



A Measure of Grace

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Why WGA? *by Mary Heathman*

WGA was just a gleam in our Father's eye when I first learned how to write a mission statement. In business management classes, sales training and customer service seminars, I was taught that if a sales or customer service representative cannot make a compelling case for why the company exists and the benefits of owning or using its product, then don't expect anyone to want its product.

As a consumer I had a few experiences that underscored this principle. A black leather motorcycle jacket comes to mind. When I bought a bike and was deciding what I would wear on my first road trip, I considered the standard black leather jacket with all its zippers and snaps.

It seemed ridiculous to me that all bikers wore the same style of jacket. The bikers

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seemed to me to have given themselves over to some sort of alien sub-culture. I resisted the notion of allowing myself to be assimilated into a biker mentality and identity. “I am just someone who happens to like riding motorcycles; I’m not looking for a gang to join.” I said to myself and all my friends.

But it did seem prudent to do a little research by visiting a store that specialized in leather clothing. I asked the sales clerk, “Why do most bikers wear a black leather jacket with silver zippered pockets and snap-down collars?” The sales clerk replied, “Black leather is the “status symbol of serious motorcyclists,” and that



“every rider needs at least one.”

My response was to choke down a contemptuous retort, and vowed to myself that “I will not be buying into such nonsense.”

The next weekend, a few friends were riding from Denver to Colorado Springs and back. The weather was going to be cool, and we were likely to return after dark, so I wore several layers of clothes to keep warm and topped it off with my favorite winter jacket.

It was a miserable trip. The dry, chilly wind and the merciless flapping of my jacket collar left me with severely chapped cheeks and neck that hurt for days. My gaping jacket pockets practically spit out my favorite sunglasses, lip balm, and extra pair of gloves before we hit Castle Rock. I was chilled to the bone the entire trip, as the wind whipped through my several layers of clothing as if they weren’t there.

At home, I re-thought the leather jacket issue. I now believed that it was in my best interests for the jacket collar to snap down and my pockets to have sturdy zippers, and that leather is one of the best and most comfortable windbreakers there is. I came to the conclu-

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Save the Date!

Open House



Roger Jones will become our new Executive Director when he returns from his sabbatical in April. Please come meet Roger and celebrate his new position at WGA!

Date: Sunday, April 22nd

Time: 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Place: The WGA offices, 1532 Emerson St, Denver

Call 303-863-7757 if you need directions!

P.S. And, while you are standing in line to celebrate Roger, you can also celebrate Mary in her new role as Founding Director, or celebrate Scott in his continued role as program director. We all look forward to seeing you there.

Staff Update

Pat Bott, our assistant program director has decided to step down as a part of the staff here at WGA. Pat is still part of the WGA Leadership Team and continues to be an important presence on Thursday nights and works with the Family and Friends group and the women that attend our ministry.

Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Dwight Scull

This year in the Survivors of Abuse group, we decided to try something new. In addition to working on people's past abuse and giving them tools to work through that abuse we decided to add an additional piece of homework if they wanted to do it. We assign several options for practicing a spiritual discipline each week that will help them reconnect to God during this process. Some of the exercises can be intense, but most are designed to compliment the work they are already doing in their lives.

I wanted to give you (the reader) the benefit of having a great resource for spiritual disciplines on your shelves (for under \$15), to have an opportunity to practice one exercise today, and to hear my personal experience with the exercise.

All of these exercises come out of a wonderful book called *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005).

Contemplation (p. 48 - 51) –

“Palms down, Palms up. Sit comfortably with both feet on the floor and your hands on your lap. Breathe deeply and relax. Intentionally place yourself in the presence of Jesus. Turn your palms down and begin to drop your cares, worries, agendas and expectations into Jesus' hands. Let go of all that is heavy or burdensome. Relax. Breathe deeply. When you have given your cares to Jesus, turn your palms up on your knees. Open your hands to receive God's presence, word and love. Listen. When you feel prompted to end, tell the Lord what it is like for you to simply be with him. (50)”

When I first did this exercise I remember listing my anger over my own abuse and I could not give it up to God. I tried and tried, but my hands would not move to let go of the anger and rage. I sat there for several minutes speaking to God. I told him that I was secure with my anger and that I did not trust him enough to have it. I then got a sense of peace and felt reassured that I did not have to

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give up my anger at that time. That was two years ago.

I assigned this as one of their possible exercises to do that week. Later in the week I sat down and spent about 20 minutes with this exercise. I got to anger and had the memory that I relayed to you above. I then asked God to show me if I was ready to give him my anger. I waited for an answer, but I did not feel anything one way or the other. So I said, I will continue to work on my trust in you, Jesus, so that one day I will be able to fully hand over my anger about my past to you. I then turned up

my hands to listen to God. Several minutes went by and there was not anything there. (Because of my past experience with his presence, I am not discouraged but comforted in his timing and pace with me.)

After this exercise, I knew that this was a great next step toward being honest with God about where I am at and also asking him to keep coming alongside of me and helping me to grow more fully into him.

I am thankful to God for the process of healing and being able to recognize growth in my life. ☆

***So, whether on the hill-tops high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie—what matter? He is there.***

***And more than this; where're the pathway lead,
He gives to me no helpless, broken reed,
But his own hand, sufficient for my need.***

***So, where He leads me, I can safely go,
And in the blest hereafter I shall know,
Why in His wisdom He hath led me so.***

Unknown

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sion that it might be good to buy a leather jacket for bike riding.

“But,” I said to myself, “I am not going to get black like all the other conformists.”

I visited the leather store again and asked to see the color choices in leather—there were a few with the now-essential snaps and zippers, but they all cost way more than the black jackets! I stood there stunned with a paradigm shift twisting through my head and heart. *All bikers weren’t buying into a cultural identity, or carving out for themselves some sort of separatist sub-culture. They were simply people who liked to ride motorcycles—and they knew that, to ride comfortably, **they needed zippered-pocketed, snapped-collared, wind-breaking jackets.** Most were wise stewards as well, and chose to purchase the most economical jacket that gave them all these necessities.* (That would be black, it seems!)

So, dear reader, you may by this time be wondering what the truth about bikers and black leather jackets has to do with the title of my article, “*Why WGA.*” Let me explain a bit.

From the perspective of many people, the purpose and function of

WGA isn’t readily obvious. To many, our place in the Body of Christ isn’t clear, and they wonder how much need there really is for our services.

Unlike the first clerk who steered me wrong about the benefits of black leather jackets, I want to spell out the truth about sexual sin (within and without the Body of Christ) and give our supporters a clear understanding of what we do and how we do it. As we look forward to the future, **the need seems to us to be ever-increasing, the challenges and resistance in our society ever-mounting.** I would like to tackle the job of clearly communicating our mission and our approach.

For the next few months, I will be writing a series of articles spelling out my perspective on the need for WGA, its place in the Body of Christ, and how we minister in our little corner of the kingdom. If you are thinking right now, “I hope she will be sure to include. . . .” or “surely, there will be a discussion about. . . .” or “spare us a ranting about. . . .” I would welcome hearing from you. It would be great if this series ended up being a collaborative effort. ☆

Update from Ted Haggard

(Director's Note: We have heard so much commentary about the recent reporting of Ted Haggard's therapy experience, that I thought it would be good to simply print his open email to his congregation, rather than try to add our voice to all the analyses. I encourage WGA supporters, friends, and leaders to continue to pray for Christian Leaders in the Body of Christ, for the strength and heart to walk in transparency and with lives congruent with their values. May it be so with all that call upon His name.)

Open Email to New Life Church: (posted on the Denver Post Website)

Thank you so much for writing.

Jesus is starting to put me back together. I have spent so much time in repentance, brokenness, hurt and sorrow for the things I've done and the negative impact my actions have had on others. That sadness continues as my family and I, along with so many others, go through the painful consequences of my actions. Jesus and his followers, though, have saved my life. As part of New Life's efforts to help me, they sent Gayle and me to Phoenix for a three week psychological intensive that gave us three years worth of analysis and treatment. We all wanted to know why I developed such incongruity in my life. Thankfully, with the tools we gained there, along with the powerful way God has been illuminating His Word and the Holy Spirit has been convicting and healing me, we now have growing understanding which is giving me some hope for a future. Gayle and I have decided to move from Colorado Springs to go back to school. We love Colorado Springs so much, and will always regard the believers at New Life Church as family, but we have to go in order to let the church determine its own course and for us to retrain. We haven't decided where we are moving but so far have been offered two places, one in Iowa and one in Missouri. We are both planning on getting our masters in Psychology so we can work together serving others the rest of our lives. Since we are taking our classes on-line, we can live anywhere that's affordable. Then we'll travel to location for short in-class requirements.

Thank you so much for your love and prayers during this horrific time of transition in our lives. For the last three months, I've not been communicative because I've been paralyzed by shame. But as God and people like you forgive me, the sun is starting to rise in my life, I look forward to communicating with greater ease.

God bless,

Ted Haggard

"We are Easter People."



January At a Glance

January 4th: Scott presented at Denver Seminary

January 9th: Mary presented at Abundant Life Church

January 28th: Scott presented at Hope Fellowship

January 30-February 2: Mary, Roger and Scott attended the Exodus Leaders' Conference in Orlando

February And Beyond

February 10th: Intercessory Prayer: Join us from 7:00–9:00 am at the WGA offices

February 18th: Mary at Arvada Covenant Church Missions Emphasis

March 3rd: Intercessory Prayer: Join us from 7:00–9:00 am at the WGA offices

March 4th: Scott and Mary will be speaking at Ascension Lutheran Church

March 23-25, 2007: Family and Friends Retreat

April 22nd: Open House at the WGA offices; celebrate the changing roles of the staff.

June 26th–July 1st: Exodus International Conference—Irvine, CA

Thursday Night Group

January 4th: 49 people

January 11th: 36 people

January 18th: 45 people

January 25th: 46 people

Orientation meeting - 4 new people

WGA Staff

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A Measure of Grace
is edited by
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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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