



# A Measure of *Grace*

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1986-2006  
**20**  
YEARS  
WHERE  
**GRACE**  
ABOUNDS

## From Infancy to Twenty Years old *By Mary Heathman*

“All the seeds for direction for the ministry will be planted in corporate prayer.”

When my heart and mind heard these words from God, I was in the fourth day of a fast. It had been two weeks since the Lord had made it plain that I was to plant myself in ministry to the sexually broken. I was still freaked out, not knowing what in the world to do, how to go about pursuing this calling. Having learned early in my Christian walk that the first step of any important undertaking ought to be fasting and prayer for direction, I set aside a week for this familiar discipline. The questions on my mind were many:

“Why me?”

“Who will help me?”

“What if I fail?”

“What should I do?”

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**wga**

where grace abounds

(From Infancy continued from page 1)

“How will I do this?”

For the first three days of my fast, my thoughts tumbled about without much focus. Three years of study had left me with a healthy respect for the complexity of sexuality and relationships. My own experience had taught me that the roots of sexual sin are deep-seated with a vast web of relational and spiritual consequences. My research had revealed no comprehensive guide for how to minister in this field. I knew this wasn't going to be an easy path to walk.

Yet, I was called. There was no mistake about that. So, I fasted and prayed. On the fourth day, my thoughts and prayers had all been reduced to one recurrent plea, “Lord, I don't know what to do; how will I know what to do?”

In the simplicity of that prayer, in the midst of awareness of my complete inadequacy, came His still small voice speaking to my heart and mind at once, “All the seeds for direction for the ministry

will be planted in corporate prayer.”

I was immensely relieved and a bit irritated: relieved, because the Lord had spoken, and I was no longer casting about with no direction; irritated, because I had spent all that time praying in secret and the answer was not going to come to me, but to a community. And on top of that, I had

expected a blueprint to follow, not just the next step!

But His guidance was uncomplicated and easy to follow. I ended my fast, talked with a few people of like mind, and formed a simple plan—pray together as a staff at the beginning of every day of

ministry, and gather the broader WGA community together regularly to pray for the needs of the ministry, guidance and direction.

The plan has been adjusted a few times over the years, but the rhythm of corporate prayer has remained constant and strong. Prayer has been and continues to be the seedbed for all growth since WGA was first conceived

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## Desperate Times

*How did sex become just skin-on-skin  
instead of soul-to-soul?*

*A Leadership Forum*

*Reprinted with Permission*

*DIRECTOR'S NOTE: the following is the first part of an interview done by Christianity Today's Leadership Journal. The comments of Christian leaders highlight the issues in our society and in the church that make Where Grace Abounds a ministry for "just such a time as this."*

If only sex were as simple as "the birds and the bees." And perhaps it is. Like the creatures of nature, sex is a part of God's good creation. Yet, just as birds drop and bees sting, human sexuality can create sudden messes and unanticipated pain in many lives.

Today's ministry leaders are not immune to the stains and stings of sexuality. In fact, we are called into the middle of them as we attempt to help people live faithfully and well within a sexually charged culture.

*Leadership's* Marshall Shelley and Chad Hall invited three Christian leaders to the campus of Duke Di-

vinity School to discuss ministry in our decidedly post-Eden world. Bruce Marcey is lead pastor of Warehouse 242, a church in the uptown area of Charlotte, North Carolina, and known for being culturally engaged while placing a high value on communicating theological truth.

James Emery White founded Mecklenburg Community Church in suburban Charlotte in 1992 and has written widely on the intersection of church and culture in works such as [Rethinking Church](#) and [Serious Times](#). He also serves as adjunct professor of theology, culture, and apologetics at Gordon-Conwell Seminary's Charlotte campus.

Lauren Winner serves on the faculty at Duke and is the author of a memoir, [Girl Meets God](#), and, more recently, a critically acclaimed book about chastity, [Real Sex](#). She attends St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Durham, North Carolina.

**What's an example you've seen in the last week that we live in a**

*(Continued on page 4)*

Desparate Times continued from page 3)

### **sexually charged culture?**

**James Emery White:** I was stunned by the Kaiser Family Foundation study that came out this week that found that the number of sexual encounters on television programs *doubled* between 1995 and 2004. This sexualized culture is becoming mainstream.

**Lauren Winner:** I see it in the lack of clothing on college campuses. For both women and men.

**Bruce Marcey:** I see it in the skyrocketing occurrences of oral sex among high school kids. Even in many Christian circles, it's seen as being okay.

**White:** It's not even perceived as sex.

**Marcey:** Exactly.

### **Is this sexual climate unprecedented, or is it similar to conditions in other times?**

**Winner:** There's always been premarital sex. There have always been children conceived out of wedlock. But in earlier times, you were supposed to be ashamed about it. What's unique today is society's utter acceptance of premarital sex. The key change is not simply that premarital sex is common, but that it's good—it's not just normal but normative. Today

something is considered wrong with you if you're *not* having sex.

**Marcey:** What's considered taboo has totally reversed. I mean, think of the movie, "The Forty-Year-Old Virgin." Being a virgin is now a stigma. The culture now assumes, *How can you be a healthy person if you're not having sex?*

**White:** We asked people at our church to submit questions for a Q&A session dealing with sex, and the questions we got were ones you would not have gotten five years ago: "We both had affairs, and we have no idea how to restore intimacy." It's almost like an affair for one or both partners is almost becoming the norm. Questions like "Why on earth would you say pornography is wrong?"

I don't think you would have gotten some of those questions five years ago. It reminds me of a passage tucked away in Jeremiah that talks about people who have forgotten how to blush. That marks our society. ☆

The rest of this article may be found at: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2006/001/11.30.html>

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## Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks

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### Freedom from the fear of death Part 1 of 4

I've been exploring the topic of "Freedom in Christ" lately. I'm discovering that it is important to recognize both what Christ has freed us from and what he has freed us to.

In Romans 8:2 Paul explains that "those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death" (Eugene Peterson's *The Message*).

For many people who don't believe in God or life after death, death seems to be the end of the road--the inevitable loosening of your grip as your fingers slide off of the cliff of life and you plunge into the endless abyss of unbeing. For many people who believe God exists, death looms as the



doorway into facing the Big Man--facing a lifetime of guilt and a roll of the dice as to whether your good works outweigh your bad. Or the certainty that that scale is permanently tipped, there will be no Divine favor, and whatever Hell looks like, you'll be there.

Fear of death can easily overshadow life. The tyranny of this fear can render its victim either

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*(Reflections continued from page 5)*

paralyzed—afraid to make the wrong move or catch the wrong germ, or hedonistically self-destructive--as in “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die.”

Jesus has paved a new road—a road that dances beyond death—giving us a new vision for redeemed bodies and never-ending life with God. But what appeal would there be in never-ending life with God if we were terrified of judgment at the hands of an impersonal Universal Dictator? As Jesus was dying, the curtain in the Temple ripped from floor to ceiling. This curtain was the barrier that separated the people from God’s presence in the Holy of Holies. Up until this point, only the trembling priest, chosen by lot, was allowed to enter that hallowed place and make a sacrifice. He hoped all the while that he had purified and prepared himself enough and that the sacrifice he brought was good enough. When the curtain was rent, Jesus paved the way for all of us, each of us, to enter into that Holy Presence with the assurance that Jesus’ purification and sacrifice was all that we need to be found acceptable.

Paul paints a beautiful picture of this freedom from the tyranny of death:

Death swallowed by triumphant  
Life!

Who got the last word, oh,  
Death?

Oh, Death, who’s afraid of you  
now?

It was sin that made death so frightening and law-code guilt that gave sin its leverage, its destructive power. But now in a single victorious stroke of Life, all three—sin, guilt, death—are gone, the gift of our Master, Jesus Christ. Thank God! (I Cor. 15:56-57). ☆



*(From Infancy continued from page 2)*

over twenty years ago. It has become the bedrock of our core values, formed early and adhered to tenaciously.

Currently, the staff meets for prayer twice a week, incorporates prayer into bi-monthly staff and annual planning meetings, and gathers spontaneously to pray at other times, whenever we sense the familiar refrain, “We don’t know what to do!” In addition, the WGA community (staff, group members, supporters, board members, friends of the ministry) gathers monthly for a prayer meeting on the first Saturday of each month, 7-9AM. In my opinion, it is the best time we share together, and we top it off with another core value activity, community building—most of us go to breakfast together after prayer.

Please join our corporate prayer effort. It would be great if you came to our monthly prayer meeting. But whether you can join us in our gatherings or not, it would be great to know that we have friends of the ministry praying with us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 9AM or on first Saturdays at 7AM. And when you pray, pray that we will never forget foundational core values formed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit from the

beginning, especially that of corporate prayer in which God has promised to plant all seeds for the direction of the ministry! ☆

*NOTE: If you will be praying, let us know; we will be encouraged!*







## April

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### At a Glance

**April 13th:** Joined with Colorado Christian University in response to a protest by a pro-gay group

**April 16th** Spoke at Little Chapel of the Hills

**April 27th-29th:** Participated in Restoring the Glory Conference

#### Thursday Night Group

**April 6th:** 47  
**April 13th:** 43  
**April 20th:** 51  
**April 27th:** 48

**Orientation meeting:** 7

## May

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### And Beyond

**May 4th:** Speaking at Hope House

**May 6th:** Speaking at Logos Central Chapel

**May 12<sup>th</sup>:** 100% Truth : 100% Grace Equipping Men and Women for Authentic Living in a Warped World  
This seminar is for pastors and Christian Leaders who wish to dialogue about cultural and societal issues that impact the church. The key note speaker is Frederica Mathewes-Green.

**May 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>:** Distortion and Reality: Authentic Living for Men and Women Living in a Warped World  
This seminar is for men and women who wish to learn more about our culture and its impact upon gender, youth, and relationships. Frederica Mathewes-Green is the key note speaker.

For more info about these seminars, check out WGA's website at [www.wheregraceabounds.org](http://www.wheregraceabounds.org).

**June 27<sup>th</sup>—July 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Exodus International Conference, Indiana Wesleyan University

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*Where Grace Abounds*  
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understand sexuality and  
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personally appropriate  
God's plan for their  
sexuality and relationships.

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