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# A Measure of Grace

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

## Introducing... Come Arise Ministries *by Roger Jones*

About a year ago, Shannon Rants, a member of WGA's Leadership Team, came to the staff to let us know about a new idea for a ministry that was forming in her heart. Shannon is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and has been counseling others for a number of years, as well as volunteering at WGA in a variety of ways. One of her passions is teaching, and she has been able to share this passion in a variety of venues: WGA, Colorado Christian University, and a number of other places as well.

Shannon's vision for a new ministry was focused on education. She wanted to develop some classes on topics related to sexuality and relationship that people could watch online. Additionally, she had a desire to teach seminars and work with married couples. Shannon visited a WGA staff meeting to tell us about her ideas and her

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plan to begin a new nonprofit called Come Arise Ministries. Almost immediately, I began to consider that this new vision could be incorporated into WGA's.

Shannon's vision fits well with what we do here at WGA. Since Karen Wood left the staff about 10 years ago, we haven't had a staff person specifically focused on the educational aspects of WGA. The rest of the staff has collectively picked up the slack in that department, but what Shannon describes really takes things in a new direction and requires some new materials. After some discussions and some prayer, with the staff and the WGA Board of Directors, we decided to start Come Arise Ministries under the umbrella of Where Grace Abounds. I am so excited about Shannon's vision that I want her to be able to spend her time on preparing her classes rather than on filling out all the paperwork involved in starting a new organization.

As of the beginning of January, the first course is available online! It consists of 5 teachings and is available for a limited time at a discounted price.

### **Understanding Our Cycle of Connection**

Have you been feeling disconnected from God, from others or from yourself? Do you find yourself stuck in unhealthy relational patterns or addictions? Take this eCourse which will help you understand: what keeps you stuck in unhealthy relational patterns, how

to break unhealthy habits and how to reCONNECT in healthy ways. This 5-week interactive video class is self-paced. Recommended for both men and women. You will need access to a computer that has video viewing software installed, a personal journal, and a Bible of your choice.

Special introductory price: \$50 for 3 months access (50% savings)

Come Arise Ministries provides the unique opportunity to learn about gender, sexuality and relationships through online eCourses that they have created. These transformational eCourses enable us to impact people who lack community support and resources, or those who want to dig deeper into their journey.

Come Arise Ministries also provides structured retreat experiences for groups and is available for speaking engagements. Please check out [comearise.org](http://comearise.org). Even if you don't take the course, it is worth looking at the website to see what is there. We would love to hear any feedback that you have for us about the classes or the website. Please help us to spread the word!





## Christ In You, the Hope of Glory

*By Mary Heathman*

*“The, **Hope of Glory** within, ever reminds us that this short season we call life is only a prelude to that moment when every knee will bow before the beauty of this One who has saved our souls. This is the wonder that wakes us each morning with expectation and hope, even amidst the darkest hours of our humanity. Because Jesus is our destiny, once we taste of Him, the glory that lies ahead becomes for us the real life.”<sup>i</sup>*

*This mystery has been kept in the dark for a long time, but now it's out in the open. God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message. We preach Christ, warning people not to add to the Message. We teach in a spirit of profound common sense so that we can bring each person to maturity. To be mature is to be basic. Christ! No more, no less. (Colossians 1:27-28, MSG)*

How easy it is to forget who we are—forget that we are “little Christs”—and it is so easy to get caught up in the details of living life in this world. Such details need to be attended to, so attend we do, but without awareness that the vitality of our spiritual life is ebbing away. It takes a while to notice, but slowly and surely, the realization seeps in. . . . “I am spending my time and energy on things that won't exist, or certainly won't be so urgent, in the eternity for which I am destined.”

In this new year, I hope that I don't dwell on all the ways I can be distracted, nor become anxious about all the wiles of the enemy

### **Series in a Nutshell**

Let's not forget who we are;

- We are Christians--little Christs.
- We are in Christ; we belong with His followers.
- We are easily distracted from Him; but confession and repentance restores our focus.
- Christ In Us; Mysterious Hope of Glory

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## #Chastityw/truth&grace

By Scott Kingry

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*The bottom line is this: God created sex for marriage, and within a Christian moral vocabulary, it is impossible to defend sex outside of marriage. To more liberal readers, schooled on a generation of Christian ethics written in the wake of the sexual revolution, this may sound like old-fashioned hooey, but it is the simple, if sometimes difficult, truth. **Lauren Winner, Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity.***

Everything in social media has a hashtag (#) in front of it these days. This little symbol is usually followed by a word, or pithy phrase and is used to create links for those surfing the net for nearly anything. As we stand atop a fresh new year, I'm reflecting on what ministry for Where Grace Abounds looks like in 2014. If I could boil down my own personal heart and message these days, I would land on the succinct phrase, "Chastity with Truth and Grace." My hope is that with God's help my focus on the former will not compromise either of the latter two.

Chastity is an old-school word (actually "old-school" is becoming an old-school word) that seems to have disappeared from the Church's teaching, understanding and practical application. One of my favorite and

most used definitions is from Lauren Winner's book cited above, "*Chastity is a commitment to having sex in its proper place. The free choice to live one's sexual life in accordance with Christian values.*" Where Grace Abounds affirms the Bible's (the Truth part of this article's title) plain teaching that the proper place for sex is within the context of a marriage between a man and a woman; moreover, to live biblically as a single person is to live celibately. Cut, dried and easy, right? Not even close. This is where the Grace part of the message makes all the difference. We know from experience that walking out one's sexuality day-to-day can be one messy, complicated and bumpy ride. We need God's (and everyone else's) deepening grace at every turn.

My last few articles have focused on the reality that sexuality in our secular culture is somehow simultaneously a **public** and **private** thing. In Christian culture, to nuance things a bit, sexuality is both **communal** (a shared topic of general discussion, teaching and support to live out) and **personal** (still a sacred thing to be discussed with only those who have earned the right to that sort of vulnerability). The bottom line from my last

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two articles is this: To successfully navigate the turbulent waters of sexuality and chastity is a **collaborative effort**. God, the individual, his/her church and a supportive network of close intimates are all necessary. This is why I love the spirit of Winner's definition of chastity. Regardless of almost any other variable, if we freely choose to align our sexual lives with biblical values, we really need one another to keep us on track and help get us there. To those with an independent streak, who vow to bluster through every issue and problem conveniently alone, this may seem very bad news.

I've been amused by friends over dinner lately, as we've discussed my recent articles. When I've talked about sexuality as a "communal" topic within the Church, some have been confused and just a little horrified. "We're supposed to talk about our private sexual lives in church?" is the tentative response. Well, the confusion is understandable I imagine. "Communal" brings on visions of freewheeling hippies living together in the 70s, or old, naughty movies about Roman orgies. No wonder they're slightly shocked. Perhaps before I proceed I should clarify what I mean when I say "sexuality."

My definition of sexuality is multifaceted. Beyond genital activity, sexuality *is* about our bodies—our biological designated sex/gender, how we feel about our bodies and how we

steward ourselves and our sexual drives. Sexuality also influences our emotional lives, our mental lives and our wills. It has a relational component because it is the very energy of our sexuality that pulls us toward one another for relationships. Without it, we wouldn't want to go beyond our own selves. Our sexuality would include the non-physical side of gender—how we feel, think and fit in with the same and opposite sex, and how we navigate masculinity and femininity in our culture. Sexuality also has a spiritual dimension; God cares very much what we do with our bodies, and chastity is actually a daily spiritual discipline.

That's a lot isn't it? It's a lot to talk about and a lot of "weight" to carry around on one's own. This is why I keep reiterating *ad nauseam* that our chastity is a shared and collective effort. So with this definition of sexuality in mind, I want to explore not only how the Church can reinsert chastity/sexuality into community dialog but also to whom, about what and how much one should personally share about this private facet of life? Stay tuned as I plan to share some practical ideas in my next article.

(Christ in You continued from page 3)

who seeks to not only distract but to destroy. Plenty of attention is paid to these—it seems that a focus on the enemy can itself be a most effective distraction from following Christ. What I hope for instead, is a heart and mind that are attentive first and foremost to the things that matter not just for today, but for eternity.

What might that look like, I wonder? There will certainly be plenty of uncertainty as we have such a focus on the horizon of life hereon earth and the hope of heaven; but one thing I do know—I don't have to do it alone:

*And the Master, God, stays right  
there and helps me,  
so I'm not disgraced.  
Therefore I set my face like flint,  
confident that I'll never regret  
this.  
My champion is right here.  
Let's take our stand together!  
(Isaiah 50:4-6, MSG)*

No, I am not alone in this commitment. God will be with me. And, though I can't know for sure, I am fairly confident that there are more than a few brothers and sisters in Christ who will stand firm with me as well. None of us have to do this alone.

So what about this “Christ in You, the Hope of Glory?” What is our part in pursuing understanding and living into this promise?

A couple of thoughts from favorite authors on this topic:

*“ . . . . strive to see every natural gift and pleasure as a shaft of God's glory, enjoying it always in its proper place.” (C. S. Lewis, as cited by Phillip Yancey in What Good is God?: In Search of a Faith That Matters.)*

What a difference it makes to approach each day anticipating what God might be up to and with the intention to enjoy this day as a gift from him! As the sun rising brings the mountains more visible with ever increasing clarity, the interpreting of each day's circumstances through a filter of God's purposes brings focus and joy. The other day I was driving down I-25 to Colorado Springs with a full checklist on my mind. . . .did I remember to. . . .did I bring. . . . what if. . . but then there is. . . but maybe. . . . I remembered this quote from Lewis, and shut off the voice cluttering up my head, and lifted up my eyes to the foothills, toward Pike's Peak, and noticed the clouds contrasted

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(Christ in You *continued from page 6*)

against the Colorado blue sky. One final step. . . . “Lord thank you for this gift, this pleasure of seeing the beauty of our state—this is a shaft of your Glory!” And my mind was calmed, my nerves were settled, peace reigned! What a difference it made, as I arrived rested and ready to work!

*“The point of 1 Corinthians 13 is that love is not our duty; it is our destiny. It is the language Jesus spoke . . . . the food they eat in God’s new world . . . . the music God has written . . . It is the resurrection life.”* (N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope*).

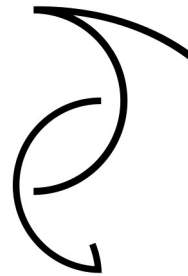
In the previous quote, Wright is poetic in his expression of the place of love in God’s kingdom. To love is not a chore or obligation, but it is the very fabric of our existence. It is our purpose as “little Christs” to love the world as Jesus does. God has made it clear that the riches of the Gospel are poured out for all the world. And He does this through His people, his men and women who are to be his agents in the world. We are to mingle with the men and women, boys and girls, of this world for the express purpose of being the “living embodiments of truth, humble little echoes of Je-

sus on the left hand and on the right. Every one of our lives is a testimony, and heaven’s plan for yours and for mine is to be flesh and blood advertisements for what His grace can do.” (Author unknown)

So, I don’t know what else it will look like for me; and know even less what it will entail for anyone else. But this one thing I know: We are free to love people in Jesus’ name; we are free to declare God’s faithfulness and provision for people desperate to know the gospel is for them. We are free to reflect “Christ in us, the Hope of Glory!”

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<sup>i</sup>The Soul at Rest: Rescources for a life of prayer.  
[http://soulatrest.com/pages/exalted\\_Christ13.html](http://soulatrest.com/pages/exalted_Christ13.html)





## **December In Review**

**December 6th:** WGA presented at a Celebrate Recovery Meeting

**December 16th:** WGA gave a presentation to students visiting from southwestern Colorado

## **January And Beyond**

**January 26<sup>th</sup>:** WGA Leadership Meeting – please pray for WGA's staff and Leaders as we plan and train for working with the people in our care.

**February 1st:** Intercessory Prayer meeting, 8:00 am at the WGA offices. Come join us as we pray for the needs of the ministry

**February 24<sup>th</sup>:** Friends and Family of Persons Convicted (or Charged) of a Sex Offense (FFPCSO) group will be meeting. Please contact the WGA office if you would like more information about this group.

## **Financial Update**

**Final numbers are not yet in for 2013, but God is faithful. Due to the generous gifts of many of WGA's friends and supporters, we really closed the gap on how much of a deficit there was for the year. Praise God!**

### **Thursday Night Group**

**December 5th:** 22 people

**December 12th:** No Group

**December 19th:** 24 people

**December 26th:** 20 people

**Orientation meeting:** 2 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*  
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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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