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A Measure of Grace

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WGA Welcomes New Staff

by Roger Jones

I am so pleased to announce that Steve and Jill Huston have joined the WGA Staff! If you've been reading WGA newsletters and updates for very long, you have likely seen their names before. The two of them began participating in our Family and Friends group in 2005, and have been around ever since. In 2007, they began leading the Family and Friends group as volunteers.

Here are a few facts about Steve and Jill that will help you get to know them a little better:

- Steve and Jill have been married for 34 years!
- They have four adult children.
- They have five grandchildren, ages 1.5-8.5.
- Steve recently retired from a 33.5 year career with Hughes Aircraft/Raytheon.

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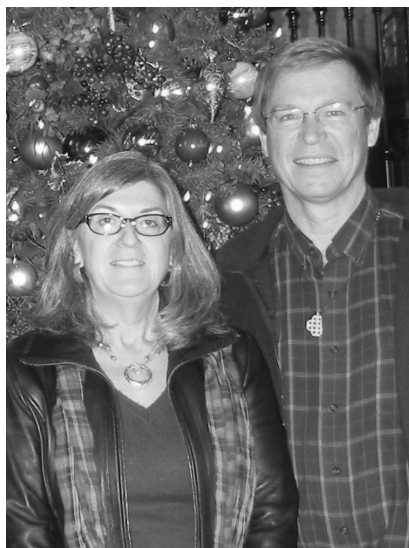
- Jill is a licensed teacher and a professional cake decorator!
- Steve has a MA in counseling from Colorado Christian University and a Chaplain Certificate from Denver Seminary.

Over the past couple of years, Steve and Jill have increased their involvement. They have opened up their home to host a variety of events, including some Family and Friends dinners and other social activities. Jill coordinated all the details of our 25th anniversary celebration in 2011 (and did an excellent job). Both have made themselves available to meet individually with parents and others in WGA's groups for discipleship counseling. Steve has been meeting with a few people who are seeking spiritual direction.

Moving forward, Steve and Jill will continue doing all the things they have been doing already as volunteers. As staff, they will increase their availability and be adding a few additional responsibilities as well. For example, Steve will be focusing a portion of his time developing relationships with churches and pastors in the area, working to increase WGA's visibility in the community. His title(s) are Chaplain/Church Liaison. Jill will coordinate events

such as our monthly Newcomers' Breakfast. Her title is Friends and Family Coordinator.

As with any ministry job, I am sure there will be many other aspects of WGA Steve and Jill will find themselves helping out with. Please keep in mind that they, along with the rest of the staff, are here for you if you need anything. And please pray for them as they begin the process of raising financial support.



Jill and Steve Huston



Yesterday, When I Was Young

By Mary Heathman

I'm going to meander in my musings a good bit today. A current critic recently said to me, "I have to wade through all your words just looking for the point—too many words, Mary!" He has a point, I think! So I will tell you the point of this article right up front, so you won't miss it as you wander with me through the wrestlings of my mind and heart!

So here's the point: *God pursues us through whatever means necessary to find us and then He shows us our hearts. He shows us the deepest needs and longings we didn't even know were buried there. He turns a light on our desperate attempts to fill the emptiness. He exposes our failed efforts at filling the gaps ourselves. Then He turns us toward Hope. Jesus is about finding us, telling us the Truth; He is about forgiving, comforting and healing us from the effects of our fallenness, then lifting us up to His higher purpose for us.*

That's the point; that's the truth as I know it so far. Now for those of you who don't mind a few more words, I will flesh that out a bit.

I am in what is turning out to be a rather long contemplative season think-

ing about my life and ministry. This process seems to be normal – at least that's what my elders tell me (there are less and less of them these days, so in my reflection I often refer back to the writings of saints long gone.) My contemplation is deep and ongoing, so I am not writing about a completed process, but one pattern that I have noticed is how God has used music to catch my attention.

There are five songs that represent the state of my mind and heart during the mid-sixties to early 70s. My life changed dramatically during that time and as I look back and remember, these five songs came to mind, and I have been reflecting on how I see God worked through them, although I wasn't aware that it was Him at all.

The five songs are: *Yesterday, When I Was Young* (1964), *People* (1968), *Is That All There Is?* (1969), *Send In the Clowns* (1973), and *Why Me Lord?* (1973). For me, these were, and are, very important songs, the lyrics of which caught my heart at the time and, looking back today, capture and illustrate the mood and movement of my heart over that decade. The first two catching it up toward "something more" that I wanted, the third and fourth touched the aching places of conviction and regret in my deepest heart, when I was honest with myself.

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Reflections: Thoughts From A WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks



I Heart Brad

We discussed Ephesians 5 in our Bible study last night. There are some tough sections to wade through: “wives submit to your husbands,” and “husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.” The conversation was passionate and honest and difficult. But I checked out a bit and stayed on these two verses: ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, **cleansing her by the washing with water through the word . . .**

My husband decided to take this obscure verse seriously about 4 years ago and dedicated himself to reading the Bible everyday, in part for me. He and I both agreed that we don’t know what it means for me to be “cleansed by the washing of water through the word,” but he wanted to do with it the best he could. His efforts have been rewarded:

- I have experienced more deep, personal healing in the past 4

years than any other span in my life.

- I have been drawn by his example to commit to my own daily reading and that consistent immersion in the Truth continues to inform and transform me.
- He, of course, continues to experience his own transformation by being daily challenged with what is True. And I get to live with a man who is being shaped by the Holy Spirit into a truer version of himself everyday.

It gets easier to submit myself to a man who is striving towards what it true and right. It makes me easier to love as I grow in confidence about the truth of who I am in Christ.

Isn’t that what our relationships are supposed to be about? Making it easier for the other to be who we are intended to be? (Hebrews 10:24) Valuing others (even my husband) above myself? (Phil 2:3-11) As I discover and comprehend that I am complete in

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Christ, beloved by the God of the universe, destined to live with Him forever, then what is it to defer to another human being? Is the truth of who I am diminished because I don't always get to do things the way I would like to?

I am not less than my husband. In fact, because of his love for me, he allows me to be even more than I would believe if left to myself. This is a great mystery to me as a strong, independent woman.

My hope in writing this is to challenge us women to press into a greater understanding of who we are in Christ; and to challenge men to immerse themselves in the truth and love of Christ. It is the greatest gift we can give each other no matter what relationships we find ourselves in.



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And the fifth was my companion as I broke into the wonder of forgiveness, restoration, and awareness of the beginnings of one of the deepest desires of my heart—a particular calling and purpose in life.

Yesterday, When I Was Young (1964)

ⁱ : I was eighteen—the parent of a one year old. Charles Aznavour, with his delightful French accent, sang words that caught my breath away:

The game of love I played with arrogance and pride/And every flame I lit too quickly, quickly died./The friends I made all seemed somehow to drift away/And only I am left on stage to end the play.

I remember thinking it odd that at eighteen, with my new marriage, new baby and my life stretched out ahead of me. I could feel so dramatically alone. I chalked it up to post-natal blues and shook off the feeling. ... mostly.

People (1968)ⁱⁱ : I was 23, the mother of two. My dad died that year don't know what to say about that . . . there are so many consequences you might expect from losing your father way too early (. . . it's always too soon . . .). One of the ways I dealt with that loss was to retreat deeper into a self-sufficient, "don't need emotions, don't need people" mode. So imagine my shock when I had a visceral emotional response to a song in the movie, *Funny Girl*:

A feeling deep in your soul/ Says you are half now you're whole, /No more hunger and thirst, But first be a person who needs people,/People who need people.../Are the luckiest people in the world...

I was so overcome I rushed out of the theater and into the restroom. When I could get my head around what was happening to me, I looked in the mirror, and stared into my own eyes, and said, "Mary, you don't believe what you think you do; something is going on way deep in you." I was reminded of the words from *Yesterday*, "the game of love I played." I decided to pay more attention and see what might be going on deeper in me.

Is That All There Is? (1969)ⁱⁱⁱ : Just a few months later, I was at happy hour with friends from work. The kids were with their dad and we were doing our "happy" thing. I was celebrating a recent promotion and the mood was light and upbeat. Then a song came on—louder than the others it seemed. The lyrics caught my breath away—I paid attention:

And as I sat there watching the marvelous spectacle/I had the feeling that something was missing./I don't know what, . . . /Is that all there is, is that all there is/If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing/Let's break out the booze and have a ball/If that's all there is.

And I, there in the lounge, amid the celebration, had an insight—"there is something more that I want. As good

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as this gets, there has to be something more, or there isn't any point to life."

In 1972, I found the "something more." I became a Christ-follower. The story of how I was drawn and led very specifically to the moment I committed my life to Jesus Christ is a story I love to tell. But for right now, I am just telling about how God used five songs in the process.

Send In the Clowns (1973)^{iv}: This year I was 27, mother of two, step-mother of four; with a whole new life as a Christian. There was great joy and relief and freedom and appetite for growth—but in the process, also a painful time of facing the truth about my life's choices. A song at that time again caught my heart up with the fullness of my regret—especially over relationships I had lost or discarded. In the midst of a lot of emotion, I mostly felt foolish:

Don't you love farce?/My fault, I fear./But where are the clowns?/There ought to be clowns./Quick, send in the clowns./Don't bother - they're here.

I knew myself to be the chief clown in the narrative of my life.

Why Me Lord? (1973)^v: I had come to the place where I was submitting even my regrets to God. In that season, Kris Kristofferson wrote and performed this song – every word in it felt like it had been written specifically for my heart's condition. Most poignant, though, was the tentative

hope that came out of it—could it be I could help someone else...:

*Lord help me Jesus, I've wasted it so/
Help me Jesus I know what I am/Now that I know that I've needed You so/
Help me Jesus, my soul's in your hand/Tell me Lord, if you think there's a way I can try to repay/All I've taken from you/Maybe Lord, I can show someone else/What I've been through myself/On my way back to you.*

And He showed me; and here I am in ministry; what a privilege; what a miracle!

So there you have it—the chronicle of how the Lord used "secular" music to draw me to Himself. I hope I have made my point. Thanks for "listening" to my many words!

ⁱ*Yesterday, When I Was Young* (1964): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiLo5q0wqxU>

ⁱⁱ*People* (1964): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-8gn6vGu_w

ⁱⁱⁱ*Is That All There Is?* (1969): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCRZZC-DH7M>

^{iv}*Send In the Clowns* (1973): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnwJ5KlcKX4>

^v*Why Me, Lord* (1973): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veBR0aH54M0>



January

In Review

January 11th – Monthly Family & Friends of Sex Offenders meeting

January 11th – Men's Commitment Group began. Please be praying for the 5 men participating, plus the two leaders.

January 12th – Survivors of Abuse group began. Please pray for the 4 participants and the 2 leaders of this group as well!

February

And Beyond

March 2nd: Intercessory Prayer meeting, 8:00 am at the WGA offices. Come join us as we pray for the needs of the ministry

March 8th: Monthly Family & Friends of Sex Offenders meeting

March 21st: Monthly Orientation Meeting required for participation in WGA's Thursday Night Group—invite a friend!

April 6th: Family & Friends Gathering—stayd tune for more information

Thursday Night Group

January 3rd: 32 People

January 10th: 30 People

January 17th: 46 People

January 24th: 37 People

January 31st: 45 People

Orientation meeting: 10 New People

WGA Staff

Roger Jones
Executive Director

Scott Kingry
Program Director

Mary Heathman
Founding Director

Steve Huston
Chaplain/Church Liaison

Jill Huston
Family & Friends Coordinator

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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