



A Measure of Grace

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It Is Enough By Mary Heathman



“*It is enough that Jesus died and rose again for me.*” This line from the chorus of *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*, keeps bubbling up through all that distracts me these days, and it serves to calm, to ground me when I most need it. The words cycle through my mind, over and over, refusing to be silenced.

The words belong to the vocabulary of Easter, all about Jesus’ death and resurrection. At first I thought it odd that they so commandeered my mind and heart during this season of advent.

Then I remembered a line from *A Beautiful Mind*. Alicia Nash was talking with her husband as she committed to stay with him as he

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worked through his illness. She looked up at John, her eyes searching his face, "I need to believe that something extraordinary can happen."

In the day to day living out of my call to ministry, I need to believe that something extraordinary can happen in the lives of the people the Lord brings to WGA. My heart yearns to see them free and whole; with healthy relationships and lives that glorify God.

This vision is assaulted daily. Journalists report the "victories" of gay rights activists. Popular television programs ridicule Christian values, particularly those of us who raise up a standard of sexual wholeness. Advertisers use sex appeal to sell more and more, and clothing designers

dress our preteens in less and less. It is no longer immoral in our society to be sexually promiscuous, rather it is considered repressive to place any restrictions on adult sexuality, even one's own. God's standards are battered upon and ridiculed every day. Reports surface regularly about Christian leaders falling into immorality, often caught up in addiction to internet pornography.

Meanwhile, in the relative peace of a WGA meeting, men and women encourage one another to fight off the sin that has so easily entangled them. (Hebrews 12:1) They confess their sins and pray for each other that they may be healed. (James 5:16) They carry one another's burdens, waiting for the fulfillment of the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

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A Christmas Thought

By Mary Heathman

The day we celebrate Christ's birth is fast approaching. As we sort our way through the commercial trappings, (Christmas music was pouring into the mall corridors as early as Halloween this year!) if we pay close attention, we catch a glimpse of Him from time to time. If we slow ourselves down and search the faces of the children, if we pay attention to what matters to our family and friends, if we make room for Jesus in



our holiday plans, then the joy of the season seeps over, under, around and past all that which is extraneous, and floods us with the wonder of who Jesus is and what He came to do-to offer nothing less than salvation and an abundant life for you and me!

Testimony from a WGA Alumni

A Personal Story

On the day I offered my life to the Lord, I also offered to Him my attraction to women confessing that I needed His intervention to deliver me from this sin. I had never wanted these feelings but they seemed too deeply ingrained for me to begin to know how to be free of them. The first three years of my Christian life, I was discipled under the teaching of an excellent pastor and was enveloped in the fellowship of committed Christian peers. I was thrilled with my new relationship with Jesus and experienced intimacy with Him and His work in my life and heart through prayer on a regular basis. He had even provided a boyfriend whom I enjoyed very much. But my continuing emotional dependency on female friends was a barrier in developing healthy intimacy with both men and women. So, I sought the help of a Christian counselor through my church in hope that he would be able to help me find the reason for my attraction to women and finally overcome this sin.

Although I immediately sensed that my counselor's approach to work on my relationship with my father did not seem right, I decided to trust in his expertise and continued to meet with him regularly. But, after a significant amount of time, I realized that all the work I was doing in my relationships

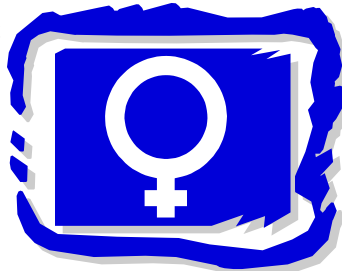
with men was not having any effect on my sexual orientation. Discouraged, I brought an end to our sessions and left the issue in God's hands.

Over the following six years, my life was like a roller-coaster ride. I went back and forth between surrendering to the Lord and giving myself over to my attraction to women. It seemed my spiritual and emotional lives were not only incompatible but at war with one another. Although I grew spiritually through delving into Bible study, prayer, church involvement and missionary training, my

emotional needs surfaced now and then in friendships and I would take time out from spiritual pursuits to lose myself in an emotionally dependant relationship. Throughout this struggle, my call to missions became clearer as well as my inadequacy to fulfill it. Not knowing how to reconcile these mutually exclusive desires, I resorted to leading a double life in which I felt trapped.

I went through two more counselors before I hit rock bottom by getting involved with a married woman. I was devastated by my behavior and its effect on my relationship with her and her family, which had become like family to me. In desperation I turned to

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a church elder for help. He advised me, based on I John 1:5-7, to bring my sin into the Light through confession to our small church body. I believe this was the beginning of the healing process that I had sought for so long.

But my healing process also turned out to be an emotional roller-coaster ride. The reaction of my church varied from condemnation of sin to unconditional love. In their efforts to help me, a couple of friends from the church discovered the ministry of WGA, talked with Mary and encouraged me to consider attending their meetings. By that time, my relationship with the married woman and her family had been severed and I was preparing for an overseas position with a mission organization. But, the Lord asked me to lay my desire to work in missions aside and allow Him to do a work in me through the ministry of WGA. It was far easier to obey God and let go of that position than it was to surrender my desire to serve Him in missions. It felt like my emotional dependency issues won the battle I'd been fighting for the past nine years and I was angry with God during my first year at WGA. Also, during that year, I got involved with another woman and my church was in turmoil as they debated expulsion from the church. I voluntarily left the church because I could not bear what I interpreted as rejection from them.

It was through WGA that I first heard that homosexuality is rooted in deficits within the relationship with the same-sex parent. Upon hearing that, I knew immediately that this was true for me

and it was this truth enabled me to commit to the healing process. The bulk of my healing was in facing the emotional neglect I endured as a child from my mother and my subsequent withdrawal from her. In my anger upon realizing her neglect of my childhood needs for nurture, I temporarily cut off contact with her and chose to work on my issues through my involvement at WGA.

During this time, I became emotionally attached to and physically involved with one of the women. But rather than isolate myself from all my spiritual support, I committed to work through the relationship at WGA. (During this time, WGA staff and leaders held up the standards of truth and grace for me, neither condoning my sin, nor condemning me for it.)

Through the support of WGA, I was able to let go of my false securities and destructive behaviors in our relationship and learned that my idea of "love" was really an effort to satisfy the unmet emotional needs of my childhood. The Lord revealed His grace towards me through this healing process, which enabled me to extend the same towards my mother as well as others. Today, I enjoy a closer relationship with my mother than ever before and a deeper relationship with the Lord in which I am free to pursue my desire to serve Him overseas with a whole heart and a clear conscience.



Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka

For unto us a child is born
(Isaiah 9:6)

My childhood holds many memories of physical mistreatment. My parents married young and had their hands full with four small, demanding children within six years. Managing our behavior was a full-time job. They hit us a lot, to an extent that I would call abusive, although now I would say that they weren't being intentionally cruel, they just treated us like they thought they should and in ways that they believed we deserved. Now, as a parent myself, I have found deep, first-hand understanding of how frazzled nerves brought on by an uncontrollable child can probably tempt even the most patient father (which is not me) to cause unthinkable harm to an innocent life.

This time of year we celebrate the baby, Jesus, born of the virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (see Mt 1:18, Lk 1:35). How challenging was the Savior of the world to his young, first-time parents? Were they tempted to give him the stone of

abuse when what he cried for was the bread of nurturance and affection (see Mt 7:9)? I have trouble believing that Mary and Joseph were exempt from the struggles that parents have faced as long as babies have been born in the world. They are more human to me if I picture them losing sleep at night, and questioning their new roles in life. Certainly they made mistakes as they raised the Son of God, and even lost sight of their calling at times, but the Lord still blessed their family.



To our mighty, omnipotent God, we are all small, demanding and unruly children who misbehave and pursue our selfish desires. Knowing our

failings intimately, the Lord embraced our humanity by becoming one of us, a parent making himself a loving and sacrificial gift to his children (see Jn 1:14). By entering our lives as the baby Jesus, subject to the abuse of this world, he told us that no harm done to us, or harm we cause to others, is beyond his redemption.



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And they have questions. Besides all the musings about causes and cures, questions formed out of hurt and disappointment. “Why are there so few workers in this field of ministry?” “Why didn’t anyone in my own church help me?” “I had to pull up roots and move here; where was the Church for me when I needed it?” And the question I hate the most: “How long will this take?” Actually I hate all these questions, because, though I have a few ideas, my answer to all of them has to be, “I don’t know.”

Why so few workers? I don’t know—with the call on my life and the passion I have for this ministry, I am often caught up short in surprise and confusion when I see once again how unreceptive are my brothers and sisters in Christ. [Note: I know I am “preaching to the choir” here. Newsletter readers and supporters of ministries like WGA are among the faithful few and we are immensely grateful for your support. But it must be said, you are the minority!] Please pray that the Lord will raise up someone to join our staff. In the meantime, we are blessed to have many leaders who give sacrificially of their time. Praise God with us for His provision, and for His strength for our volunteers.

Why didn’t anyone help me; where was the Church? I don’t know the answer to these questions either, but I remember my own silence and lack

of response until I was compelled, through my own family member’s struggle, to seek out God’s provision for him and for my family. WGA wants to help in this area too. We seek to bring understanding and vision for ministry to the Church. Please pray with us for open doors and open hearts as we knock on the doors of the churches in the Denver area this coming year.

How long? I really don’t know how long. It will take as long as it takes.

There is a lot I don’t know. But I am reminded of scripture (II Timothy 1:12) through the words of another song, *I Know Whom I Have Believed*, by *Daniel Whittel*. I latched onto these words for dear life when I was first saved. I find myself turning to them again and again in the face of questions too big for me.

*I know not why . . .
But I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I’ve committed
Unto Him against that day.*

It is enough that Jesus died and rose again for us. Lord help us remember this truth.



WGA has invited Sy Rogers to present at two seminars this Spring!

Where Grace Abounds has invited Sy Rogers to speak at two events in the spring of 2004. Regarded as a gifted international communicator, award-winning talk show host, recording artist and pastor, Sy has served for over two decades in ministry, and 17 years as a pastoral care specialist regarding sexuality. Mark you calendars and watch for more information. Plan to join us!



Sexuality and the Church 2004

The morning of April 2nd

This event is structured for people who wish to learn more about how to minister to those struggling with sexual and relational issues. Make it a point to invite your pastor!

WGA Seminar

Friday evening, April 2nd and Saturday April 3rd

This seminar will address issues of sexuality and relational brokenness and is open to everyone! More information will be available in the next newsletter.

Your Invited! A Retreat for Family & Friends June 25th-27th, 2004

WGA will be hosting a retreat for family and friends in the spring. Mark the date on your calendars. More information will be available soon. If you are interested in attending, please contact the WGA office at 303-863-7757 or email us at wwga@aol.com.

NOVEMBER

Thursday Night Group

November 6th - 42 people
November 13th - Attended Conference
November 20th - 53 people
November 27th - Thanksgiving
Orientation meeting - 12 new people

Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring

The WGA staff provided about
8 hours of discipleship
counseling and mentoring
each week during October.

November Tuesdays - We continued
an 8 week teaching series on sexual-
ity at the Next Level Church.

November 9th - Mary Heathman
spoke to First Priority Singles
group in Boulder.

November 13-15th - Participated in
Restoring the Glory, a local confer-
ence presented by Desert Hope
Ministries. WGA staff presented
workshops, sponsored an informa-
tion booth, and attended the con-
ference along with numerous WGA
group participants.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 7th - Going away reception
for Karen Wood, who is leaving the
WGA staff. See announcement inside
for more information.

February 12 - 14th - Christian Minis-
tries Convention, WGA booth and
speaking.

April 2nd - Sexuality and the Church
2004, stay tuned for more details!

April 2 - 3 - WGA seminar with special
speaker Sy Rogers. Stay tuned for
more details!

April 22-24 - Restoring the Glory Con-
ference at First Presbyterian in Boul-
der.

June 25 - 27 - Family & Friends Re-
treat More information coming soon!

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Purpose Statement

*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.*



A Measure of Grace
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