



A Measure of *Grace*

July 2003
Volume 7, Issue 7

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

WGA Services Are Free? Why?

By Mary Heathman

It will be no surprise to the reader that Christian ministries operate on as many different philosophies of ministry as the denominational/theological bents of those who lead them. Whether it's dispensing Compassion Internationally, Saving Our Youth, storing up Precept upon Precept, Good News Evangelizing, Navigating the Word, Focusing on Family issues, or offering a place Where Grace Abounds, the purposes and approaches to ministry are as varied as the visions of the leaders who work on these different battlefronts.



One parachurch organization concentrates on social justice, feeding the hungry, and reporting on the needs of the persecuted church. They do so,

(Continued on page 2)

Where Grace Abounds
P.O. Box 18871
Denver, Colorado 80218

Office: 303/863-7757
Fax: 303/863-7769

email: Wwga@aol.com
www.wheregraceabounds.org

Inside this issue:

WGA Services Are Free?	1
Survey on Sexuality and the	3
Reflections	5
June at a Glance	8
July & Beyond	8



where grace abounds

(Grace continued from page 1)

so the rest of us don't forget to pray for God's provision for the marginalized in our world and to share with them from our own abundance. Another ministry may focus on strengthening Christian families, believing that to do so will glorify God and strengthen our society. Still another translates the Bible into other languages, believing that the foundational need of the lost is the Word of God in their own languages.

Some ministries care for souls by taking care of their physical needs; others share the Gospel in order that souls may be saved. One denomination ministers strictly through its own programs, while another partners with other organizations to provide for the needs of people. One group of servants shouts their prayers enthusiastically every chance they get; others quiet their hearts, listening for the "still, small voice" of God. A few denominations adorn their churches with rich symbols of the faith, like stained glass and ornate altars; others keep their services and buildings simple, adorned primarily with the faith of their members.

All of these differences are to be enjoyed and celebrated, I believe. (I

have long thought that the Lord gave us a smorgasbord of ways to worship Him, but over the years like-minded folks chose their favorites and made denominations out of them.) It is truly a privilege to worship with believers in a myriad of ways!

Yet, not all are happy with the diversity among us. All around the world of ministry lie the tangled threads of disunity, even knots of outright strife over just such differences as I have described above.

***"Why do we
not charge for
our services?
Is it working?
Why aren't
other minis-
tries doing it
like we are, if
they are called
by the same
God to do the
same thing?"***

Even in the relatively small circle of the Exodus network of referral agencies there are differences in approach and philosophy of ministry. If we choose to, we can learn a lot from each other as we work together to share the good news about God's provision for broken sexuality and relationships.

One of the issues that comes up most often among Exodus referral agencies like Where Grace Abounds, has to do with whether a ministry ought to charge for its services or not. Within our network there are those who charge for all their services like counseling, speaking, and group participation.

(Continued on page 6)

Survey on Sexuality and the Church: Results

By Scott Kingry

A few months ago, we included an insert polling our readers for comments regarding how the issue of sexuality is currently being handled in their churches. Being neither scientific nor a statistician, I offer my observations of the data we collected. Thank you to those who took the time to fill out the survey—we appreciate it greatly and the results are helpful and very telling.

With which denomination, if any, do you affiliate yourself?

Compared to the size of our mailing list, we had a small, but varied sampling of denominations coming from a Protestant perspective (Catholic and Orthodox input would also be helpful though). Denominations represented were: *Presbyterian, Baptist, Quaker, Evangelical Free, many Non-denominational and Salvation Army.*

Which of the following issues does your church speak to most effectively?

Sex Education-pre-teens
Sex Education-teens
Pornography
Marital Intimacy Issues
Sexual Abuse

Being Single ***Homosexuality*** ***Other***

Half of those surveyed reported that none of the above issues were addressed on any level within their church. Not surprisingly, a small percentage, about 15%, reported that their churches addressed marital issues and those surrounding being single effectively. A small percentage said that pornography was being dealt with in men's groups within the church.

Which of the following issues do you think your church most needs to address?

About 50% of those who turned in surveys, said that *Sex Education for Teens* was the greatest need within their churches. Following closely on those heels (like 48%) were: homosexuality, sexual abuse and pornography.

Whose responsibility is sex education? (parents, church, school, etc..)

There seemed to be a unanimous consensus that a combination of all 3 were important, with the most impor-

(Continued on page 4)

(Survey continued from page 3)

tant being parents, working closely with the church secondly and schools lastly from a perspective of public health. Here are some of the comments about why:

"I think it takes a joint effort and multi-faceted approach to raise sexually healthy kids."

"Parents have the greatest influences on kids, but the church must offer resources for parents and families."

"When we all stand on the same platforms, they hear consistent and honest truths."

"[A combo of all] because it is so over emphasized in our culture, we can't have too many voices talking about it."

"Our church should be ready to support parents who aren't able to teach sex education to their children."

"I'd like to see our church celebrate Godly sexuality in a way that makes it worth desiring over world versions."

Which of the following resources has your church made available regarding sexual and relationship issues?

Support groups-within and outside the church

Educational Classes regarding sexuality (Sunday School

classes etc.)

Individual Counseling (Pastoral, Professional, Healing Prayer etc.)

The good news was that many churches are offering resources and referrals to Christian counselors and 12 step groups inside the church and out. Those surveyed also said that their churches offered pastoral counseling, healing prayer and even Stephen's ministries within their church.

It would seem by the results of this small survey, that people feel confident that their churches have resources for people seeking to deal honestly with sexual issues. The necessity seems to be more in the realm of education and giving vision for healthy sexuality and relationships to all age groups within the church.

One of the services Where Grace Abounds offers is teaching in each of these areas. Please contact the WGA offices if you'd like us to come speak to your congregation, Sunday School or youth group. ✝



Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka

You did not choose me, but I chose you (John 15:16)

After I reached a memorable point of surrender to faith, I found myself thanking God over and over for opening my heart to him. I had been reviewing my selfish, sinful choices in life, and I felt so relieved that my life or the world had not ended before that surrender came. I had a sense that God had been waiting for me, and I felt very much like I mattered, a feeling that I had not experienced much before. Over the years, that thankfulness has not always remained present. As my same-sexual struggles have come and gone (and come again...), and new patterns of sin have emerged, I have grown weary of the fight, tired of trying, and I have wished my troubles would all go away. I have wanted to give up on people, on my faith, and on life.

I chose you (John 15:16). I do not believe that many of us as Christians are accustomed to focussing on this crucial fact. Instead, we make note of the day we turned our lives over to the Lord and ask each other, "When were you saved?" This seems like a reasonable question unless you think of it in reference to Jesus' declaration. The truth is, we were saved when Je-

sus Christ died on the cross. It just takes us a while to accept that we did not get here on our own, we have no absolute control over what happens in our lives, and in the big picture, each one of us is no more than "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14).

Considering that Jesus chose each one of us to be in relationship with him, it becomes very difficult to talk about giving up. Only a fool would give up on someone or something that never fails. Jesus is standing by like a car that never needs maintenance and never needs fuel: just get in and turn the key, and it always runs, no matter how long it has been neglected. When it becomes difficult, as it inevitably will, to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Timothy 6:12), remember that the Lord has made his choice and will not change his mind.



There are also those in the Exodus community of ministries which offer their services without charge. Where Grace Abounds is numbered among the latter.

Just last week, an email discussion among leaders high-lighted this difference. One ministry director made the statement that “one thing that doesn’t work, is offering our services for free.”

My startled reaction was to stop and ponder the question (after I fought down the defensiveness that welled up against this “enemy”: someone who disagrees with me!) Evaluative thoughts tumbled about in my head, “Why do we not charge for our services? Is it working? Why aren’t other ministries doing it like we are, if they are called by the same God to do the same thing?”

All the frantic efforts to justify my position (still defending, you see) gave way to the memories of the first years of ministry, when we heard from the Lord and put into practice what we believed He was calling us to do. What follows are a few musings of my own, some scriptural points upon which we based our decisions, and a bit of a picture of

WGA’s approach and philosophy of ministry.

First, I want to make it clear that when I offer an apologetic for how WGA does things, I am not in any way discounting how other ministries operate. My assumption is that other ministry leaders have followed the Lord into their various positions, and I applaud them for their obedience! Nonetheless, my own journey has taken WGA to a different place.



When my heart first recognized the call of God into ministry, I was literally shaking with excitement and fear. I was thrilled to have my purpose in life so clearly spelled out for me, and looked forward to how the Lord might work it out in me.

But I was also petrified—it seemed I was called into full-time ministry; how would I make my living? The “rest of the story” of my call to ministry is beyond the scope of this article, so I will jump ahead from the fear and questions to the answer. It was right after a church service where I had shared my call to ministry, and I was driving home, doubts niggling at the back of my mind. “How will the ministry be supported? What if no one wants to partner with

(Continued on page 7)

(WGA Services continued from page 6)

me? Maybe I should start working on a fee structure. After all, wouldn't that be responsible stewardship?"

Mentally, I started to sketch out a plan for charging for counseling and support group attendance. Immediately, my chest tightened: my heart felt constricted. I recognized the signs of dis-ease, a profound resistance to the course I was mapping out for the ministry.

Then I did what I always do under such stress—I cried! And in the midst of the tears, I heard the song on the radio as if it had been turned up louder all of a sudden:

Freely, freely, you have received;

Freely, freely, give.

*Go in my name, and because you
believe,*

Others will know that I live.

(*Freely, Freely*, Carol Owens, © 1972, Bud

John Songs, Inc Matthew 10:8).

I had my answer and was relieved, and grateful. I also knew that confirmation was needed before I charged on ahead. In next month's article, I will share more biblical references and the rationale behind WGA's decision to offer its services to group members without charge.

In the meantime, I want the reader to know how important you are to us. Your prayers sustain and encourage us.

'til next month,
Mary Heathman



Please pray for the WGA staff and about 15 group members who are attending the annual Exodus Conference in Orlando, Florida. The dates of the conference are July 21st-26th. Scott Kingry and Mary Heathman will be teaching workshops there.



JUNE AT A GLANCE

Groups, Discipleship Counseling, and Mentoring

Thursday Night Group

June 5th - 37 people

June 12th - 52 people

June 19th - 41 people

June 26th - 40 people

Orientation meeting - 9 people

The WGA staff provided about 15 hours of discipleship counseling and mentoring each week during June.

June 11th - Participated in a presentation to a committee for a local school board.

June 18th - Commitment Group, a WGA group focused on resolving issues with the same sex, ended.



JULY & BEYOND

July 3rd - Doing a presentation for the interns of Prodigal Gatherings, a local ministry for kids on the streets.

July 21st - 26th - The WGA staff and others from WGA groups will be attending the 28th annual Exodus Conference in Orlando, Florida.

August 12th - WGA booth at the Next Level Church.

August 24th - Speaking at Celebration, a local church.

September 23rd, October 28th - Speaking at New Heights Center, a local church.

October 5th - Participating in Missions Service at First Denver Friends Church.

WGA Staff

Mary Heathman
Executive Director

Scott Kingry
Program Director

Karen Wood
Education Director

Roger Jones
Operations Director
Assistant Program Director

Sheila Knudtsen
Resource Development

Where Grace Abounds exists to guide and support men and women who seek to understand sexuality and relationship, and to inspire all people to know and personally appropriate God's plan for their sexuality and relationships.

Printed in the USA
Copyright 2003