



A Measure of Grace

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2008, a Review—2009, a Preview

By Roger Jones

This has been quite a year, full of exciting opportunities and ministry at Where Grace Abounds. So you can see everything all in one place, I thought I would share some of what happened throughout the year.

Our Thursday Night Group continues to offer a regular, weekly place of support for men, women, and family members dealing with a variety of sexual and relationship issues. On average, 45 attended this group each week. Throughout the year, a total of 65 new people began to participate in this group, beginning with an Orientation Meeting.

The WGA staff provides Discipleship Counseling to interested group participants. This is done in teams of two, a male and female, from the staff. On average, there were 12-15 appointments per week, providing individualized direction and support for men and women. In

January, the men's
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Commitment Group began, with 8 guys participating in this six month group. Another group, Going Deeper with God, ran for three months in the fall. Also, the staff was able to participate in a couple of conferences: the Exodus Leadership conference in January and the Exodus Freedom Conference in July.

WGA is active in the community, mostly in the Denver metro area, but we also have opportunities to speak and share about WGA and God's message of grace to the sexual struggler nationally and occasionally, internationally.

In the first quarter of '08, Mary Heathman was able to speak at a Quaker church in Wyoming and a MOPS group there too. She was also invited to speak at Tuesday Morning Joy, a women's ministry of Abundant Life Church. In February, she travelled to the Philippines and spoke in a variety of churches there. Scott Kingry and I travelled to Portland in March, where I was able to share my testimony at the annual retreat for Portland Fellowship, a sister ministry there. We also provided training for some of the mentors at Save Our Youth, a local ministry to at risk youth.

In the spring, we hosted our annual Family and Friends Retreat. The staff participated in missions events at The Next Level Church and Christ Episcopal Church. Mary was invited

back to Tuesday Morning Joy to share again. Janet Moine and I spoke at a dinner party, introducing a new group of people to Where Grace Abounds.

More opportunities came our way in the summer. Mary travelled to Asheville, NC to speak and participate in the Friends United Triennial. She was also the keynote speaker for the New Hope Family and Friends Retreat in San Rafael, CA. Janet was given the opportunity to share her testimony at Wellspring Church. Scott and I shared our testimonies at a support group in Colorado Springs, a ministry of Calvary Chapel. The entire staff attended a breakfast for pastors and leaders, sponsored by the Love Won Out team at Focus on the Family. Also, the Democratic National Convention was in Denver in August. WGA hosted a series of prayer meetings during the convention. In September, WGA joined with HIV Carelink for the AIDS Walk.

October and November were full of speaking/visibility opportunities for us. Mary and I were able to speak at missions events hosted by Cherry Creek Presbyterian and First Denver Friends Church. I spoke at a volunteer training for HIV Carelink, teaching about sexuality and addiction. Janet and I gave a presentation to the Wednesday night prayer group at Galilee Baptist Church. Scott and Mary taught at a college group (the

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The Give and Take of Advice

By Mary Heathman

One of the guidelines for group sharing is to refrain from giving unsolicited advice.

The purpose of this guideline is to protect the person who is sharing as well as the person trying to give advice, and to make sure there is plenty of time for each person to share during small group time.

Protection is needed for the person who is sharing. This protection is necessary, because it is most often true that group members have already been given plenty of advice before they ever arrived at the WGA doorstep. They have read Scripture; they have been reminded of Scripture; they have read self-help books ad nauseum. What they haven't had an opportunity to do is simply talk about how they are feeling, what they think about their situation. Some have never had a chance to speak about their struggles, or hear others share their stories—stories sometimes different, sometimes remarkably similar to theirs. The boundary against unsolicited advice ensures that group members can access emotions and explore them with others before possible solutions are brought into play. Solutions offered before their time tend to cover over issues, especially deeply rooted emotion that has never been tapped before.

Protection is needed for the person who might be tempted to give advice. Listening to someone sharing their struggles, doubts, and painful emotions is sometimes more painful for the listener than for the one sharing. This isn't just empathy, though that is part of it. It is simply a fact that when we hear others' pain, we remember our own, or that of a loved one, and our own emotions are triggered. A reflex is to do something to safeguard ourselves from feeling pain, even when we know we are there to work through it together. A good piece of advice can put a lid on all that pain! The trouble is, if we don't feel our emotions, we may not understand enough about what has contributed to our struggles; if we don't understand what has happened, we can't move on.

So, in WGA small group sessions, we ask that no one give any unsolicited advice!

Having said all that, I would like to say that advice is good in its place. I have benefited from a good bit of it myself. A few quotes illustrate:

Advice may be wrong, but examples prove themselves.—H. W. SHAW.

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A New Resource—Finally!

By *Scott Kingry*

One by One is a denominational ministry that was created in response to the need for a non-political, ministry-oriented voice to address issues of sexual brokenness within the Presbyterian Church USA. It was conceived in 1995, after national leaders invited a group of PCUSA pastors, elders and ministry leaders to pray and discuss how this need might be met. I had been at that original meeting after years of volunteer work at their annual General Assemblies, mostly helping man a booth representing biblical sexuality and sharing my story with others in front of delegates who'd be voting on issues like same-sex marriage or homosexual clergy.

About 10 years ago, Teresa, the Executive Director approached the WGA staff to entertain the idea of the two organizations creating a curriculum on sexuality together. We hoped the finished product could be used in small groups or adult Sunday school classes. Teresa and a few other leaders from One by One arrived on the doorstep of the WGA of-

Sexual Wholeness
IN A BROKEN WORLD



Kristin Johnson, Editor

fices for a two day brainstorming session. By the end of that time and with an overall plan, we assigned chapters for the book we envisioned together.

As usual with any joint project, our motivation in the early stages was enthusiastic and productive. We each got the rough drafts of our chapters done within a few months—we were well on our way! But life's obstacles got in the way of good intentions: given problems locating an editor, a change in the leadership of One by One and life changes with the authors, the curriculum was buried for several years.

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(A New Resource continued from page 4)

Kristin Johnson, the new Executive Director of One by One, talked with us at an Exodus conference a couple of years ago about resurrecting and finishing the project. An editor was found, so the authors dusted off their manuscripts and began making changes under his guidance. We were once again moving. This summer, all this effort finally paid off in the publication of *Sexual Wholeness in a Broken World*.

The book is comprised of 10 chapters with discussion questions at the end of each. The first two chapters discuss that we are made in God's image and His original plan for sexuality. I follow up quickly in chapters 3 and 4 about what got messed up in "A Good Plan Gone Wrong." This material is actually from a talk I do quarterly for new people in our Foundations classes. The next sections address specific issues like homosexuality and sexual addiction. Mary brings her years of expertise to the chapter "Sexual Abuse—A Root of Sexual Brokenness." The book wraps up with a look at the Cross and the Church of Jesus Christ as the most important components for healing. There is also an appendix with personal testimonies from men, women and

parents who have dealt personally with the issues of homosexuality, pornography, sexual addiction and sexual abuse.

Sexual Wholeness in a Broken World is described as "*a reminder to its readers that sexuality is one of God's greatest gifts to his children and provides answers to why we often abuse this gift and how we can find help. Authors describe their own struggles and provide practical help for hope and healing.*" To see a selection of resources offered by One by One, including this new book go to <http://www.oneby1.org/resources.html>

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Annex) in Boulder, a ministry of First Presbyterian Church. The staff and some of the WGA leadership manned an exhibit at Love Won Out, a conference in Colorado Springs. Also in October, was the annual Leadership Retreat, where we met for training and fellowship with our leaders.

WGA believes strongly in the healing power of community. Because of this, we provide a number of supervised events throughout the year so that men and women can connect in a relaxed social environment. These events in 2008 included a BBQ, a few movie events (drive in, Movie Marathon Day, women's movie night), a Rockies baseball game, a concert, and a number of game nights. We hold Intercessory prayer each month, with a breakfast following.

New in 2008 were opportunities for men to face into their fears surrounding sports. Two of the WGA leadership guys came to the staff with a vision to offer some sports clinics and discussion forums. A basketball clinic and a football clinic were offered and very well attended. Additionally, the men gathered for a Rockies baseball game, a camping trip, and a night of watching the Olympics.

Plans are already underway for some events and groups for 2009. In January, we have three focus groups beginning: Growth Group, Commit-

ment Group, and Survivors of Abuse. We are hard at work developing some promotional materials for seminars and speaking engagements in local churches. We'd actually like to do more speaking in 2009! In March, we are pleased to offer a seminar with special guest Sy Rogers. In April, the annual Family and Friends retreat will take place once again. Of course, our regular counseling, speaking, and Thursday Night Group will be available at the same time.

As you can see, there is a lot going on at WGA! It is exciting to be a part of this vibrant and socially relevant ministry. Would you please pray for us as we wrap up 2008 and move into a new year? Have a blessed Christmas!



(Advice continued from page 3)

From Shaw I've learned to look for congruence between a person's advice and his or her life before deciding to take that advice.

Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other, and scarce in that; for it is true we may give advice, but we cannot give conduct.—FRANKLIN.

Franklin reminds me of several important points: although we can learn by experience, we can learn other ways as well; only a fool insists on learning by experience, and hardly learns anything anyway; we can give advice but have no control over another person's behavior in response to it.

When in reading we meet with any maxim that may be of use, we should take it for our own, and make an immediate application of it, as we would of the advice of a friend whom we have purposely consulted.—COLTON.

Colton exhorts me to take and apply a useful piece of advice as if from a trusted friend that I sought out purposely to get their counsel.

And Scripture has provided countless gems, among them:

2 Samuel 15:31-34 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom" (David's son who turned against him and was now his

enemy). So David prayed, "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

We learn to pray that the Lord will intervene in the process of advice/counsel giving.

When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the

Archite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.

David said to him: . . ." if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your

servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice."

We learn that advice is so powerful, that David felt it necessary to send in an undercover agent to frustrate the bad counsel Absalom was getting.

So, when you hear that WGA doesn't allow advice giving, just remember, it's not that advice is bad. In fact, in the proper time and context, it is as a Proverb (27:9) says, "Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel."

May it be so: that all the advice we give and receive brings joy to our hearts!



November At a Glance

November 8th: Roger Jones spoke at a training for HIV CareLink

November 17th: WGA presented at a college group at First Presbyterian Church in Boulder

Thursday Night Group

November 6th: 35 people

November 13th: 47 people

November 20th: 33 people

November 27th: No Group

Orientation meeting - 4 new people

December And Beyond

January 3rd - Intercessory Prayer. Join us from 7:00 - 9:00 am at the WGA offices.

April 24-26th: WGA Family and Friends Retreat

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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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