



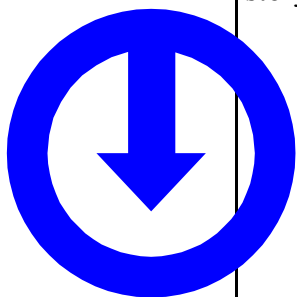
# A Measure of *Grace*

April 2004  
Volume 8, Issue 4

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

## WHAT LIES BENEATH?

*By Mary Heathman*



His face was contorted, flushed red with anger, tendons in his neck standing out. His voice raised, words flung at me in response to my story. I don't remember what he said, but I remember his rage, and I remember he wasn't the only angry one in the room.

It was the late 1980's. Former WGA staff member, Steve A., and I faced a roomful of angry gay rights activists. We were two of several panelists presenting to CSU students on the issue of homosexuality. The other panelists told their stories or spoke of their convictions regarding homosexuality as a viable alternative to heterosexuality. Most in the room smiled and nodded in agreement.

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**WGA**  
where grace abounds

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Then Steve told his story of conflict with his own same-sex attractions and his belief that God would have him abstain from acting on them. I talked of my experiences as a family member of a gay man, and how during my search for resources, I experienced a call to come alongside folks who find themselves in conflict with their sexual feelings or behavior.

Neither Steve nor I had been judgmental or unloving in our presentation. We had prayed and enlisted others to pray for us. One of our prayers was that we would be full of love for our listeners, representing the whole of biblical truth and grace. Our stories and perspectives were expressed carefully and gently, without condemning those who might think and feel differently than we. Yet they were angry.

As my eyes locked with one of the angriest and most vocal of them, I asked if I could say something. He glared at me, then nodded.

***“Isn’t my  
role as an  
ambassador of  
Christ to be one  
of offering  
acceptance, not  
withholding it?”***

“Why are you so angry?” I asked. His response is seared in my memory.

It was his face that responded first. Eyes blazing with hatred suddenly filled with tears. The lines on his face rigid with rage seemed to soften, revealing the torment of internal pain. Then words rushed out and told a story that has become familiar to me

over the last eighteen years of ministry, a story of personal injury at the hands of Christians he went to for help.

Under the rage, there is always unresolved pain. When a WGA group member expresses anger, a prayer always forms in my mind, “Lord, what is driving this;

what hurts her so, how can we get under this anger to his real issues?”

So, when I read of a gay activist chaining himself to a desk, or see a video clip of angry faces demonstrating at various events where gay rights are being addressed, or see a sign that reads, “God hates

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# A Mother Writes: Parents Are In Process Too!

by Mary Heathman

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*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the November 1998 edition of A Measure of Grace.*

WGA is in contact with many parents, wives and other family members, as they struggle to find a way to stay in relationship with their loved ones, without compromising their own convictions. This is a tall order for all of us! Let's take a glimpse into a parent's heart.

Parents, in particular, carry a heavy burden as they grapple with the accusations of their adult children and/or theorists. The blame for nearly everything the adult children deal with is placed on the already bent back of their parents. Who of us parents don't cringe at the statistics about crime, drug use, teen pregnancy and suicide and flinch at the responsibility laid at



the feet of the "families of origin?"

On many occasions I have felt the desire to scream, "Don't blame me for everything! I couldn't have been that powerful!!!" My favorite book title, in fact, is Don't Blame Mother. I don't remember the content, but the title was comforting!

I got a letter from a mother today. I asked her if I could share it with you. With her permission, I present to you a look into an honest mother's heart:

*Finding Mark's backpack in the garage and looking through it yesterday made a big impression on me. In it, I found a CD by a group called "Lords of Acid." The CD was titled "Voodoo U." Its cover had a pornographic drawing on it.*

*I resented Mark's sin. I don't like it! I don't want the "slime" of his sin in my house. . . . ., but it is.*

*His sin is damaging me. It gets slime on me that God never intended for me to have. I forgive this kind of stuff everyday, and I don't judge Mark, but rely on God*

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*to clean the slime that gets brought in everyday. I also pray for him, that he will see the slime and become offended by it himself.*

*It occurs to me that I do the same thing. We all do. I can see it so clearly when it's Mark's sin; I don't see it so clearly (in fact, barely at all!) when it's MY sin. When I sin, it's ME that brings slime here, and others around me (family, even co-workers and friends) are "slimed" and damaged by it.*

*It also occurs to me that this is why we need the grace of God: to clean the slime, making us white as snow, and to minimize the damage. As I seek holiness, I will be involved with slime less and less.*

*It is my prayer that my actions will remain repentant, even as I go through times of internal struggle - WANTING that sin. I wonder, "When we sin in our thoughts or desires, do we slime only ourselves? When our actions manifest those sinful desires, does the slime spill out and dirty others, too?"*

*I think Mark's been damaged very much by my sin, and the first step to making amends is to stop participating in the sin (or STAY stopped!). I believe that this action will stop the production of slime,*

*and then cleanup can begin.*

*I wanted to share this with you --thanks for listening. Many blessings to you! — A Sister in the Lord*

May I simply ask that you pray for parents?

A few have blown it big time, and may not even acknowledge the fact - for these I ask that you pray with me for a spirit of conviction to come upon them and guide them into truth.

But most parents are simply doing the best they can do. As is our letter-writer, many are taking responsibility for their own part in the family dynamics that pulse with the sin of all the members. Some are confused because, as far as they know, they've done everything right. When accused, they are willing to confess, but for the life of them, they can't think of what to say. For all these dear people, pray that the Lord's presence will be real to them and that they will come into His peace.

And, I would venture to say, all parents of children in crisis are experiencing great pain. For them, please pray that the Lord's promise, "The Lord is close to those whose courage is broken and whose spirit is crushed," will be an ever-present comfort to them.

## Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

*By Patrick Maschka*

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**B**lessed is the one who perseveres under trial  
(James 1:12)

It's early on a Spring morning, and the birds begin their morning clamor. Soon after that, squirrels are heard jumping on the roof and scampering in chase of each other. A woodpecker misguidedly drills at the rain gutter. The sounds of traffic are emerging in the distance. Do I meet these sounds of the morning with a fresh urge to get out of bed and face the day? No. I feel nothing but irritation and annoyance.

Whenever I read about trials in the Bible, I usually envision severe tragedies or long-term hardships that require great strength to endure. Those are the kind of trials during which believers are the most likely to acknowledge their need for God and his divine intervention. Thankfully, such adversity is relatively infrequent in the lives of most people. What about the lesser difficulties, the everyday kind from which no one can escape? The daily aggravations

we humans face can slowly whittle away at our patience and gradually, insidiously shape how we operate in the world and come to view this life God has given us. Such trivialities, seemingly void of spiritual meaning, are true tests of character, and even faith. They are indeed trials. How we weather these mundane storms ultimately determines the outward picture of Christianity that we portray to those around us.

Whether dealing with the sometimes monumental obstacles of sexual brokenness, or just making it through one of those times when nothing is going right, "Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt 6:34). Each day, there may be something that could blind me to the "bigger picture" of Christ's love and presence, some trial through which I must persevere. On some Spring mornings, it's not what you might think.

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fags” held by angry people who believe they speak for God, it all melts into the same question for me. “Lord what is under all this; what is at issue here?”

What bothers me most about the gay rights debate is that it isn’t usually about rights at all. When you get underneath all the arguments, the gay activist wants the same thing we all want—to be loved and accepted. When all the presenting arguments are named, explained, and analyzed, they all come down to whether or not a person has significance and value.

We don’t have to agree with the solutions offered by gay rights activists—that more laws in their favor is the appropriate way to salve the hurt of past rejections, or the path to finding real acceptance. But we certainly can, and must, have compassion for that which compels them to seek such basic recognition. They are, as are all human beings, created in the image of God and are of inestimable value to Him (therefore must be to those of us who are called by His name.)

With all this on my mind, I find it difficult to answer the question, “What is your position on gay marriage?” The question itself

seems to miss the most basic issues involved.

If I acknowledge the value and significance of all men and women, including gays and lesbians, must I not allow for their right to love anyone they choose? But if I affirm this right, am I then in violation of my own convictions regarding marriage—that God designed the one-flesh relationship to bring together men and women, to symbolize His relationship with the Church, to be a beacon proclaiming His commitment to and passion for people?

Yet, if I take a position opposing gay marriage, am I then standing against the gay or lesbian person who is seeking acceptance? Isn’t my role as an ambassador of Christ to be one of offering acceptance, not withholding it?

Yet again, I believe English philosopher Edmund Burke made a good point when he said, “*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*” It seems that remaining silent, (the newsletter equivalent of “doing nothing”) is not an option for me at this point. There is so much pain, such polarized positions evident in the debate over gay rights, that it seems evil is at

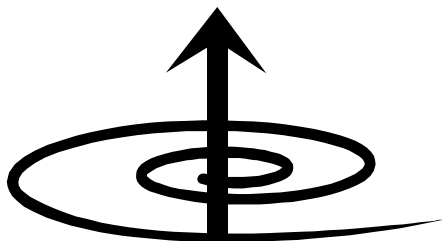
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work in and through the whole issue. I believe that it is our responsibility to expose and resist darkness wherever we find it, and speak truth and light to take its place.

So, it seems important to think through and address the issue of gay rights, gay marriage in particular, and offer what I can to our group members and supporters. For the next couple of months, I will address this issue; please pray for me as I think and write. My prayer is as always, "Lord, help me to speak the truth without compromising your love and grace, and help me to offer your

love and grace without compromising your truth." I hope you will join me in this prayer.



## You're 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](mailto:wwga@aol.com).

# ) ) ) **MARCH** ) ) )

## **Thursday Night Group**

**March 4th - 54 people**  
**March 11th - 44 people**  
**March 18th - 46 people**  
**March 25th - 47 people**  
**Orientation meeting - 12 new people**

## **Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring**

**The WGA staff provided about 13 hours of discipleship counseling and mentoring each week last month.**

**March 6th - participated in Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church's Missions Banquet**

**March 18th—presented to a local group of Lutheran pastors**

**March 28th - WGA was invited to exhibit at Trinity Presbyterian Church's annual missions services.**

# **APRIL & BEYOND**

**April 2nd—Sexuality and the Church seminar for pastors and ministry leaders**

**April 2-3 - Redeemed Sexuality Seminar**

**April 12th - Scott Kingry speaking at Denver Seminary**

**April 22-24 - Restoring the Glory Conference at First Presbyterian in Boulder.**

**April 25th - WGA presentation for local church's men's group**

**July 20-24 - Exodus International Conference at Asuza Pacific**

## **WGA Staff**

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 Executive Director

### **Program Department**

**Scott Kingry**

Program Director

**Pat Bott**

Assistant Program Director

### **Operations Department**

**Roger Jones**

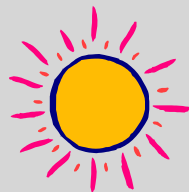
Operations Director

**Sheila Knudtsen**

Resource Development

## **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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 Elodie Ballantine Emig.

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