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TRUTH Magazine

Fall 2018 Edition

Mightier THAN THE
waves
OF THE SEA IS HIS
LOVE
FOR *You.*
Psalm 93:4

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



GRACE GOSPEL
FELLOWSHIP

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TRUTH Magazine

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

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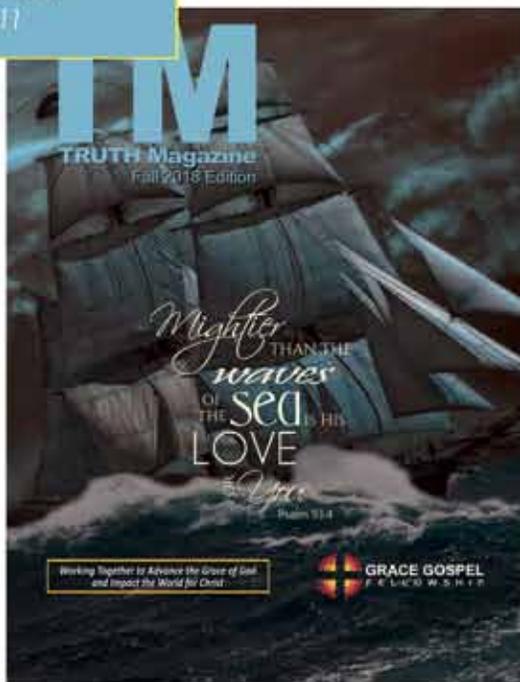
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CHRISTIAN ETHIC THAT CONFRONTS SIN (WITHIN THE CHURCH)

This article covers the eighth and final category from the GGF Church Health questionnaire. You can find the full resource at ggfusa.org. The goal of this questionnaire is to provide a resource for churches to continue to grow into greater health as we seek to serve our God in the world. This current article focuses on the topic of "Christian Ethic that Confronts Sin (within the Church)."

BY CHURCH HEALTH TASKFORCE

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A key part of Paul's ministry to the Church was confronting sin within the congregations. The Christian community is called to a process of sanctification which involves continually examining our sins and repenting so that all members of the Body may be more and more conformed to the image of Christ. Culturally, we often gravitate toward seeing the sins of those outside the church, rather than addressing our own. However, when Paul discusses sin in his letters, it is primarily focused on addressing those concerns within his churches. The role of the Body of Christ is to be building one another up in the love of Christ and humbly repenting of our own weaknesses so that we can better reflect Christ's love to the world.

- A. What processes does your church take to discipline sin within the congregation?
 1. What sins within your congregation require confrontation? Which ones do not?
 2. Do you have adequate statements in your constitution and doctrinal statement addressing the current moral and ethical problems in your society that can impact your church?
 3. What is the purpose of the confrontation of sin within your congregation?
 4. What process do you have for exploring communal sins?
- B. How would you treat people that come into your church with lifestyle issues and want to fellowship with you?
 1. What is the process of restoration for those whose sins have been addressed?
- C. Are there any ongoing, egregious sin issues that are causing strife, discord, or tension in the church or community?

One of the most beautiful and powerful things about Scripture is its ability to transcend culture and time in a way that is living and active. In other words, the transformative work of Scripture is just as vital for us today as it was for the original reader. However, as anyone who has spent even a little time reading the Bible knows, there

“ One of the most beautiful and powerful things about Scripture is its ability to transcend culture and time in a way that is living and active. ”

are clearly some cultural differences between 21st-century America and the ancient Mediterranean world which help us connect in a different way with the text. When reading the New Testament epistles, probably the most critical point is recognizing how the early church saw themselves as unique among their neighbors. In Ephesians 2, Paul presents his audience with a powerful reminder of those who were once outsiders not only being brought near to God, but actually being put on a level playing field with everyone else. He famously declares that Christ’s “purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace” (Eph 2:15 NIV). This carried with it some obvious theological implications (namely the distinct identity of the Body of Christ) but there was also an ethical dimension. The first Christians saw themselves as a people who, while living within the world and culture of Rome, were committed to a different way of being—a new ethic that was an imitation of the holiness of the God (5:1) who had graciously and freely saved them.

As the letter continues, this theme becomes more and more prevalent as Paul emphasizes how those within the church should live lives that are markedly different from those who are not (4:17-24). However, Paul recognizes that because we are all in the process of learning how to live according to our God-appointed status as saints, the church community needs to be a place of encouragement and correction. While it is ultimately the work of the Spirit which enables us to live holy lives (Gal 5:16), the church is encouraged to “look carefully” (Eph 4:15 ESV) at the way we operate in the world. Specifically, this is a call to a morality which is set apart—one that does not seek to use oth-

ers as objects for financial, personal, or sensual gain, but rather follows the example of Christ in serving and submitting (5:1-2 NIV). Sexual immorality and greed are not to be tolerated (5:3), while bad language and pointless discussions are to give way to words of gratitude (5:5) which build up rather than tear down (note: Paul didn’t have a Facebook account, but if he had, this is the place where he would have warned Christians against the fruitless act of online debate).

It’s clear that the issue of living well was important to the early church. They existed within a culture that often not only tolerated but celebrated immorality, yet they were called to reject this for something better. So, one of the roles of the community of believers was to be firm in holding its members to a new and often countercultural standard. While some of the other epistles contain fairly lengthy discussions of how the church was to respond when these standards were ignored (1 and 2 Corinthians are especially helpful with this), Ephesians also presents a case for the local church’s oversight of ethical issues to be taken seriously.

Perhaps the clearest way that Paul captures this idea is by way of the often used metaphor of light and dark. In 5:8-13, Paul refers to the Christians’ former lives immersed in Roman culture as being in “darkness” and challenges them to have nothing to do with this anymore—but rather to “live as children of light” (5:8-9). However, while it may be tempting to assume that Christians are to simply mind our own business and worry about our own lives, Paul takes this a bit further by stating one of the purposes of living in the

“ Paul refers to the Christians’ former lives immersed in Roman culture as being in “darkness” and challenges them to have nothing to do with this anymore—but rather to “live as children of light” (5:8-9). ”

“The role of the Body of Christ is to be building one another up in the love of Christ and humbly repenting of our own weaknesses so that we can better reflect Christ’s love to the world.”

light is to expose the things of darkness—to be willing and able to recognize sin within the community and be bold enough to confront it. While the word “discipline” is not used in this passage, this is in fact what Paul is describing. The steps may look different depending on the context, the nature of the sin and the life of the specific congregation, but the concept is clear—consistent and intentional sin is not to be a regular, accepted part of the life of believers and it is the job of the community to live in step with the light of the Spirit so that this darkness can be exposed.

“...it is critical to recognize that discipline is never intended to be an end to itself, but rather is always aimed at bringing about forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation.”

As mentioned earlier, there are some pretty clear passages on church discipline which provide principles and instructions that should form the backbone of any consideration of these points. However, one of the driving principles behind our work on the Church Health Taskforce is that each local church is unique, so there cannot be a one-size-fits-all solution to these problems. However, as your church thinks through this topic and these questions, we’d like to suggest a few things to keep in mind:

First, while the concept of exposing darkness within the church is one that must be firmly held, it is critical to recognize that discipline is never intended to be an end to itself, but rather is always aimed at bringing about forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. In

Paul’s metaphor of light driving out darkness, he writes that “everything that is illuminated becomes a light” (Eph 5:13). The goal is not to humiliate our brothers and sisters who have been caught in sin (see Gal 6:1), but rather to help them see how God can redeem even these things. Pointing out the darkness of sin within our churches must be done in view of God’s grace, with the hope of allowing the the light of Christ to shine even stronger. Second, we need to be aware that while God desires all people to be saved and live according to his light, the church is to first and foremost hold themselves to this standard. Ephesians is written to a group of people who have been saved, and therefore is intended to serve as a reminder of their unique call to a God-reflecting ethic. While we can always find opportunity to help bring this way of living outside of our local church communities, we must be sure that we are focused on our own light first. As Jesus humorously stated, its ridiculous to point out the saw dust in the eye of our neighbors when there is a log protruding from our own! As the Body of Christ, let us put our energy first and foremost into keeping ourselves in the light.

Finally, any act of pointing out and correcting sin in our churches must be done from a state of humility. After all, since our salvation is by grace through faith alone, none of us has anything to boast about (Eph 2:8-9). There is nothing inherently better about you, your pastor, or your elders that makes them able to stand in a place of holiness. We are all dependent on grace and should act accordingly. Of course, this does not mean that we ignore darkness, but simply that we approach it humbly, embracing the words often attributed to the English reformer John Bradford, “but for the grace of God go I.”

May our local churches be known as places where we take our call to a Christian ethic seriously, while holding firmly to the invitation to imitate the love, grace, forgiveness, and humility which we all experience in Christ. ■



IS THERE A BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP MODEL?

by Ken Bruce Kemper
President
Grace Christian University

When it comes to leadership or any other popular topic such as justice, environmentalism, sobriety, gender identity, civics, or genetic engineering, there is a wide variety of theories and positions. It could be stated that the source or foundation of one's position determines the shape of the building or leadership model upon which it is built. What I find interesting is that there are diverse positions on leadership and other issues even among fellow Christ followers.

We would agree that the Word of God is the timeless source of truth and a reliable foundation amid the dramatic and breakneck cultural, technological, and ideological changes in our society. Nevertheless, there will always be those who choose to discount Scripture as being archaic and too outdated to address these issues in our present "advanced" society. Most often, this perspective emanates from a personal philosophical issue with the statements or principles of Scripture. The resulting "rationale" sounds Christian and is backed up by a few proof texts which are loosely "interpreted" to substantiate the justification for a change from the historical orthodox perspective.

Honestly speaking, the Word of God is NOT a textbook for leadership any more than it is a textbook for conservative politics, parenting, or crime and punishment. This is not the primary purpose of God's revelation to mankind, which is preserved in our canon of Scripture as the inspiration of God. In Scripture, leadership is demonstrated through examples and incidents, or it is implied in various texts or through particular contexts within the greater story of God. In that greater story (or meta-narrative), the emphasis is clear: God is the ultimate leader as well as the author and conductor of the whole of history. Nevertheless, by understanding the variety of stories within the

whole story, and how God works in various dispensations through His agents of those ages, Scripture does show principles of leadership. The synthesis of terms and examples gives us noteworthy insight in order to better understand godly leadership. It is my hope that an examination of these major biblical terms will be instructional, even motivational, for our leadership.

It is surprising that amid the six to eight major historical leadership theories, each author will insist that their particular theory is the only one taught in Scripture. This is often a result of a narrow focus rather than a focus on the whole of Scripture and its overall message. It might also reveal a lack of understanding of the characteristics found in various historical leadership theories. The Bible gives examples and principles which apply to multiple leadership models, yet it differentiates between leadership which is blessed and given by God and leadership which is carnal and is used for intentions which God cannot bless [see my article in *TRUTH Magazine*, "Popular Leadership: Not so With You" (Volume 68, Issue 2, July-September 2018)].

Ralph Enlow, a friend and the president of the Association of Biblical Higher Education, did an extensive study of all the biblical terms referring to leaders. We were honored to have Dr. Enlow visit our campus to teach our faculty about this subject. His book, entitled *The Leader's Palette: Seven Primary Colors* (2013), captures this information and discusses biblical leadership. I appreciate his scholarship and work as he has reduced all leadership references down to three primary "Biblical Leadership Designations." These designations are servant (Hebrew: ebed; Greek: doulos, huperetes, diakanos), shepherd (Hebrew: ra'ah; Greek: poimein, poimaino), and steward (Hebrew: mesheq; Greek: oikonomos) (Enlow, 2013, p. 3).

In Scripture, leadership is demonstrated through examples and incidents, or it is implied in various texts or through particular contexts within the greater story of God.

Leader as Servant

Christians most easily recognize the concept of “servant leadership” in Scripture, particularly in the clear teaching of Jesus Christ in Matthew 20 and also in Luke 22. Robert Greenleaf first coined the term “servant leadership” in his early writing in the 1960s. Later, he founded the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Greenleaf had worked for the phone company for forty years and felt compelled to study the subject of power and authority in organizations. He wondered how people could respond to leadership without being coerced or commanded to act. He advocated for personal care for those being led, and strong personal communication to inspire joint action. Greenleaf was aware of biblical teaching on this topic, yet his work preceded that of most Christian authors in exploring the idea of servant leadership as he espoused the sociological value of concern for, and serving by giving responsibility to those being led.

Servant leadership as practiced in major organizations today is not motivated by scriptural teaching (“servant leadership” principles are employed by Fortune 500 companies such as Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, AT&T, Toro, and Herman Miller). It does not take into consideration the divine nature of man, God’s value of man, and His redemptive agenda for mankind, and therefore it degenerates into a utilitarian way to get things done. It simply plays on the sociological principle of reciprocity: the leader serves and does things for followers, so they will in turn feel obligated to do the same for the leader, thereby progressing the group or organization. We observe this practice frequently in major organizations “trained in servant leadership.”

Biblical servant leadership has a much richer meaning and practice. God calls leaders to view others

as made in the very image of God and therefore of great value to God and to those leaders rather than to view others simply as “workers” to carry out the leaders’ will. These followers are also servants of an Almighty God. They are capable of growth and development to think, plan, and work together for the progress of a group and a greater cause. The Bible teaches that servant leadership is diametrically the opposite of entitlement, patronage, envy, indulgence, popularity, or extravagance - which are so commonly associated with worldly leadership. Scripture presents authentic examples of servant leadership: Jesus washing the disciples’ feet (John 13) and Paul’s description of Christ setting aside His authority and taking up the posture and practice of a servant (Philippians 2:5-11). These instances, as well as many more from the life of Paul, Moses, and others show the humility of serving the Master and His will as the greatest motivation, without any thought of reciprocity. This kind of service shows an authentic heart for others, like that of God in heaven.

Leader as Shepherd

Possibly the most prominent leadership metaphor in Scripture is the shepherd leader. There are many references throughout the Old and New Testaments to leaders who are devoted to the duty of guiding, providing, and protecting their followers. God is spoken of in these terms by Jacob in Genesis 48:15, by David in Psalm 23, and also by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. Jesus describes Himself as “the Good Shepherd” (John 19:11, 14), and He reinstated Peter after His resurrection with the words, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:16).

Leaders in the early church were instructed to “shepherd” the people entrusted to them and to keep watch over their souls (1 Peter 5:1, 2; 1 Timothy 3; Hebrews 13:17). What a great metaphor of leader-

God calls leaders to view others as made in the very image of God and therefore of great value to God and to those leaders

ship this is! It motivates us to lead as God desires. The shepherd leader takes responsibility to initiate action and lead by example. Shepherds do not push sheep from behind and prod them to move. Rather, shepherds walk in front of the sheep and call them to follow. They seek the welfare of the sheep and make certain their sheep have the freedom to grow and develop without danger or other inhibition to growth. The shepherd leader has a genuine care for the safety of the sheep and acts with vigilance to help followers avoid the perception of danger and thus be frozen in fear. Many followers in organizations and even in the church are motivated by fear: fear of losing their job, their ministry position, their reputation, or their good standing among peers. The shepherd is a leader who is viewed as a source of assurance and comfort, not of fear and intimidation. I'm sorry to see so many cases of leadership "intimidation" and "a culture of control" exposed within Christian organizations. This saddens the heart of God, who desires shepherd leaders to mirror His leadership of His people. A shepherd leader is a gracious, loving leader who is followed; one whose voice is readily recognized and brings calm and assurance to all who follow.

The significance of the steward leader is not so much due to the breadth of responsibility for those whom he leads, but the authority under which he serves.

Leader as Steward

As dispensationalists, we should most readily appreciate the steward leader since we recognize that God's changing plan throughout the ages employed a steward leader to carry out His progressive revelation. God dealt with Abraham as a steward leader under the dispensation of promise, Moses as the steward leader under the dispensation of the law, and the Apostle Paul under the dispensation of grace.

We should also recognize there is some overlap of these three leadership metaphors of servant, shepherd, and steward. One could not be an acceptable servant or shepherd without also being a good steward and vice-versa. The steward leader described in Scripture is best understood as a manager, or an agent. This leader oversees someone else's possessions or people, and acts on behalf of a higher authority. The significance of the steward leader is not so much due to the breadth of responsibility for those whom he leads, but the authority under which he serves. This leadership metaphor speaks strongly of the accountability before God and to others to whom we must report for how we lead. In the leadership areas in which I serve, I often hear leaders mention the number of employees, students, church members, or the millions of dollars annually they oversee. But the steward leader is most concerned that those employees, students, members, and dollars all belong to someone much greater and more significant than the leader. The steward leader is concerned more for the one being served than how many or how much he oversees! As leaders, we are God's stewards of His resources and must continually give account to God for how we lead and steward what is His.

The leadership of our time shows all the historical signs of higher influence, increased compensation, along with titles and respect. But these leadership rewards of higher visibility also bring increased opportunity for arrogance, greed, and unnecessary control to develop in the leader. The steward is not to pursue his personal agenda and amass notoriety; rather he is to serve the master's desires. If a steward leader serves well, the owner of what he serves grows in measure and honor. The steward leader's success is found in pleasing the one to whom he is accountable. The steward leader consistently keeps in mind who he serves, and seeks his master's pleasure. What a refreshing leadership metaphor the steward leader is to our times! It is worthy of our imitation!

The Bible gives plenty of examples of leadership, but these three major terms or metaphors of servant, shepherd, and steward bring distinctive nuances to how God would have us practice leadership wherever God places us as leaders. I trust this motivates our service to be rich and reminds us to value those being led as God values them, and to serve in a manner so the Owner of all is well pleased with our leadership. ■

by Jeremy Clark
Executive Director
Grace Ministries International



How did we get here? Ten years ago there were a few ideas and fewer plans. Not even the walls and roof of the classrooms where we met on a Saturday evening just this past September in Costa Rica had been finished. A new field in Nicaragua was still a distant dream while Panama generated no conversation. However, on that night a couple months ago at Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia (Grace Bible Community) in San Antonio de Belén, all three countries and ministries were conspicuously represented by individuals gathered around tables to study the Word of God and to enjoy the company of their brothers in Christ. Several members of this Costa Rican church had traveled to Nicaragua during the exploratory years from 2006 to 2014. Many of the same and several others have visited and invested in the Nicaragua ministry since this congregation sent out their own in 2014—GMI missionaries Emiliano and Raquel Seravalli whom this church continues to support.

On this particular evening, Marvin attended a men's group while a couple classrooms down the open-air walkway, Yilber took part in a young adults' meeting. Both men are from the GMI-affiliated church in Nagarote, Nicaragua ("Arrraigados" or "Rooted"), while spending a few months in Costa Rica studying ministry and also participating in the work there. During those initial exploratory trips, Marvin was the first man the teams traveling from Costa Rica met who demonstrated a passion to learn the Bible and to see

a work established in his hometown among his neighbors. Soon after the church was planted just a few years ago, Yilber, then a youth, began attending and showed his potential through His faithful commitment.

Visiting from the U.S. and also present that night were GMI missionary candidates Ronnie and Jaque Mackensen. They traveled to Costa Rica to spend time with their future co-workers—GMI missionaries Alvaro and Mauren Barrantes—who will all serve in the new field of Panama. Alvaro and Mauren attend Iglesia Bíblica de la Gracia (Grace Bible Church) in the nearby city of Alajuela and have led the effort to take survey trips to Panama over the past couple of years during which they identified the zone in which they will work—in and around the city of David in the Province of Chiriquí. In preparation for their missionary service, Alvaro has studied at Grace Bible Institute which meets on the facilities of Grace Bible Community in Belén.



Panama Team—Ronnie and Jaque Mackensen and the Barrantes Family

The work in Costa Rica began decades ago, the ministry in Nicaragua just a few years ago, and the new field in Panama is set to open during the second half of 2019 when the Barrantes family moves there after raising support followed the next year by the Mackensens. The faithful investment and support of partnering churches is one element of the past success and future hope for each of these ministries and helps to answer the question posed at the beginning: How did we get here?

In our evangelical church culture supporting missions is not new. However, in most of the evangelical world it is novel. For centuries many parts of the globe have been accustomed to receiving missionaries, but had scarcely sent them, let alone considered the possibility. For them, it would be a first much like it was for the first churches planted by the Apostle Paul which, in turn, supported his ministry as he journeyed through the Mediterranean to proclaim the gospel of grace. Recounting the faithfulness of the church in Philippi, Paul provides the rationale for giving to missions towards the end of his letter to them. Meditating on 4:14-19 gives churches, new to the idea of investing in missions, motives for doing so while reminding us who have grown accustomed to supporting missions a reminder as to why we should continue doing so.

Philippians 4:14: “Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress.” In a negative sense, Ephesians 5:11-12 describes the sorts of things in which we should not share or have fellowship, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.” The word translated “shared” in Philippians 4:11 is the word translated “fellowship” in Ephesians 5. Paul is saying we should not do, think about, speak of, or even want to do evil. That would be having fellowship or sharing in them. When Paul is recounting the

Philippian believers’ commitment to his ministry he is saying that they have been thinking about, speaking of, and wanting to be a part of his ministry even those things which have caused Paul much anguish. A partnering church is aware of the missionary’s struggles and wants nothing more than to actively demonstrate its empathy. When Paul initially visited Philippi, he was “spitefully treated” (1 Thes. 2:2) being beaten and thrown into jail (Acts 16:22-24). Instead of disassociating herself with Paul, Lydia, a new convert, received Paul and Silas into her home upon their release from prison. Sharing in the hardships of missionaries is an active pursuit requiring both an investment of our resources and time.

Philippians 4:15: “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.” Paul was a new messenger, with a new message—the dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:1-7, Col. 1:24-27). Not only that, but those who had put their faith in the resurrected Christ noted Paul’s previous mission, “He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy” (Gal. 1:23). In one sense, investing in Paul was somewhat of a risk. Likewise, investing in new missionaries going to a new field to start a new ministry is also a risk. However, in order to see the gospel spread we are going to have to take risks. The second part of verse 15 describes our attitude as we give. In so far as we are able, we should give as if the ministry of the missionary depends on us. Imagine if all believers and churches took on this same sense of urgency towards giving as the Philippian church realizing that they were the only ones supporting Paul at least for a time.

Philippians 4:16: “For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.” Supporting missions with the intent that new works are



The back of the church in 2008 and now

established and that established works grow requires us to give “once and again.” Understanding the missionary’s necessities and praying for them is essential. Giving “once and again” is often how those prayers are answered through the Body of Christ. It is a consistent and faithful discipline giving the missionary confidence he or she can depend on you and your church to meet both their one-time and ongoing needs to live and serve away from home.

Philippians 4:17: “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.” For the supporters of missions, they are not going to see much of a tangible benefit from their investment. Their support will not add a wing onto their local church building or hire new staff. Much like a retirement account, the result of our faithful support will manifest itself in the “ages to come” (Eph. 2:7) as we share in those crowns of rejoicing when those who have come to faith in Christ through the ministries we support are present with us before the Lord at His coming (1 Thes. 2:19). Even for those who are ministry-minded, the challenge is to think about how we invest our time and resources not only to bless those ministries around us, but to bless those ministries we may never see. Consider all those who have supported the work in Costa Rica who will one day enjoy blessings from the Lord not only because of what He has done with their investment in Costa Rica, but also in Nicaragua, and soon in Panama.

Philippians 4:18: “Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.” To enjoy and fully appreciate our relationship with God, it is imperative to find out and do that which is pleasing to God. If this is not your goal, you are likely attempting to live the Christian life for your own gain or through a legalistic effort by which you are attempting to obtain more righteousness than the righteousness Christ has already given us upon our salvation (Rom. 4:23-24, 1 Cor. 1:30). Imagine having a relationship with someone who is only in it for themselves instead of finding out what would please you. How long would that relationship last? How enjoyable would it be? Consider our relational responsibility to God: “...walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord” (Eph. 5:8b-10). It is not hard: do what is right and in the process find out what God likes and do



Yilber and Marvin at Comunidad Bíblica de la Gracia (Belén, Costa Rica)

it for Him. This is the will of God. It is not mysterious or difficult to discover. Fortunately, He has provided His Word which clearly indicates what He wants from us so He too—not just we—can enjoy the relationship we have with Him through Jesus Christ. Supporting missions pleases God. As Paul writes, it is a sacrifice and one that is both acceptable and pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:19: “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Quoting from Psalm 24, Paul reminded the Corinthian believers, “the earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness” (1 Cor. 10:28b). Surely God could have provided Paul everything he needed to do the work to which He called Paul from the fullness of the earth. In a sense He did this, but not in a miraculous way with which we might be tempted to interpret this verse. The Lord provided for Paul’s needs through His Body. Likewise, the Body of Christ also provided for the needs of others. For example, the impoverished believers in Macedonia gave out of their poverty to other believers who were also in need (2 Cor. 8-9). Belonging to a church that gives selflessly as you yourself give selflessly is a great place to see our God “supply all your needs according to His riches.”

Through the centuries modeling the faithfulness of the Philippian believers, new ministries have been established, have grown, and have multiplied through the investment of God’s people committed to missionary giving. What the Lord is doing in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama is one example of how these God-centered motives for supporting missions are working to spread the gospel throughout the world. ■

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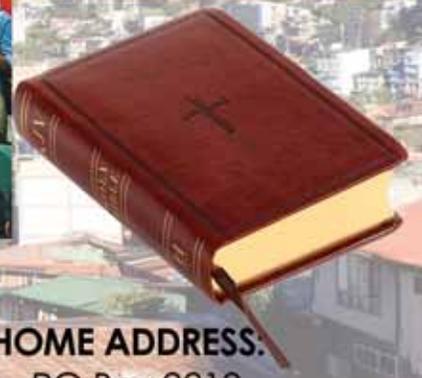


"Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry to testify the gospel of the grace of God". Acts 20:24

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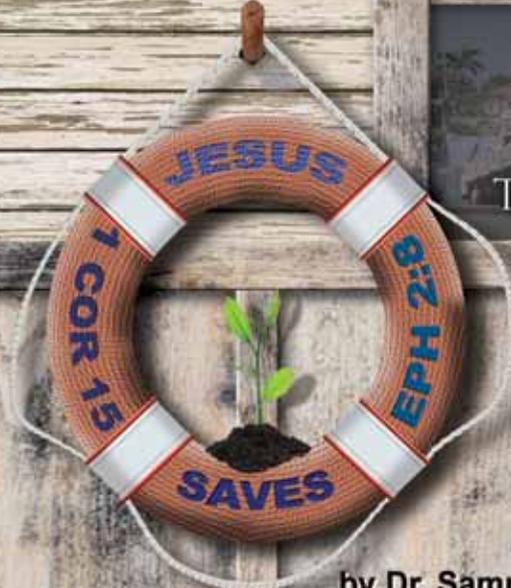
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THE DOCTRINE OF

Salvation

THE PROVISION
THE APPLICATION
THE OUTWORKING

by Dr. Samuel Vinton

Former Exec. Dir. Grace Ministries Int'l
Instructor at Grace Christian University

*Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul,
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole;
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me
Thy great salvation so rich and free.*

This simple chorus was one of the favorites that we often sang at camp and in youth group many years ago. Even though we may seldom sing this chorus anymore, its magnificent truth still remains—God’s salvation is great, rich, and free. Along with Jonah, we say that this salvation “... comes from the LORD” (Jonah 2:9, emphasis mine). That’s why salvation is so great, rich, and free.

For the last number of years I, along with several other professors, have taught a course on evangelism and missions at Grace Christian University (formerly Grace Bible College). I am often surprised—even dismayed—that Christian students, many of them brought up in Christian homes and in the church, have a difficult time explaining anything other than “I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior when I was six years old.” It seems that at age 18 their understanding of the gospel of salvation is still at the level of a six year old, which makes it difficult for them to share their story of salvation with an adult, especially if the adult is not a churchgoer. It is therefore my purpose in this series on salvation to see what the Bible states concerning: (1) why mankind can’t save themselves; (2) what Jesus did on the cross to provide salvation; (3) what the sinner needs to do in order to receive the gift of salvation; (4) what God does to the sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus; and (5) how does the believer work out his salvation (Phil. 2:12). To state it in

another way, we will consider three facets or aspects of salvation: (1) **the provision of salvation**; (2) **the reception and application of salvation**; and (3) **the outworking of salvation**.

The basic meaning of the word “salvation” in the New Testament is “deliverance,” mostly in a spiritual sense, though in Phil. 1:19 Paul uses the Greek word for salvation regarding his deliverance from prison. In the Old Testament it is often used for being saved from death, danger, the enemy, war, or physical harm. It is also used, of course, in the spiritual sense of God delivering, rescuing, and freeing men and women from the bondage of sin.

The Bible states that God created mankind in His own image. After creating Adam and Eve and placing them in the Garden of Eden, God commanded them not to “eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *for when you eat of it you will surely die*” (Gen. 2:17, emphasis mine). Therefore, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit, they *died* spiritually and their bodies began to die physically. According to Rom. 5:12 when Adam sinned sin entered the world and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. As loving as God is (for HE IS LOVE), God is also JUST and His justice required the death penalty.

Because man is now a sinner he cannot save himself. Also God could not simply forgive man or wave a wand over mankind and thus forget what He said would happen when Adam sinned. This is where we see that the purpose of God would be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, who would come

...Jesus is the only man who was perfect and without sin, He therefore was the only one who could pay for our sins. He did this by dying as the sacrifice for the sins of sinful humanity.

to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29) and save lost sinners who were under the condemnation of death. Jesus who had no sin would take the sins of mankind by dying in their place. This would take place thousands of years later when Jesus would become the God-Man. So God in His mercy and compassion made provision for mankind to be forgiven on the basis that Jesus would one day die for the sins of the whole world. He therefore immediately started His rescue operation to save sinners when Adam and Eve sinned (Gen. 3:8-21). Throughout the Old Testament God showed His love and compassion for the sinner by providing a way to be saved while waiting for the full provision which would be accomplished by Jesus dying on the cross for the sins of mankind.

THE PROVISION OF SALVATION

Scripture states that all human beings have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). It also states that all human beings are dead in their transgressions and sins (Eph. 2:1). In light of the fact that humans could not pull themselves out of the pit of sin, God had to intervene. He did this by sending His sinless Son Jesus into the world to do something that mankind could not do.

The Death of Jesus

By dying on the cross Jesus Christ paid for our sins and bore our penalty of death (Gen. 2:16-17). He did this when “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). God’s justice could only be satisfied by a sinless person being the sacrifice for sin. Since Jesus is the only man who was perfect and without sin, He therefore was the only one who could pay for our sins. He did this by dying as the sacrifice for the sins of sinful humanity (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; 7:25-28). His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4) made

Him the only way for a sinner to come to the Father and be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). What the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross can be viewed from the following three perspectives.

- **Redemption** (Eph. 1:7; Titus 2:14)
Redemption deals with the issue of SIN, man’s sinfulness. The word redemption speaks of “buying and redeeming” the sinner from the marketplace of sin. This word was used in buying a person out of slavery.
- **Reconciliation** (Rom. 5:8-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 1:21)
Reconciliation deals with the issue of RESTORATION; restoring man’s relationship with God. The word “reconciliation” means breaking down the wall of enmity that existed because of sin and man’s rebellion and enmity against God (Col. 1:21) and restoring a peaceful relationship. When Jesus died on the cross He took down the barrier that existed between God and the sinner. He removed the alienation that existed between God and humankind (see Baker’s *Dispensational Theology*, pp. 356, 357).

...when Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit, they DIED spiritually and their bodies began to die physically.

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the basic foundations of Christianity...Because of the resurrection of Jesus we proclaim a message of life.

- **Propitiation** (1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rom. 3:25-26)

“The word *propitiation* appears in many English translations (e.g., KJV, ASV, NKJV), although others translate it *expiation* (e.g., RSV) or *atoning sacrifice* (e.g., NIV). *Hilasmus*, meaning ‘to satisfy God on behalf of the sinner,’ is found in two places” [1 John 2:2 and 4:10 KJV]. In the Old Testament, the mercy seat was the throne of grace where, once the sacrificial blood was sprinkled, God was satisfied and released His mercy upon the sinner in forgiveness. In the New Testament, Christ forever satisfied God on our behalf (1 John 2:2) by one sacrifice (Heb. 10:14) (Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 229-230). The word *propitiation* speaks of SATISFACTION – God’s wrath and justice are satisfied with the work that Jesus accomplished on the cross when He paid for our sins.

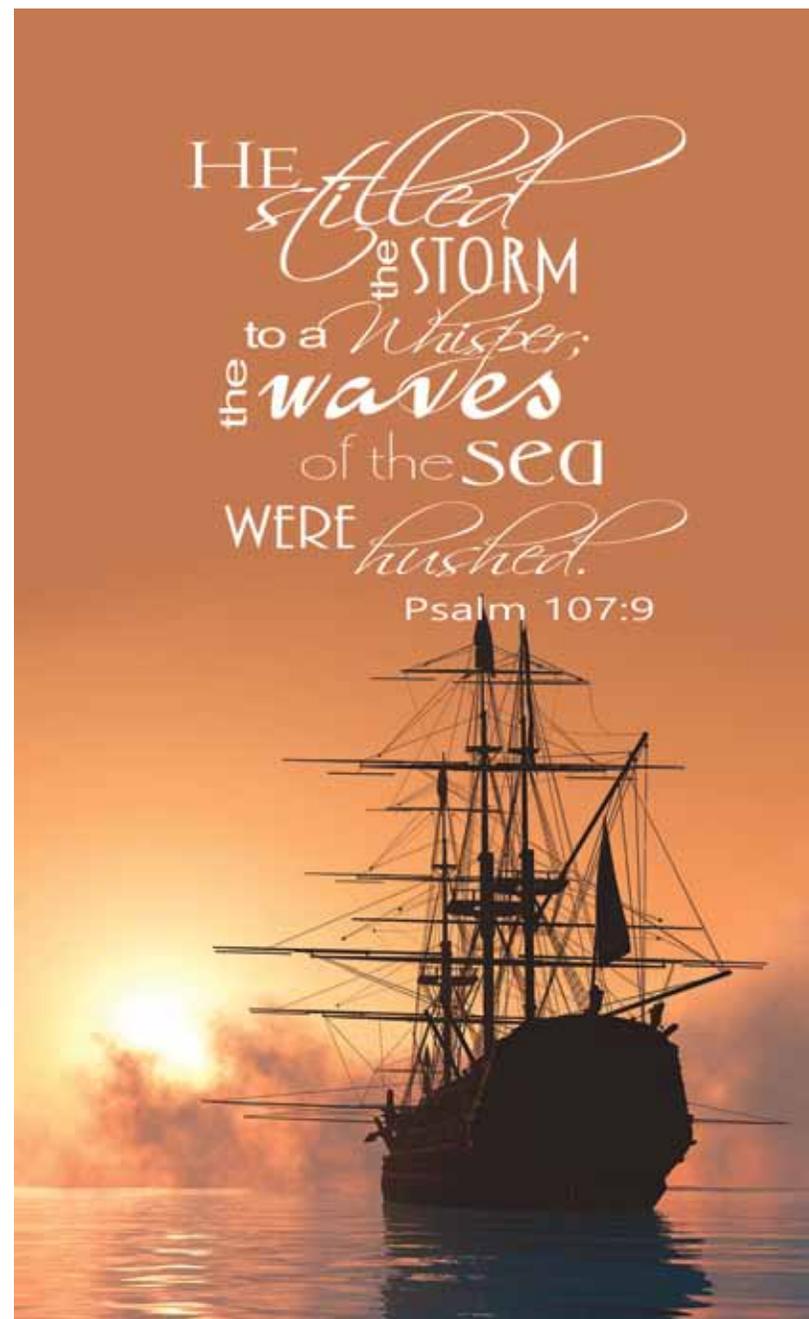
“In summary, then, on the cross Jesus was a substitute for sinners. He took our place. In so doing, He paid the full price for our sins. He bought us through the infinite cost of shedding his own blood. The price He paid satisfied the holiness of God so that we who believe are reconciled to God” (Radmacher, *Understanding Christian Theology*, p. 837).

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross cannot be separated from His resurrection from the dead in the gospel of salvation. The resurrection of Jesus is one of the basic foundations of Christianity. Founders of other religions died and they are still in their graves. Because of the resurrection of Jesus we proclaim a message of life. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Jesus not only resurrects those who died but He also gives people life. The

importance of the resurrection of Jesus led the Apostle Paul to write the following to the church in Corinth: “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Cor. 15:14).

Without the resurrection of Jesus there would be no salvation since a failure to rise from the dead would show that the Father did not accept the work that Jesus did on the cross. This is the reason the Scriptures declare the necessity for us to believe that Jesus rose from the dead if we are going to be saved. In Romans 10:9 Paul states that “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” See 1 Cor. 5:3-4. Praise God for our wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who conquered death, and because He lives, those who believe in Him also will live with Him forever. ■





COMMUNICATION AND UNITY

BOTH ARE ESSENTIAL

by Angela Ortiz
Camp Caribe, PR

NOTE: We are now bilingual! In the article below the English and Spanish versions run side by side.

How can we effectively show God's endless mercy, love, and grace to the world around us?

That is a question a lot of believers have asked ourselves at some point in our Christian walk. In our families, our neighborhoods, our jobs—everywhere we go—we have the opportunity to spread the seed of God's Word through what we say and what we do. The people we bump into frequently and the places we are at now are not coincidences. God has a specific purpose for allowing us to be where we are right now, to be light and salt (Matt. 5:13-16), to spread the gospel of salvation through His Son (Jn. 3:16-17).

But how exactly do we do that in a world filled with unnecessary busyness, lack of trustworthiness, and mocking? We must be one; we must be a God-obeying, Christ-honoring, strong community. (Read John 17:23, Col. 3:13:14, and 1 Cor. 1:10.)

Community is the sum of communication plus unity. If we take out one of those two key elements we would have not built a truly unified fellowship that reflects God's love.

Unity without communication is just a group of people who come together because of common interests or things they like. There is no deep-rooted developed relationship if we spend time with others and do not cultivate purposeful life relationships through communicating with one another. This might be a reflection of not understanding how profound our relationship with God should be after we have believed in Christ as our one and only Lord and Savior. When we believe, we come into eternal unity with God. We are sealed forever by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9); but if we lack in our daily prayer life (us communicating with Him) and reading/ studying and meditating on the Word (Him communicating with us), our growth will be slow paced. How will we know how to be a better disciple and how to love others if we don't allow God to show us? To have deep-rooted community, we must

¿Cómo podemos mostrar con eficacia la infinita misericordia, el amor y la gracia de Dios al mundo que nos rodea?

Esa es una pregunta que muchos de nosotros, como creyentes, nos hemos hecho en algún momento de nuestro andar cristiano. En nuestras familias, nuestros vecindarios, nuestros trabajos; donde quiera que vayamos, tenemos la oportunidad de sembrar la semilla de la Palabra de Dios a través de lo que decimos y hacemos. Las personas con las que entramos en contacto frecuentemente y los lugares en los que nos encontramos ahora no son una coincidencia. Dios tiene un propósito específico para permitirnos estar donde estamos ahora: ser luz y sal (Mateo 5:13-16), para difundir el evangelio de la salvación a través de Su Hijo (Juan 3:16-17).

Pero, ¿cómo hacemos eso precisamente en un mundo lleno de actividades innecesarias, falta de confianza y burlas?

Debemos ser uno; debemos ser una comunidad de fe que obedece a Dios y honra a Cristo. (Lea Juan 17:23, Col. 3:13:14, 1 Cor. 1:10).

Comunidad es la suma de la comunicación más la unidad. Si sacamos uno de esos dos elementos clave, no habríamos construido una verdadera hermandad unificada que refleja el amor de Dios.

Unidad sin comunicación es solo un grupo de personas que se unen por intereses o similitudes comunes. No hay una relación desarrollada profundamente arraigada si pasamos tiempo con otros sin cultivar relaciones reales a través de la comunicación entre nosotros. Esto podría ser un reflejo de no entender qué tan profunda debe ser nuestra relación con Dios después de haber creído en Cristo como nuestro único Señor y Salvador. Cuando creemos, llegamos a la unidad eterna con Dios. Estamos sellados para siempre por gracia mediante la fe (Efesios 2:8-9); pero si carecemos en la vida diaria de oración (nos comuni-

be intentional in our communication—with God and thus with each other.

Communication without unity is just cliché light small talk. I have a degree in Speech and Language Therapy and in college we are taught that there are levels to communicating effectively. We can stay on the shore or with time, patience, resistance, and persistence reach the deep end. They are the kind of conversations that, when planted and nourished, cultivate strong and lasting unity. Communication or conversations filled with intentional and purposeful words can bring out our most vulnerable areas. The same is in our relationship with our Lord. When we allow the Holy Spirit to create in us pure hearts (Ps. 51:10), strengthen us (Eph 3:16-17), and guide us (Gal. 5:22-25, Rom. 8:4,16), His power will take away all that is not godly and pour in us what God knows we need to produce His fruit so others cannot only see, but taste that He is mm, mm good y'all! (Ps. 34:8).

As Lara Cassey, author and CEO of “Cultivate What Matters” says: “Visibility creates accountability that leads to results.”

The way we love each other, forgive one another, and care in our relationships with others will truly be a reflection of a strong community—an action-based community, a unified, interconnecting, and compassionate community. Living out what God tells us in His Word—starting with verb-filled-individual obedience that spreads out to each and every person we come in contact with on a daily basis—that’s when people all around us will truly see what God’s endless mercy, love, and grace look like.

Jesus prayed this over us before going to the cross: “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:22-23). ■

**What can you do
today to better the
community God has
placed you in?**

camos con Él) y la lectura / estudio y meditación de la Palabra (Como Él se comunica con nosotros), nuestro crecimiento será lento, débil y llano. ¿Cómo sabrás ser un mejor discípulo y amar a los demás si no permites que Dios te lo muestre? Para tener una comunidad profundamente arraigada, debemos ser intencionales en nuestra comunicación; con Dios y por lo tanto con los demás.

La comunicación sin unidad es solo una pequeña charla cliché. Mis estudios universitarios son en terapia del habla y lenguaje. En la “U” nos enseñan que hay niveles para comunicarse de manera efectiva. Podemos permanecer en la orilla conformándonos, o con el tiempo, la paciencia, la resistencia y la persistencia llegar a lo profundo. Es el tipo de conversaciones que, cuando se plantan y se nutren, cultivan una unidad fuerte y duradera. La comunicación o las conversaciones llenas de palabras intencionales y reales pueden revelar nuestras áreas más vulnerables. Lo mismo está en nuestra relación con nuestro Señor. Cuando permitimos al Espíritu Santo crear en nosotros corazones puros (Sal. 51:10), nos ha fortalecido (Efesios 3:16-17) y nos guía (Gálatas 5:22-25, Rom. 8:4,16), Su poder quitará todo lo que no es piadoso y derramará en nosotros lo que Dios sabe que necesitamos para producir Su fruto; para que otros no solo puedan ver, sino que también puedan saborear que Él es mm, mm ¡bueno! (Salm 34: 8).

Como dice Lara Cassey, autora y CEO de “Cultiva lo que importa” (“Cultivate What Matters”): “La visibilidad crea un rendimiento de cuentas que trae resultados.”

La forma en que nos amemos unos a otros, nos perdonemos los unos a los otros y nos preocupemos en relación con los demás, será verdaderamente un reflejo de una comunidad fuerte, saludable y estable. Una comunidad basada en acción. Una comunidad unificada, interconectada y compasiva. Vivir lo que Dios nos dice en su palabra, comenzando con el Verbo, la obediencia individual que se extiende a cada persona con la que entramos en contacto a diario, es cuando la gente a nuestro alrededor realmente verá cómo se ve la infinita misericordia de Dios, Su amor y Su gracia.

Jesús oró esto por nosotros antes de ir a la cruz: “Yo les he dado la gloria que me diste, para que sean uno, así como nosotros somos uno: yo en ellos y tú en mí. Permite que alcancen la perfección en la unidad, y así el mundo reconozca que tú me enviaste y que los has amado a ellos tal como me has amado a mí.” (Juan 17:22-23). ■

THE INTERSECTION OF CHURCH AND COFFEE



by Joe Johnson
Associate Pastor
Parkside Bible Church

Coffee tastes like comfort and adventure. Every cup, no matter the quality, is bursting with a unique combination of familiarity and excitement.

When I was in middle school, I used to take long weekend trips to stay with my oldest sister and her husband. I looked forward to these trips for months. I'd get to stay up late watching cool movies. We'd go to the mall and listen to cool music in the car. Even the journey from my rural town of Remus to the "sprawling metropolis" of Grand Rapids, Michigan, felt like a rite of passage. The thing that sticks out most to me is drinking coffee. We'd meet at this cool little café and drink mochas—a blend of steamed milk, dark chocolate, and espresso. I couldn't wait until I was old enough to leave my parents' house and drink cool coffee whenever I wanted. The whole memory is tinged with this potential and anticipation, but also wrapped in safety and family. Now when I drink coffee I still have this complex experience. The drink is normal, commonplace, safe, but it's also somehow different, exotic, fresh.

Since that time, I've had the opportunity to work in coffee—first at a local chain; then at internationally-known **Starbucks**; and finally at a high-end, revolutionary, specialty coffee company, **Madcap**. But what exactly is "specialty coffee"?

It's helpful to think of "coffee culture" in terms of "waves." The *first wave* of coffee is characterized by

commodity and value. Maxwell House, Folgers, and Nescafé all came of age under this wave. There is nothing bad about this understanding of coffee; its purpose is to get the most basic taste of coffee to the most people at the most relatable price. After this, the *second wave* of coffee is characterized by coffee shops becoming a "meeting place." Rather than just a commonplace morning routine, coffee slowly became its own culture. The act of sitting and conversing with people over coffee became a cultural staple and allowed places like **Starbucks**, independent coffee shops, and **Central Perk** to slowly integrate into American culture. Slowly, this led to the *third wave* of coffee, which takes the understandings of the first two waves and dives into their source. The driving force of the *third wave* is: where does coffee come from and what makes it what it is? This leads to finding ways of harvesting and buying coffee that is sustainable and gives farmers around the world dignity and legitimate fair wage. Thus, coffee as a business can become an industry of relationships: with those who harvest it and among those who consume it.

This *third wave* of coffee is where the term specialty comes in: technically, the objective definition of specialty coffee is any cup that scores an 80 or higher on the 100-point scale set forth by the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA). The criteria are based on complexity, full taste, clarity, and lack of defect. This may sound relative and elitist, but it's a similar distinction of qual-

ity that we make in other areas of life: fast food vs. fine dining; store-brand vs. high-end; low-grade vs. high-grade. The more you get into the details of what you're buying, the more quality becomes important.

As independent shop owners began relationships with farmers, they began realizing that there is more going on beneath the surface than a mere cup of coffee. I like to think about this like melting down crayons. The *first wave* is a bunch of bits and pieces of different colors. When melted down, the result is a gray, pale, leveled color. It still has color and still smells like crayon, but really in its most basic sense. The *second wave* is a bunch of crayons in different shades of the same color. If you melted down a thousand crayons that were all shades of blue, you'd get the thing they all share in common: blue. Nothing particularly bright or unique, simply the color. The *third wave* is taking a bunch of crayons, all blue, but all a similar shade of that blue. When melted down, they will create a huge mass of that shade with all its nuances and brightness. It showcases the shade's own uniqueness.

So what does this have to do with church? What does this have to do with Christian spirituality? This growth and shift in thinking is a helpful example of the change in culture that has taken place over the last 60 years. The change in commonly accepted "family," the relativization of moral actions. All of that seems to threaten the church. Surely there are challenges, but I think this gives us unique opportunities to minister to, serve, and evangelize the culture.

This is where the church comes in. People who work in this *third wave* of coffee are looking for the purest sense of coffee. They're searching for the best cup. They're always finding ways to constantly make the farming, harvesting, producing, roasting, and brewing of coffee better. Baristas (the professional term for those working in coffee) are hard-working, driven, passionate people. Most baristas, often without knowing a Christian worldview, understand the value of excellent, diligent work. Without being rooted in Scripture, they are good stewards.

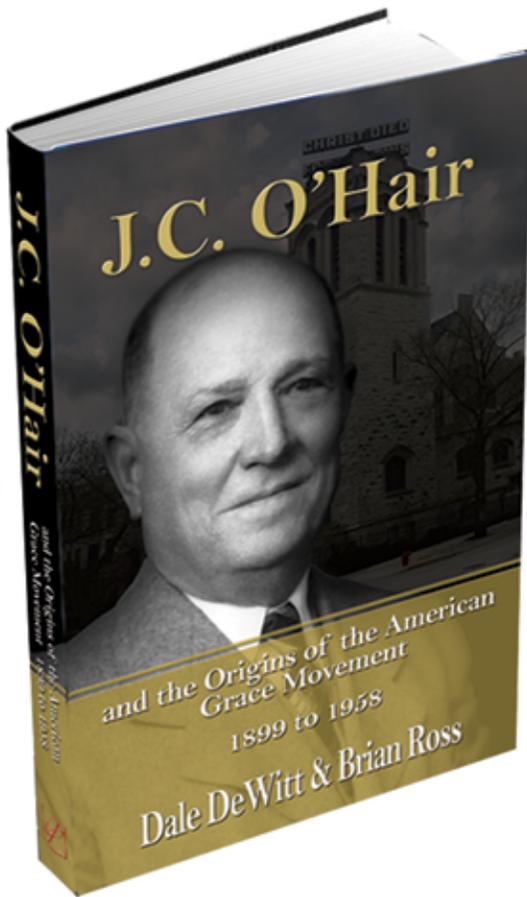
The more you get into the details of what you're buying, the more quality becomes important.

I think the most important part of the intersection of church and coffee is the openness and longing for a compelling, beautiful, flourishing life—one that has purpose and is connected to a cause beyond oneself.

They also see the value of pursuing excellence in community. Specialty coffee has to be done together—there is no way to do it individually. If we as Christians understand that people are committed to excellent work in fellowship with one another, we'll see that this actually reveals a deeply human need: fulfillment and connectedness. Rather than pursuing Christ to satisfy this longing, they are pursuing the fulfillment that coffee brings. Further than this, many of the people I have met in my decade of coffee work have been raised in church and have been hurt by people or completely turned off to Christianity. They are looking for genuine expressions of Christlikeness, forgiveness, grace, and peace.

I think the most important part of the intersection of church and coffee is the openness and longing for a compelling, beautiful, flourishing life—one that has purpose and is connected to a cause beyond oneself. I asked one of my dear friends from **Madcap**, who was raised in church and now calls himself an atheist, if I could quote him saying, "I'm committed to specialty coffee because there is so much mystery to it. People have worked thousands of years in coffee and there are still fresh ways to experience it. It's like a living thing."

People in our culture—exemplified by this quote—are searching for a deep, spiritual way of living. They realize that reality lies deeper than just what they can see. As Christians, we know this as the nearness of God, who is so close that, as Paul says in Acts 17:27, "they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from anyone of us." Surely, there are ways we can direct this longing to its satisfaction in the beauty of Christ's redemptive work; we have to be brave enough to ask them to "taste and see." ■



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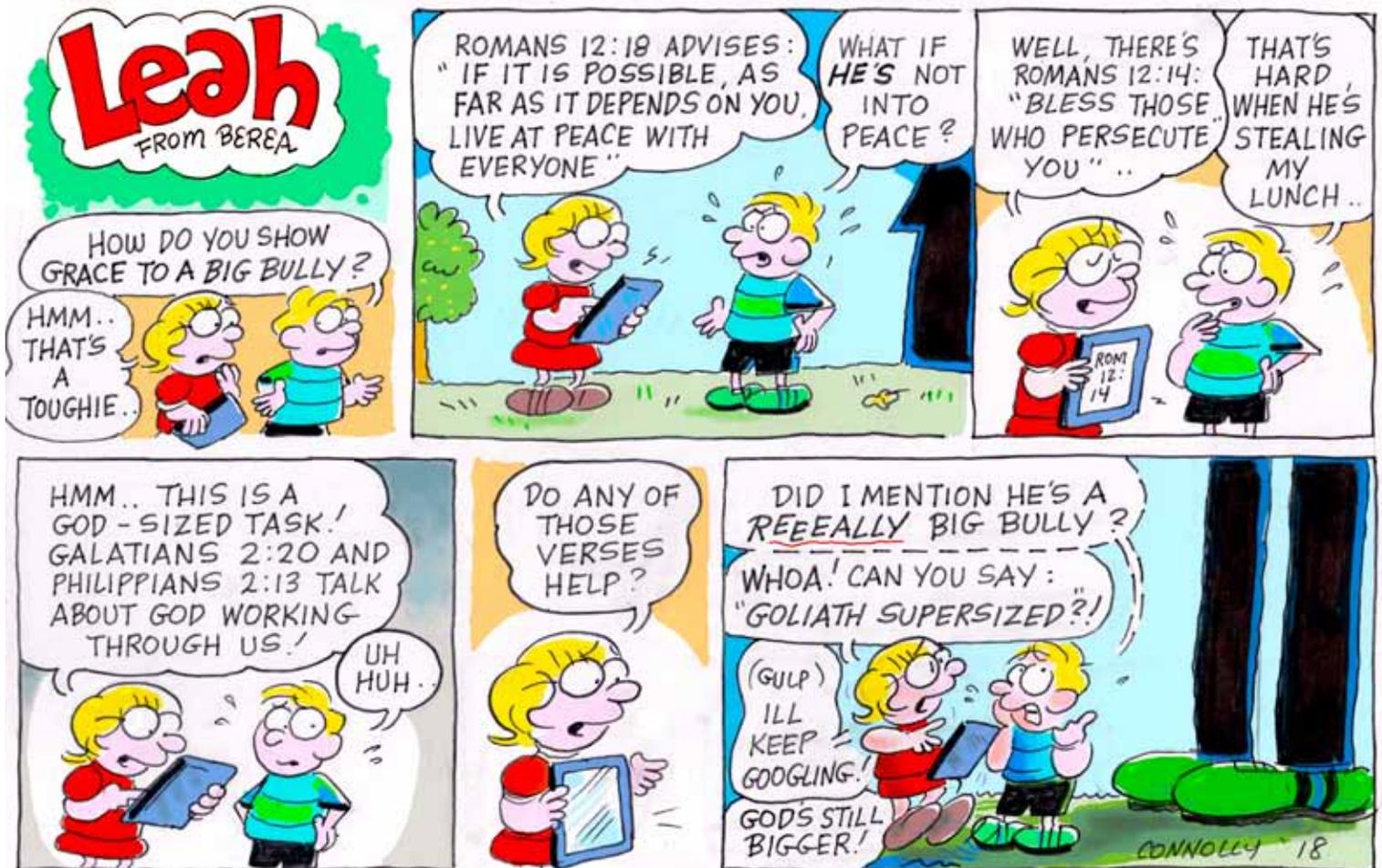
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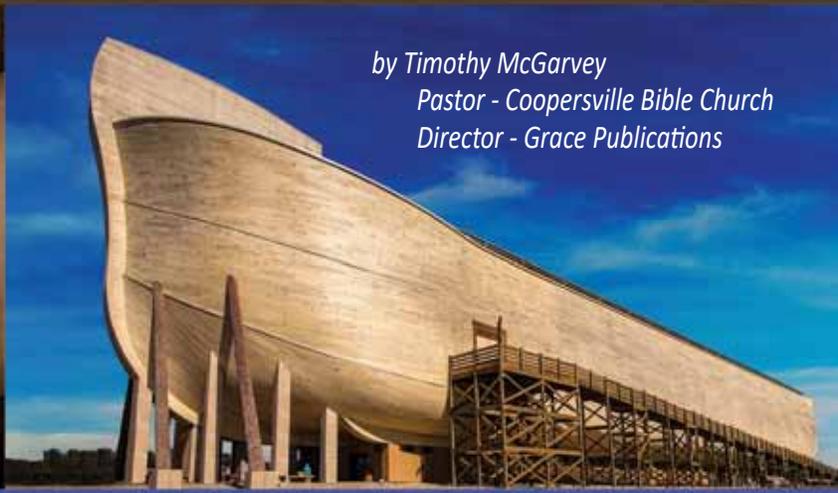
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by Timothy McGarvey
 Pastor - Coopersville Bible Church
 Director - Grace Publications

THE CREATION MUSEUM & THE ARK ENCOUNTER

My wife and I decided to take a couple of days off for a little road trip south—a nice get away from the regular routine and a time to take in some sights. I really enjoy road trips with Sharon. We traveled to northern Kentucky to the Creation Museum. It’s a place we had talked about seeing but had always put off. Now was the time.

For the past several years we have used the Answers in Genesis (AIG) material in our Vacation Bible School at church. We like the high quality of their material in both presentation and content. It is refreshing to be able to present lessons that present the Word of God from a perspective of absolute and literal truth. In many ways it’s an oasis in the middle of a desert of Bible deniers. One “apologist” on the radio, when asked about something in Genesis or Revelation, responded, “We are under no obligation to believe that.” I always wonder who makes that determination.

something for all ages. There are hands-on activities for the young and lectures and Q&A sessions for all. The museum was only half of our trip.

The next day we traveled a bit farther south to see the reproduction of Noah’s Ark. The *Ark Encounter* will absolutely amaze everyone. The sheer size of the ark is unbelievable. When you stand under the bow and look up, it is mind boggling to think that it ever existed. It is massive unlike what is depicted in most children’s books.

Once aboard, you move from one floor to another, each filled with fascinating and informative displays that adhere to a literal approach to Scriptures, including a worldwide flood that served as God’s wrath upon a sinful world. The large door that was closed by God is there and has the image of the cross beamed from above depicting the salvation of God.

“ From the very first display to the last we were confronted by a literal approach to a six-day creation thousands of years ago instead of millions or billions. ”

We went to the *Creation Museum* and were not disappointed. From the very first display to the last we were confronted by a literal approach to a six-day creation thousands of years ago instead of millions or billions. AIG isn’t afraid to stand up against the so-called science that has robbed generations of believing in the Bible. The Museum is well thought out and offers

This short article can only scratch the surface of what both the Museum and the *Ark Encounter* present. Both are a “must see” for everyone. Your faith in God and His Word will be greatly enhanced. I can truly say that we thoroughly enjoyed our visit and would like to make it a church outing sometime. If you have the opportunity to go—go! Make it happen. You won’t be sorry. ■



Region 1: Northwest



Region 1 held its annual youth camp July 29 - August 3 with nearly 100 students participating from our churches! Ben Lange, the intern from *Grace Bible Church* in Port Orchard, WA, spoke to the junior high. Andrew Clark, whose hometown is Traverse City, Michigan, spoke to the senior high. A couple of salvation decisions were made during camp and many grew in their faith! ■

Region 3: West



Harvest Fellowship Church

(Steve Blackwell) Brighton, CO— We have added four part-time young staff members (interns) to assist in the ministry, especially to the younger adults. We just started on a property upgrade with an outdoor picnic area, outdoor basketball court, and an outdoor volleyball court. We are hoping this will add to the draw of younger high school, college-aged, and young adults, as well as the rest of the church. We were given outdoor picnic tables and benches by a company that was upgrading. So we are pretty excited about all the additions!

Grace Bible Church (Harl Hargett) of Lakewood, CO, is look-

ing to the Grace Gospel Fellowship for direction and counsel to help us grow and reach a younger audience. These days, the gray generation fills the pews and we want our witness to be current and revelatory to all! Pray for our joint endeavor to be successful.

Cope Community Church (Terry Covert) Cope, CO—Summer is drawing to a close which means a gearing up of Bible studies, youth group, Seniors Only (a Bible study for high school seniors only), and kids' programs. We are looking forward to all the ministry opportunities that comes with the fall season. I turned 67 a few days ago and am looking down the road of our longevity. I still feel young and somewhat energetic so I will make hay while the sun shines ("behold, today is the day of salvation"). ■

Region 4: Upper Midwest



Grace Bible Church (West Allis, WI)— Here we are with another fall set of ministries getting under way. We are excited as we have Alex Tulsie as an intern pastor with us for six months until the middle of December. He and I will be involved in a series of 14 Bible Discovery Classes entitled "Choosing a Disciplined Life." Pastor Floyd Baker, Jr. will be teaching a series of BDH

classes on "The Bible's Relevance in a Changing World."

The ministry of Apples of Gold began on September 11 with about 50-60 women studying God's Word from 9:30 – 11:45 a.m. The book of Galatians will continue to be taught on Wednesday evenings twice a month beginning September 12. There will be the quarterly Women's Rose events, monthly Women's Bible study on the third Saturday morning, and monthly Men's Breakfast and Bible Study beginning on the first Saturday morning in October. Also, we shall offer a youth ministry called *Generation Z* (*Gen Z* for short) beginning also in September. The "Z" stands for "Zeal."

We thank God for the people who are involved in these ministries.

Bethesda Church - Prior Lake and Savage, MN. We have been very blessed this past quarter and give all the glory to God! This summer we had another Financial Peace University class Sunday mornings 9 am to 10:25 am for the 9-week course and had more unchurched neighbors come. We are using the strategy that Pastor Aaron Bolduc from Well Spring Church shared at the GGF Leadership Conference this year to do evangelism training with each small group and Sunday school class once per year per group. Pastor Dwight Anderson taught the first "Be Prepared to Share" Workshop to our adult Sunday School class Aug. 26 and it went very well. We combined it with our youth class and it was packed out. We appreciate your prayers as we follow up all the unchurch families from VBS and invite them to AWANA this fall. ■

Region 6: Southeast



Greystone Bible Church, Mobile, AL, has experienced growth over the past several months, not only in congregants but also in the Dropzone, their after school daycare program. Dropzone is now picking up more kids at the local elementary school, including pre-K, as well as at a local middle school.

Greystone Bible Church, along with other southern Alabama GGF churches, had a great time at Southern Grace Youth Camp this past June. These churches will also be gathering October 7 for the annual Church Picnic on the Causeway at Meaher State Park. This is always a great time of food, games, and fellowship.

Forest Park Bible Church,

Mobile, AL, will be organizing and hosting the Gulf Coast Fall Bible Conference October 18-21. Speakers include Pastors Joel Finck, Joel McGarvey, Glen Beauchamp, and Nathan Lippincott. ■

Region 9: Michigan



Berean Church of Norton Shores (Muskegon), MI, is thrilled to share that the fruit of literally years of on and off discussions and, most recently, months of deliberate and prayerful focus and interaction to change the name of our church has ripened to harvest! Our church family voted overwhelmingly to become *Anchor Point Bible Church*. We wanted to remove the

barrier of a church name that was of unknown origin and confusing to so many, as well as misunderstood for pronunciation for the purpose of reaching more in our community with the message of God's grace and the gospel. A wonderful spirit of unity and purpose was present, as well as peace, in the process that has culminated in a new identity and renewed passion to reach the lost and equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

The week after our name change vote, we hosted a community picnic at the church with lots of food, games for both adults and kids, as well as ministry information and introductions to our "new" church in the neighborhood. ■

The Grace of God Changing Lives through Multiplication!



Thank YOU for being a part of what God is doing to reach the 2.2 million unreached people groups behind bars! Your prayers and gifts are bringing a huge harvest!

I have never been a part of any ministry that had a better return of eternal fruit for the investment of time and money.

There is a new video entitled "*The Greenhouse Effect*." We ask you to watch and share it on social media. It is at: www.tinyurl.com/pmagreenhouse.

We give God the glory for what He has done in just this last year. **PMA now has over 32,000 students encompassing all 50 states!** Several new churches that serve as a local "BCF"- Bible Correspondence Fellowship, have now partnered with us. These churches duplicate the work we do. PMA has decentralized lesson distribution with now over 12 local BCFs around the country distributing more PMA lessons than we are able to do from the home office! Praise the Lord!

We have resources online to plan and implement a prison ministry at your local church. **Please call Pastor Dwight Anderson for more info to start a BCF: 612-423-3457.**

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