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TRUTH Magazine

Spring 2018 Edition

*Ask rain from the Lord at the
time of the spring rain...*

Zechariah 10:1

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



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TRUTH Magazine

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

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STRONG LEADERS DISCIPLINING FUTURE LEADERS

by Church Health Taskforce
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This article, written by Cal Lowder, is the sixth installment from the GGF Church Health Questionnaire available from our resource page on our website: ggfusa.org. It is often stated that a church is only as strong as its leadership. This section evaluates both how invested your church leadership is in their spiritual health as well as the necessity of reproducing themselves. There is great value in efforts to mentor and disciple future leaders to carry on the ministry of the local church while also enabling the current leadership to be thriving in their calling.

The questions are divided into three areas: 1) current activity to reproduce workers; 2) importance of rejuvenated leaders, and 3) current harmony of purpose. Hopefully, you'll notice, as with the other categories of our church health

survey, addressing our churches' weak areas will require involvement of the entire congregation. We especially emphasize this here, because the category, "Strong Leaders Disciplining Future Leaders," can force an unnatural emphasis on the leaders' responsibilities. But within the Body of Christ, pastors, elders, and other leaders are not isolated from their congregations. A strong, healthy leader needs support from the church in order to lead well.

One of the things we learn very quickly in a relay race is the necessity of knowing how to pass the baton from one runner to the next. It is critical both for the first runner to pass the baton to the next runner but also for that person to be ready to receive the baton. This requires observation, timing, and practice. The goal is for the first runner to

maintain as much speed as possible, while the new runner accelerates to receive the baton as they are beginning to hit their stride, so that little momentum is lost. The same is true for ministry. Paul puts it this way to Timothy, “The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2.2). He recognized that the ongoing work of the ministry would require intentional training. We have seen great ministries fail and disappear because no one was trained and ready to take the “baton” when the original leadership was gone.

As we continue to evaluate our ministries, this survey invites us to look critically and answer honestly so that our churches can thrive. Over the years I have discovered several pitfalls that need to be looked at honestly before positive results will occur.

Who are your pastors/elders discipling?

This question can be broken down into four important components:

1. Are you presently giving others training and opportunities of leadership in the church?
2. Are you supporting an “ongoing” discipleship program or is it sporadic “when needed”?
3. Are you identifying and working with those who show promise of “greater ministry ability” to further their education and training so they are equipped if God calls them into the ministry?
4. Are you identifying and working with your replacement?

“A strong, healthy leader needs support from the church in order to lead well.”

One of the pitfalls of ministry leadership comes as a result of the “natural leader.” This person understands their calling and is gifted in a way that makes it difficult for them to teach oth-

ers. They haven’t necessarily thought deeply or critically about why and how they lead and would be hard-pressed to explain it to others. Since their particular job comes so naturally, they haven’t even thought about how they do what they’re doing. This person may be very open to working with someone else but would need to have help organizing their thoughts to articulate how they do what they do.

Two areas of frustration can occur when this type of leader disciplines someone else. One is that the natural leader does not know how to work with someone who does not have the same innate ability. Also, the person being disciplined can become discouraged when they can’t do it as well as the other person. I’ve seen this with evangelists who seem to have a natural way of leading people to the Lord every place they go. Others then who want to do evangelism get very discouraged when they can’t do it the same way or see the same results.

A second pitfall I call “shortsighted leadership.” This type of leader does the job that is required of them but has all sorts of excuses as to why they could never disciple. They are too busy; they don’t know what to do; or they promise but never get around to it. These are the leaders who have never stopped to examine their priorities. They are basically interested in the “now” of their ministry and do not feel like they have the time to be preparing leaders for the church’s future.

One of the biggest pitfalls in ministry leadership is “territorial leadership.” This type of leader claims their particular ministry is a “sacred calling” and no one else can enter that area. No one can criticize them; no one can help them; no one can do it as well as they can; and no one can take their place. Usually this type of leader isn’t stubborn or closed off from others, but they have a sense that they are the one employed by the church, so they are the ones who have to do the job, or they believe bringing others along requires more work than just doing it for themselves. Territorial leaders forget that the central task of the pastor is to equip God’s people “for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12). It is important to recognize this task of training new leaders is not just a responsibility for older pastors. Paul’s instructions in 2 Timothy should be heeded

by all Christian leaders, regardless of age. Pastors, elders, committee members, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, worship leaders – anyone in a position of any leadership ought to be looking for at least one person whom they can teach to do the ministry God has entrusted to them.

What steps is your pastor taking to strengthen his leadership and personal/spiritual health?

It is vital for the pastor to be constantly renewed and refreshed for the furtherance of his life and ministry. Sometimes territorial leaders are born and sometimes they are made. While some leaders have a hard time letting go, others are asked to carry too much of a burden by their congregation. Just as it is important for church leaders to examine themselves to determine where they have held too tightly to the ministry God has given them, so too their congregations must wrestle with the ways they have leaned too much on their leaders to be doing the work of ministry, rather than partnering with them.

Having been in ministry now for almost 50 years, I can speak firsthand to the absolute essentials of this question. The pastor is expected to be a leader, counselor, visionary, theologian, great preacher, exemplary husband and father, and more. He is assumed to have this eternal reservoir of both physical and spiritual energy along with eternal optimism. But it is absolutely essential that the pastor continues to learn his strengths, his limits, and his shortcomings so that he knows how to stay fresh for the long haul. The answer to this question will change as his needs change. Each pastor will need to find what works for him. Some use personal retreats, some use conferences, some read, some seek more education, and some include physical exercise. Whatever the pastor chooses, it needs to be purposeful and productive so that the pastor stays centered in Christ and excited for the ministry. This question should not be answered by just the pastor alone but along with those closest to him that know his blind spots. They then are able to help him address those areas he has avoided or not seen.

For the sake of the congregation, churches should not encourage their leaders to take advantage of opportunities to be refreshed and strengthened. They should require it.

How does your congregation encourage your pastor in a regular and meaningful manner?

We have all heard horror stories of churches that have “crucified” their pastor and so demoralized him that he has left the ministry never to return. Had the congregation handled situations differently, there may have been a better outcome. Appreciation, adequate financial support, excitement about the ministry, and the congregational involvement alongside the pastor go a long way to encourage longevity in the ministry. “Us against them” will destroy a ministry very quickly. But where the congregation builds a team relationship with the pastor, great things are accomplished. This question assumes that the pastor has developed trust with the congregation and that he has earned their respect and a hearing. When answering this question, be sure to include someone from every facet of the ministry – staff, youth, senior saints, leaders, regular attendees, and even visitors. All will have a different perspective, but all need to become a part of the team.

“...churches should not encourage their leaders to take advantage of opportunities to be refreshed and strengthened. They should require it.”

This sixth section of the survey can be overlooked or put off and forgotten but someday your church will wake up with regrets that nothing was done to prepare adequate leadership for the future. The process is time-consuming and hard work, but it will pay great dividends with a vibrant ministry for years to come.

No one has all the answers and every church has a unique ministry style. It is vital as you finish this section of the survey to customize it for your needs. Seek answers by talking to those who are having a successful discipling ministry. Read materials and tailor them to your church. Pray for your congregation to have a vision, open minds and hearts, and a love for the Lord and others. ■

WHAT IS GOING ON BENEATH THE SURFACE?



by Ken Bruce Kemper, President
Grace Bible College

Our eyes can only see what is visible. That in itself allows for wonderful perception of many amazing things. However, it also limits us from clearly seeing a whole lot that is not readily visible to our eyes, or even that which happens when we are not looking.

Our perspective is limited

If you have ever visited the ocean coastal areas, you soon realize that although you see the surface of the waters, there is also an amazing world below the surface. I recall the first time as a young person that I boarded a glass-bottomed boat in order to tour a reef area. I was overwhelmed by all the beauty and life thriving just out of our sight, but still quite near in proximity!

In another familiar example, spring in Michigan is one of my favorite seasons. There is always a wide array of brilliant colors which burst into sight after a cold, white, and colorless winter. What was dormant, yet very much alive in our bushes, trees, and bulbs will blossom and bloom in extravagant beauty! Each year, the tulips in my yard come up with even more stems and flowers than the year before. They have multiplied and gained strength after blooming the previous year. All of this is totally undetectable to my eyes and is out of my mind until I see them bursting forth from the soil, just as God designed them to do!

Individuals are complex

We have all heard many times that “we should not judge a book by its cover.” Today, this adage is constantly stated to promote tolerance toward and inclusiveness of the variety of people in our world. It also admonishes us not to profile or make generalizations or judgments about people by their outward appearance. I agree with this. Yet, as humans we all inherently feel or see things based upon our past experiences or our culture. We do not try to do this, rather it is a trait of our conditioned perceptions and our own self-awareness. Clearly, we know God has made each and every person in His image (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6) and all of us have dignity, worth, and meaning due to this fact alone. But when we look at someone, we can only see what is visible and hear what is audible. We cannot see the character, heart, or the mindset of another person at first glance. For instance, as we take a seat on an airplane next to a man, we cannot discern if he is a morally upright man or an immoral sex trafficker. We cannot even differentiate a gracious, emotionally mature woman from a codependent, recovering, immature woman unless we spend time with her and she chooses to disclose to us what is beneath her outer surface.

“...but Jesus was making the point that what is invisible inside a person will eventually be evident by what he says.”

Advertisers often promote that “the clothes make a man,” and we need to “dress for success.” Some will even try to convince us that their brand of aftershave or perfume will make us irresistible. The reality is, no amount of expensive clothing, makeup, or blush can mask bad character, evil desires, or inner degeneracy. Jesus understood this, and He told the Pharisees and teachers of the law what it is that makes a person clean. (They emphasized ceremonial washings and baptisms.) Jesus stated to the crowd which was present, “What

goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean’” (Matthew 15:11). It is easy to observe what is visible, but Jesus was making the point that what is invisible inside a person will eventually be evident by what he says.

What is below the surface and unseen is most important

In America today, we see an ever-increasing interest in staying “youthful” and keeping active. Gray hair prevention or elimination, as well as re-vitalizing lotions and potions will always appeal to our human vanity. We want to be attractive, stay relevant, and feel like we are needed. The Bible addresses this issue in 2 Corinthians 4:16: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” The Apostle Paul describes the reality, that the decay of the external (above the surface) does not necessarily describe the reality of what is internal and below the surface. In fact, he suggests that the wear and tear of life shown in the aches, pains, and wrinkles may be molding us into something even more vibrant below the surface! “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Corinthians 4:17). The reference here is to what is beyond this present life, as well as what is molded and shaped inside of the person who is experiencing the challenges of life. The renewing of what is inward is a result of how the heart and mind approaches the external circumstances of life.

We all know people who are bitter and angry about life. They can explain to you the run of bad luck they experienced which landed them in this unfriendly spot. But, most of us are also aware of people who have suffered hardships and difficult physical challenges, yet exhibit a sweetness and deep trust in the Lord in spite of their circumstances! I would suggest to you that this is the focus of allowing the Spirit of God to shape and mold what is below the surface in each one of us. The Apostle Paul finished the thought noted above by stating, “So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). Your aging body will not last, but who you are in-

ternally in character is who you will be with God's continual work after this life is done. Your personality and relationship with God Himself is eternal!

Human growing is voluntary

When I was young and playing basketball, I wanted to keep growing so that I could surpass the tall kids who gave me trouble on the hardwood. But in my early twenties, I stopped growing vertically. Now, I have added pounds and muscle over the years, but never more height. In her recent book, *Mindset* (2007), Dr. Carol Dweck describes how people all fall somewhere on a continuum from "fixed mindset" to "growth mindset." This Stanford professor goes to great lengths to describe how in every context, people with a "fixed mindset" spend their waking hours defending themselves as to why they are the way they are. They never get beyond that because they don't feel a need to progress. I would call that in a biblical sense – the self-centered person who lives according to the flesh and feeds the ego for life satisfaction. Dr. Dweck also describes the person with a "growth mindset" as one who sees every challenge as a potential to develop and each failure as preparation for the next challenge. This person is a humble individual, open to guidance from others, and is moldable to be more than they were in the past. It is not surprising that she finds these are our world's greatest leaders today. Does this sound familiar to the submissive follower of Christ in any way?

“We are not just “passing time” in the family of God. Rather, it is anticipatory of greater usefulness by the Spirit of God to minister to others.”

The Scriptures describe the growing believer as one who “[does] not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but [is] transformed by the renewing of [his] mind” (Romans 12:2a). Growth

results from consistent renewal and intentionality. The body may be mature at age 25-30, but the inner mind and heart have all kinds of lessons to learn and potential for growth if one is willing! People can grow by reading and expanding their mind and by learning from experiences. People can also grow from associating with the right kind of people. Charlie Tremendous Jones was quoted most for saying, “Five years from today, you will be the same person you are today, except for the books you will read and the people you meet.” We all have the potential to grow and change.

Building muscles is worth the pain

We strain and pull to strengthen our muscles, especially after an injury or surgery. But it is very worth the effort. I am presently rehabilitating a knee with full anticipation that after the consistent, daily, physical therapy there will be rewards. Paul wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, “Train yourself to be godly” (1 Timothy 4:7b). There is hard work involved to grow your character in godliness. It demands daily nourishment in the Word of God, prayer, and worship. It demands exercising those spiritual muscles in giving testimony of our faith, as well as encouraging and teaching others. Paul told the Ephesians that growth in the body comes as it “builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:16b). This is dedicated work with a view toward growing what is beneath the surface. It is not a passive stance, even though “in Him you have been made complete” (Colossians 2:10 NASB). We are not just “passing time” in the family of God. Rather, it is anticipatory of greater usefulness by the Spirit of God to minister to others.

What is beneath the surface, the unseen, grows and evidences itself to the external as our hearts and minds focus on what God is doing in the world and our passion to participate. We must be in training, ready to take our place in the work as God reveals it. God has no “bleacher bums” or spectators. He only has two types of players: those who resist His calling due to their self-absorption, or those who willingly enter the fray with full faith in God, based on strong inner training and the will to serve. May we be counted among the latter type. ■

STANDING ON THE TRUTH

By Jeremy Clark
Executive Director
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Pursuing truth will ultimately lead a person into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Denying truth will obscure one's understanding of God and His creation making it difficult to fully know and love Him. A functional definition of truth is that which agrees with reality, or put another way, that which agrees with that which is. God's words to Moses echo this as He affirmed His foundational reality declaring, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). As the Eternal God Who needs no cause to exist but has created all things apart from Himself, He is real, true, and thus, the source of truth. When Pilate asked our Lord if He was a king, Jesus replied, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37b). While the direct answer to Pilate's question was "yes," Jesus wanted to bring this man—made in His image—to the point of making a decision which would affect the rest of his eternity. If Pilate was concerned with truth, he had to evaluate Christ's claim beyond simply addressing what he saw as the nuances of this subjugated people's politics (i.e., who the King of the Jews was). Jesus confronted him with truth so that Pilate would have to deal with an ultimate reality: Was this man standing before him his Creator and Savior?

Pilate's response (John 18:38) sounds all too familiar: "What is truth?" Instead of dealing with the veracity of Christ's claim, Pilate, like many today and throughout history, called into question

truth itself! You can be fairly confident the discussion is not going very well for your side if your best argument is that truth is unknowable or does not exist. If we never have to wrestle with truth, then we will never have to ultimately decide whether Jesus Christ is worthy of our worship. As Christians, however, we are comfortable asserting that truth exists and that God's Word is true. Regarding the first assertion, how can we be confident truth even exists? Ironically, those who would deny that there is truth prove the antithesis of what they claim. Posing the simple question to them, "Is it true there is no truth?" exposes their untenable position. Either way this question is answered affirms truth exists.

God is interested in truth because He is interested in us. Not only does He desire "all men to be saved," but He wants us "to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Truth does not come solely by gaining information (2 Timothy 3:7), but through repentance, or changing our mind, from opposing God—the source of truth—to pursuing Him so we can do His will (2 Timothy 2:25-26). Evaluating three biblical approaches to testing and discovering truth reveals God's heart that all come to the knowledge of the truth.

If the resurrection did not happen, Christianity is false. If a person is confident in what they believe, they could provide a way one could conceivably falsify their belief. If I were to claim that the last time the Chicago Cubs won the World Series was 1908, this claim could be falsified (or tested)

by reviewing the official records of Major League Baseball. They could prove me right but thankfully they would prove me wrong. In another example, if the Body of Christ began after the conversion of the Apostle Paul, as mid-Acts dispensationalists assert, then that claim could be theoretically falsified by demonstrating from Scripture that an unprophesied body of Jews and Gentiles as equal heirs without distinction existed before its revelation to Paul (Ephesians 3:1-6, Col. 1:24-29). This is a challenge I regularly give people so they can test the scriptural foundation, or truth, of a dispensational approach to studying the Bible.

“God does not run away from truth, but wants all men to run to it.”

Similarly, Paul provides scriptural, personal, and contemporaneous evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-8) for anyone to challenge. He encourages the believers in Corinth to test the Scriptures regarding Christ’s resurrection (vv. 3-4). Furthermore, God demonstrated and gave credibility to Paul’s apostleship through the signs and miracles He empowered Paul to do (2 Corinthians 12:11-13). Because of that, Paul was also able to give a credible, firsthand account saying that he too saw the resurrected Christ (v. 8). Paul also references hundreds who saw their risen Lord noting that almost all were still living when he wrote that letter (vv. 4-7). In Paul’s day as in ours, Christianity stands or falls with the historicity and veracity of the resurrection. Confident of the resurrection, Paul put his entire ministry, credibility and the faith of all Christians on the line when he wrote, “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise” (1 Corinthians 15:15-16).

God does not run away from truth, but wants all men to run to it. He wants everyone to test His proclamations, because doing so will inevitably

lead to Him. Comparing Himself to manmade gods He declares, “And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, let them show these to them” (Isaiah 44:7). In reality, there is no comparison since, unlike idols, the Lord, “will do all My pleasure,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it” (Isaiah 46:10b-11). God’s claims are testable and He has always invited men to test them to see that He is true.

Jesus said His witness is not true. How could the Creator of the universe say such a thing? Speaking in front of those who sought to kill Him (John 5:18), Jesus boldly stated, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true” (John 5:31). If Jesus was only concerned about being right, He could have simply said on this occasion, “I am your Creator, believe me.” However, He wanted to bring His adversaries to the point of having to make a decision—was He their Savior or not (cf. John 5:34b)? The Law of Moses, with which they were very familiar declares, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness” (Deuteronomy 19:6). Jesus then enumerated the witnesses testifying in favor of His claim (John 5:32-47). Having heard the legal terminology, these Jews would have understood the implications of what He was proclaiming: accept who I am on the basis of the evidence or be condemned to death (John 5:40).

Jesus provided three witnesses to testify to His claims: John the Baptist, the miracles the Lord had done during His earthly ministry, and the Word of God. Leaving the unfathomable vastness of heaven, Jesus willingly limited Himself, coming to earth in the form of a servant and the likeness and appearance of a man (Philippians 2:7-8). Then He voluntarily gave Himself for us (Titus 2:12). The years Jesus lived on the earth required unimaginable humility which is reflected in this discourse. Knowing that those He wanted to reach with truth did not acknowledge Him as their God and Messiah, He confronted them with truth in a way which would make them wrestle with His claims. They knew the law and that the truth of any matter

“Knowing that those He wanted to reach with truth did not acknowledge Him as their God and Messiah, He confronted them with truth in a way which would make them wrestle with His claims.”

would be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses. The Jews who wanted to kill Jesus now had to decide, based on the evidence, if they would repent from opposing God and accept the truth.

There must be factions in churches. In the very passage where Paul describes the Lord’s Supper as a unifying event in the life of a church, he writes of the Corinthian congregation, “For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you” (1 Corinthians 11:18-19a). Christianity was new. Paul’s message of the dispensation of the grace of God was also new. In spite of this, Paul writes that within these congregations, only a few years old, there must factions! This does not sound like the strategy most of us would develop to create a healthy church-planting movement. Before reading the rest of verse 19, consider if all Christians chose to believe the same thing or minimize the import and impact of doctrinal differences solely to avoid division and not to first seek the truth. If a doctrinal error would arise, diminishing our capacity to know and love God, how could it ever be discovered, let alone corrected if we are averse to such conflict?

Paul writes, “For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19). Paul tells us that factions can help us recognize what is approved so that we can know truth since truth is evident when compared to falsehood. If God was merely interested in numbers and organizational adherents, He would have discouraged controversy over substantive matters of the Christian faith preferring only that people take on

the name “Christian” without regard to beliefs. Think about it this way, if there were not historical factions within Christendom and Christian denominations, would you be reading TRUTH Magazine today? God is more concerned about preserving truth than preserving numbers or unity solely for unity’s sake. We are “not to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4b). The extant Word of God which proceeded from His mouth is the Bible. We do not know everything Jesus said while on earth, or every utterance of all of God’s prophets, nor do we have every letter written by the Apostles. What we have is what God wants us to have and allows us to know truth and prove what is true. Can our interpretation of the Bible be wrong? Yes, but even where there are various conclusions surrounding a single issue based on differing interpretations, truth will stand a far greater chance of being approved and preserved with respect to that issue than if we all choose to believe the same thing or practically nothing for the sake of “peace.”

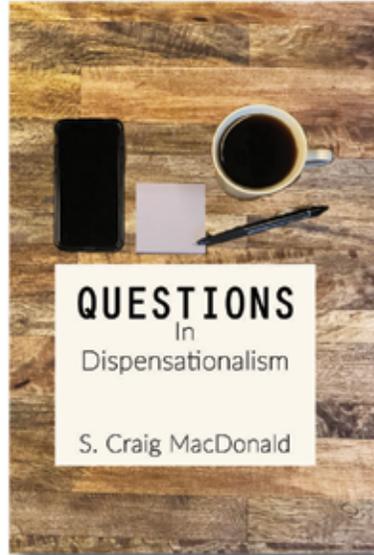
As “imitators of God as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1), we ought to view and relate truth as God does. With confidence, we should discuss our faith in Jesus Christ knowing that it can withstand any test. Like Christ, we want to humbly engage others in a way that they have to make a decision about Him with the goal that they want to come to the knowledge of the truth as we have. Because we know the truth, we have a responsibility to share it with others. Giving us only two options, Christ tells us, “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters” (Luke 11:23). Let us not be those who scatter because of our indifference to truth, but those who gather. ■

Both Available **NOW** on Amazon.com - in Paperback and Kindle!

QUESTIONS IN DISPENSATIONALISM

This book, a follow-up to *Understanding Your Bible, An Introduction to Dispensationalism*, addresses some of the questions that arise when someone takes a dispensational approach to Scripture and understands the unique ministry of the Apostle Paul.

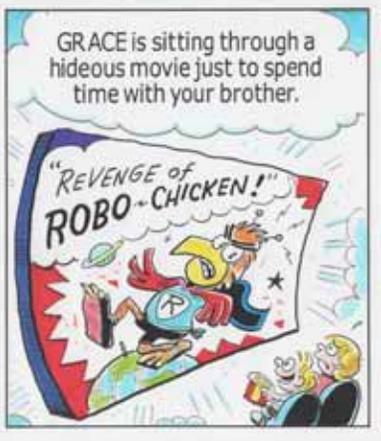
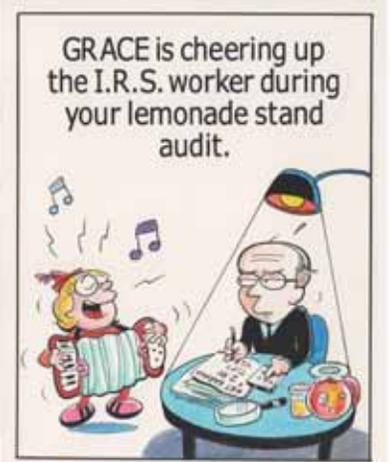
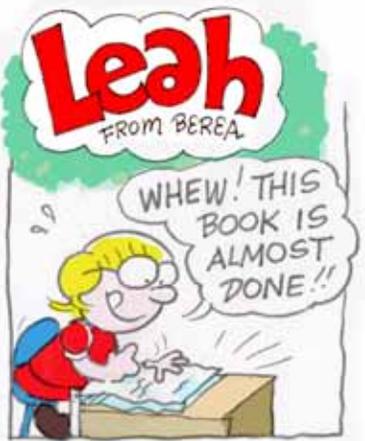
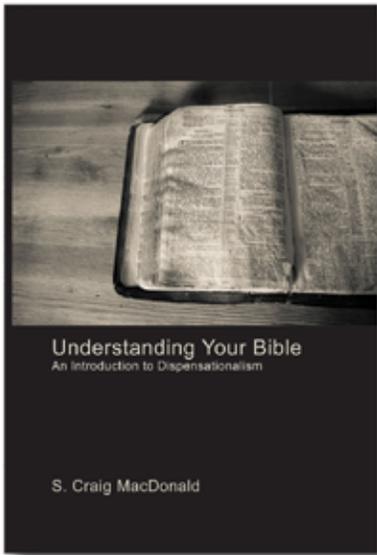
What happened to Jews who were already believers when the Body of Christ began? Will those in the Body of Christ have any part in the millennial kingdom? What about the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath? *Questions In Dispensationalism* answers these and other questions in an easy-to-read style that relies on the Bible and avoids technical "theology talk." The goal is to understand God and his Word better so we can more closely conform to his will. This book will take you to the next level when it comes to understanding a dispensational approach to the Bible.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR BIBLE

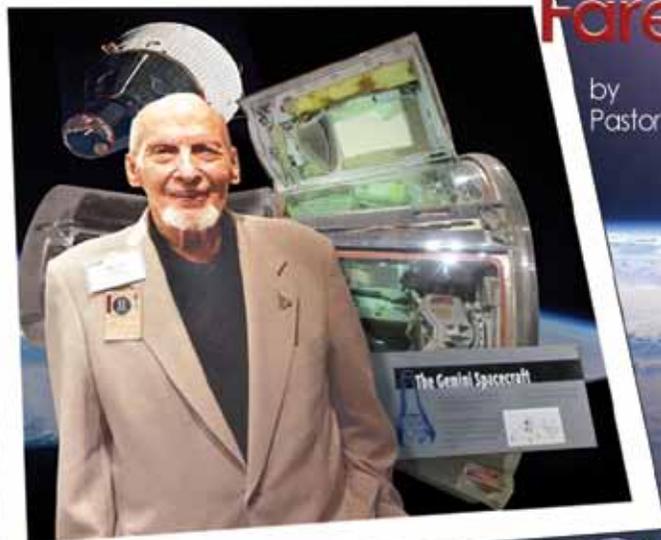
S.Craig MacDonald's first book, *Understanding Your Bible, An Introduction to Dispensationalism*, explains basic things about the Bible like taking words and phrases at face value and recognizing God has had different instructions for his people in different periods of history. This straightforward approach to the Bible is known as dispensationalism. It's the method the Apostle Paul talks about when he explains how God has worked throughout history.

Understanding Your Bible is written in simple language for the average person. The goal is to encourage you to read the Bible for yourself. You will be surprised at the benefits when you take advantage of the Book God has given us.



Forewell to Mr. Ed Jeude

by
Pastor Rick Owsley



As I sit at my desk writing this tribute to Ed, his passing still seems so surreal. It is hard to accept the fact that he is gone. He was one of those “larger than life” individuals you just can’t imagine not having around. I’m glad that I’ll have eternity to fellowship and worship with this unique character.

My dilemma at the present moment is - who will I get to proofread this? I could always count on Ed joyfully reviewing, critiquing, and correcting anything I submitted to him. As reality sets in, there is a renewed ache in my heart over the loss.

I loved this dear brother in Christ, this mentor, sounding board, and faithful partner in ministry. I appreciated his ministry, his enormous impact on my life, and the outreach at St. Louis Bible Fellowship. Early in my ministry I would notice Ed taking copious notes as I preached. I thought to myself, “Great, I’m certainly teaching this guy something! Just look at him taking notes!” Afterwards he would present me with a list of misspelled words, syntax errors, and grammatical corrections. But, it

was never to embarrass or ridicule, but in his own words, “to make you a better pastor and orator, Rick.” Ed cared and I’m grateful.

The amount of knowledge he had on numerous subjects was enormous. Regardless of the topic, it seemed he could flawlessly carry the conversation. From aviation to engineering to math, he would amaze me with his insights and grasp of the subject. I’ll never forget the time he and I traveled to Grand Rapids, MI, to attend a GGF National Council meeting. A car passed us with a “Jack in the Box” bobbing head on the antenna. Ed commented to explain to me how the drag of that object on the antenna was affecting fuel consumption. My eyes glazed over, but Ed was in his element.

It was his genuine love for the Lord Jesus Christ, his sincere belief in God’s Word, and his burden for the lost that was most impressive. Many times af-

GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP, 2125 Marquette SW, PO Box 9432, Grand Rapids, MI
Why the World Hates Israel D: TRUTH Magazine, Spring 2018 Issue

The Bible says "...there are differences of ministries but the same Lord" (1 Cor 12:5 NIV). That's why the article Why the World Hates Israel's spotlighted in this column of TRUTH magazine. The author is Andy Ferler [1/midwestmessianic.com/ [and also] ofler@trsbogobal.net]. Thanks, Andy. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden He gave them a simple test: "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat..." (Gen 1:16,17). The serpent, who is Satan, was instrumental in getting them to break God's command. They were driven from the garden and the entire creation was placed under a curse including Satan: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise [you] on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen 3:15). Satan then tried many many ways to prevent the coming of the seed of the woman.

One of Satan's first efforts was to corrupt the Adamic lineage of the seed of the woman, "Sons of God [in this case, fallen angelic beings] saw the daughters of men were beautiful, and took wives for themselves..." (Gen 6:2). Genesis 6 tells of giants, non-Adamic offspring. "God looked on the earth, and beheld... of fesh had corrupted their way..." (Gen 6:12).

Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations [pure lineage back to Adam] and Noah walked with God" (Gen 6:9). God told Noah to build a boat to save his family and two of every land-dwelling animal. God then sent a worldwide flood [it had never previously rained] to cleanse the earth of its corruption and preserve a pure lineage for the coming of the Messiah, the seed of the woman.

God chose Abram [later renamed Abraham] and told him that the Messiah would come thru his seed. [Gen 12:7; Galatians 3:16]. The lineage was thru Abraham, Isaac, Jacob who was later also named Israel. Now Satan's goal was to destroy Israel well before they even became a nation. Pharaoh tried to have all the Hebrew baby boys killed. As God led Israel out of Egypt after 400 years of slavery, Satan inspired Pharaoh and his army to destroy them. God parted the waters of the sea to let Israel [now several million] walk across on dry ground. Pharaoh and his army were then all drowned.

As Israel entered their promised land, Satan had a host of nations try to destroy the tiny country. When he realized that he couldn't destroy it militarily, he changed tactics and tried to corrupt Israel with false worship and foreign inter-marriage prohibited by God. Thru rebellion, the nation was split into 10 tribes in the north [Israel], taken captive and never returned, and 2 tribes in the south [Judah / Benjamin]. Seventy years of Babylonian captivity cured Judah of false worship. While there, Satan encouraged Haman to "worldwide" single out the Jews for annihilation [Esther 3:8]. The plan backfired and Haman was executed on his own gallows.

After some 4000 years of waiting, the seed of the woman arrived, born of a virgin in accordance with the prophecies of Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6, a virgin birth from the seed of the woman, not man. Note that "a child was born, [but] a son was given." The name Immanuel means "God is with us" and Yeshua, Jesus, means salvation because He would be the One to save man from sin. Satan inspired Herod to have the young child Jesus killed.

As Yeshua began his public ministry at about age 30, Satan showed Yeshua of the kingdoms of the world and told Him, "All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me" [Matthew 4:9]. Yeshua would not worship Satan but responded from the Torah, "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only" [Deuteronomy 6:13].

A few years later, Yeshua was jailed on Passover for the sin of the world, fulfilling the prophecy that His heel would be "bruised" by Satan, "But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening of our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed" [Isaiah 53:5]. A crushed heel is very painful but one from which one could recover. Yeshua not only recovered but arose from the dead the third day. His resurrection

Ed's last "Ed Says" left unfinished midsentence.

ter doctrinal discussions, I would think, “Man, I’m glad this guy is on our side!” He was a scholar in every sense of the word. It was not by accident that St. Louis Theological Seminary bestowed on Edward A. Jeude its very first Honorary Doctorate. The Seminary recognized his scholarship and lasting contribution to the the Grace Message and his powerful defense of the Pauline Distinctive.

His tract ministry is legendary. I doubt if there is any McDonald’s employee between St. Louis and anywhere Ed traveled that has not received a “God Can’t” or “All Roads Lead to God” tract. If you visited Bible Fellowship, you received a tract from Ed, even if you were the guest preacher. He said he didn’t want to take any chances, so he

(continued on page 23)

“
We will never know the impact that this faithful servant had on reaching the lost for Christ.
”



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

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

by Dale S. DeWitt
and
Bryan C. Ross

DIFFERING VIEWS ON BAPTISM

The DeHaan and Rice Exchange. The controversy over baptism and "Bullingerism" waxed and waned in the 1930s and 1940s, apparently waning slightly in the later 1940s and waxing again in the 1950s. Pamphlets by Martin R. DeHaan and John R. Rice revived this dispute. DeHaan must have been aware of both the Gray-Ironside (1930s) and Fuller-Haggai discussions on baptism of the 1940s. Early in the decade DeHaan published two pamphlets: *Factions and Divisions in the Church* and *Water Baptism: What Saith the Scriptures?* In the first, DeHaan refers to O'Hair and associates as "The Paulites" and "Thessalonian Baptists" meaning apparently they were "dry" baptists because, as O'Hair taught, they were baptized only by the Holy Spirit into Christ with no water baptism reported in Acts or the Thessalonian letters for this church. Hence O'Hair, picking up DeHaan's jibe, called his answer pamphlet *"The Paulites" and the "Thessalonian Baptists."* This prickly "back and forth" seems partly personality-driven and partly influenced by desire to entertain or arouse observers and partisans; in longer perspective it was mild compared to language the sixteenth-century Reformers sometimes used of their opponents. Still one wishes it had been avoided on both sides. A correspondent in good position to know reported to the authors

that at some point, probably in the 1950s, the board of North Shore Church asked O'Hair to end this kind of controversy.

With DeHaan's view O'Hair seemed delighted in one respect and chagrined in another. DeHaan had decided Jesus' kingdom proclamation to Israel was, as Darby, Haldeman, O'Hair, and others taught, continued in Acts' early chapters. On this point both O'Hair and DeHaan echoed and perhaps consciously followed Darby and Haldeman. But DeHaan thought the kingdom offer to Israel continued only through Stephen's speech and martyrdom of Acts 7. Haldeman had not identified a specific end-point for the kingdom offer. O'Hair was also pleased that DeHaan viewed water baptizing in early Acts as "necessary" to salvation. With O'Hair, DeHaan thought the language of Acts 2:38—"repent and be baptized for the remission of sins"—pointed to a "required for salvation" meaning for baptism. But according to DeHaan, this "necessity" no longer continued after Acts 7. Instead, DeHaan thought baptisms after Acts 7 were only voluntary salvation testimonies. For O'Hair this alleged change in baptism's meaning was arbitrary and a case of bad exegesis. He questions how DeHaan's view can be correct in light of Acts 22:16 where Ananias is remembered as having told Paul about his baptism, "be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts, AV). O'Hair's discussion

of baptism texts consistently read Mark 16:16 with Acts 2:38 and 22:16 as teaching the necessity of water baptism to salvation in kingdom-to-Israel contexts. Although affirming its “necessity,” a question lingered on exactly how to define the “necessity.”

O’Hair’s pamphlets on DeHaan’s views are mostly devoted to two large blocks of thought: (1) In both pamphlets DeHaan made high-level ethical exhortations to readers and discussants about how to treat other Christians in debating baptism and other differences. DeHaan, however, makes one exception: his recommended charity does not apply to O’Hair. For O’Hair’s views, DeHaan stoops to scorn and mockery. O’Hair devotes substantial space to chiding DeHaan for this treatment.¹⁷ (2) More importantly, O’Hair again reviews a long list of varied perspectives on the practice and meaning of water baptism and cites specific statements of their representatives. He laments the confusion and divisions water baptism had created over which he expressed sadness throughout his ministry. Worst of all, DeHaan’s view of two different meanings of baptism within Acts created still another confusing, divisive view of baptism’s meaning—a problem O’Hair had for a long time been interested in resolving.

O’Hair’s pamphlet, *The “Paulites” and the “Thessalonian Baptists,”* is retrospective, but not merely sentimental or nostalgic over some dreamy past. It reviews what has been said and done about matters he regarded as extremely important, noting many denominational spokesmen O’Hair had read or heard. Each presumed his own or his denomination’s views were the only correct ones, aided, as O’Hair thought, by both hoary sentiments and embedded traditions critically unexamined for biblical roots, contexts, and meaning. The individual spokesmen he reviews included Harry Ironside and Martin DeHaan (independent fundamentalists; baptism now a public witness to salvation), James Willeford (Church of Christ; water baptism necessary to salvation), Walter Maier (Lutheran; water baptism regenerates infants), Alex Stewart (household/family immersion), William

B. Riley (Baptist; baptism as a public witness to salvation), Louis Bauman (Dunkard Brethren; triple immersion, once for each member of the Trinity), Kenneth Wuest (independent commentator on Romans; no water in Romans 6:1-4), and Albertus Pieters (Dutch Reformed; infants baptized into the covenant of grace). All disagreed with each other, endlessly exacerbating denominational divisions and factions which DeHaan too lamented. This portion of the pamphlet reads like a carnival of conflict among people who all believed only one interpretation and form of baptism were biblically correct, and were certain theirs was the only right view. The pamphlet reflects what O’Hair had learned over the years about the depth of these divisions in the church and how stubbornly resolution was resisted. He still hoped to do something about it, but the doors seemed to be closing.

“He [O’Hair] laments the confusion and divisions water baptism had created over which he expressed sadness throughout his ministry.”

John R. Rice’s disagreement with O’Hair was reviewed in *The Dispensationalism of Dr. E. W. Bullinger, Dr. C. I. Scofield and Dr. John R. Rice* (1954). Rice tried to undo O’Hair by calling his teaching “hyper-dispensationalism,” a more frightening name for “Bullingerism,” and by seeking against dispensational theology to blend church and kingdom as he did in other writings like his commentary on Matthew. In the early 1940s, O’Hair had suggested such labels were only a “preachers’ scarecrow” and a poor substitute for serious engagement with issues. He countered Rice with a series of critical questions on details of texts and events important to dispensational theology against Rice’s merging of kingdom and church. For example, he asks, “Why did not one or more of the twelve apostles . . . deliver the decree that Gentiles were not to be put under the law, rather than send Barnabas and Silas [two associates of Paul at the time (Acts 15:22)]?”¹⁸ Or, to cite another example, “Did the Lord Jesus commit to John the Baptist . . . ‘the dispensation of the grace

¹⁷See M. R. DeHaan, *Factions and Divisions in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, n. d.), pp. 9, 10-11, 19-21; *Water Baptism: What Saith the Scriptures?* (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class, n. d.), pp. 2, 7, 10-11, 16, 17, 24-25.

¹⁸ Bracketed insertion is for clarity by the current authors.

of God' for Gentiles?" With these and other questions, O'Hair challenged Rice to exhibit language in the early gospel accounts about the Gentile mission and the church, as though they were first made known by John the Baptist.

“O’Hair also recognized John’s interest in the creation of a new people of God flowing from Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection.”

The Church of Christ and Ten Confused Fundamentalists. In this pamphlet O'Hair again reviews the baptism of Acts 2:38 as taught by the Church of Christ, agreeing with their claimed “necessity” of baptism in the passage. But he opposes using the text as a permanent guide to baptism in the church of the current dispensation. The text’s required baptism rather belongs to the manifest messianic kingdom of the First Advent and its goal of a renewed Israel. The pamphlet produces yet another list of fundamentalist teachers and their explanations of the rite. He speaks well of the doctrinal and Trinitarian faithfulness, remarkable evangelism gifts, and splendid preaching and teaching of the group. The ten fundamentalists confused over baptism are M. R. DeHaan (Independent), H. A Ironside (Plymouth Brethren), W. Pettingill (Baptist), D. G. Barnhouse (Presbyterian), K. Wuest (Moody Bible Institute faculty), W. Maier (Lutheran), W. B. Riley (Baptist), I. M. Haldeman (Baptist), L. Bauman (Dunkard Brethren), and A. Stewart (Plymouth Brethren). While commending them personally and noting their effective ministries, he laments the confusion created among Christians by their conflicting views of baptism.

These two pamphlets on grace seem aimed at Christians whose thinking overshadowed the larger biblical ideas of grace because of traditional emphasis on law-, covenant-, or Sabbath-keeping, or they may have been aimed at Christians who were unable to recognize the newness of the dispensation of grace and the grace of personal salvation.

Salvation, Grace, and the Christian Life

The Gospel of John

In all four decades of his ministry O'Hair wrote evangelistic pamphlets and tracts. The importance of John's Gospel for him is obvious in an evangelistic pamphlet from before July 1923 while still living in Oak Park, Illinois, and traveling as an itinerant evangelist. Even at this early time he made extensive use of John's Trinitarian texts (*The Christ Who Died for Us*, c 1920) basing his salvation theme on Jesus' sayings on incarnation and eternal life. In the next three decades he paid even closer attention to John's Gospel. O'Hair appears to ignore the popular notion that evangelistic tracts or booklets should avoid theological detail and keep to simple, catchy, sentimental stories and explanations of salvation. Instead, his salvation pamphlets and booklets are full of Trinitarian-salvation texts from the Bible; these, not human interest stories, are his illustrations. In this way converts were made aware of what they were actually accepting when saying “yes” to Christ and the gospel.

O'Hair's *Gospel of John* (1954) was a result of this preference for teaching salvation by assembling Scripture texts. The booklet explains the thought of John's Gospel on receiving eternal life. It stresses the Trinity—Christ sent from the Father and the Holy Spirit, sent from both Christ and the Father to establish and operate salvation's movement in the world with the three divine persons working in harmony. The Gospel of John appears to be a development of the segment on John in the planned work begun about 1939 entitled *Through the Bible in Fifty-Two Lessons: Ten Books*.¹⁹ Of this planned series, only Books One, Two, Five and Six appeared. In the published segment called, “Book Six,” O'Hair explained his understanding of the Gospel of John as itself a kind of New Testament salvation tract—a widely shared view. What follows is a sketch of central ideas found in *Through the Bible: Book Six* and *The Gospel of John* together.

O'Hair saw in John's Gospel two major themes—the sinful world and the saving Christ. The two themes are joined by this Gospel's view

¹⁹ See Chapter Four above for further introductory comments on this incomplete work.

that the world rightly belongs to Christ by both creation and redemption, though now swamped in sin and death. John's Gospel features seven miracles; their theme is Christ the giver of new life—he who rose from the dead and continues to make alive all who receive him as the incarnate and resurrected Son of God. O'Hair also recognized that Christ's *speeches and sayings* are tied to his person and miracles, the *whole Christ* being thus his person, words, and signs. The themes of Christ's teaching are capsulized in his "I am" sayings which show both his relation to the Father and his revelation of the Father. The relational sayings of Christ about himself and the Father aroused Jewish opposition—a parallel theme to the book's Trinitarian thoughts about Father, Son, and Spirit woven into Jesus' speeches. The book's Trinitarian teaching, its thematic emphasis on faith and new life, and the Jewish reaction and opposition are all parallel to Paul's Trinitarian salvation teaching and Israel's rejection of Christ and ensuing national judgment (Rom 11). This combination of themes in John and Paul drove O'Hair's interest in John's Gospel.

O'Hair also recognized John's interest in the creation of a new people of God flowing from

Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection. Despite the divide in Israel and the rejection of Christ by Israel's leaders, the nation has a future just as it does in the prophets and Paul. Israel's future is visible in Caiaphas' prophecy about Christ dying for the "nation" (11:50-51), which, with the ensuing context (11:52), seems to think only of Israel, whether the Judean nation, Jerusalem as its capital, or that part of the nation scattered abroad (the Diaspora). However, O'Hair also saw in John Jesus' death for the whole world ("all men" 12:32). This, he notes, is actually what happened, but the path to its enactment became Israel's rejection of both Messiah and the kingdom. Like the other gospels, John's story of Jesus has many prophecy-fulfillment details. He also notes how Christ dying for and creating a new people of God took shape at the beginning in a group of Jewish disciples, but was later expanded in application of the gospel to the Gentiles. He thought Jesus' parable of the vine and branches was parallel to Paul's thoughts on the union of believers with Christ. Thus O'Hair saw the Gospel of John as more Pauline-like than the other three gospels. He does not explain how this came about or how John's book fit historically into later first century developments. ■



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**Committing
the Grace Gospel
to Faithful People**
2 Timothy 2:1-2

THINGS
TO COME
MISSION

IT'S A MATTER OF FOCUS: POST HURRICANE LIFE

by Angela Ortiz

We are excited to announce a new addition to TRUTH Magazine. It is our hope that this area of focus will simply serve to broaden our scope and reach as we seek to impact the lives of people for Christ. TRUTH has long been a beacon of encouragement and equipping the saints, and it is our prayer that this change will only serve to enhance that effort.

The Grace Gospel Fellowship desires to be an organization that values the importance of being multiethnic and embracing different cultures and languages. We are confident that taking steps to become more diverse will bring balance to our fellowship and broaden the impact the Lord has in and through us. Starting with the next issue, we will be offering a bilingual article that will be printed in English and Spanish. This will give you a chance to get more familiar with a different language and better understand another culture and how others approach and perceive some of the very topics our churches wrestle with on a daily basis. You will notice a new author in TRUTH this month, Angela Ortiz of Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. Angela will be part of a team of authors who will share perspectives on relevant topics from a "Grace Theology" perspective but also from a personal viewpoint that may be different and new. Every issue we will present a bio on each of these new authors so you can get to know them better. We hope and pray that through this our fellowship will continue to take steps to embrace diversity and perspectives beyond our initial view.



Angela Ortiz is the wife of Felix Gaby Torres, the Director of Camp Caribe in Puerto Rico.

1 Kings 19:11-13:

"¹¹...but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'"

The morning after September 20, 2017, for many "boricuas" (Puerto Ricans) it felt like the verses you just read above. An historic, massive, and powerful category 4 hurricane had passed through the country, destroying all in its path. All that was left for weeks after was pure and deep silence. But, a lot can be heard as a consequence of "forced" stillness. After Hurricane Maria hit, the whole 100 X 35 mile island was in a total state of silence. No electric power, which meant for many, no running water. Getting in long lines just to get food, ice, groceries or gasoline. People lost their homes, their personal belongings and some even their lives.

Up until this date, almost six months after Hurricane Maria impacted us, that silence is still



Sunflowers grew in people's back yards because the winds of the hurricane blew seeds from all over...this picture is in my parents' back yard.



This picture shows what was left of this man's home. I don't remember his name but our church did a partnership with Samaritan's Purse and FEMA and we helped him with prayer, food, and other needed supplies.

felt in the hearts and minds of Puerto Ricans. For some, it was a wake-up call—a silence that led to a reflective time, to truly examine the motives behind actions, the why behind a way of living out life. For others, that utter and deep silence translated to confusion, anxiety, fear, anger, depression and profound disappointment. Suicide rates went up between the months of November and December 2017 compared to the same time frame a year ago. About 40 cases were reported.

So, what mindset is the right one in troubling times like these?

The Lord our God is an expert in transforming our negatives into positives. He always allows great opportunity to arise from the ashes of any kind of loss or mourning. It's been a time, as believers, to really be intentional in pouring out through action the powerful and transforming message of the gospel. Not only talking about God's grace or love, but to truly live it out and by that be obedient to: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength... Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

To first live that out we must: "...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). If the heart is aligned to God's own heart, everything else will align itself accordingly to be able to, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:2). We "boricuas" have helped each other

“
 ...not even the strongest of atmospheric phenomena could ever separate us from our Lord's immense love.
 ”



People have started to put up signs like this one thanking power companies for giving their communities power.

with little to nothing. We have been able to smile and laugh in the midst of a wavering moment. People have stretched out a helpful hand and given someone a cold bottle of water when there was none left at the store after a 10-hour line or some have extended a power cord to a neighbor who didn't have an electric generator. Adversity can lead to grace or disappointment. We must choose wisely.

One of my aunts lost all of her personal belongings due to Hurricane Maria. She came face to face with a demolished house she called home. How can resilience come in a moment when you are faced with the reality of having nothing? It's a matter of focus. The Lord is the only One who can shift our focus from loss to opportunity, mourning to dancing, loss to gain. Resiliency comes from God Himself. Ephesians 6:10 says to "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power." The Hurricane took many things, but not even the strongest of atmospheric phenomena could ever separate us from our Lord's immense love. The negatives we face in life can be seized as opportunities to focus on God and minister to all around us.

So, as you read this, ask yourself, where is your heart and mindset? Where does your resilience come from when facing the hurricanes of life? ■



People made art from what was left of the trees after the hurricane. That's a phrase that says, "Puerto Rico is rising."

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Region 1: Northwest



Berean Bible Church in Shoreline, WA, has been memorizing the GGF's Foundation 50 memory verses that were released several years ago. As we have been memorizing, we are also focusing on that week's verse during our Sunday morning worship service. Exploring the verses each week has been a great way for our congregation to internalize their truths for our lives. ■

city, and get closer to Christ through planned activities. Every other month the youth of our region eagerly anticipate youth activities so they can catch up with their friends from the other churches.

The Pinnacles National Monument gives students an opportunity to test their grit while climbing to the high peaks or spelunking in the caves below. Viewing the California condors riding the thermals up at the ridgeline or viewing the cave bats clinging to the granite, it is obvious that the Creator has done an amazing work in His world and all He has created.

Region 2: Southwest



The youth groups of Region 2 got together at *Grace Community Church* of Prunedale, CA, for their annual weekend fellowship last month. I know the young people from *Grace Bible Church* of Anaheim, CA, enjoyed the trip and traveled with the kids from *Grace Bible Church of Phoenix* in Arizona. They were accompanied by Jason Steele, our youth director.

The annual Nor-Cal trip is an opportunity for young people in our region to fellowship with each other, experience creation not seen in the inner

After a day of strenuous hiking and climbing, the group returned to Prunedale Grace Community Church for dinner, devotions, and games. The teaching on both nights was centered around Ephesians 2:1-9. The devotions challenged the youth to consider that God's purpose for their lives is not just to save them, but to have them become like His Son, Jesus, a true masterpiece.

The Sunday morning worship service was a mutually encouraging experience as the youth from around the region flooded the pews of Grace Community Church. Worship-

ing together and learning from Pastor Bill Hardman was a highlight of the trip.

Sunday afternoon the youth experienced the Santa Cruz beach boardwalk. Students rode the oldest roller-coaster in California and took part in a mini-golf tournament.

That evening the group had another opportunity to fellowship at Grace. Games, worship, and devotions finished off the night.

A special thanks is owed to Mark Bruszer and Grace Community for their hospitality. ■

Region 3: West



Bethel Union Church (Akron, CO): Once again we are gearing up for Resurrection Sunday where the men of our church do the cooking and clean up for breakfast followed by the service. It is usually our best attended Sunday and we hope and pray that the message of reconciliation through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus will take root and grow. We also have a shared Good Friday service every year with three other local churches which consists of all the local churches within a radius of 25 miles of us and them. We have a great time of worship and most everybody knows each other in this isolated farm country.

We are just finishing up with a basement remodel that will ac-

commodate our children's ministry much better as well. Though we are in an isolated area, God is actively involved with us. To Him be the glory.

Grace Bible Church of Lakewood (Lakewood, CO): Grace Bible Church is beginning the process of partnering with a major food bank to become a food pantry for any and all who want to supplement their groceries or who are in need of food for themselves or their families. This outreach is vital in our community location, which is often transient and lower income. Our hope is not only to supply good food but "food for the soul."

Harvest Fellowship (Brighton, CO): We have lost several families to new jobs out of state and also have a church in our community that just opened a large new building. We have lost some people to this "new show" in town as well. It is hard on our souls, but our church, at the same time, has filled up the missing people with new people! It's hard to lose that closeness and connectedness we take for granted, but the people we have lost will be a gift to their future churches when they establish themselves in their new locations. It sure gives us a new ministry focus with more people volunteering in ministry to help our new people grow in Christ. It has also caused us to rethink who we are and what our DNA as a church is. We grieve the loss of these loved ones, and they grieve as well, but God is using it to help us develop a stronger disciple making ministry with the newer people. ■

Region 4: Upper



The Lord gave us a very special privilege at **Grace Bible Church** in West Allis, WI, to send ten short-term missionaries to Nicaragua where the Seravallis are beginning a new work. Our church helped to financially support the missionaries along with a good number of saints from outside of our church body. We were also able to undergird them with prayers during the ten-day trip. A good part of the building was completed for housing and a future educational building for the ministry.

This past year and the beginning of 2018 was filled with work on a rewrite of our Constitution and By-Laws for our church. The original documents were established in 1932 and the facelift of the documents was completed in the early months of this year. The vote at the annual business meeting was on March 18, 2018. We are thankful for all those who poured their efforts into this important project. ■

Region 6: Southeast



Greystone Bible Church, (Mobile, AL): We were able to purchase a second church van to expand *Dropzone*, our after school care program. Our enrollment has increased as well as the number of our employees.

We currently service one public elementary school in the area. Our prayer is to be able to expand to other local schools as well. This is a great ministering opportunity to our community.

Our Good News Club started up again this school year. Every Wednesday church volunteers go to a local public elementary school during the afternoon to sing songs and share stories about Jesus. This year over 22 kids have accepted Christ. Praise the Lord!

Recordings of Greystone worship services continue to air on several internet broadcasts as well as on an AM station. We are very thankful to have this opportunity to reach out to others. We also stream live on Facebook every Sunday morning.

We currently have two Bible studies during the week. A family Bible study is currently studying the book of Romans and a ladies' Bible study is going through the book of Ephesians. ■

Region 9: Michigan



We have undergone some major changes at **Berean Church** of Muskegon, MI! We added our new Family Pastor, Steve Carlson, in December 2017 and he is a great addition to our staff. We recently underwent a huge renovation of all new lights, carpet, hearing loop system, and stage work in our sanctuary during the whole month of February and into March. We are currently planning our Time Lab Vacation Bible School that kicks off on June 18. ■

(continued from page 13)

gave everyone he met a tract. We will never know the impact that this faithful servant had on reaching the lost for Christ.

I miss Ed terribly. The impact he had on so many lives was clearly demonstrated by the testimonials shared at his memorial service. The impact of his passing will be felt by all of us at Bible Fellowship, by the readers of TRUTH Magazine, and all within the GGF ranks who knew this man.

I can hear him quoting a portion of 1 Thessalonians 4:13, as I'm sure he would remind me, "sorrow not as others who have no hope." Well done, Ed! Thank you for your faithful ministry. ■



NOTE FROM THE EDITORS: Ed served as an expert and faithful proofreader of TRUTH Magazine for many years. We didn't know the previous issue of TRUTH would be his last. We will always be thankful for his words of encouragement that came to us with his corrections.

If you want to be grounded and grow in grace, you need these books. You can't buy them at your local bookstore. These and many more available at

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In Tribute

Gloria Koch, long-time secretary and office manager of the Grace Gospel Fellowship, passed into the loving arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Sunday, March 18. Gloria served the Lord for many years at her church and in her home. She is survived by a brother, sister-in-law, 4 children, 14 grandchildren, and 23 great grandchildren.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your ways straight.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

