



# A Measure of Grace

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## Those “Other” Groups *by Mary Heathman*

By the time group members have managed to navigate their way through the first year in WGA, they have a considerable set of experiences behind them. Having survived the beginning—the orientation meeting—and all the companion mixed emotions, many launched immediately into the Foundations Series—a set of teachings and experiences designed to give them an overview of important issues pertaining to sexual brokenness, and to help them learn how to get the most out of group discussions.



Upon completing this twelve-week experience, they begin to work it out along with

other group members who have been around a bit longer

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

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

email: [Wwga@aol.com](mailto:Wwga@aol.com)  
[www.wheregraceabounds.org](http://www.wheregraceabounds.org)

**WGA**  
where grace abounds

(... "Other" Groups *continued from page 1*)

in the core group—here they experience more teachings and more small group experiences. Interspersed with all this intensity there are fun and games—from silly icebreaker polls to game night, to picnics, to backyard “drive-in” movie nights to give a little balance to the hard and painful work involved in recovery and personal growth.

After about a year, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, a group member begins to look around and wonder, “What’s next?” About that time they will pay closer attention to an announcement that has been made periodically—“commitment groups and survivors of abuse groups will be offered

soon. . .” They look into these six-month closed-groups, which are soon full with fifteen or so men and women who have signed up to focus on healthy interpersonal relationships and address the effects of abuse in their lives.

Last night, at our regular Thursday support group, there was a panel presentation by group mem-

bers who had recently completed these groups. It is always an emotional time for me as I hear them describe the way they have grown. They have sensed the Lord’s healing touch in their lives through the group structure and the intimacy that developed among the participants over the months.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, one group member shares his

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“Commitment Group Memoirs.” (In the many years we have offered these groups, not one person has actually died, though many wondered if they would live through the six months!)

It is my hope that you will be blessed as you read these highly personal notes from a group member’s journal. And as you read, please remember to pray for this man. Please also pray for all the others who come to group, applying themselves diligently to the hard work of self-discovery and their part in their spiritual growth. I am so often inspired by them! ✽



Mary,

I've spent the morning ripping open envelopes and reading an accumulation of WGA newsletters from the past year; seems everything on my desk has just been piling up for the last 12 months.

Thank you for your voice. Oh, I thank God for your voice. My heart rejoices and agrees with just about every word you have written, and I'm so glad your words are out there, adding the truth and grace so desperately needed in the mix.

So often I feel we in the Church are fighting valiantly and strongly, slashing bravely away at the enemy--- but he's deployed this tiny army to keep us diverted from the main battle. We're winning, in many cases, the political war against the pro-gay movement. All the while, more and more people read the headlines about these victories and realize (pretty accurately, even though their reasons for jumping to such a conclusion are often faulty) that they will never be loved in a church. We win the political battle, and Satan wins thousands of souls. I am so GLAD you represent the grace and truth that we all so desperately need! I almost don't care which way a Christian votes--- [on gay rights issues]--- as long as the person's love and grace toward strugglers is there. That is where the real battle will be won or lost.

Thanks again.

Love,

[Name Witheld]

# Commitment Group Memoirs

*By an un-named group member*

The WGA Commitment Group:

1. **Allowed** me to plot an obstacle course and develop a changing and dynamic action plan to steadily navigate through combative and painful ordeals to a VERY gradual and peaceful resolution. Over time, this promoted heightened trust and decreased my overall guardedness. As a result, the Commitment Group became a more **approachable** entity in my eyes
2. **Equipped** me with tried and proven behavioral and communication techniques to meet and achieve my personal goals using the group as a willing sounding board. As a result, the Commitment Group became a more **credible** entity in my eyes.
3. **Enabled** me to explore techniques of gender-affirming connection and bonding so that other group members were no



longer perceived as a potential threat or deterrent to my overall progress. I began to recognize the setting as another “safe” and cathartic place. I wanted to become more and more naked and true with my feelings. As a result, the Commitment Group became a more **healing** entity in my eyes.

4. **Convinced** me to yield and see myself as others see me where it most mattered through different group exercises which would strip anyone of any varnish of defense or painted excuses. I was in

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka

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*No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (John 3:3).*

What do we know of the experience of birth? Although some believe that it is possible to remember our entrance into the world, most people have absolutely no recollection of the event. Having witnessed the birth of an infant, I personally am thankful that my birth is one transition in life that I cannot recall. Thoughts of being helplessly forced from a safe, warm environment, taking a first breath of harsh air, seeing blurred images and the brightness of light, and suddenly being surrounded not by secure, fleshy walls, but rather by nothing at all are positively horrifying.

As Jesus conversed with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21), he explained the notion of being born again. Our need is to be born not only of water (physically), but also of the Spirit. I have listened to several teachings on this subject, most of which seem to portray this necessary second birth of Christians in a metaphorical sense, a life passage that can only be understood on a spiritual or philosophical level.

What if, however, we could imagine that being born again truly is a physical experience, one in which we feel pain and trauma as the life we once knew is left behind forever and we are suddenly desperate for the nurturing and loving embrace of our savior, the only one who can meet our needs?

The healing journey for those of broken sexuality and relationships is one of change and transition. At a point of deep surrender to the Lord in my own life, a friend of mine pointed out that I was “walking on new legs” and needed support. Indeed, I felt very weak, needy and immature during this rebirth into a new faith territory. May we as helpless infants always know our need for the Lord and draw our strength only from him.

*Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always (Psalm 105:4).*



a long, 6-month stint of progressive sexual recovery, and this was yet another vital link in the chain to be aware of and agree to. As a result, the Commitment Group became a more **convicting** entity in my eyes.

- 4) **Constrained** me to channel my confessions in a sometimes confrontational way to get to the source and depth of the pains before sublimating them into healthier exchange within the group. This required agreement by all involved parties. It also provided a gateway for me to become more sexually accountable on a weekly basis and present that ever-changing image to the group to sober and encourage each other. As a result, the Commitment Group became a more **nurturing** entity in my eyes.

This 6-month period leaves me with a viable and personal challenge to re-implement the interactive behaviors and techniques I learned through this therapy and deal with similar same-sex issues and complimentary personality

types in a larger setting.

Finally, the rollout and success of these sessions would never have been accomplished without the prayerful planning and tireless devotion of its facilitators. So, to this end, I think the other participants in this year's CG would agree that it would be greatly remiss of us not to publicly acknowledge and heartily thank Scott and Brent for encouraging us to “stay” the course and keep focused on the goals we all individually mapped for ourselves—some still taking shape, conforming us more to Our Maker and Creator, Jesus Christ. ✿





Inside of me the darkness churns  
Doubts and fears that tear and burn  
They assault my heart and confuse my mind  
The answers I need are so hard to find  
I cry out tears of deepest pain  
Searching, searching, I call out Your Name  
The voices within scream in outrage  
They are the ones who have kept me caged  
In total exhaustion I fall to the ground  
My body is aching, my soul is unsound  
I rage at my fears, my failures and flaws  
That keep me from truly following Your laws  
Lord, can You ever forgive this guilty child  
I ask and I search and I question so wild...

Until Your voice thunders in  
With the gentleness of a shepherd's rod...  
"BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!"

Jo Jo



## July

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## At a Glance

**July 2nd:** Intercessory prayer was held at the WGA offices

**July 16h—19th:** Two WGA staff members attended the Exodus Leadership Conference in Ashville, NC

**July 19th—23rd:** 2 Staff members and a few group members attended the 30th annual Exodus International Conference in Asheville, NC

**July 30th:** WGA Leadership Meeting

## August

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## And Beyond

**August 6th:** Intercessory Prayer at the WGA offices

**August 18th:** Orientation Meeting. Contact the WGA offices for more information

**August 21th:** Presenting at Lakewood Christian Fellowship

**September 24th—25th:** Participating in Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church Missions Banquet

**March 31st—April 2nd 2006:** WGA Family and Friends Retreat

### Thursday Night Group

**July 7th:** 47 people

**July 14th:** 47 people

**July 21st:** 44 people

**July 28th:** 46 people

**Orientation meeting:** 5 new people

### WGA Staff

**Mary Heathman**  
Executive Director

#### Program Department

**Scott Kingry**

Program Director

**Pat Bott**

Assistant Program Director

#### Operations Department

**Roger Jones**

Operations Director

**Sheila Knudtsen**

Resource Development

*A Measure of Grace*

is edited by

Elodie Ballantine Emig

*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.*

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