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A Measure of *Grace*

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An Important Update about Mary Heathman *by Roger Jones*

By now, I am sure that many of you have heard the news that Mary Heathman was involved in a serious car accident on May 15th. Let me begin by letting you know that she is doing fine now and is expected to make a full recovery. We are so grateful that she was spared. Here are more details of what transpired, from my perspective.

Just a few short weeks ago, WGA was having its typical Thursday night group meeting. It was the third Thursday of the month, which meant that in addition to all the usual groups and activities, it was also the night for the monthly Orientation Meeting. Five men and women came for their very first time that night and were able to meet Mary and hear her story and some of WGA's history. Later that

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night, on her way home, Mary was involved in the acci-

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dent.

I got word of the accident even later at home. Just before midnight, I received a text message from Mary's pastor saying, "Mary H. in car accident. Serious head injury. I'm just arriving at Denver Health." I was in shock, or course. I did not know how to process the information, but I quickly got dressed, prayed with my wife Jill, and left for the hospital. On the way, I called Scott and stopped to pick him up so that we could go together. By that time, I had received a follow-up text that simply read, "Improving Outlook."

During those twenty minutes between text messages, my mind was racing. Mostly, I was filled with the overwhelming feeling that I was not ready to say goodbye to Mary. I did not want to lose my friend, mentor, and coworker. I was reminded with gratitude that, even though Mary is no longer the Executive Director of WGA, she remains a rock of strength and wisdom to whom I have access on a daily basis. And I still enjoy working with her after all these years!

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Once we arrived at the hospital, we found out that Mary had accidentally driven through a red light and had a head-on collision with another car. The passengers in the other vehicle walked away without serious injuries. With great relief we discovered that Mary's head injury was minor, despite her serious concussion. There had been a lot of blood which caused the initial questions about the extent of her head

injury. She will have a scar on the left of her forehead, but no internal damage was done. Her right arm was seriously broken, requiring surgery; her left collarbone was broken; and the big toe on her right foot was dislocated. Her right knee, fortunately not broken, was compressed somehow, and has caused her a bit of discomfort. After three days in the hospital, Mary was sent home to rest and recover.

As of the time of this writing, Mary remains at home recuperating. While she cannot lift anything of significance, she does have limited use of both arms and hands. She is able to feed and dress herself, although both activities take much longer than she is used to. She has been enjoying visitors, especially

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Where are You Headed?

By Mary Heathman

(reprinted from May 2010)

So, did you hear the one about the woman from Denver who packed her belongings, loaded up her car and headed for New York? She did all the right things—the car was ready, oil changed and full of gas; she had her driver's license with her; she had reservations for motels at all the right spots along the way. But when she got to I-70, she headed west instead of east. From almost anywhere in the country, New York is east. She was traveling in the wrong direction and if she didn't turn around, she was never going to get to New York, no matter how sincerely she believed she was headed the right way.

I have been in that position before, both literally and many times figuratively. Once, when I was on the plains of Kansas, I filled up with gas at a truck stop, got back on the highway and drove two hours before I noticed that the mileage signs were all for cities I had supposedly already driven through! When I finally got turned around, I had driven 150 miles in the wrong direction; 150 miles I had already covered earlier in the day; 150 miles I had to drive again just to get back to the point in the road where I had turned west instead of east. (I don't believe I ever told my brother why I was four hours later than I said I would be!)

There are plenty of directional signs along I-70. Neither the woman headed for New York nor I needed to get too far in the wrong direction before we got to a highway sign telling us clearly what direction we were headed. Of course, in order for the signs to be helpful, we needed to pay attention to them in the first place. We don't know what the New York bound woman's problem was, but as for me, I was listening to a book on tape, and I-70 just goes on and on without incident – I was on my way and making good time, couldn't be bothered with details like double-checking my direction!

Stephen Covey, in his book, *7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, describes the difference between a manager and a leader. As he tells the story, the team was building a road through the jungle. The manager coordinated the schedules, assigned work crews, saw to it that equipment was in good repair, and that the workers had what they needed. The leader climbed the tallest tree in the jungle to look around and yelled down to the manager, "We're in the wrong forest!" The manager yelled back, "Don't bother me, we're making great progress!"

I am so often like that leader, not getting up into the tree soon enough to plan out the project well. Or I can sometimes even be like the manager

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Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Nancy Hicks



Tippy Toes

The summer of my 6th year, I took swimming lessons at our local, outdoor community pool. Looking back, I can see that the bored teen-aged boy charged with teaching us to float was not thrilled with his summer job. He threw our sturdy little bodies into the water one by one, told us to float, and flirted with the life-guard. His only job was to teach us to trust the water, and my only job was to try to figure out how – he failed at his job. Within a few minutes of the “floating lesson” he showed us how to add kicking and armstrokes to our float so we could motor across the width of the shallow end. I watched the other kids lying on top of the water and just didn’t get it. So for that entire week of lessons, I walked across the bottom of the pool swimming with my arms, diligently trying to imitate the other kids and never saying anything about my confusion (I was that kid – “Don’t make waves and figure everything out yourself because it’s up to you”).

When I got to the second week of lessons my new teacher quickly picked up on the fact that I didn’t know how to float. We had moved a little deeper into the pool, and I could barely keep my nose above the water by standing on the very tips of my toes. It would have been hard to miss my consistent effort not to drown – even for a bored teenager with a bunch of little kids. She took me aside and accomplished in 5 minutes what I hadn’t grasped in the first week.

This vignette came to mind this week as I struggled with buying a car. I’ve never cared about cars, but recently I saw my first Nissan Juke and fell helplessly in love. It’s smaller than is practical for us. It cost more than we had the cash to spend on it (we’ve always tried to pay for our cars and not carry loans). It’s flashy and sporty. And working towards actually buying it stirred up a strange deep pool of emotional residue and identity issues in me. It hit me in a deep place that I realized touched on some major themes in my life. (I know, aren’t you glad you don’t have to live

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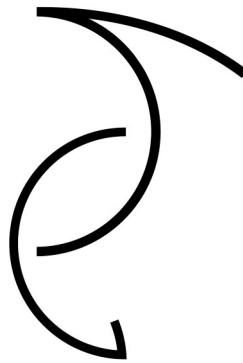
(Reflections continued from page 4)

with me on a daily basis? Brad is a saint.) As I pondered, journaled and reflected on this struggle, I realized that there is a fundamental part of me that is still that little girl that says, “Don’t make waves and figure everything out yourself, because it’s all up to you. If you can’t carry it by yourself, don’t pick it up.” I believe that I should always earn my way, always clean up my own messes, never take on more than I can carry with my own sturdy two legs. That’s the Christian way, isn’t it – a neat, tidy, small world that I can always control? Who actually gets to live that way? No one I know does. I had the sudden thought that if I continued to believe that those two 6 year-old legs had to hold the weight of everything in my life and always touch the bottom, I would never be able to grow; I would never be able to explore deeper places. I would always be too top heavy to move freely and be increasingly anxious about drowning in my life. I needed to learn to float.

The amazing thing about water is that it can keep an aircraft carrier loaded with soldiers, equipment and airplanes afloat; it can keep a cruise ship with thousands of people, all their shoes and enough

food for a third world country afloat. It can handle the weight.

I’m back to this water theme again. I need to give up my own self-contained self-sufficiency that keeps me plodding along in the shallow end and learn to trust the buoyancy of God’s Spirit. Isn’t that what he has been inviting all of us into all along? We can never do it all on our own. We aren’t intended to. To live a big life and take on the joy he has intended our little legs would collapse. He is calling me to something much more fluid and graceful. And fun. Is he inviting you too? Lift your feet off the bottom and give it a try. After all, the truth is that “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).



(Important Update *continued from page 2*)

members of her family. I think they are happy to spend some time with her too. Mary is usually quite busy, and even her children and grandchildren have to schedule time with her for a visit. Knowing where she is and having the option to pop by have been a real gift to them all. Just yesterday, the WGA staff gathered at her home to have our weekly staff meeting and to go to lunch together. Mary seemed sharp and focused for our discussions. She was ready for a rest afterwards, but considering what she has been through, this was no surprise. She will require some physical therapy as she regains use of her arm.

Today, Mary posted this on Facebook. I can only imagine how long it took her to get it all typed out.

“So grateful for all the greetings and prayers for healing. Specifically: friends and family in all the ways they are loving me, from practical helps to emotional support and everything in between. Also, a few specific things make me glad in the here and now:
...Pillows that support my arms so I can text
...The amazing way thumbs work
...Engineers at Toyota that designed the cab of my Camry
...My pilates training that resulted in core strength enough

to get up and down without the use of my arms
...Fridge door water and ice (no caps to twist off water bottles)

...Oxycodone (for first 2 weeks) and Tylenol and Motrin

...Mostly ranch style floor plan

...Visitors

...More could be said, but tired thumbs - want to take care of them well.... Thanks so much everybody! I praise the Lord to be able to enjoy such good Friends and friends.”

And finally, here are a few prayer requests for Mary and for WGA, as a result of her absence:

- For a speedy recovery for Mary, that she will quickly regain her strength and her broken bones will heal.
- For Mary’s search for a new car. Her car was totaled in the accident. She will likely be driving again in 2-3 months.
- For the WGA staff, who are missing her terribly at the office, and for those whom she meets with on a regular basis to counsel and mentor. Mary will likely begin returning to the office for a few hours here and there over the next few weeks.

(Where are You Headed continued from page 3)

that is so interested in the work at hand that he can't lift his eyes a moment and make sure he is on the right track. A portion of scripture, Jeremiah 31:21, taken shamelessly out of context, speaks to these circumstances:

*Set up road signs;
put up guideposts.
Take note of the highway,
the road you take."*

Of course, a few hours lost driving back and forth on I-70, a few thousand dollars lost hacking through the wrong jungle, these things probably don't matter all that much in the long run. As a friend of mine used to say, "It's not worth worrying about; there are no eternal consequences at stake!"

However, there are some turns I have taken that seem to have far-reaching, if not eternal, consequences. When I was nine years old, I decided that God was irrelevant to my life—it was sixteen years before the consequences of that decision piled up enough to get my attention. Choices I made when I was thirteen that led to early marriage, decisions to divorce and remarry, all these still have troubling residual results in my life and that of my children and grandchildren. I see the ripple effects, and though gratefully forgiven, I deeply regret those choices. If I had just known before I . . . well, I really did, didn't I? There were signs.

As for me, I don't want to miss any more signs. I want to be on the alert. I want to know how to pay attention, and turn back at the slightest misstep! I don't presume to know for any-

one else what signs are being ignored right now or whether the direction they have marked out for themselves is going to take them where they ultimately want to go. But I do know that there is a Way available to all of us to check things out—there is another scripture that speaks to directly to this:

*Stand at the crossroads
and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is,
and walk in it
and you will find rest for your souls."*
Jeremiah 6:16

It seems that I have lately experienced a rush of questions about whether the day to day decisions of my life are lining up with my values and convictions. Maybe that's because I am approaching the season of life where one just naturally wants to take stock; I want to make sure my life is filled with activities that will lead me to my highest purpose—God's purpose for me. So that's why I stand at the crossroads of my life and pay attention, and look for the well-worn path laid out by God for me. I keep on asking where my next step should be and walk tentatively as it opens up before me. The rest for my soul is tangible when I live this way.

I pray for this rest for WGA group members, supporters, staff and leadership. May we know the Way and walk with Him always.



May In Review

May 10th: Mary taught at COSA Training

May 24th: WGA Annual Picnic in the Park

May 28th: The staff met for an extended planning meeting

June And Beyond

June 8th: WGA Leadership Meeting

June 28th: WGA Event - Lakeside Amusement Park

July 5th: Intercessory Prayer meeting, 8:00 am at the WGA offices. Come join us as we pray for the needs of the ministry.

July 9th: WGA presenting at Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting Youth Camp

Financial Update

Would you pray for WGA's finances and consider making a donation? As of the end of May, WGA has experienced a financial loss of approximately \$25,000 for 2014. This has almost depleted the funds held in reserve for lean months like we have had this year. Thank you in advance you're your prayers and your help!

Thursday Night Group

May 1st: 34 people

May 8th: 33 people

May 15th: 41 people

May 22nd: 33 people

May 29th: 48 people

Orientation meeting - 3 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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