



A Measure of Grace

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Ministry Updates *by Roger Jones*

This Fall is off to a busy start! Here are a few updates about a few things that have happened and a few others that are coming in the next couple of months. Please join us in prayer and praise for these items:

WGA's 25th Anniversary Celebration

Where Grace Abounds was founded twenty-five years ago, in 1986. On September 17th, we gathered together with many people who have been blessed through the ministry over the years. Old friends and new, family members, and supporters were in attendance (almost 200 people). We had a great time reminiscing together and celebrating what God has done in so many people's lives.

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

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

Email:
info@wheregraceabounds.org
www.wheregraceabounds.org



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The silent auction was really fun, with almost 40 donated items valued between \$15 and \$1,800. After expenses, we raised almost \$10,000! Thanks to everyone who participated and helped to make this such a successful event.

A few other significant anniversaries happened in 2011. Nancy Dryden, WGA's Office Manager, has been with us for 10 years! We honored her at the celebration. Mary, as WGA's Founder, marked 25 years along with the organization. This year is my 15th working in a variety of roles at WGA. Stay tuned for next year, when we will be marking Scott's 20th anniversary!

Transgender Children

Perhaps you have seen recent news stories about transgenderism. Chaz Bono, who transitioned from female to male, has been in the headlines lately due to a new book and as a contestant on *Dancing with the Stars*. Also, there have been stories about new treatments for children who believe they are transgendered. Simply put, transgendered people believe that their bodies do not match who they really are inside, hence the phrase "a man trapped in a woman's body" and vice versa.

New therapies for children in this situation are utilizing medications which delay puberty, to give children more time to decide which gender they really are. Just last week, Scott Kingry was interviewed for Focus on the Family's radio program. He was asked to comment on these issues and had the opportunity to share his own story, some of which includes gender confusion as a child.

Women in Leadership Seminar

On Friday October 14th, WGA staff and leaders will be presenting at a seminar for women in ministry. The theme of the conference is "ministry to women who struggle with same sex attraction." Mary will be speaking to some of the cultural aspects of the issue and casting a vision for the need to reach out to this population. Two of our leaders will be sharing how their daughter's homosexuality impacted their family. Elodie Emig, another of WGA's long-term leaders and a Greek professor at Denver Seminary, will be teaching some of the theological aspects that pertain to the issue of homosexuality.

Building Bridges

On November 5th, I have been asked to co-teach a workshop at

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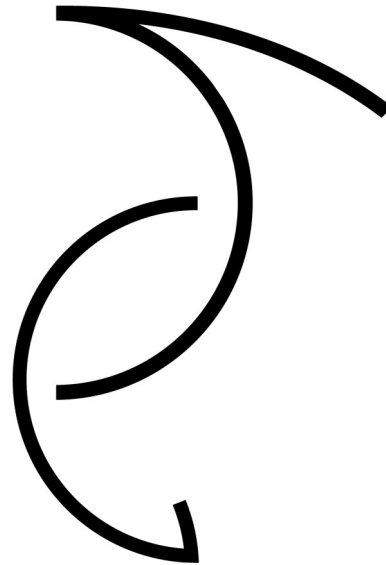
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Highlands Church, a local church in Denver which has taken the position that homosexuality is God-given and should be blessed. You may be asking, “Why would Roger speak at a church like this?” Good question! The theme of their conference this year is “Bridging the Gap,” with the intent to bring people who disagree about the issue of homosexuality together to dialogue. The purpose of the workshop I am participating in is to demonstrate how people who disagree can be respectful to one another, rather than hateful. I would appreciate your prayers about this, that God’s purposes would be accomplished in this.

Financial Update

As we move into the last quarter of the year, we trust that God will continue to provide for WGA’s financial needs. Typically, giving increases during this time of year, and makes up a significant portion of WGA’s budget. Would you pray for our finances? If you are able to give a donation, it would be appreciated.

Thank you so much for your continuing support of WGA! We are blessed to have a broad base of supporters, both through prayer and finances.



Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks

Hunger Pangs

I learned quickly as a mom that my kids were more likely to eat whatever I put in front of them if they were really hungry. It is irritating to take the time to fix a meal and discover that everyone has been snacking their way through the afternoon and find broccoli really unappetizing on stomachs filled with chips.

I thought about this as I was reading Deuteronomy this week. In chapter 8 Moses says, “Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” God caused the Israelites to hunger so that they would eat what He put in front of them. And in the process they learned



that God could and would provide for them in a new way.

After fasting for 40 days in the desert, a very hungry Jesus quoted from this passage in Deuteronomy. He used these words and this idea to deflect Satan’s temptation to satisfy Himself in a way that didn’t include God. (Matt 4:4 and Luke 4:4)

When Stephen delivered his final soliloquy to the accusing Jewish leaders in Acts 7, he reminded them that God had lead his people through hunger even before they marched out of Egypt. In fact, that’s exactly the way he led them in: “Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could

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not find food. When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit.” It was their hunger that drove them to places they wouldn't normally go.

I seldom hunger for food. If I do, it is only by my own choice and not because I'm forced into it. But there are many ways to hunger: starving for attention, for love, for direction, for identity, for a sense of belonging. What if the famines in your life are part of God's careful plan to get you to a new place? To provide for you in a new way that you've never experienced before? To find nourishment in Him that you didn't know was possible?

The temptation is to dull the hunger rather than wait for the meal. Satan offers us potato chips and root beer and illicit sex and distraction and fake internet relationships – all in an effort to spoil our appetite for the real meal, the real provision.

I believe that reading the Bible and spending regular time in God's presence is a way to heighten my sense of spiritual smell for the meal that's being prepared for the day. You know that smell of the turkey on Thanksgiving Day?

How it starts to swirl with the smell of fresh yeast rolls, and the wild sagey smell of stuffing? And maybe the spicy sweet scent of the pumpkin pies that are baking for dessert? As we mature in the art of “Thanksgiving Day waiting” we understand that the more we hold back from satisfying our hunger prematurely, the better that meal will taste. Don't give in to the chips. He knows your hunger. He knows the banquet He is preparing to satisfy it-- at just the right time.



Loneliness is Good

By Mike Goeke

Note from Mary: As I was thinking about my newsletter article for this month (a follow-up on the adequacy of God's provision) it occurred to me that one of the first things we need to consider is our attitude toward God. This series is moving toward what we can learn from Bible characters and God's provision, but before I launch into that I would like to share with you an article by a friend of ours. Mike Goeke has written a great blog entry about loneliness and how God has used it in his life for good. Please enjoy Mike's comments as a primer for my articles to come:

I have discovered that there are many lonely people out there. In many ways, most of the people I counsel, no matter the specific issue they are battling, have a core issue of loneliness. In fact, I think loneliness often serves as the fuel that causes many battles and struggles to become inflamed.

Several years ago I was going through some counseling myself and struggling intensely with who I was as a man and as a Christian. My identity was very shaky. I read many books, and a common

'cure' for my problems included finding some good male friends with whom to have healthy, authentic relationships. I was a little scared of this assignment, but decided I would try. I joined a city-wide, interdenominational men's Bible study. I figured that a men's Bible study would be a great place to make some good, Christian friends.

I was wrong. I sat alone most nights, and rarely spoke to anyone. I looked around the room and everyone seemed to know everyone else. Instead of finding friends, my loneliness only seemed to grow heavier. One night I got angry with God and told him that I was tired of being alone, that the Bible study thing wasn't working to help me meet new friends, and I was just going to quit the stupid Bible study. In the dark of my room, as I expressed my frustration, I sensed God speaking into my heart. He said, not audibly but clear nonetheless, "go to the Bible study to meet ME."

In the days that followed, I realized that my greatest need at that moment was not connecting with a

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friend. My greatest need was connecting with my God. As I quieted myself down, it became clear to me that God could not entrust me with the kind of friendship I longed for at that time. I had set up ‘friends’ as a sort of idol and made friendship the key to my joy and my fulfillment and my healing. I would have devoured friends had He given them to me then. God was gracious in many ways to deny me what I so longed for because it compelled me to Him and the true source of my affirmation and identity. And, amazingly, as I pursued a deeper relationship with God, I found myself developing relationships with other men, and the friendships I had longed for began to happen.

Since then, I have gone through several seasons of loneliness. I believe that God orchestrates those seasons in my life – in all of our lives – to help pull us back to Him. We can be so prone to lose sight of Him and to make something else or someone else our center. But when He becomes all we have, we realize more clearly that He is really all we need. When He, in His godly and relational perfection, speaks affirmation and friendship and love and acceptance into our souls, we are perfectly satisfied. And when we are perfectly satisfied in Him, we are so much more ready to be a true friend to

someone else, and to receive true friendship in a healthy way.

God designed us to be in community and to be in friendship. Those are good things, and things we all must have. But God did not design us to idolize or worship friends and relationships. Our joy is not to be dependent on the state of relationship in our lives. I know from experience that seasons of loneliness hurt immensely but can also be a very good thing. Much of my growth as a Christian has occurred during such seasons. If you are in one now, I encourage you to take this time to get to know God. Explore Him, and share yourself with Him. He promises that He can satisfy you, and you will discover the immensity of what it means to be fulfilled and have abundance in Christ alone. And when your eyes are off of you and on God as the true center of your existence, you might just realize that you are not alone after all.

Mike Goeke’s blog:
[www.stonegatefellowship.com/
pastors/?cat=10](http://www.stonegatefellowship.com/pastors/?cat=10)



September

In Review

September 17th: WGA 25th Anniversary Celebration

September 24th: Men's Event

Thursday Night Group

September 1st: 29 People

September 8th: 31 People

September 15th: 32 People

September 22nd 32 People

September 29th: 38 People

Orientation meeting: 13 New People

October

And Beyond

October 9th: Cherry Creek Presbyterian Mission Event

October 14th: WGA Teaching at "Understanding Broken Sexuality" Conference

October 16th: First Denver Friends Mission Event

October 21-23: Leadership Retreat—please pray for our leaders!

November 5th: Intercessory Prayer. Join us from 8:00— 9:00 am at the WGA offices

November 5th: Roger will be speaking at Highlands Church Symposium

WGA Staff

Roger Jones
Executive Director

Scott Kingry
Program Director

Mary Heathman
Founding Director

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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