

TMA

TRUTH Magazine
Winter 2020 Edition

Passing the Torch

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



T M

TRUTH Magazine

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume 69, Issue 4
January - March 2020

3



A Vision for 2020

A lot of great things are happening around the Grace Gospel Fellowship as we look to the future. We look to the years ahead with confidence in what God is doing.

by Matt Amundsen

7



The Founders Biographies

Celebrating 75 Years requires a strong beginning. In these articles we will be highlighting those individuals who laid that firm foundation.

by Jeremy Clark

9



Passing the Torch - In Tanzania and Around the World

The future direction and plans of a God-given vision will always accomplish God's mission in the lives of those impacted and fulfilling the vision.

by Jeremy Clark

13



A Dreadful Source of Authority

When we move away from our historical literal interpretation heritage we lose the only real authority we have. We must not mirror the world.

by Ken Bruce Kemper

17



Answering Your Questions

We are bringing back a popular part of TRUTH. The Question & Answer section. We will attempt to answer all of your questions about theology or the church.

by Timothy McGarvey

18



Vision 2020

Our daily motivator should be to follow His example by living like He lived.

by Angela Ortiz

21



Reborn with a Purpose

The rich history behind the old Berean Church in Muskegon could have been lost. But now it assumes a new roll as home to the Bultema Institute of Biblical Studies.

by Kevin Rigg

23



Regional News

A window into the happenings of GGF churches around the country. A look at what the Lord is doing through His people to His praise.

PUBLISHER:

Matt Amundsen, GGF Executive Director

EDITOR:

Timothy McGarvey

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:

Ken Bruce Kemper, Jeremy Clark

THEOLOGICAL CONSULTANT:

Dr. Sam Vinton, Jr.

FEATURED CARTOONIST:

Bill Connolly

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

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

PUBLISHED by

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

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 9432
Grand Rapids, MI 49509

phone: 616-245-0100
email: info@ggfusa.org
website: ggfusa.org



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

A VISION FOR 2020



by Matt Amundsen
Executive Director
Grace Gospel Fellowship

We have entered a new year and decade with vision in mind. A few years ago, the Grace Gospel Fellowship council developed a vision for 2020 that would inspire, equip, and mobilize pastors and churches to cultivate healthier congregations, plant more churches, and develop new leaders. We are nearly at the end of our timeframe and we have witnessed a number of successes through the course of the journey, and yet if we are honest, a few shortfalls as well.

Transparency is an important component for building trust and with this in mind I will share an update of where things stand. Additionally, we will hear from Troy Sergey, a young man who will soon be graduating from Grace Christian University and stepping into GGF Residency. This is a new program that seeks to cultivate a greater foundation for our young pastors aspiring to serve the Lord in the local church.

When the GGF council set out to establish a vision for the coming years it took steps to grow and get healthy. The 2020 vision declared the following:

“We (the GGF), by God’s strength and fully believing it is His desire, will work to develop healthy, culturally relevant, reproducing churches with visionary leaders that will partner to plant 10 of the same.”

Plant 10 Churches

Currently, we have seen two churches planted—Bethesda North Branch (MN) and Grace Bible Church of Brownsburg (IN). Each of these churches has stepped out in faith to minister to their communities with the gospel. Their journey is not without challenge but both pastors have seen blessing in their ministries. We praise the Lord for the faithful work of Pastors Mark Huber and Phillip duPlessis. Early on, we supported the work of Don and Val Hosfeld as they left St. Louis Bible Fellowship to pursue God’s calling to Quincy, Illinois, to explore church planting. After many months of effort, they prayerfully closed the doors on the opportunity to then pursue a pastoral opportunity in Florida. With the sale of the building they were given, they



Transparency is an important component for building trust and with this in mind I will share an update of where things stand.

We understand that ministry, like many aspects of life, will be filled with moments of elation, and likewise, moments of discouragement.



When you look into an existing church and attempt to understand just how healthy the congregation is, you must look at many factors, and rarely can you assess all churches with the same set of measurables.

were able to bless three ministries, including the Grace Gospel Fellowship. We also set out jointly with the NW region to plant a church in Vancouver, Washington. The Lord worked in and through the leadership of Pastor Josh Herman to step into the community and begin the process of building relationships and networks. As we continued in the journey it was evident that the GGF and our region of churches needed greater resources (both financially and in training and preparation) if we were to be successful in planting churches moving forward. As a result of this revelation, our partnership of ministries agreed unanimously to step away from the planting effort in Vancouver to evaluate what we had learned and how best to step forward. We are so grateful for Pastor Josh and his willingness to step into a space that we have historically struggled to step into. This willingness to step into a relative unknown is a characteristic of church planters and we are so thankful for all of these men and women and above all their desire to proclaim the gospel of God's grace! We understand that ministry, like many aspects of life, will be filled with moments of elation, and likewise, moments of discouragement. Nonetheless, each of these opportunities has given us a greater awareness of the challenges but also the blessings in each and every one of them.

Revitalize 10 Churches

When you look into an existing church and attempt to understand just how healthy the congregation is, you must look at many factors, and rarely can you assess all churches with the same set of measurables. In our efforts over the last few years, we have worked alongside churches in Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, and New Jersey. There have been difficult times and yet some great stories that we hope will inspire your church and you individually.

Our friends at Grace Bible Church in Lakewood, Colorado, approached us last year with a desire to be revitalized. Pastor Mark Smith was facing the daunting task of energizing a "flock" of 20 while tending to the needs of his

wife, Debbie, as she faced a long battle with cancer. Through her journey I was amazed at her strength and courage in the face of darkness. Both Mark and Debbie gave every bit of glory to the Lord, whether in the midst of a good day or not. Last summer our family had the privilege of spending an hour with



the Smith family in her last days on earth. My wife, Sharon, and the kids and I were so impacted by the Lord's work in and through them. No doubt their surrender unto the Lord has and will impact so many. Just a few days later Debbie entered glory and stepped into the presence of her Savior, Jesus Christ. For Mark, undoubtedly, it has been a difficult road without Debbie by his side and yet her example, her faith, and her testimony inspired him to continue on. With the encouragement of our Church Health Taskforce (Pastors Gary Hansen and Jim Shemaria) and the strength and direction of the Lord, the ministry at GBC Lakewood is growing and reaching. Recently, Pastor Mark shared that they had 44 in attendance for Sunday morning and afterwards served 400+ with their food pantry. They realized that the Lord had blessed them with an opportunity to be a bridge into the community, providing for tangible needs with food, clothing, and books. When Pastor Mark shared this with me, I teared up and couldn't help but think of Debbie and her faithful heart for the community, and above all, the faithfulness of the Lord in and through their journey.

Also, our friends at Grace Life Community Church (GLCC) in Seminole, Florida, contacted us last year to begin a conversation about revitalizing as they moved from their previ-

ous location in Pinellas Park. Pastor Urian Rios desired partnership with the GGF, both in resources and encouragement. Over the last few months we have asked for cooperation from partner churches and faithful individuals and there has been great investment on behalf of so many. These resources allow for the church to further impact their community. In fact, members of the board at GLCC have stepped into aspects of city leadership to share what is going on in the church. Additionally, the church hosted a special breakfast for “first responders” out of appreciation for all they do and to cultivate greater relationships within their neighborhood. Recently, the church began a youth ministry outreach that

local church. Sometimes they are developed through institutions like Grace Christian University (GCU) or Berean Bible Institute (BBI); other times they are mentored through the local church and key leaders investing time and resources into their development. I could easily highlight each and every one of these young men, but I am going to highlight two gentlemen.

Altoona Bible Church (ABC) in Pennsylvania has a rich history of developing individuals for ministry. Among these are Pastors Cal Lowder, John Hollis, David, Timothy, and Joel McGarvey, and Stuart McClelland. Most recently, Pastor Aaron Harris of Kettle Moraine Bible Church (WI) and Pastor Dennis Kenepp of Friendship Congregational Bible Church (WI) opened their hearts and minds to the possibility of the Lord using them outside the four walls of ABC. Both men were mentored within their church but also received training and

encouragement through the ministry of BBI. They also stepped foot into partnership with the Grace Gospel Fellowship and have been open

saw many kids come through the church doors for the very first time. There is an excitement at the church that hasn't been seen in some time. Board Chairman, Bill Connolly, expresses such encouragement and hope knowing that sister churches and partners in the gospel have chosen to come alongside them in their time of need.

These are merely two examples of the kinds of partnership we have had together with the churches in our fellowship. As more come to surface, we will share what the Lord is doing!

Developing 20 New Pastors

As I wrote in a recent edition of TRUTH, there is a great need for pastors in our fellowship. Over the last few years we have seen over 20 new pastors stepping into roles within the

in their desire to work together, both in their towns and across the fellowship. Each of these men and their families stepped out in a response of faith unto the Lord and His provision. Had it not been for the faithful mentoring within their church, they would not have been prepared and ready to serve the Lord in this way.

I share this as a reminder that it is crucial for you and I to be looking for those who may be mentored and equipped to minister, and to not simply look, but find and equip and then mobilize. What an encouragement that the Lord is continuing to work in and through the local church. What a blessing that these 20+

Transparency is an important component for building trust and with this in mind I will share an update of where things stand.



What an encouragement that the Lord is continuing to work in and through the local church. What a blessing that these 20+ men have stepped into ministry out of response for the Lord's calling.

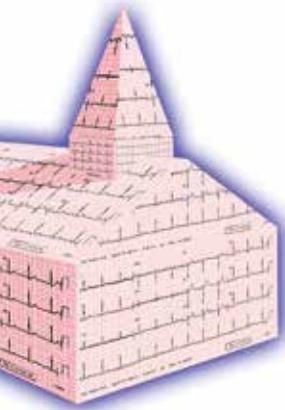


The Harris Family



The Kenepp Family

This last year we constructed a program that aims to place our “soon-to-be” graduates of GCU into a healthy residency program that will match young pastors with churches that desire to play a key role in their growth.



This passage is one that I hope to model my ministry after as to be effective in leading our culture and generation for Christ, we must stay true to the word of God.

men have stepped into ministry out of response to the Lord’s calling.

Well, there is an update on where things stand. Currently, the Executive Committee of the GGF, which consists of John Lowder, Kathy Molenkamp, Dale Day, and Jim Shemaria, are working in unison to evaluate our past steps and begin developing our next ones that will serve as the framework for our new vision.

GGF Residency Program

This last year, with the help of Caleb Befus (Director of GGF Licensing and Ordination) and a crew of leaders who have invested in the process, we constructed a program that aims to place our “soon-to-be” graduates of GCU into a healthy residency program that will match young pastors with churches that desire to play a key role in their growth. This program operates much like an internship but with greater intentionality and prepares them for licensing with the GGF. I would like to introduce you to the first participant in the residency program....



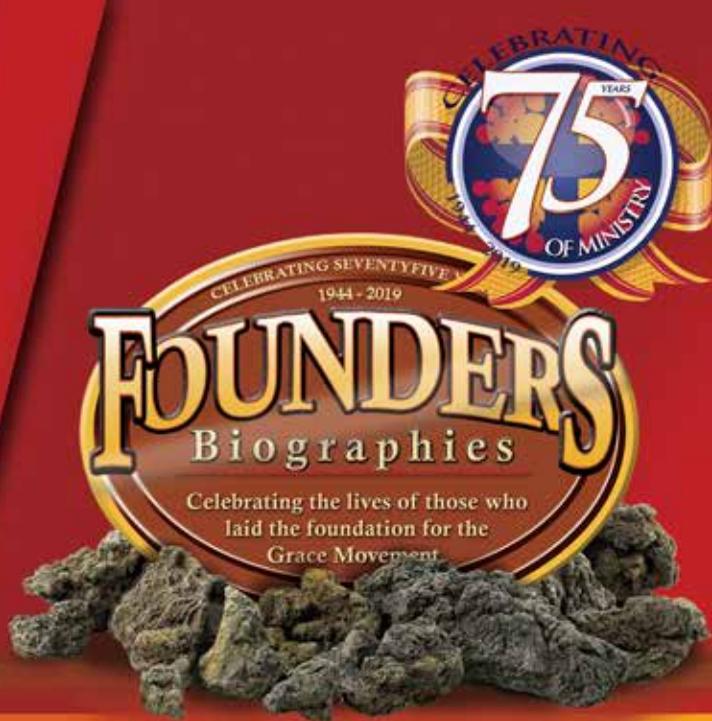
“My name is Troy Sergey. I am currently a senior at Grace Christian University where I will be graduating in the Spring of 2020 with a Bachelor’s degree in Pastoral Ministry. I was born and raised in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula in the city of Marquette. I grew up attending a Lutheran church during my adolescent years; however, my view of God was nothing more than a “magical genie” who you would go to in prayer if you wanted something. At church, I had briefly heard the gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection for our sins but that truth never transpired into my heart until I was sixteen years old. During a long road trip, my high school cross country coach, who also served as pastor at another church, started asking me basic questions about life and quoted Scripture to go along with it. I had never viewed Jesus Christ as a personal relationship until then and the gospel

confronted my sinful nature and my need for a Savior. It was at that moment I made a personal commitment to Christ. My desires for the future changed at this time too as the Lord put on my heart to now take this truth that transformed me and lead others and proclaim it as truth in the vocation of full-time pastoral ministry. I found Grace Christian University (Grace Bible College then) in a college booklet, and seeing in their doctrinal statement how much they value the Bible as the authoritative word of God and the death and resurrection of Christ to be true, I decided this would be the place in which my calling to pastoral ministry would be developed and strengthened.

“Fast forward four years later, the Grace Gospel Fellowship and Grace Christian University have now partnered in creating a residency program to help place graduates of GCU into churches where they can grow as ministry leaders, learn by being under a head pastor, and have more practice behind the pulpit. This semester I did a four-month internship at Parkside Bible Church in Holland, Michigan, under senior pastor Gary Spykerman and associate pastor Joe Johnson. This was an incredible experience in which my pastoral calling was confirmed as I did a variety of ministry work, such as doing hospital visitations, teaching Sunday school, and even preaching a couple of sermons.

“When I read the New Testament, the Apostle Paul works so diligently to advance the gospel throughout Asia Minor as he writes to the churches in Ephesus, Galatia, and Corinth. What strikes me the most, however, is his letter to young Timothy. In 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul encourages Timothy to keep preaching the word and being ready to rebuke as there will be a day that people will not endure sound teaching. Paul closes these verses by encouraging Timothy to keep up the good fight as he did. This passage is one that I hope to model my ministry after because to be effective in leading our culture and generation for Christ, we must stay true to the word of God.

(continued on page 8)



Mr. Charles & Teresa Baker

This information was written and presented by the sophomore class of 1964. It was written in the style of the television program entitled, "This is Your Life" albeit sans Ralph Edwards.

Mr. Baker was born October 24, 1905 in Dallas, Texas. His parents were Alice Arletta (née Newton) and Alfred George Baker. Both of his parents were born in the vicinity of London, England. His father was a tea tester. Alfred moved to Texas and established himself in business with the railroad. At that time he brought Alice and her mother to the States. Alfred and Alice were married in Texas by Dr. C.I. Scofield (of the Scofield Reference Bible) who was the pastor of the First Congregational Church of Dallas. Dr. Scofield's dispensational scheme no doubt laid a foundation of Mr. Baker's approach to biblical studies.

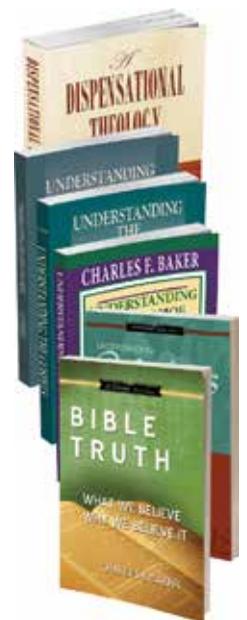
Charles was in high school when World War 1 broke out. It was during these formative years that he developed his interest in radio which would become an all-consuming hobby. It was his interest in radio that first took him to Chicago where he attended his first ARRL (Amateur Radio Relay League) convention in the windy city. Radio would occupy his life and would be instrumental in his first employment after graduation. In 1922 he secured his first commercial radio license and his first amateur license. It was during 1922 that he first met his future bride Teresa at a Sunday School picnic.

About this time Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer came to Dallas, and succeeded Dr. Scofield, and founded Evangelical Theological College. Dr. Chafer author of the 9-volume "Dispensational Theology" would also influence Mr. Baker's theology. In 1924, Teresa enrolled at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and Charles received his first commercial first class license. In 1925 he enrolled at Evangelical Theological College and graduated in 1929. Both Charles and Teresa traveled north to Wheaton College where they both received junior status. Charles found employment at North Shore Church on weekends at the WFCC radio transmitter. Upon meeting the pastor, J.C. O'Hair, Charles was pressured into taking O'Hair's radio Bible class.

Charles and Teresa graduated from Wheaton College in 1931 and returned to Dallas where they were married. After a honeymoon in the Ozarks, the Bakers returned to Chicago to build a new radio station for WPCC (at North Shore Church). After the church lost its radio license, Charles candidated in Milwaukee, WI, at the Fundamental Bible Church. While these were happy years for the Bakers, they also saw the birth and eventual death of their first child, Harrison, who died from a rare blood condition.

In 1939, Charles began the Milwaukee Bible Institute as an evening school. Radio contin-

Dr. Scofield's dispensational scheme no doubt laid a foundation of Mr. Baker's approach to biblical studies.



Mr. Charles Baker became a giant among those who held to the Pauline truth. Yet in his genuine humility, his greatest joy was in the accomplishments of all those who were saved under his ministry and college and have gone out to serve Jesus Christ in all parts of the world.

ued to play an active roll in Charles' life as he began a program over radio station WEXT and shared the radio Bible class with J.C. O'Hair which was aired on WAIT.

In 1944, Mr. Baker joined several other Grace believers at meetings that were held in Evansville, Indiana. It was at these meetings that the American "Grace Movement" was founded. At meetings in St. Louis the following year, it was determined to have a Bible Institute. Charles was asked to be president and Mr. C.R. Stam was to be the head registrar, and Bible teacher. The school grew over the years and in the late '50s Charles resigned from the Fundamental Bible Church so that he could invest more focused time in the Milwaukee Bible Institute. Also, Teresa began writing Sunday School lessons under the banner of Grace Line Bible Lessons.

All through these years, Mr. Baker continued in his study of Scripture. With the foundation laid by Scofield and Chafer and refined by O'Hair, Charles began to put down on paper the theological and dispensational beliefs that reflected those of the Grace Movement.

Among those many books and pamphlets is his monumental work entitled, "A Dispensational Theology." Through his writings and teaching, Mr. Charles Baker became a giant among those who held to the Pauline truth. Yet in his genuine humility, his greatest joy was in the accomplishments of all those who were saved under his ministry and college and have gone out to serve Jesus Christ in all parts of the world. **TM**

In the previous issue of TRUTH our cover reflected the 75th birthday of the Grace Movement and ultimately Grace Ministries International, Berean Bible Society, Grace Christian University, and Grace Publications, Inc. Each of these ministries has worked in their own way over the years to further the distinct message of the Apostle Paul's revelation of the mystery and mid-Acts dispensationalism. Over the next several issue of TRUTH we are going to shine a light on several of these individuals. Pastor J.C. O'Hair's life was the subject of several past issues of TRUTH and an outstanding book. This issue we will look at the life of Mr. Charles Baker. These articles will not be as lengthy or in depth as the O'Hair installments but we will strive to make them informative. We apologize in advance if we overlook anyone and will welcome submissions from family members who can share precious memories.

(continued from page 6)

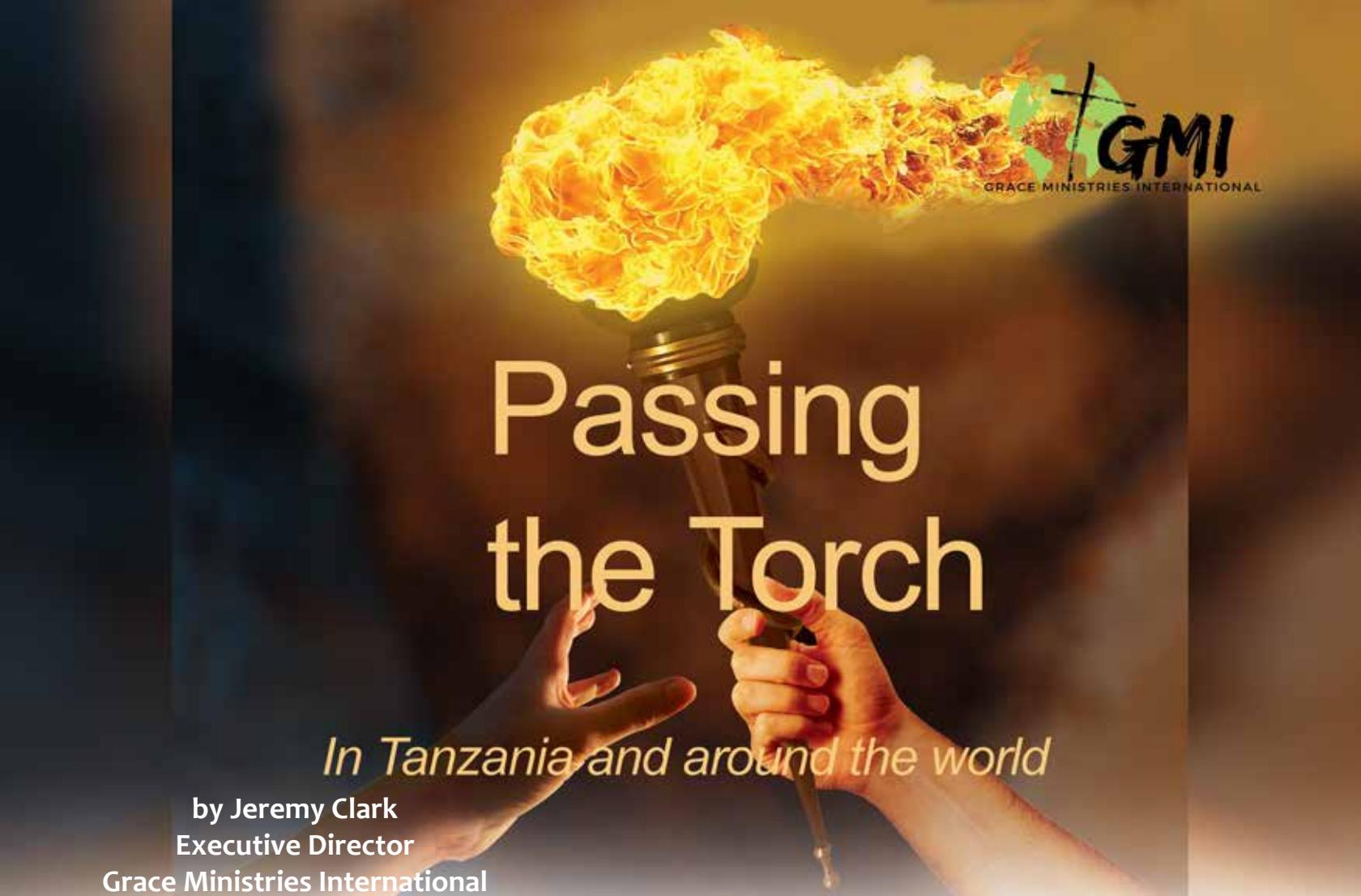
As you can see, there is much to pray about and yet much to be encouraged by. We do know this; we cannot continue to invest in pastors and churches without your help.

"I am so excited to become part of the next generation of GGF pastors and continue the rich history of teachers and pastors. I have such a strong passion to preach and proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God and I'm incredibly inspired by the GGF pastors I met at the 2019 GGF Theological Summit who are committed and devoted to preaching sound biblical doctrine and ministering to the local churches they are leading. I am also incredibly thankful for the GGF pastors and professors who have discipled me and have poured in hours of their time in teaching theology, hermeneutics, and homiletics. The GGF has been nothing but encouraging and helpful for me in confirming my call. I plan to become commissioned by the GGF in May of 2020 and, Lord willing, licensed by the GGF in spring of 2021. I can't wait to start full-time pastoral ministry and being part of the GGF."

Troy's passion for the gospel is clear and his desire to serve the Lord in vocational ministry

is an encouragement to me. Please be praying for Troy as he begins his residency this June. As we work together to finalize his residency, we will communicate updates and details so you can pray specifically for his next steps.

As you can see, there is much to pray about and yet much to be encouraged by. We do know this; we cannot continue to invest in pastors and churches without your help. Maybe you already support the GGF through your giving and we greatly appreciate that step of faith. Maybe for others, this is the first time you have considered supporting the ministries of the GGF. Would you take a step with us? As each of you gives, more resources become available to mobilize pastors and cultivate healthier churches that are reaching into the community with the love of Jesus Christ! Here is a link to donate directly to the GGF <http://ggfusa.org/donate/>. Thank you for your prayers and partnership! **TM**



Passing the Torch

In Tanzania and around the world

by **Jeremy Clark**
Executive Director

Grace Ministries International

Having been elected to their posts last year, nearly all of the leaders of the Grace Churches in Tanzania seated across from me in early December at Majengo Church in Sumbawanga, had one thing in common: they all studied at Tanzania Grace Bible Institute (TGBI). Grace Ministries International missionary Steve Sherman, who is leaving the mission field early in 2020 to serve on the pastoral staff of Rush Creek Bible Church (Byron Center, Michigan), describes two key ingredients of successful leadership development as *time and relationships*. After years of experience, Steve notes the TGBI program which he directed and where he taught for many years was far more effective when teachers took their time to disciple students both during and after their studies. This is not just theory for Steve, but real life as he recounts his relationship with new GMI missionary, Method Mwendapole who graduated from TGBI with his wife, Omelina, in 1996.



After graduating, Method worked as the head of the Evangelism and Church Planting Department of the Grace Church of Tanzania with GMI missionary Tim Meier. From there he went to Morogoro to spend a few years in church planting. Upon his return he then headed up the Youth Department of the national church and pastored a local church. Since 2004 Method and I have been closely aligned in ministry. During this period Method helped me to launch our Bible School program which he oversaw for nearly ten years (while also pastoring a church and serving as the Secretary of the National Church). The last five years he has spent as a church planter in the north of Tanzania where he has planted six churches in the Mwanza region. Earlier in his ministry he helped us but most recently we joined what he was doing in Mwanza and helped him.

Steve & Barb Sherman

Jerry & Sandy Bomers

During the last fifteen years our relationship has gradually morphed. It started more with me mentoring him but has developed into a mutually accountable relationship where we challenge each other spiritually, pray for and encourage each other, and plan and do the work of the ministry together. Now, as Barb and I plan to step away from foreign missions, we are excited to see Method and Omelina take that next step as they join GMI to work as missionaries in Burundi. How exciting it has been to witness God's transformation of Method and Omelina through time and experience and to have been used by God in that process by having a long-term ministry relationship and a close friendship.

Just as the Lord used Steve and Barb in Method and Omelina's lives, He used GMI missionaries Chuck and Joy Befus to help develop Alvaro and Mauren Barrantes as leaders who now serve with GMI in Panama. Alvaro attended Grace Bible Institute in San Antonio de Belén, Costa Rica, while also serving at Grace Bible Church in the city of Alajuela where the Befuses are working. Chuck saw the abundant potential in Alvaro and set him on a



Chuck & Joy Befus

path to become one of the pastors in the church working with both youth and leading the church's aggressive missions program.

Not only was Alvaro given an opportunity to serve, but he was impacted by Chuck's example as he shares: *"I could also see how easy and simple Chuck explained the Bible. Although Chuck never wanted to be a pastor, he was a teacher, and he made teaching the Bible easy to understand for people who, like me at some point, never had exposure to the message of salvation by Grace. Also, working with Chuck in Talamanca showed me how much he loved the lost and how much courage he had in explaining and bringing the message to the unreached."*

In an established ministry like Chuck and Joy's, many will walk through the doors and

some, like the Barrantes, will demonstrate the passion and desire to take those extra steps to become leaders. For the missionary, this is a tangible measure of success as the ministry has just multiplied! In a new field, like Paraguay, where the GMI missionary team is establishing this young, but growing church plant in the city of Ciudad del Este, the immediate focus is not so much on who comes through the doors, but who is already part of the ministry. GMI missionary Jerry Bomers and the rest of the Paraguay team want to plant self-sustaining churches which plant others. In fact, his coworker, GMI missionary Alex Gulart is rightly convinced that a healthy church not only plants others, but sends missionaries to the nations.



Discipleship in a new ministry looks a little different as Jerry articulates: *"As our team serves in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, we are not working toward a future in which we will 'hand over' the ministries to national leadership. We strive to develop our leaders and ministries simultaneously. We can quickly fill our schedules with tasks which can only be performed by the missionaries and find ourselves busy every day of the week. It's a great way of accomplishing much in very little time, but it can also be detrimental to the sustainability of future goals. Obviously, our plan is to eventually work ourselves out of the job, but the truth is that should be happening every day. In our experience, encouraging a sense of ownership as early as possible is essential to lasting success."* As our Paraguay missionary team looks toward future plans and goals, Jerry firmly believes that the shared responsibility between the missionaries and their local team members will be enough to spur on their national coworkers to initiate their own vision rather than having the missionaries visualize the future for them.

Central to all of this is biblical training for both pastors and lay leaders. Jerry recalls, *"One student was explaining how she finally*

understood what God's grace truly was, while another student with tears in his eyes was amazed to understand how the Bible functions start to finish. We may not know exactly who our potential leaders are, but we can provide opportunities for the Word to take hold of their life to reach people for Christ in Paraguay and beyond."

Training leaders through Malawi Grace Bible School is the heart of GMI missionary Joseph Asong's ministry. He works with and continues to develop several core leaders (Courtesy Kaline, James Bandah, Yamikani Lefani, Davies Balala, and Fecas Phiri) while always in search of more. Regarding the Bible school ministry and the development of these leaders, Joseph explains, *"The first order of training for all of our leaders is done through Malawi Grace Bible School. Here, they take biblical, theological, practical, ministerial, and spiritual classes as they are trained to grow individually as well as in ministry. When it comes to the core leaders mentioned above, the second order of their training is entirely practical. These are the leaders that we, missionaries, do ministry with on a frequent basis. In doing ministry with them, we mentor them on the practical aspects of ministry. The majority of our leaders do not have this frequent opportunity to learn directly from us in the practical side of things."*

While focusing on these key leaders, the desire is that they will invest in others whom they identify as having a passion and desire to serve the Lord just as they did. For Joseph and the rest of the Malawi team, the fruit of this effort is self-evident as he observes, *"So far, most of these men are serving the Body of Christ faithfully through national council functions, teaching at Malawi Grace Bible School, leading local churches, and filling several other roles that are relevant to the growth of the ministry."* The kind of spiritual maturity and growth the team is seeing in Malawi would not be possible without this sort of intentional leadership development.

GMI missionary Givemore Nyakambiri serves in Malawi with his wife, Sylvia, alongside the Asongs. Givemore works with the evangelism department of the Grace Churches in Malawi and exemplifies this essential component of leadership development by doing ministry

with his Malawian coworkers. He will often take trips throughout the country with a team of pastors and evangelists sharing the gospel and following up with new believers. He challenges members of the evangelism team to share their own testimonies of joy because they will be passionate to do so. He notes, *"Passionate leaders are an encouragement in themselves because passion is contagious; therefore, each leader motivates others through their passion in serving Christ."*

In Nagarote, Nicaragua, GMI missionaries Emiliano and Raquel Seravalli live a life of discipleship to train others to serve the Lord. Looking back at their last five years of ministry in Nicaragua, Milo and Raquel share:

"When we arrived in Nicaragua, it took us time to adjust to the culture, learn to live as a Nicaraguan lives, talk as they speak, understand their politics and their historical situation, and survive in the climate. In this challenge, sometimes you feel a lot of frustration and it is an uncomfortable process, but in our case, we really started enjoying it that second year. We continued to learn and adapt, but something that motivated us was seeing people who were going through the same process of cultural adaptation for pure pleasure, because they decided to live in Nicaragua for a business, or for tourism, and they enjoyed the process! That takes away the image of 'martyrs of faith' and we learned to see missionary life as a fun adventure."

Though they have met many people along the way, Milo and Raquel reflect on a few of those relationships: *"We found Marvin, the first man of peace we encountered in Nagarote. The day Marvin met us we were playing street soccer with some children. He asked us what we were doing in Nagarote as foreigners, and we shared our motive: Christ. That same night Marvin invited us to dinner at his house. Sounds like a story from the Bible. But it is the model of Christ. Marvin introduced us to his wife, Alicia, and his daughter María Elena, in whom we have invested for many years in discipleship, but it was Marvin who has become a leader in the local church."*

"One day while cooking soup on the patio—we were cooking with firewood as Nicaraguans do—in the courtyard next door was an old

We may not know exactly who our potential leaders are, but we can provide opportunities for the Word to take hold of their life to reach people for Christ in Paraguay and beyond.



...we learned to see missionary life as a fun adventure.

On the mission field, we do not often have a pool of potential leaders to choose from. Instead, the missionary must find, train and develop local ministry partners so the ministry will not only survive, but flourish long after we are gone.

woman named Aurora. We started talking with her. She was a devout Christian and invited us to come to her house. We asked her to allow us to do a craft course at her home, where we would also teach the Bible. There we met Elizabeth, daughter of Aurora, with her two children, Mariely and Luis. Also, there was another grandson of Aurora named Larry. We have invested in all of them at times, but especially Mariely and Larry who have become leaders in Nagarote.”

“Yilber is a young man we got to know when he was 16 years old. He had come from Matagalpa—three hours from Nagarote—and lived alone. Yilber was invited to meet us by Mercedes, a 13-year-old girl. Mercedes had been invited by her half-sister, Yolaina; Yolaina had been invited by her cousin, Yuri, Yuri was a cousin of Maria Elena, daughter of Marvin. We have invested in all of them in discipleship and in the intentional study of the Bible. Of these, Yilber, Mercedes, and Marvin were the ones who became leaders in the Nagarote congregation and true disciples of Jesus.”

Milo and Raquel summarize their ministry of leadership development and discipleship like this: “The process is always the same. First we become friends, and then we share about Christ in our personal lives. We invite them to come and see Jesus, either in some church ministry or in personal time to study the Word. But if we were to summarize in one sentence the key to making true disciples of Christ, I would say be a true disciple of Christ first. We as humans do not imitate what others tell us, but what we see others do.”

On the mission field, we do not often have a pool of potential leaders to choose from. Instead, the missionary must find, train, and develop local ministry partners so the ministry will not only survive but flourish long after we are gone. This is not only a model for working in other countries, but right here in the U.S. where intentional leadership development is necessary not only for our survival but for our growth for years to come. **TM**

LOOK WHAT'S NEW FROM

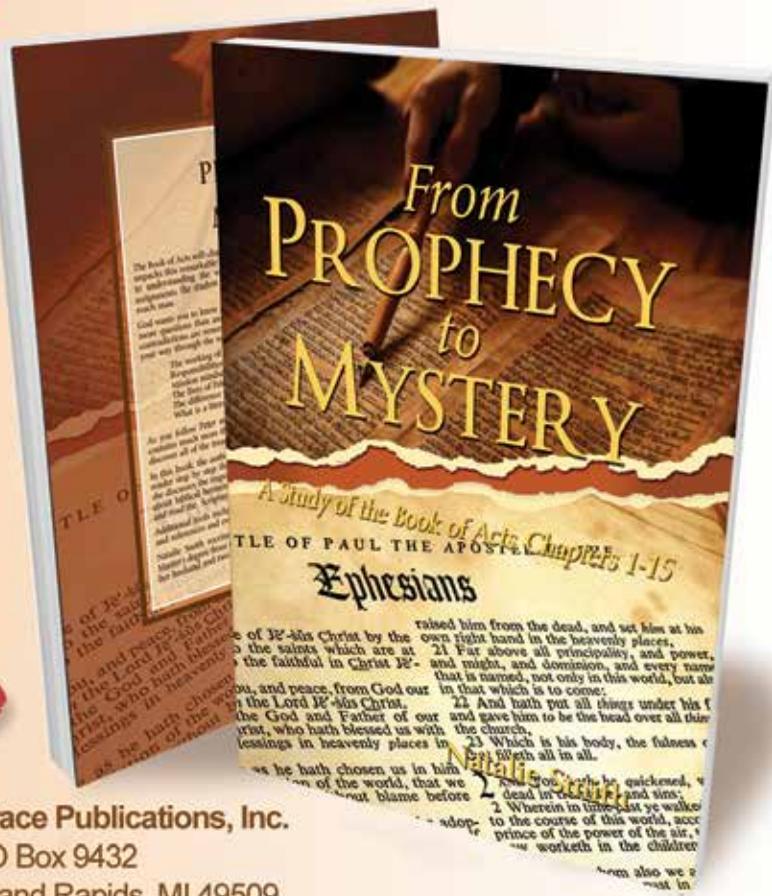
Grace Publications

A nine-week lesson series covering the first 15 chapters in the Book of Acts. There are 45 lessons in all as you study the transition *From Prophecy to Mystery*. Each lesson will take you one step closer to the goal and is complete with study guide and questions. This study can be used individually or for men's, women's and teen's Bible study or even a Sunday School setting. Get your copy today.



\$16.00 each

20% discount when purchased for groups of 5 or more.



Grace Publications, Inc.
 PO Box 9432
 Grand Rapids, MI 49509
www.gracepublications.org



A DREADFUL SOURCE of AUTHORITY

by Ken Bruce Kemper
President
Grace Christian University

Increasingly these days we find conflicting reports and opinions. We live in a severely divided United States which bifurcates over ideological and philosophical lines. These same lines lead to different views of morality and practices of ethics. It would be simple if these divides were merely between Christians (who seek to follow and please God) and non-Christians (who do not believe in God). But the reality of our times which concerns me most is that there are vitriol comments from those professing to be Christ-followers toward others who also claim the same.

The “people of God” who for the most part founded this country and still believe we are to be “One Nation Under God” disagree in ideology, politics, social issues, and even practices of the church. This did not happen suddenly, but over the progression of years. We have experienced many cultural and generational dynamics elevating certain social, theological, or cultural issues which previous

generations never needed to consider. We have all observed this in our lifetime, dealing with highly debated issues such as:

- Poverty and the alleviation of homelessness locally and internationally.
- The woman’s role in the home and church.
- Immigration practices and the treatment of undocumented people.
- Environmental preservation and the use of natural resources.
- Abortion and privacy of women’s rights
- Sexual revolution from private to open sexuality and now to same-sex marriage rights.
- Pacifism and the rightful use of force locally and internationally.

Each of these issues has seen volumes of books and articles as well as blogs written by Christians arguing for a proper response as to what believers should believe and do. It pains me to think of new Christians as they come

But the reality of our times which concerns me most is that there are vitriol comments from those professing to be Christ-followers toward others who also claim the same.

The mind and heart that humbly seeks God's answers for our present cultural issues should not be opinion driven or ignore the confessional faith of centuries of believers.



Another example is the recurring issue of the woman's role in the church, which began with the 1960's civil rights movement as women left the home to take careers and challenged the traditional family model.

into the faith and seek to get a biblical understanding on these issues. If those individuals were to do an internet search for guidance as is so often the practice today, they would find conflicting answers from Christians and read quotes of similar Scriptures to prove their given point of view. I can accept that we all have opinions and need to be constantly learning, but I regret that much of this confusion results from the issue of how we see the authority of the Word of God. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and the description of reality as we know it. In the Word we find the principles and illustrations of how God desires His people to live and understand the world. I am saddened by the audacity of believers who hold strong opinions and go to the Scriptures to look for ways to apply it to their causes or social issues. The mind and heart that humbly seeks God's answers for our present cultural issues should not be opinion driven or ignore the confessional faith of centuries of believers.

Authority is Grounded on the Inspiration of Scripture

The authority of Scripture is the belief that God supernaturally (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21) wrote the Word of God, guarding the accuracy (inspiration) of the text while using human agents who wrote with their own style. This authority has to do with the right God has to oversee and sovereignly give direction for life as we study to understand the authors' (human and divine) intent to the original audience, and thereby seek to grasp the application (illumination) for us (1 Corinthians 2:9-14; John 16:8-13). I would juxtapose this with the believer who is captured by the attractiveness of a social issue of our time and seeks to re-interpret Scripture to show the validity of his or her view on the issue. Of course, the latter of these two gets lots of print and popular reading of these new-found perspectives, allowing Christians to take up a contrary point of view and be quoted by all those who would like to join this more "liberal" or "enlightened" perspective. This is the essence of Christian book selling in our times. What is not easily noticed is the arrogance with which the newfound "scholar" has employed a hermeneutic of relativism toward the Word of God and the long time confessional faith. This

concerns me greatly. This hermeneutic often goes unnoticed by those who love the endless discussions and papers regarding the needed "updates" to our historic faith to justify new or even old resurfacing social issues. The problem that is not pointed out is that not only are we operating from different hermeneutics (methods to interpret biblical text), but from dramatically different understandings of the inspiration and authority of Scripture.

A Clear Example of Relativistic Hermeneutics

Many within evangelicalism saw this hermeneutic and lack of respect for the authority of Scripture some years ago with the emergence of Pastor Rob Bell here in Grand Rapids, Michigan, beginning with his first book, *Velvet Elvis* and more clearly exposed in his later work, *Love Wins*. This is such a good illustration of how many, many believers can be carried along by a good writer or teacher who uses the Bible, yet uses human logic to espouse a relativist hermeneutic which asks, "How could a loving God really condemn people to an eternity in hell?" From my conservative, Bible as authority confession, I simply respond, "It is a clear biblical truth regardless of how 'uncaring' it sounds to your 21st century American mind." But this is also a good illustration of how the relativistic hermeneutic of today uses the technique of "framing" to attack historical truths based in the Word of God.

Another example is the recurring issue of the woman's role in the church, which began with the 1960's civil rights movement as women left the home to take careers and challenged the traditional family model. The issue instigated a plethora of articles and books to show the needed changes in the church for the inclusion of women on elder boards and the church staff. The goal was societal, and it is not difficult to find examples throughout Scripture of women used by God in leadership roles. The mainline, historic denominations who departed from the authority and the inspiration of Scripture readily adopted these views. They disregarded historical confessional beliefs, considering them no longer culturally relevant. Stop and consider this for a

moment. Our present culture has driven much of our sentiment toward what is proper, and while hardly noticing it, we moved from acceptance, to normalcy, and on to legislating it. At this point, we break with historical confessional faith and make the biblical texts mean something else because we *now know so much better!* There is an alarming arrogance in our reinterpretation of Scripture to fit our views. In his writing, Rob Bell repeatedly insinuated how he now knew better than those of the past how to interpret a passage. He would not admit it, but it seems to me that the authority has now moved from Scripture to man's human capacity to find an acceptable solution to legitimize one's own view on an issue. This is a hermeneutically dangerous process but it continues as new issues arise.

A Warning to Not Leave Our Historical Literal Interpretation Heritage

Let me send up a warning flare to our Grace Gospel Fellowship believers. We hold to an historic literal grammatical interpretation of Scripture, and in it we see emerge a Mid-Acts Dispensational perspective. We do not read dispensationalism into the Word. The Bible clearly shows progressive revelation and interprets itself from Old Testament events and prophecy to New Testament occurrences and quotes. It is a respectful hermeneutic which does not impose our personal relativism or prevailing needs on the text. It honors the inspiration and authority of the Word of God. But, there is a certain lure of using hermeneutics which continues to be used to promote issues and "fresh cultural understanding." These hermeneutics have been, and are being employed by Christians for environmental causes, feminism, sexuality/gender identity, and immigration concerns. This present cultural motive as the driving force to seek alternative interpretations needs to be seen as a change in the hermeneutical reading of the Word and a challenge to the authority of the Word.

We should be aware of the strong movement of conservative evangelicals addressing these issues. Noting the continual attractiveness and new articles on topics which employ these hermeneutics alarmed biblical scholars so they

called for believers to support a confessional of historic faith.

Present Affirmations of Historical Confessions

I would encourage the research of these affirmations of confessional believers which are a response to these relativistic hermeneutical attacks. The Danvers Statement (Wheaton, Illinois, 1988) addresses the feminist hermeneutic which "framed" the discussion as "egalitarian" versus those who did not believe in equality. Out of this the Center for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood was formed. The Nashville Confession (2017) was signed by over 23,000 conservative evangelical leaders, including the Grace Christian University president. These leaders, as those of the Danvers Statement, do not take a defensive position but write a positive statement for Biblical marriage and human sexuality which is under attack from writers who employ the aforementioned dangerous hermeneutic of relativism. They positively address the corresponding view which makes the authority of Scripture subservient to one's personal perspective and the uses of "framing." One such example states, "God is love" and that He created people with same sex tendencies, or gives "identical gifts and roles" to both sexes.

This continued dialogue has come to the forefront for Bible colleges and Christian universities most recently as the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) advocated for a "Fairness for All" legislation which sought to accommodate LGBTQ social issues in exchange for some type of legal exemption. I gladly report that this initiative has not acquired traction in Washington DC - by conservatives or liberals - and is, in my opinion, a naïve suggestion of how to deal with this issue. Returning to the authority of Scripture and our need to have a consistent hermeneutic is critical to teach to our students. Grace Christian University is a leading member of the Association of Biblical Higher Education (Around 200 Bible colleges and universities in North America). We are also

In his writing, Rob Bell repeatedly insinuated how he now knew better than those of the past how to interpret a passage.



This present cultural motive as the driving force to seek alternative interpretations needs to be seen as a change in the hermeneutical reading of the Word and a challenge to the authority of the Word.

Many Christian schools have compromised on the baseline requirement to hold unwaveringly to the authority of Scripture.

one of the founding members of the newly formed International Alliance for Christian Education (www.iace.education). The IACE is a confessional group of conservative Christian organizations who cooperate together in the midst of societal attacks in the US culture. This comes into being as those around us become more opposed to biblical truth and push many more institutions and denominations to adopt a relativistic hermeneutic as well as a low view of the authority of Scripture. As President of Grace Christian University I was asked to serve as a founding board member of this new organization which already represents 21,000 institutions and over 5.7 million students in all fifty states and on six continents.

What is of Importance?

Many Christian schools have compromised on the baseline requirement to hold unwaveringly to the authority of Scripture. Their leaders or faculty have left a historical literal interpreta-

tion of Scripture and a conservative hermeneutic of belief and have embraced cultural relativism. They indulge in various and divergent research about the Bible, rather than reading and studying the Bible itself. It is so valuable to read and study the Bible daily and see the natural themes and emphases so as to not be caught up in these “new interpretations” which are based on research with the sole purpose of finding a reason to ignore or expand the plain, clear, and consistent reading and understanding of the text. In these few paragraphs I trust I have alerted you to the overarching danger latent with the hermeneutical approach which is essentially the same in all these societal issues, of which you might not have been aware. In the coming year, I hope to give further explanation and follow up to develop these examples of suspicious hermeneutics in this or other publications in order to equip us to be biblically vibrant in an increasingly anti-authority, and anti-biblical society. **TM**

GRACE
CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY



Find more information about Grace Christian University at:

www.gracechristian.edu

Thankful for each of YOU!

We have been so blessed this past year with reaching thousands of men, women and children of those affected by incarceration. Thank you all for your prayers, love, volunteer work and support that makes it all possible. For more info you subscribe to our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/prisonmission.

**WATER
PROJECT**

We need your prayers for a new project and urgent need at our home office in Port Orchard, WA

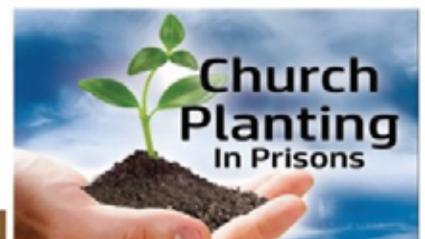
The water well has dried up. Our only option is to drill a deeper new well and estimates quote say that it will be **over \$20,000 for the complete new well, water pump, pipes**

and system! Please consider a one-time gift to help us with this URGENT project. Just mark your gift WATER PROJECT.

We are renting a port-a-potty in the mean time but pray for us to be able to provide water for our staff and volunteers as soon as possible.

Please call Pastor Dwight Anderson for more info 612-423-3457.

**PRISON
MISSION
ASSOCIATION**
www.prisonmission.org





Answering Your Questions

by Timothy McGarvey
Editor TRUTH Magazine

From the Word of God

Have you ever been studying the Bible and come to a verse that you just scratch your head? It just doesn't seem to make sense in light of the context. You aren't alone. There probably isn't a pastor who hasn't experienced the same dilemma while studying for the next sermon. Sometimes, even when you consult a commentary, you discover that the author has also experienced the same issue.

Well, we want to try to be of help to you. This new section of TRUTH Magazine is dedicated to answering your questions. We will seek to answer every question that is asked. The answers will come from a team of individuals who are equipped to tackle your toughest query (or at least attempt it!).

Your questions can be about a Bible passage, an area of theology, church government, social concerns, and more. The only area that we want to stay clear of is politics.

In initiating this opportunity for you, we want you to understand that not everyone will agree with the answers. It is said that there are two things that should never be discussed—religion and politics. We aren't going to talk about politics but we will be writing on religion; therefore, we must insist upon a real spirit of peace and unity. It is not our desire to enter into debates (righteous arguments) regarding an answer. We understand that within the Grace Movement there is not a singular view on many aspects of our mid-Acts dispensational theology. In the past, there were answers that drew negative comments

and caused some to simply not want to put anything in writing. That kind of divisiveness is certainly not honoring to Christ and does not edify the Body.

If you have a serious problem with a particular answer, we would encourage you to write to us and let us know. We will explore the printed answer and your response. If it is warranted, we will run the "corrected" answer. However, whether it is printed or not, you will hear from us (again, this is not meant to be a place for debate).

Many years ago I was approached by a man who loved to read and study the Bible. He had recently been studying the book of Solomon. He scratched his head and said, "I have read through the book of Solomon several times and cannot find the Body of Christ there." He just couldn't understand it. My response was that he couldn't find it because it wasn't there. He didn't "rightly divide the Word of truth" and it left him confused. This is true for many—even with many who attend our Grace churches.

We encourage you to study the Scriptures and not be discouraged when you come across something you just don't understand. First, ask your pastor, then ask us. We want to help. Send your questions to the GGF office in care of TRUTH Magazine, or email us at:

Trutheditors@gmail.com



does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."

Using the passage we just read, the question that comes to mind is: How can you and I have clear, focus and acute Spiritual Vision in this new year?

- We have to spend time daily in God's Word. Not only reading it but studying it & meditating on it. Memorizing Scripture is key for growth and clarity when "fog" develops in our midst.
- Obeying The Lord's commands in His word is the fruit of clear spiritual focus. James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
- We must remember God is who makes us complete. No other person, no job title, not even any season in life determines our worth. Only our Lord has defined our identity and has made us whole through His Son Jesus. Live that out every day!
- Everyday is a new chance to show a broken world Who can truly heal any wound: Christ. If we say we love Him, let's love like Him.

Let's pray together for these upcoming 365 new mercies:

"Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for You are such a Good Father! I praise your name for all You are, all you have done and all that is to come. Please help me through your Holy Spirit to focus my spiritual eyes only on You and Your Word. Guide me to make decisions that honor You. Help me love and serve those around me with a grace that glorifies You. Amen"

TM

pasaje de una de sus cartas: 1 Juan 2: 3-6 "Sabemos que hemos llegado a conocerlo si guardamos sus mandamientos. Quien dice: "Lo conozco", pero no hace lo que ordena, es un mentiroso, y la verdad no está en esa persona. Pero si alguien obedece su palabra, el amor por Dios realmente se completa en ellos. Así es como sabemos que estamos en él: el que dice vivir en él debe vivir como lo hizo Jesús."

Usando el pasaje que acabamos de leer, la pregunta que viene a la mente es: ¿Cómo podemos usted y yo tener una Visión Espiritual clara, enfocada y aguda en este nuevo año?

- Tenemos que pasar tiempo diariamente en la Palabra de Dios. No solo leyéndola sino estudiándola y meditando en ella. Memorizar las Escrituras es clave para el crecimiento y la claridad cuando se desarrolla "niebla" a nuestra vista espiritual.
- Obedecer Los mandamientos del Señor en Su palabra es el fruto de un claro enfoque espiritual. Santiago 1:22 "No solo sean oidores sino hacedores de la Palabra."
- Debemos recordar que Dios es quien nos hace completos. Ninguna otra persona, ningún título de trabajo, ni siquiera una temporada en la vida determina nuestro valor. Solo nuestro Señor ha definido nuestra identidad y nos ha hecho completos a través de Su Hijo Jesús. ¡Vivamos esto todos los días!
- Todos los días es una nueva oportunidad para mostrar un mundo quebrantado quien realmente puede sanar cualquier herida: Cristo. Si decimos que lo amamos, amemos como Él.

Oremos juntos por estas próximas 365 nuevas misericordias:

"Querido Padre celestial,
¡Gracias por ser un buen padre! Alabo tu nombre por todo lo que eres, todo lo que has hecho y todo lo que está por venir. Por favor, ayúdame a través de tu Espíritu Santo para enfocar mis ojos espirituales solo en Ti y Tu Palabra. Guíame para tomar decisiones que te honren. Ayúdame a amar y servir a los que me rodean con una gracia que te glorifique. Amén"

Cuanto más lejos estemos de esa línea de inicio, más difícil es mantener nuestra visión enfocada en lo que nos propusimos lograr.



Nuestro motivador diario debería ser seguir Su ejemplo viviendo como Él vivió, amando como lo hizo, enfocando nuestra visión en lo eterno y no en lo terrenal.



5TH SOUTHEAST ASIA GRACE CONFERENCE

Crown Regency Hotel, Cebu City

PHILIPPINES

May 28-June 1, 2020



**Strategizing together to spread the
Gospel of Grace throughout Southeast Asia**

FOR INFO CONTACT TCM: P.O. Box 127, Beech Grove, IN 46107 (317) 783-0300 www.tcmusa.org



REBORN

with a purpose

by Kevin Rigg

One hundred years ago a young man stood in the pulpit of the First Christian Reformed Church of Muskegon and announced to the communicant members that the following Sunday would be their last in the building. Church started at 9:15am, but he made clear to the second largest congregation within the denomination that they were expected on the Lord's Day next to be seated and Spiritually expectant at precisely 8:15am. At 8:15 the following Sunday, church began with everyone in attendance. By 9:15 the service was coming to an end while a professor from the denominational seminary was making his way up the front steps to conduct a service which he knew began at 9:15. He was sent by the powers that be to replace the young "heretic" on his last day in the pulpit. Realizing he'd been had; the seminary professor did a 180 and headed back to his car to begin the journey back to the east side of Grand Rapids. By the following Sunday, on the corner of Ambrosia and Iona, a poll building had been erected. Inside was a wood stove, a makeshift pulpit, and seating for a thousand people made of cinder blocks and unfinished 2x6 planks. The floor was sawdust and grass, but when the Lord's Day arrived, at 9:15 precisely, there was not an empty seat in the "Tabernacle." Virtually every communicant member of the second largest church in the Christian Reformed denomination, with their coats buttoned shut and their King James Bibles opened, sat in the

"pews" of the Tabernacle under the passionate teaching of the Reverend Harry Bultema.

When even younger Harry was a student at Calvin Seminary, the professors made it abundantly clear that "the restoration of Israel was a fiction not a fact." Harry towed the party line, so to speak, publicly during his first five years as a pastor in Iowa, but privately he was struggling with the restoration of Israel being a fiction, due to the hundreds of verses in the first testament clearly teaching the restoration of Israel as fact. The inconsistency troubled him until he prayed and asked his Father to give him the truth regarding Jeshurun, and if he did, he would fearlessly and without fail proclaim it from rooftops, regardless of synods and seminarians.

Right around 1916 young Harry, with three daughters and a bright future, so everyone thought, arrived in West Michigan to pastor the First Christian Reformed Church of Muskegon. It didn't take long for his Restoration Theology to knock heads with the Replacement theology of the denomination of which he was a part. Classes Muskegon took him to court and the city had to recruit a judge from, I believe, South Bend to come and preside over the case. All local judges were well acquainted with the man and the controversy and were unfit to judge the case due to their leanings one way or the other.

One hundred years ago a young man stood in the pulpit of the First Christian Reformed Church of Muskegon and announced to the communicant members that the following Sunday would be their last in the building.



I drove by the old church to see what life there was in the building. The windows were dark and a bit sad and chains locked the doors. There were cracks in the concrete and the parking lot had lost, years ago, its battle with the weeds.

This was front page stuff back in 1918, and even the folks across the pond up in Uithuizen were standing in line waiting to read the latest news about this Bultema character in west Michigan. Well, the judge from South Bend determined that in the country in which Harry lived, he was free to preach whatever he wanted. This set like stale popcorn in the bellies of our Christian Reformed Brethren, so they immediately took the case to the highest court in the state. There they were given satisfaction. The Michigan Supreme Court determined that even though the country in which Harry lived was free, the denominational pulpit in which he preached was not, and he either had to change his tune or exit the building. Harry refused to dance and was expelled, not only from the First Christian Reformed Church of Muskegon, but from the denomination in which he was raised.

It was while they were in the Tabernacle that they began construction on the building at 1163 Terrace. It was a large and elegant building with windows of stained glass and an organ with pipes of wood. Acoustically, it rivals the great old churches of New England and I can only imagine how beautiful it was to hear 1000 plus people singing “Wonderful Grace” accompanied by that magnificent organ. By 1921 they were doing just that, but the dedication service was held on the first of January 1922.

In January of this year I drove by the old church to see what life there was in the building. The windows were dark and a bit sad and chains locked the doors. There were cracks in the concrete and the parking lot had lost, years ago, its battle with the weeds. But as I stood on the broken steps out front holding the railing weakened with age, my soul was warmed on that winter day by an idea; an idea stronger than my imagination and deeper than my thoughts. It was very brief; just a glimpse. But instead of an idea with details, it was of an idea restricting all other ideas. In other words, it wasn’t a grand idea, yet, but it systematically removed all other ideas until it stood alone, as it were, in the forefront of my mind a beautiful, irresistible, formless intellect!

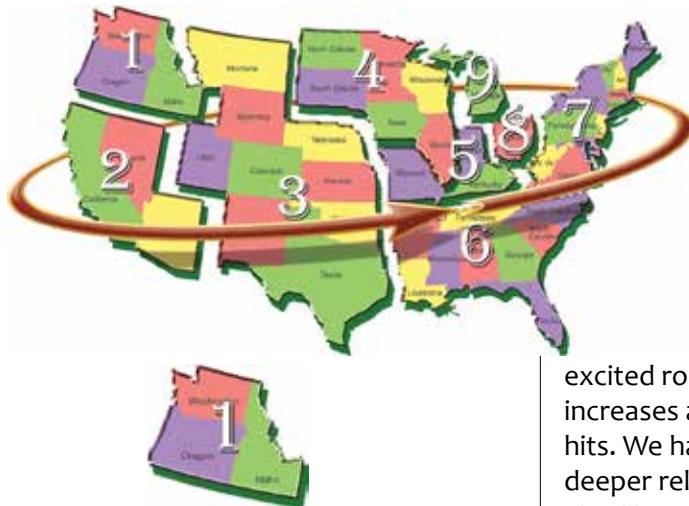
Since that January day the idea has taken shape, and what a shape it has taken. The parsonage, built in 1922 for Reverend Bultema and his growing family, is the cradle for the newborn “Bultema Institute of Biblical Studies,” a unique experiment in higher education. It is an offering-based education, not a tuition-based education. It is an Institute that recognizes the time in which it lives; an Institute with its good eye on the clouds, both looking and longing for the imminent, premillennial return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; an institute where the atmosphere is that of a one on one, mentor/student relationship with twenty people in the room. Classes began on the 11 th of September and as I write this on the 4 th of October it has already surpassed all hopes and dreams. The students in the room called to teach include Dr. Sam Vinton, Bill Rigg, Pris McDonald, Pastors Craig Apel and Gary Spykerman, and myself. There are others as well who would love to be a part if schedule allowed, and will when it does, be in the lineup.

The Berean Youth Choir is in the blueprint stage but will soon be in production. This choir will be made up of children from the neighborhood and the program will be patterned after Grandpa Ericson’s “Scripture Kids” from the Chicago Gospel Mission on the west side of Chicago. Back in the 60’s and 70’s. If you were fortunate enough to have seen these kids in action, I’m sure you have not forgotten what you saw. A wonderful combination of Scripture memorization and music that both shamed and blessed those who listened.

There is more, so much more to say but I pray that you see and understand this idea that began alone and formless but has risen to the height of a potent, vigorous and joyful calling. Yes, the Almighty calls! Yes, the Almighty works and His ways are anything but mysterious. We are tearfully urged to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God and to conform no longer to the pattern of confusion in this world but to be transformed and renewed in our minds. And when this is done, I mean really done, to the point of gaining the attention of God, we will be able to test and approve what His will is, His good, ever pleasing, and perfect will. **TM**



There is more, so much more to say but I pray that you see and understand this idea that began alone and formless but has risen to the height of a potent, vigorous and joyful calling.



REGIONAL NEWS FROM AROUND THE GRACE GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP

Berean Bible Church (Seattle, WA) once again plans and hosts a Youth Basketball League for 10 weeks in their gym on Saturdays from Dec. 28 through February. There will be 14 teams in three divisions – Boys/Girls Grades 3-6, Girls Grades 7-12, and Boys Grades 7-12. There are over 110 signed up to participate. Brief devotions are shared at halftime and it is a great opportunity to share with those in our community.



It is with great sadness that **Grace Bible Church** (Anaheim, CA) will be saying goodbye to Pastor Joel Molina, Darcy, and the family on February 2. They are wished a wonderful new ministry at their next church.



Bethel Union Church, Pastor Peter Tel, (Akron, CO) It's good to be in ministry. This year was our highest attendance in my 17 years here. Looking back, it has been a wonderful blessing to be a part of this church. I also had a really good time participating in the GGF Theology Summit this past October. We are looking forward to another year in the Lord. God is good.

Harvest Fellowship (Brighton, CO) We are

excited rolling into the winter. Attendance increases as we all know when winter weather hits. We have been able to establish some deeper relationships with newer people. We also like rolling into the winter, because things slow down, it gives us time to rest a bit and clean up things we have wanted to do. We have seen several people come to Christ and we realize God is not finished. It was great to host the GGF Family Bible Conference last summer and our people really enjoyed meeting the people they have only heard about. May God have his way with the Grace message!

Denver Bible Church (Pastor Bob Enyart) Three of our young families, all strong in their mid-Acts dispensational understanding, moved out of state, two to Puerto Rico and one to San Diego. We are looking forward to hearing of the fruit that comes from their Bible teachings! Our radio and podcast has never been stronger with the Pauline Gospel



Faith Bible Church (Olney, IL), We continue to preach and teach God's word through a dispensational prospective. We continue to search for an adult ministries pastor. The youth programs continue to reach out into the community with God's word and compassion as well as build strong Grace believers.

The **St Louis Bible Fellowship Church** (St Louis, MO), enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner, and a wonderful Christmas Cantata, Christmas Eve service, and an exciting New Year. We continue to see new families & excited that many already understand the word rightly divided! Thank you Les Feldick for faithfully broadcasting the truth.

PO Box 9432
Grand Rapids, MI 49509

NONPROFIT
ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
Grand Rapids, MI
Permit No 82



*Be strong in grace, teaching and training others, enduring hardship,
be a warrior, compete by the rules, work hard & reap the benefit!*

JOIN US FOR THE 2020 GGF LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE – **MAY 5-7**