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CHRISTIANITY IN ACTION

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CHANGING LIVES



GRACE ADVENTURE

By Alice Bourdon

STUCK! We have all been at that frustrating place in life. Whether it is a stubborn habit or a recurring

sin, we might think we've overcome it. But then, under stress, we find ourselves succumbing again to something we'd hoped was gone for good. Jesus died to set us free! How can we live out our freedom in this life in holiness and truth?

Grace Adventure is a hands-on workshop held over four weekends that focuses on the timeless teaching of the Word of God as our foundation. These workshops are group experiences with a high value on confidentiality and a safe environment to share from the heart. The activities expand both our knowledge and experience of being image bearers—amazing people created by an amazing God. Together we learn what is keeping us from living consistently as that man or woman, and how to return to joy in relationship with our Father as we serve in His Kingdom.

We also require our staff to be Christ-followers who are deeply committed to helping God's people truly reflect Him, and who live out what is taught in our workshop.

Grace Adventure helps us capture a more complete picture of who God says we are and then identify and eliminate the obstacles keeping us from that truth. It opens up the possibility that we aren't just on this earth to endure sorrow until Heaven, but that the abundant life can be ours here and now. Living this life blesses us and glorifies the Father who makes it possible.

We invite you to learn more at www.graceadventure.org.



COLLEGE PROFESSOR ON-MISSION

By Carl Baum

I have been working as a university professor at a secular university for more than 20 years. In the early years, I "kept my head down" and generally did not reveal my faith in Christ to faculty or students. As time went on I felt increasing discomfort about my life. I had been saved in graduate school at a secular university when fellow graduate students reached out to me, but as a faculty member, what could I do? What was I even permitted to do? I began to pray for answers.

Over the years God has shown me answers one step at a time. I led a Bible study for students in my church. I led a study on apologetics to a small group of students with a parachurch organization that met on campus. With our church, I helped when teams came from sister churches and our family started hosting teams at our home. Through all these things I was making an impact for the gospel by using my position indirectly.

A Christian faculty group began to form on campus and I became involved. This gave me the confidence to be more direct about my faith. I signed my name to newspaper advertisements that encouraged students to see us if they had questions about Christianity. I began to tell my classes I was a Christian on the first day and talk about my faith with non-Christian faculty. I took on a leadership position with the Christian faculty group. The group has swelled to over 50 faculty and it is exciting to help them one step at a time. Over the years I have watched students and faculty come to Christ and grow in faith. Ask God what you can do!

MISSION USA

RIVER RIDGE CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

By Chad Cobb

In 2013, both campuses of River Ridge Church had a desire to rally each congregation in an effort to extend ourselves into the local community through various service projects. While not an original idea, the desired impact would simply show that the church still places high value on extending the love of Christ outside the walls of the building. Our day of serving, aptly named "The Church Has Left the Building," begins with identifying local needs and projects that typically fit the skillset of nearly everyone.

From light construction and painting, to landscaping and beautification, teams of 15 to 25 people partner with local organizations on a Sunday morning for 3 to 4 hours instead of attending regular services. In some instances, larger projects may have 50 to 100 volunteers doing a variety of tasks. Each team is assigned a

Volunteer Project Manager who coordinates logistics and works as a liaison between the organization being served and the team that is assembled. Teams are formed leading up to the event while it is promoted to the church body.

Like any outreach project, those who have participated in The Church Has Left the Building have been impacted as much, if not more, than the individuals and organizations that have been served. Over the last three years, it is estimated that over 3,500 volunteers have provided thousands of hours of volunteer service to over 300 different projects. The range of projects is vast, ranging from community parks and local schools to nursing home facilities and non-profit organizations.



Several long-term partnerships have been established between River Ridge Church and local non-profit organizations as a result of The Church Has Left the Building. These partnerships are with larger emergency shelters serving the homeless in two different areas of our community. The partnerships offer River Ridgers the opportunity to continually volunteer and serve many different types of needs in the local community.

FROM THE CITY TO THE 'BURBS

By Rich Thatcher

My wife, Morgan, and I started the Firehouse Church in the summer of 2004 together with Rick and Neva Whitney and a team of mostly students and singles. Over the first several years, we bounced around the downtown Denver area. Eventually we landed in a warehouse that God gave us to renovate and make look like an old fire station.

By God's grace and through that faith-venture, we grew and were able to be a part of sending several teams to help start churches in Manhattan, KS and Stillwater, OK. We also had the privilege of having two other Great Commission Churches (Valley View and Prairie View) merge with our church.

More recently we realized that we had a number of people commuting to our church from the south side of Denver. We also had families that were growing and moving out of the more expensive Denver Highlands neighborhood and into the suburbs. We eventually sensed God leading us to start a new location of The Firehouse Church in the south metro suburb of Parker, CO. My family along with several other families moved to Parker (and the nearby countryside of Franktown) to form a church-planting team of about 20 adults and 30 kids.

This spring we were blessed by the response God gave us for our Grand Opening service



in February with about 30 visitors along with several more at our Easter service! We're in the process of initiating and cultivating friendships with these visitors, new neighbors, family, and co-workers in order to sow the gospel and make disciples. We are excited about the plans that God has for us. Please pray that we keep in step with all that God wants to do with us as we reach people for Jesus in the suburbs of Denver.

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

MIGRANT CRISIS OR MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITY?

By Daniel Goering

Mass migrations of people on a scale not seen since the Second World War are currently changing the face of Europe. What are we to make of this and how does God want us to respond?

In Germany alone, over the last year, well over one million migrants have entered the country. They are initially housed in temporary shelters of all kinds until they can be more adequately accommodated. Popular public opinion at the beginning was very positive and welcoming. In the meantime, many have been sobered by the realization of what a difficult thing it will be to integrate so many people.

Does God's Word have anything to say about such a situation? Actually it does, and in very

many places. Here is one example: "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10:19 NASB) This verse makes it clear that we should have a heart for the stranger and alien — and also why we should.

Even though there have been — and will be — unpleasant and unacceptable occasions (such as in Cologne on New Year's Eve in 2015), God is at work and is bringing many to faith in Christ during this time.

The emergency shelter behind me (pictured) is only a couple of blocks from our home in Berlin. It is not much larger than a basketball court, yet it is a temporary shelter for as many as 200 people living with make-shift barriers for privacy.



Daniel Goering pictured with a temporary shelter for migrant people in Berlin, Germany.

This is not only a migrant crisis, but also a missionary opportunity! We are seeking to minister to these people through language classes, mentoring, and just being there for them. Please join in praying for more laborers, for open hearts, and for many more to come to Christ.

REACHING THE UNREACHED IN PAKISTAN

By Ken Young

Just days before my third trip to Pakistan, the Taliban bombed Pakistani Christians celebrating Easter at a community park. This increased concern about my safety. However, with many people praying for me and compelled by the tremendous spiritual need of this region, I continued my travel plans for April 5th-20th.

God's Fellowship Ministries of Pakistan arranged meetings in nine cities throughout Pakistan to take place during my trip. In an amazing move of God, the local government in Quetta (one of the least reached and most dangerous cities) provided five military officers as security guards for my evangelistic meetings. All five of these Muslim men heard God's plan of eternal life several times. When they were offered a prayer of salvation that had been translated into Urdu, all five prayed to receive Christ.

Muslims are drawn to these meetings because they have heard that Jesus heals. So after each meeting, we prayed for people who wish to be healed or released from evil spirits. A Muslim woman and her four children asked to be freed from evil spirits. I shared the gospel with them and each received Christ. Then we prayed that Jesus in His power would remove all demons. The next day they returned to report that they have no more oppression from wicked spirits.

One large crusade-style meeting was held in Narowal. Largely because our donors had provided funds for buses to transport people from many unreached villages, a total of 2,300 people attended the meeting. I asked the crowd, "How many of you would like to know God's plan for your life?" Later,



Ken (left) with a Pakistani officer who accepted Christ.

after I shared who Jesus is and the free gift of forgiveness He offers, over 1,000 people prayed the prayer of salvation.

All in all 1,930 people, including many Muslims, received Christ and the gift of eternal life in the Karachi, Quetta, and Punjab provinces.

INSIDE GCC



FAITHWALKERS

Every house first needs a blueprint. For a house to stand strong, its foundation and its walls must be built according to the plan of a wise master builder.

The good news is this: Jesus Christ has given in the Scriptures a blueprint for the abundant life that He promised His followers.

At Faithwalkers 2016 we will take a fresh look at the Lord's blueprint. So come and learn this December – so that you can also live the abundant life Jesus Christ has planned for you.

For more information please visit: gccweb.org/conferences-missions/faithwalkers

MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION:

Perry Paulding

My wife, Katie, and I got saved as freshmen at Iowa State University through the GCC church in Ames. I was a high school science teacher prior to entering full-time ministry. We have three grown children – Nathan, Aaron, and Abby.

I've worked as church staff since 1989 and pastored since 1998 in Iowa and Colorado. I currently oversee the counseling, marriage, and Prime-Timers (empty nesters) ministries, coach small group leaders, and teach on Sundays.

I love hiking in the mountains, biking on trails, reading the Puritans, listening to Celtic music, and traveling. My real passion has always been theology – not just head knowledge, but a passion for God's Word to transform people's lives through true understanding of the character of God.

One outlet for this has been to be a part of GCC's Doctrinal Ministry Committee that meets



annually. Plumbing the depths of the gospel – not merely for salvation, but all its applications to daily life – has been our greatest quest and renaissance over the past decade.

The greatest quote I could share would be from Timothy Keller: "We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

My life verse: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

RAISING UP FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



What is our mission as followers of Jesus Christ?

The Apostle Paul stated his mission this way: "We have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake" (Romans 1:5).

God has blessed us with grace through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The good news of Jesus Christ dying for our sins and resurrecting to give us eternal life is the most important message in the world.

God has also given us grace to serve Him according to our spiritual gifts. The goal of this service is to bring

about obedient believers of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world.

In this newsletter, we see examples of people in Great Commission churches reaching out in the gospel in the United States and overseas, with college students and with families, with middle class suburbanites and with needy people in Europe and Asia. And what is the fruit of these outreach efforts? People throughout the world who obey Jesus Christ.

I want to invite you to join with your church in the greatest mission known to man – advancing the grace of Jesus Christ so that the whole world will worship and obey our Savior.



NAE | National Association of
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