

Notes & Letters

Formerly a Victim of Uncertainty

I was a victim of uncertainty for five years after giving my life to Christ at the age of 12. Your article on certainty placed in the *Grace In Focus* newsletter helped me to better appreciate what the Lord did for me. I am grateful to God for saving me and proud to say that I am certain of my place in heaven. Thank you for making the issue very clear to me. Thank you also for placing me on your mailing list. I hope to introduce the youth ministry of my church, of which I am its leader, to your ministry. I am 26 now and desire to fulfill my call as a pastor. I hope to enjoy more of your encouraging words and pray that God's strength will rest on you as you fulfill your purpose on earth through His help. God bless. L.O. ~ Lagos, Nigeria

Perseverance Touted from the Land Down Under

The point of the article ["Is Departure Proof One Is Unregenerate?" *GIF* (May/June 2003)] is not quite true. Martin Luther says we are saved by faith alone, but not an alone faith. John says that one who is born again does not sin. Obviously, he is not talking about any sin or we would all be dead. But the apostle Paul in 1 Cor 6:9, 10 states those sins that become impossible in practice for one who is born again. They may occur in thought (private sin), but cannot occur in deed (public sin). In each case listed, the Apostle states that those who do these things do not enter the kingdom of heaven. They may still

be elect, but they are clearly not yet saved. That is the important difference. Backslidings for regenerate persons do occur, but clearly the Holy Ghost restrains those backslidings to a certain point.

F.B. ~ Brisbane, Australia



Bob visiting with his mother in California on Aug 23

Grateful for JOTGES

I finally found time to sit down with the GES Journal and read your interesting article on "Bible Translations" [Bob Wilkin, "A Free Grace Perspective on Bible Translations," *JOTGES* (Spring 2004)]. Thank you—it really helped me to understand what you were trying to tell me about the NKJV being a good choice. I really liked the way you chose to end the article, too.

N.P. ~ Las Vegas, NV

Confident in Christ!

I write to thank you for your defense of the true gospel. As an intellectual individual, I have been wrestling with questions concerning repentance, Lordship salvation, and the like for a long time. I have known that salvation is not any work of my own, but only that which Christ performed already for me. Reading from your material has helped me solidify my decision not to doubt or waver. The work is done and I am confident that Christ has saved me by His grace!

J.L. ~ Huntington, WV

Partners in Grace is a monthly magazine of:

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Financial Report

August Revenue	\$21,067
August Budget	\$27,320
YTD Revenue	\$45,055
YTD Budget	\$54,640



Partners in Grace

RidgePointe Fellowship Dallas, TX

August 7-8

In January Pastor Bob Vacendak underwent brain surgery. The doctors removed a tumor the size of a large pickle. Today he has returned to work full-time (up to 16 hour days). I've spoken at his church a number of times over the years and it was great to be back this weekend.

On Saturday night Bob and Kelly Vacendak invited Sharon and me, and several couples from the church, over to their house for a nice supper and time of fellowship.

When I agreed to speak at RidgePointe, I thought I was going to give a sermon on what eternity will be like for believers and unbelievers. Instead, Bob wanted me to preach on what unbelievers will do in eternity. What a sermon title! Also, he asked if I'd speak on what believers will do during eternity in Sunday School. This was a real challenge. Frankly, there isn't a lot in the Bible about what unbelievers will be doing in eternity.

I received good feedback on both messages. And the second message triggered more thinking on my part and afterwards I revised the sermon. If I speak on this again, I won't feel like I am working totally from scratch. PG



Pastor Freddy, his wife Corine, and Bob



A special gathering at Pastor Bob Vacendak's house

Church of Hope Tustin, CA

August 22

I heard about Pastor Freddy Cortez, Jr. through Chafer Theological Seminary. He has taken classes there and his church is on our Grace Church Tracker.

Since my sister was on vacation in Costa Rica and Panama for three weeks, I decided to visit Mom for 5 days while Pam was gone. I was thrilled to be able to speak at Freddy's church during my time in Southern California.

Freddy and his wife Corine are Filipinos, as are many in their church. This was a very warm group. I felt right at home the minute I arrived.

In the worship service I spoke on the parable of the prodigal son from Luke 15. We then had a break during which we ate a nice lunch. I like Filipino food! This was followed by an hour of instruction with questions and answers. My topic was "How to Be Sure" (John 11:25-27). I also dealt with objections that many Christian leaders have today with certainty. Both messages were well

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Highlights

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September 2004



Church of Hope on Sunday morning



Chris and Rosalinda Herring with Bob at Church of Hope



Michael and Gina Makidon with Pastor René Lopez

Church of Hope

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received and the questions were extremely challenging. When I got back to Dallas I had to email Freddy a revision of one of my answers since the answer I had given wasn't quite right. Believe me, answering questions on the spot is tough!

They told me they'd like me to come back and I'd love to do that. This is a very responsive group that loves to hear the Word of God taught. It is a pleasure to be able to speak at churches that are well grounded in the faith. *RG*

The Grace Conference

March 14-17, 2005

Dr. Elliott Johnson, Professor of Bible at Dallas Theological Seminary, has agreed to speak on the subject of partnership in the Bible. He believes that God's desire for us to be partners with Him in rulership over this planet is the main theme of the Bible.

Zane Hodges, the man whom many regard as the father of the modern Grace movement, has committed to speak on the ending of Matthew 24-25 where we find three parables and the account of the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats. As you know, this section of the Olivet Discourse has long been one of the main areas in the Bible used to refute Free Grace theology. This is a wonderful topic that should be very interesting.

Mike Makidon, Director of Publications for GES, has accepted our offer to speak as well. Last year he presented a workshop on the fundamentals of postmodernism that was extremely well received. This year he will give a main session that will briefly review what postmodernism is, but then will concentrate on the practical ramifications of postmodernism and how we should respond to it.

Register by December 31 and you will save \$50 off the normal registration price of \$150. And remember that if you've never been, we offer a special first-time price of \$50 (or free for pastors attending for the first time). *RG*

A Wedding Celebration

July 31

Mike Makidon married Gina Salazar on Saturday July 31st. It was a wonderful service. GES Partner René Lopez preached in both English and Spanish on the meaning and significance of marriage. He did a great job.

Mike and Gina went to Costa Rica for their honeymoon. Congratulations, Mike and Gina! May God give you many happy and fruitful years together serving Him. *RG*

The Commentary Needs Help!

175 Gifts of \$200

At the summer board meeting we decided that it is time to start raising funds for the commentary once again. This is something we have neglected, primarily because the project was still a long way from completion. However, we now have over half of the commentary completed and hope to complete it by the end of next year. To this end, the board approved hiring editors, which will cost approximately \$23,000 for the next two years. Consequently, the commentary fund needs to raise \$51,500 over the next two years for author's fees and editing. Our hope is to raise \$35,000 of that by the end of this fiscal year.

We ask for your prayers and, if you are able to give above and beyond your regular support, additional gifts as well. We realize many of our partners are already stretched financially. But, if 175 Partners could give \$200 this fiscal year toward the commentary, we'd reach this year's goal.

The commentary fund is a completely separate fund. If you give for this fund, please make sure you indicate this on the memo line of the check. When you do, we will segregate the funds and use them only for the commentary. We've been doing this since the fund started, and that is why we have nearly half of the money in reserve for author's fees. Gifts to this fund have been used to publish the two outstanding stand-alone commentaries on the Epistles of James and John by Zane Hodges. *RG*

Prayer Requests

Please pray that we finish editing the new book on Assurance soon, for commentary authors who are behind schedule to get back on track, for the editing of the commentary, for the GES staff and board to walk closely with the Lord, for the funding of the commentary and general funds, and for God to bless the GES partners, especially those who are undergoing trials at this time. *RG*

Summer Board Meeting

This was the first board meeting for Pastor J.B. Bond (Stillwater, OK). He fit right in.

Since our fiscal year starts in July, we set the budget for the next year at this meeting. We set a budget that is higher than what we took in last year. However, we feel it is reasonable since we plan to release three new books this year and they should generate revenue. In addition, we are hopeful that support might continue to increase.

We approved GES sponsoring its first family camp next summer. It will most likely be at New Life Ranch in Colcord, OK (Near Siloam Springs, AR). We will put information about this on our website. You can check out our website, call, or email us for more information. *RG*



Sunday morning at RPF



Zane Hodges and Bob after lunch in Dallas



Board members (from left to right) Brad Daskocil, Doug Hill, Greg Sapaugh, J.B. Bond, and Bob Wilkin