Israel is altogether different from the New Testament Church. They have some things in common, but many things are peculiar to each.<sup>33</sup>

In these observations, O'Hair is only a "half-step" from the obvious conclusion. At this point, however, he still believes the Church began at Pentecost. Instead of going where his distinctions point, he resolves the hesitation by two related ideas: 1) the whole of Acts is a changing kaleidoscope of transition(s) and overlaps; and 2) Acts presents us with a Jewish church and a Gentile church, apparently coexisting side by side in parallel throughout the whole book. He continues to speak of "the beginning of the church at Jerusalem," distinguishing chiefly between its ethnic makeup and practices (Jewish), and the Gentile churches which do not practice Jewish ordinances—at least not by apostolic order. These distinctions are discussed even more fully under the next heading, "THE JEW CHURCH—THE GENTILE CHURCH." This kind of contrast continues from page 22 to the pamphlet's end at page 31. Some contrasts may be slightly overdrawn, but on the whole the differences between Peter and Paul's ministries are substantial and biblically based. One contrast which could be viewed as questionable, but is in fact biblical, is that certain works of the Holy Spirit—baptizing and sealing into Christ or his Body—do not appear in the Peter-to-Israel portions of Acts (chapters 1-8).

In this pamphlet, O'Hair has virtually moved into believing that the beginning of the Church was not until Paul and the Gentile mission; nonetheless he is not quite sure as yet, since he continues to assume and even state that the Church

<sup>31</sup> *Unscriptural Cathedrals*, nd, 26. Cf. similarly, *The League of Nations* (1919), 21.

<sup>32</sup> *The Program of Jesus*, 12-14; this may seem reminiscent of the paradoxical in something like Karl Barth's sense. O'Hair resolves this by pointing out that the

Sermon on the Mount belongs to the old covenant of law, while the atonement-salvation of Christ belongs to the new covenant (*Program of Jesus*, 12-16).

<sup>33</sup> *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, 22.



began at Pentecost. The “mid-Acts” view would have to wait a bit longer for its full realization. Nonetheless, the Indianapolis insights were gradually working their way toward final conclusions—conclusions which became the distinctive theology of the grace movement on matters dispensational. O’Hair’s views in the 1920s represent his thinking in transition. The pamphlets of the 1930s would solidify the mid-Acts origin of the Church.

### **Pamphlets Addressing Two New Testament Gospels:**

O’Hair’s theological ideas discussed above led by logical extension to the thought that two different gospels were preached by Peter and Paul respectively—Peter preaching the “gospel of the circumcision” in his continuing mission to Israel, and Paul preaching “the gospel of the uncircumcision” in his ministry to Gentiles. Galatians 2:7, where these phrases are found, attracted O’Hair’s attention since it contained a rather sharp Peter-Paul difference. This distinction thickened his growing sense of discontinuities between Israel, kingdom, Jewish legal and ritual practice, and prophecy on one side, versus the Gentiles, Church, freedom from law, and mystery revelation on the other. Two early expressions of this idea are *The Twelve Apostles and Paul* and, only slightly later, *The Great Blunder of the Church*. The first appeared in 1927-1928, while the latter appeared slightly later, perhaps in 1929.

In *The Twelve Apostles and Paul*, this distinction belongs to a much larger set of sharp contrasts drawn between the twelve apostles and Paul. In this pamphlet the two-gospels difference is present in concept, but is not developed with much detailed explanation.

In *Great Blunder...*, more space (twenty-five of seventy pages) is devoted to it. Several observations on context and explanation can be made. 1) The distinction between Peter and Paul’s respective gospels closely parallels the same distinction found in W. R. Newell’s pamphlet, *Paul vs. Peter: Or, Remarks on Galatians 1 and 2* (1930). Who learned from whom or even whether either one learned from the other is not clear—not, at least, until we know more about the details of the obscure relations of the two men. Especially crucial is the meaning of the phrase “the gospel of the circumcision.” 2) In O’Hair’s discussion in *The Great Blunder of the Church*, his usual sense is that “the circumcision” refers to the Jews, but especially as the people descended from Abraham after circumcision was added (Gn 17) to the earlier promises (Gn 12:1-3) and justification by faith (Gn 15:6). That is, “the circumcision” refers to the people, Israel, and their identifying physical ritual. 3) Exactly what the content of “the gospel” is in this phrase is not clear until he finally says on page 50:

In the gospel of the circumcision, Peter preached concerning Jesus of Nazareth and His doings on earth [Acts 2:22]. He preached the same message to Cornelius and his household [Acts 10:38-40]. Paul never preached the

ministry of reconciliation for all the world, concerning ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ He made no reference to what he did on earth, except the Lord’s Supper, which exception is one proof that Supper is for the observance of members of the Body of Christ. The reconciliation ministry took in the human race as related to Adam and not to circumcised Abraham and his seed after the flesh. Therefore Paul, in his writings to Gentiles never once referred to the parables, the sermon on the mount, miracles, or kingdom teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. He never referred to Jesus of Nazareth in writing to Gentiles, but to the Christ Who was reconciling the world unto God by His death.

These generalizing contrasts used to explain the “gospel of the circumcision” are partly due to the fact that there is no parallel to the Galatians 2:7 phrase outside the passage—nowhere to look for help on the exact sense. New Testament parallels do exist for the phrase “the circumcision,” quite a few in fact. But in the New Testament these usually refer to Israel/the Jews collectively—the recipients of the gospel, not the preached content—as many of O’Hair’s comments recognize when citing the passages with “the” before “circumcision.” But still, no passage parallels the whole phrase. Whether originating with Newell, O’Hair, or one of the British dispensationalists, his explanation of the phrase encouraged many of his followers to repeat the point and sometimes to elaborate in more detail.

## **Conclusion**

The grace movement emerged from J. C. O’Hair’s experience during evangelism and teaching meetings in Indianapolis in 1921. Along with his prior evangelical millenarian Christianity, O’Hair brought with him dispensational insights, and gained from the Indianapolis encounter a negative view of both the new Pentecostalism and water baptism for the church age, and new forms of the distinction between the Church and Israel; this thinking came mainly from the teaching of C. I. Scofield. Into this type of biblical theology he introduced the major refinement—also based on the Scofield Reference Bible—that Paul was the apostle of a newly revealed church age, and the added inference from the exegesis of Ephesians 2-3 and Colossians 1, that the Church of the dispensation of grace began not with Jesus or the twelve apostles at Pentecost, but later in Acts in conjunction with Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. □



## *What must we believe in order to receive eternal life?*

### **Part Two**

## *The Difference Between Saving Faith And Daily Faith*

by Pastor Craig MacDonald  
Pathway Bible Church, Litchfield Park, AZ

**I**n the first article of this two-part series we saw that salvation has always been by faith in a substitute who died in the sinner's place. Before the cross, God established a sacrificial system whereby an animal could be that substitute, provided the one offering the animal had faith that God in his grace accepted it as payment for his sin. After the cross, we believe that Christ paid the penalty for our sins, that nothing we do has any merit toward our salvation, and that his substitutionary death is the sole basis for our acceptance before God.

We concluded that article by asking if the Israelites who lacked faith and refused to enter the land of Canaan under Moses (see Nm 14) were saved. Did their refusal to believe God and his promise to deliver the land and its inhabitants into their hand have any bearing on their eternal state? Did their vote at Kadesh Barnea affect their salvation?

Two truths are worth noting. The first is that there is a difference between saving faith and daily faith. The former must be placed in a substitute who dies in our place, paying the price for our sin. Whereas daily faith causes us to trust God and His promises to care for us. We sometimes fail to trust God, as we should when it comes to matters of daily life, but we recognize

that has no impact on our salvation. The same was true in the Old Testament. Each of the patriarchs at times showed great faith in God's promises and at others times acted foolishly. The same Abraham who offered up his son, Isaac, was the one who years earlier had a son with Hagar, Sarah's servant, in an effort to provide himself an heir.

The other truth is the important distinction between national obedience and an individual's saving faith. Prior to the current dispensation, God had a special relationship with Israel. He formed them into a nation at Sinai and made promises to them, promises to bless them as a nation above all others. They alone received a land flowing with milk and honey, they were given monarchs chosen by God, and were promised victory in battle. These and other promises were conditioned upon their submission to God as a nation, and when the nation rebelled they had kings who oppressed them, were defeated by their enemies, and were exiled from the land. When we read the Old Testament we have to keep in mind that we're reading on two tracks. Prominent in most passages is God's dealing with Israel as his special people, his chosen nation. The other track speaks to an individual's relationship with God and God's provision of

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*“We sometimes fail to trust God, as we should when it comes to matters of daily life, but we recognize that has no impact on our salvation.”*

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substitutionary atonement through a blood sacrifice. A nation could not affect the eternal salvation of an individual member of that nation one way or the other.

When Israel refused to enter the land under Moses, God sentenced the nation to wander in the wilderness until the next generation arose. That national decision at Kadesh Barnea had no bearing on an individual member of the nation with regards to his or her salvation. An individual Israelite could accept by faith the sacrifice of a lamb as payment for sins and still vote against entering the land, just as we have trusted in Christ's substitutionary death for our salvation yet still fail to trust God to provide in any given daily challenge. The opposite is also true, at least hypothetically. Though it didn't happen, an individual Jew could have voted to enter the Land but have done so for pragmatic reasons and have gone through the sacrifices from purely legalistic motives.

Understanding these two truths—salvation through faith in the death of a substitute, and the difference between an individual's salvation and Israel's national standing before God—will help us understand what's going on in a very important section of the New Testament. In the beginning of Acts, Peter spoke to Jews and called them to repent (see Acts 2:38; 3:19). Was he addressing them as individuals or as a nation? Was he urging them as individuals to accept the substitutionary death of Christ as payment for their sins or calling on them as a nation to turn back to obedience as God's special people? And does it make any difference in how we understand the text?

Just as faith must have an object, repentance must have a “from” and “to.” The Greek word means to change one's thinking about something, which implies a former view is set aside and a new conviction adopted. Peter makes it clear what the “from” and “to” are when he urges repentance. They viewed Jesus as a blasphemer worthy of death, and Peter calls them to repent, to change their view of him and accept Jesus as their promised Messiah, the Christ: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). So, was Peter preaching to the nation, urging them to accept Jesus as their Messiah, or to individual Jews, calling them to accept him

as the one who paid the penalty for their sins and offered a sure and certain salvation?

Passages like Acts 3:19-21 seem clearly to have a national perspective and to focus on the Messiah's return to set up the promised millennial kingdom. Peter urges them to repent, “that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago” (vv. 20-21). But other passages seem just as clearly to have individual salvation in mind: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

So, which is it? Was Peter's message a call to national repentance so they could have the promised Kingdom, or that individual Jews should accept Jesus Christ as the One who paid the penalty for their sins and through whom they must be saved? National or personal?

The answer is yes. Unlike Israel's decision to turn back from the Promised Land, a national decision which carried no connection to an individual's salvation, in early Acts the two are inseparably connected. To repent and believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah meant to also believe that he was God in the flesh whose death and resurrection accomplished payment for sin. Accepting either truth—Jesus as Messiah or Jesus as Savior—necessarily implied the other, and rejecting one required rejecting the other.

We know from reading what follows in Acts that while a significant number of individuals accepted the truth about Jesus, the nation rejected him. Peter and others were jailed, the believers were persecuted to the extent that many fled Jerusalem, and Israel's leaders stoned Stephen to death. This rejection of Jesus as their Messiah led to a change in God's relationship with the nation of Israel. He set them aside as His special people and now deals with all, Jew and Gentile, without distinction, a mystery never before revealed but made known to the Apostle Paul. The offer of the Kingdom was withdrawn, the Body of Christ formed, and our future hope is to be caught up to meet Christ in the air (1 Thes 4:17).

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*“Just as faith must have an object, repentance must have a ‘from’ and ‘to.’”*

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So, what happened to those Jews in early Acts who did change their minds (repent) about Jesus and came to believe he was indeed God in the flesh, both Savior and Messiah? When—because of the nation’s persistent unbelief—God withdrew the offer of the Kingdom and set aside his relationship with Israel, did those who had believed lose their salvation? Certainly not, just as the eternal state of individual Jews who died during the wanderings was not affected by the vote at Kadesh Barnea and the judgment that followed. Personal salvation comes through faith in the substitutionary death of a sacrifice—the spotless lamb in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ fully and finally at the cross—and it is unaffected by God’s relationship with Israel as a nation, including their being set aside in Acts. Understanding this dynamic helps us answer another interesting question as we consider the changes that took place when God set the nation of Israel aside. Specifically, did Peter change what he preached as he continued his ministry beyond that point?

The answer has to be yes, if we’re talking about the offer of the Kingdom. Nowhere after Paul’s conversion do we read Peter preaching that if the nation will repent their Messiah will return and set up the Kingdom promised by the prophets. If the Kingdom were still a legitimate possibility God is put in the position of simultaneously administering two mutually exclusive dispensations. The offer was withdrawn just as the opportunity to en-

ter the Promised Land was withdrawn after the vote at Kadesh Barnea (see Nm 14:20-23). So, we can accurately say Peter’s preaching changed if by that we mean he stopped proclaiming an offer of the Kingdom requiring the nation’s repentance. We can also say Peter’s preaching did not change regarding Christ’s death as payment for sin. Individual salvation comes through faith in a substitutionary sacrifice, and Christ’s death is that sacrifice now just as it was then.

Sorting all this out helps us read the early chapters of Acts with clarity. We understand that two tracks run alongside each other, the first having to do with Israel as a nation and the other with individual salvation. The nation is called to change from their view that Jesus was a blasphemer and accept that he was their promised Messiah who, if they repent, will return to set up the prophesied Kingdom. Inherent in this message is that he is also the Savior who paid the penalty for sin and through whom individual Jews can be reconciled to God. Thus, those referred to as “believers” in early Acts were believers on both tracks, accepting Jesus as Messiah and Savior. When the offer of the Kingdom was withdrawn their understanding of Jesus as Messiah became irrelevant but their saving faith in Jesus as the atoning sacrifice remained as the sole basis for their personal salvation. And in that regard we are united with those early believers. □



*Scott Myers' Rebel with a Cause...*  
**Did you say laugh?**

by Pastor Scott Myers  
Northwest Bible Church  
Enumclaw, WA

*“Worry is an ‘acceptable sin’ to a present day Christian. Strange term, acceptable sin, but we probably try to rationalize away our worry more than any other sinful activity.”*

**S**tress... it is part of our daily experience. Just look back over the past week. How many different things crowded into your “story” that caused you unthinkable stress? Deadlines, expectations, broken promises, finances, relationships, unending change; the ongoing pressure of living in the twenty-first century brings us face-to-face with all of these issues on a weekly—probably daily—basis. How do you react to stress? Admit it, you worry.

Most people, if we were to start discussing addictions, will think immediately of “drugs” or “alcohol,” but there is one addiction Christians have difficulty realizing they have... **worry!**

The most normal of possible reactions to stress is anxiety, and so, worry addicts are everywhere!

The trouble with worry is that it doesn’t seem to be harmful (it is!). Worry might well be like the first few snorts of cocaine; you would know, down inside, it isn’t good for you, but you would rationalize, surely, it can’t be all that bad either.

Do you know that Christians often give each other permission to indulge in this addiction? For example, one friend says to another, “Hey brother, don’t worry about it!” The other friend might respond, “Yeah, maybe I shouldn’t, but you know... I’m

just the worrying type.” “Yeah, I understand,” says the first, “I worry about stuff myself sometimes.”

Fairly innocent, but let’s couple a more conventional addiction like alcohol or prescription drugs with worry and the friend says, “Brother, you need to stay away from the booze” (or drugs, or whatever) “when you’re stressed out.” “Yeah, I know I should,” the other guy responds, “but you know... just a drink or two” (or a vallium) “helps me cope.” We might answer, “Yeah, I’ve been known to drink a little” (or take something to sleep or relax). “Certainly can’t blame you for having a few when things get tough!”

### Analyzing the Problem

The problem is we don’t acknowledge worry because we don’t think of it, in and of itself, as really being that bad, but when you see it linked to destructive behavior, like in these examples, its harmful potential becomes obvious.

Worry is an “acceptable sin” to a present day Christian. Strange term, acceptable sin, but we probably try to rationalize away our worry more than any other sinful activity. It is, however, a sin; we have been advised not to indulge in worry by the Son of God.

In Matthew, chapters 5-7, Jesus preaches a brief but masterful sermon, and in the middle of that sermon he discusses worry (see 6:25-34). In this section the Lord Jesus is not referring to wise foresight, not a necessary sense of responsibility or thoughtfulness toward other people. Jesus is referring to worry, describing it as being mentally harassed and emotionally agitated; being preoccupied with distressing fears; being tormented and burdened with things that haven’t even happened.

### Identifying its Impact

What happens when I live a life of worry? The Lord Jesus tells us in these verses that four things will occur:

1. Our value system gets confused (v. 25) – “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”
2. We become selfish (v. 31) – “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”
3. Our distinctives get blurred (v. 32) – “For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.” (When you live a life of worry, you are living just like an unbeliever!)
4. The thought of tomorrow becomes dreadful (v. 34) – “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

### God has a better Plan!

All this discussion has been in preparation for God’s perfect plan for our worry, found in Philippians chapter 4. While this is a comfort to us, it is also a rebuke! If we do what Paul admonishes, something amazing will happen to our addiction: It will be broken! You can live a worry-free life! Jesus will come to our relief and we will discover that we can live free from the dungeon we have lived in for too many years! Let the Lord speak through the words of the man who modeled this kind of living:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

If Paul’s instruction here could be summed up in six words, they would come directly from verse 6, and those six words are the foundation for God’s plan: **Worry about nothing, pray about everything!**

Stop worrying about anything you can’t change, that you are not responsible for, that you do not control. **Stop it!** Pray about everything; whatever would agitate, or frighten, or burden, or torment you! God’s plan does not include being enslaved to these things. Worry about nothing, pray about everything!

But now, what are we going to do with all our time? We have just freed up about two or three hours of the day... what are we going to do with all that time now that we’re not worrying? I’m glad this came up! Let me suggest three things we can do with our extra time, right out of Paul’s command in this passage:

1. **Rejoice!** (v. 4) – “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Trade in our frowning, grinding worries and put on a heart of rejoicing! This is a command, just like the one that says to “worry about nothing!” Find the bright side, the sunny side of life. Force ourselves to see life from God’s perspective, realizing that every dark cloud has a silver lining... it’s there; we just have to look for it. Choose to Rejoice! Replace the frown with a smile! Live life lightheartedly; take God more seriously and yourself less seriously!
2. **Relax!** (v. 5) – “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Where do I get “relax” in that verse? In the KJV it is “moderation” and the NASB uses “forbearing spirit,” but the word means “easy,” or we would say “easygoing.” One scholar translates this “sweet reasonableness.” How few people do we know who are sweet, reasonable, even easygoing? Relax with your children; relax with your teenagers (especially if they are in middle school). Give them a break! Remember those years? I’ve never met anyone who

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wanted to go back to middle school. I know it's difficult to allow them to "find" themselves (especially when we know they're not even looking), but God is with them, and He knows what is best, and He will be there to protect them, even when we're not around. **Relax! The Lord is near!**

3. **Rest!** (v. 7) – "And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." We buy security systems to guard our homes when we are away, but that is not what we need guarded; we need our hearts and minds guarded! In place of worry and anxiety, we pray! We take those worrisome, clawing, monsters of pressure off our shoulders and hand them over to the Sovereign God in prayer. We do that in the midst of the pressure! Instead of the slavery of my anxiety, I experience the freedom of His peace! In the place of worry and fear, there comes a quietness of spirit, a calming of my mind... and rest returns!

I choose to rejoice instead of worry, I choose to relax instead of becoming impatient, and I choose to rest instead of continuing to live in turmoil.

### How do I change my Perspective?

Paul does not leave us hanging, he give us three simple exercises in Philippians 4:8-9 that will empower us to stay worry-free:

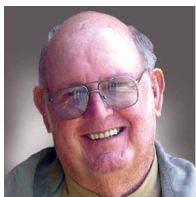
1. Feed your mind positive thoughts! (v. 8) – "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Fix your mind on positive thoughts; that is a con-

scious choice! Choose to view everything in God's hands, and trust that He is working in every aspect of your life!

2. Focus your attention on encouraging models! (v. 9a) – "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice." Paul's not bragging, he has learned how to live like this. Paul says, "You need a model. I've got a lot of things I could worry about, but I don't! I choose Joy!"
3. Look for "the God of Peace" in every circumstance! (v. 9b) – "And the God of peace will be with you." Claim God's peace, find it in every circumstance. When we choose worry, it forces us to focus on the wrong thing; we focus on nonessentials rather than essentials. When we choose worry, we focus on the unknown and uncertainty of tomorrow rather than on His abundant and consistent blessings. When we choose worry, we focus on what we lack rather than on what He has provided.

I want to leave you with a real world example. For a few weeks our ministry teams at Northwest Bible Church (NWBC) worked feverishly preparing for Vacation Bible School (VBS). Suffice it to say, anything that could go wrong, did go wrong! Understand, we're a church of just over a hundred attendees, and for the last number of years we've done a VBS program for our entire community! Last year we had over 300 kids and 145 volunteers... we had to rent an elementary school! This year we're using a middle school, expecting closer to 400 kids, and we've recruited over 160 volunteers. There is only one reason why VBS doesn't completely overwhelm us and that is because we know this is not our doing, it is **His**. We continually pray every step of the way! We choose to rejoice, relax, even rest. That is how we can laugh in the face of stress!

## NEWS from AROUND GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP



Region 2: Southwest  
Chuck Williams

**Grace Bible Church Anaheim** did some spring cleaning. They had the parking lot repaved getting rid of the numerous pits and potholes. They held their annual Memorial Day picnic on the church grounds underneath a beautiful big Chinese elm, with games played on the new parking lot. Pastor Phillip duPlessis has planted a vegetable garden at the back perimeter of the property with corn, zucchini, cucumbers, watermelon and

tomatoes should be ready soon. Speaking of growth, the church welcomed more new members Sunday, June 30.



Pastor Rob Warmouth of **Riverside GBC** reports they just had an all church yard sale and raised \$1000 to send kids to camp. They are doing well and looking forward to growth.



Region 4: Upper Midwest  
Mark Matychuk & Les Takkinen

Pastor Les Takkinen of **Grace Bible Church of West Allis** reports: On June 9 we installed our new intern pastor for the next six months, Jared Kusz. He is a graduate of Grace Bible College and from Berean Church of Muskegon, MI, where Pastor Craig Apel and Pastor Rick Pilieci presently minister. He is with us to be further trained to become an associate pastor or senior pastor in the coming years. Pastor Randy Brown and I are looking forward to ministering together with Pastor Jared, as we help him grow personally through his practical experiences in our ministry. He will have a variety of opportunities to get involved in our church, which will allow him to take the next step in his pastoral pursuits. Pastor Jared will be teaching a dispensational class on Wednesday evenings called “Three Bible Churches,” based on a booklet written by Pastor Vernon Schutz.

Also, we have embarked upon a new journey through the book of 1 Corinthians before we again pick up on our series, the “Harmony of the Gospels,” in October. The opportunity of expository preaching is a thrill to us as pastors and a spiritual enrichment to the congregation. □



Region 5: Lower Midwest  
Ed Jeude

A meeting of GGF Region 5 “Grace” activities was convened in Effingham, IL, with 10 participants, including Nathan Killion on short leave from Thailand. For those interested, Region 5 holds meetings every 3 months. **St Louis Bible Fellow-**

**ship** had Lee Homoki conduct services Sunday, June 30th. Lee is in the vicinity with his Summer Cowboy Camp at Victory Lane Grace Bible Camp in Livonia, Missouri. □



Region 10: Central Michigan  
John Lowder

Pastor Tim Hall reports: Greetings to all our brothers and sisters in Grace churches across America and the world. As summer is approaching here at **Grace Community Church** in Belmont, we are thankful to have three high school graduates from our church family attending Grace Bible College this fall, with two more related to our ministry who will also attend. We are thankful for Grace Bible College, proclaiming the grace of God and preparing young people and adults to serve Him in churches and society.

We are continuing our study through Paul’s letter to the Galatians on Sunday mornings. How good to know having been placed into the Body of Christ that we are not under the Law of Moses. We are considering the upcoming “My Hope with Billy Graham” event in November. Perhaps you have heard of this outreach to friends who may not know the Lord. Consider it for yourselves.

This past ministry year at **Frontline Bible Church** of Byron Center has been a challenging one in some ways. From the perspective of attendance and budgets, we have seen both of these decrease, which is never easy to take. While these challenges have been difficult to go through, we have seen some real growth in other areas.

We are very excited to see our vision of making a church full of “disciple makers” become a reality. This past ministry year we

had more than 40% of our men involved in disciple making relationships. The women are making huge strides in this area, as well as the youth! We are also getting more intentional with outreach. In July we will be hosting a block party for the businesses on our street to establish relationships and make some bridges into the lives of owners and employees alike. Also, we are now hosting a Tae Kwan Do class to build more relationships with those around us.

**Rush Creek Bible Church** of Byron Center is excited to announce a new journey of faith installing John Spooner as Lead Pastor, and Cameron Townley as Associate Pastor of Ministry Development. Equally awe-inspiring is the future planning that is already well underway. God has, indeed, called RCBC to step out in faith. As Pastor John said, “I love the healthy nature of Rush Creek, but never want us to become complacent and satisfied. We must always be asking, How do I belong? How do I grow? How do I serve? As an athletic coach, I would challenge my teams that life constantly seeks to answer one of two reflective questions: ‘Am I glad I did or am I wishing I had?’ At Rush Creek that should be the reality of not just **coming** to church but **being** church—to our families, community and beyond.”

Drop Zone, the after school ministry on Tuesdays and Thursdays, had a 30% increase this year, with over 140 youth attending at various times. Kid’s Games, a combined outreach effort of Rush Creek, Frontline and Highpointe Church (Nazarene), celebrated with over 350 kids one week in June. Fifty-seven children indicated they placed their faith in Christ. Praise the Lord!

This is a great example of churches coming together in a region for one common goal, the elevation of Jesus Christ offering hope and life for the Byron Center community.

We pray that God will be blessed through your faithfulness to Him. See you at the Family Bible Conference in July. □

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