



October 2015  
Volume 19 Issue 10

# A Measure of *Grace*

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

## Ministry Updates

*by Roger Jones*

### Upcoming Seminars

On **Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**, we will be hosting a seminar during our regular Thursday-night group time (7pm – 9pm). The topic will be, “Understanding the Gender Dysphoric/Transgender Experience.” Our goal for this evening of information and discussion is to bring greater understanding to an issue that many find troubling and confusing. Increasing our understanding of the issue will enable greater love and empathy for this population of people. The seminar will be taught by Shannon Rants, MA. Shannon has been a part of the WGA Leadership Team since 2007. She currently serves as the director of Come Arise Ministries, a subsidiary of Where Grace Abounds. Shannon lives in Portland, OR with her husband Brian and their two sons. You can learn more about Shannon and Come Arise Ministries by visiting [www.comearise.org](http://www.comearise.org).

On **Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 1pm**, we will be hosting a seminar and training for pastors

*(Continued on page 2)*



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

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

Email:  
[info@wheregraceabounds.org](mailto:info@wheregraceabounds.org)  
Website:  
[www.wheregraceabounds.org](http://www.wheregraceabounds.org)



(Updates continued from page 1)

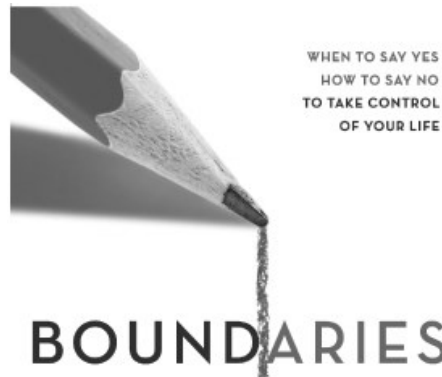
and ministry leaders on the same topic, "Understanding the Gender Dysphoric/Transgender Experience." The focus of this particular seminar will be on helping pastoral caregivers better understand these confusing issues and empower them to reach out with God's love to those who are transgender and/or their loved ones. Shannon Rants will also be teaching this seminar. Consider inviting your pastor!

For more information on either of these two seminars, please contact the WGA offices.

### **Boundaries Book Study**

This month on Wednesday evenings, Scott has a book study and discussion group on *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. Please be praying for this group of men and women as they explore the topic of boundaries and how their personal lives are affected by them.

Having clear boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle. A boundary is a personal property line that marks those things for which we are responsible. In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not. Boundaries impact all areas of our lives: Physical boundaries help us determine who may touch us and under what circumstances -- Mental boundaries give us the freedom to have our own thoughts and opinions -- Emotional boundaries help us to deal with



our own emotions and disengage from the harmful, manipulative emotions of others -- Spiritual boundaries help us to distinguish God's will from our own and give us renewed awe for our Creator -- Often, Christians focus so much on being loving and unselfish that they forget their own limits and limitations. When confronted with their lack of boundaries, they ask: Can I set limits and still be a loving person? What are legitimate boundaries? What if someone is upset or hurt by my boundaries? How do I answer someone who wants my time, love, energy, or money? Aren't boundaries selfish? Why do I feel guilty or afraid when I consider setting boundaries (From the *Boundaries* book jacket, 1992)?

### **Speaking**

We have had a number of opportunities to speak in the past couple of months. Scott was part of a panel discussion about ministering to gay people in the church for the Evangelical

(Continued on page 6)

## How Should We Respond?

*By Mary Heathman*

---

In last month's newsletter, I offered a resource that has been helpful to me: Alistair Begg at the last Ligonier Conference<sup>1</sup> was talking about realities of our culture and his thoughts on how to respond. Begg offered "three possible responses--two he thought we should avoid; only one he thought we should adopt." His three options were admonition, accommodation, and proclamation. The audience was exhorted to avoid the first two and concentrate on the third.

I was impressed by his rationale, particularly as it seems to match how the Lord has led WGA in its almost 30 years of ministry. The rest of this article includes a summary statement of Begg's view, and a smattering of my thoughts on each option.

### **Option One: Admonition— respond in a spirit of condemnation.**

**Alistair Begg (AB):** "A church can quickly become an angry place; a place with a spirit of admonition. We seem to have aspirations to replace Henson's Muppets, Statler and Waldorf, the balconeers who were never down in the action but sat up there mumphing and bumphing, criticizing.



The biblical precedent here is the Sons of Thunder, kind of a reverse altar call approach."

**Mary Heathman (MH):** At WGA, the staff and leadership have responded to the call to get into the action, to be a direct part of God's provision for people whose consequences of their own or another's sexual and relational sin can complicate their current relationships and eat away at their spiritual well-being. To those who stand on the sidelines and lob over their critiques of others or of us, we simply say, "Come to an orientation, invite us to speak at your church, volunteer to be a mentor or a spiritual friend to people whose lives are often lonely all the time." WGA has no interest in being a part of a spirit of condemnation toward the people God has called us to love.

### **Option Two: Accommodation—**

*(Continued on page 4)*

(How Should We Respond? continued from page 3)

**respond with “a theologically vague and harmlessly accommodating gospel which is no gospel at all.”**

**AB:** This “no gospel at all” approach of accommodation tragically exists now within the broader framework of evangelicalism. This issue of truth and reality and history is absolutely crucial .... G D Youngman, a historian, studied 86 different societies spanning 5,000 years. He found an unexpected and direct correlation between sexual continence and the ability of a society to grow and remain healthy. In human records, there is no instance of a society retaining its energy after a complete new generation has inherited a tradition which does not insist on pre-nuptial and post-nuptial continence. Begg goes on, quoting another historian, Arnold Toynbee who once said “...of the 22 civilizations that have appeared in history, 19 of them have collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today.”<sup>iii</sup> Toynbee died in 1975, before seeing the worst that was yet to come.

**MH:** The temptation to accommodate is just as strong as is the pull to admonish. These are two extremes in a polarized church—at least that is how the Church is portrayed in the media—the medieval, condemning,

critical, unloving Church, or the progressive, enlightened, affirming, and therefore “loving” Church. WGA is familiar with this tension. In recent years, the pull has moved from one to the other temptation so quickly it makes my head swim. In the not so distant past, it was common for us in our Q&A sessions to field questions that mostly leaned toward the condemnation of sexual sin. In those venues we were criticized by some as “soft on sin.” Just a couple of years ago, we were in a discussion with Denver area pastors when it seemed we were in the opposite position. The questions that came up in this meeting were all leaning toward accommodation (at least this is how it seemed to us.) I remember saying to them, “Just a few years ago, I was trying to get some of you to lighten up, to remember not to compromise God’s grace for people. Now I find myself reminding you that there is a biblical standard for sexuality, a position that must be considered, the truth of God’s word that must not be compromised.” At WGA, accommodation to the direction of our society (that ignores biblical principles) is not an option.

**Option Three: Proclamation—make a clear and understandable public announcement on what the Bible says, and its importance.**

**AB:** What are we to do? We say “no” to admonition, “no” to accommodation and say

(Continued on page 5)

(How Should We Respond? *continued from page 4*)

**“yes” to proclamation.** As Paul did in Athens—he was in a sophisticated environment; he was aware it was full of idols. What stirred him is the de-godding of God, God robbed of his glory. Now he stands; **he is confronting that culture, he identifies with them; he builds bridges; he engages them.** He starts at the beginning, “God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything.” Use this foundational framework to help us engage the world in which we find ourselves today.

**MH:** This is where Alistair Begg’s teaching is most encouraging to me. Oswald Chambers has said that “the author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been struggling for utterance in you.”<sup>iv</sup> When I came to faith in 1972, I came into the Kingdom with many false ideas about who God is and who I was, and certainly about Christians and how they should be in the world. I found biblical principles like “be in the world and not of it” (John 17:14–19,) and the teachings of Jesus that, if we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoners, we are actually feeding, clothing, and visiting Him (Matthew 25:31–46). At WGA, part of our calling is to follow Jesus as He was with His disciples; He was with them, lived His life with them, came alongside

(as a paraclete) them. It is the WGA approach to proclaim and provide God’s uncompromised grace and truth within the context of a community, teaching, discipleship, mentoring, and spiritual direction. And the last couple of years, the Lord has been pressing us to proclaim what He has taught us to the Body of Christ in a more intentional and purposeful way. (More will be said about that in future articles.)

**AB:** If we are going to take on the challenges of the day. . . , no, we **need** to take on the challenges of the day; **we need to be prepared to say what the Bible says; not to be rude, or make enemies all the time, after all we also were in rebellion at one time. Although truth has stumbled in the public square and the substitute gods that are offered in our culture today are worthless, it is not difficult to gain agreement on one thing; our world is broken. The intent of man to bring reconciliation is confronted at every turn with the virtual impossibility of it all. Husbands and wives, parents and children, why is this? – because we are alienated from the God who made us.**

**MH:** I have had the opportunity several times (Kenya, Oregon, Denver, and Tennessee) to **present a series of workshops on Sexual Brokenness**

(Continued on page 6)

(How Should We Respond? *continued from page 5*)

**that poses three questions: “What is God’s intent for human sexuality?” “What is broken?” and “What would God have us do?”**

**This is what I want to do more—to help people come to an understanding of God’s love and grace and intent for human sexuality—not condemnation of those who fall short, but provision for those who seek His highest and best.**

**Please pray with us for our society,**

**the Church, and WGA’s place in the process of proclaiming biblical principles in His way, His timing, His way.**

<sup>i</sup>Alistair Begg, (2015) National Ligonier Conference, “After Darkness, Light.”

<sup>ii</sup>James Stewart, (1952) in a speech to Yale Divinity School.

<sup>iii</sup>Arnold Toynbee, a British historian (1889-1975), *A Study of History*, 1934-1961.

<sup>iv</sup>Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, uploaded 10/05/2015 from: <http://utmost.org/classic/approved-unto-god-classic/>

(Updates *continued from page 2*)

cal Presbyterian Church of the West Region’s annual meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Scott and Roger were invited to tell their stories at Wellspring Church in September. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Tree of Life Church, Steve and Jill Huston had the opportunity to share about their experience as parents and about the struggles their children have faced. In November, we have been invited to speak at Foothills Fellowship. Also, we have been invited to come and share our stories with the leadership of a local church that is wrestling with what their church’s position should be regarding homosexuality and church leadership (Please be praying for us and them about this conversation).

### **One by One**

As we mentioned in last month’s newsletter, WGA has entered into a partnership with One by One. Most

readers are aware that WGA partners with churches and other organizations in a variety of ways. This month, as we seek to be more intentional in coming alongside the Church, we entered into partnership with One by One (OBO), a long-time friend of WGA. We plan to share resources and skills, gifts and abilities, as the Lord guides and directs. Initially, WGA will be providing content for OBO’s bi-monthly email blasts. This will give WGA visibility to the readers of OBO newsletters; the e-blasts reach 1500 across the United States. The WGA staff will also be featured as speakers available to serve churches that want to under-



(Updates continued from page 6)

stand biblical sexuality and healthy relationships. As we work together in the next few months, pray for us as we seek ways to work together to serve the Body of Christ as it seeks to minister in the current culture.

### **Beyond Containment**

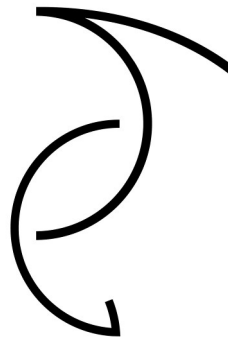
Over the last 10 years, WGA has encountered a particularly isolated group of people. We have met individuals, and some of their family and friends, who have been convicted of a Sex Offense. This led Mary and the rest of the staff to explore ways to reach out to this population; from there, Beyond Containment was born. Mary discovered a program that was developed in the early 1990s called Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). This program forms a small community around someone so that he/she can re-integrate safely into society. The COSA model has been shown to reduce the recidivism rate by over 90%.<sup>1</sup> As we form a community around someone, we help our towns and cities become safer. At the same time, we reach out with the love of Christ to men and women who are often considered society's pariahs. Currently, WGA is providing three COSA groups. These groups are volunteer intensive, with a minimum of four volunteers needed to gather around one core group member (five or six is ideal). To serve an additional three people, we need a minimum of twelve more volunteers. This leads to the purpose of

this letter. **We need you!** Would you consider the following question: "What would God have me do to support these men and women and their loved ones?"

If you would like to learn more about COSA, Mary and Steve are teaching a two-day training Friday, October 23, from 6:00PM – 8:30PM and Saturday, October 24, from 9:00 AM – 4:00PM at the WGA offices. Please note that attending the class is not a commitment to be in a circle. You can come simply to learn more about this group of people WGA is now serving. Feel free to call Mary and Steve with any questions, even if you cannot attend the training.

---

<sup>1</sup> R. J. Wilson, F. Cortoni, and A.J. McWhinnie (2009). "Circles of Support & Accountability: A Canadian National Replication of Outcome Findings." *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 21(4) 412-430.





## September In Review

**September 2nd:** Roger and Scott spoke at Wellspring Church

**September 16th:** WGA Board Meeting

## October And Beyond

**October 2nd:** Scott participating on panel at Greenwood Church

**October 3rd:** Intercessory Prayer meeting, 8:00 am at the WGA offices. Come join us as we pray for the needs of the ministry.

**October 3rd:** Jill and Steve will be speaking at Tree of Life

**October 16th—18th:** Annual WGA Leadership Retreat

**November 22nd:** Scott Speaking at Foothills Fellowship

### **Upcoming Event!** Understanding the Gender Dysphoric/Transgender Experience

**Thursday November 5th, 7-9 PM**  
*Open to the Public*

**Friday November 6th, 11 AM—1PM**  
*For Pastors and Leaders*

*Please call the WGA Office for further details*

### **Thursday Night Group**

**September 3rd:** 20 people  
**September 10th:** 24 people  
**September 17th:** 26 people  
**September 24th:** 25 people

**Orientation meeting:** 7 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

**Dianne O'Brian**  
Asst. Program Director  
Beyond Containment

*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.*

Printed in the USA  
Copyright 2015