

Opening Blind Eyes and Healing Running Mouths

By Mike Sciarra



When I was a child I wouldn't stop talking. I think someone once told my parents I had diarrhea of the mouth. I wanted so badly to be good but kept getting in trouble for some reason at home, school, and church. I couldn't shake it. It felt like no one liked me; the annoying pest, the kid who couldn't keep his mouth shut at the right time. I wanted attention and it brought the negative kind. I could never answer the "why did you do that?" question because I had no idea then why I did what I did.

Looking back, baptism at age 10 for me was an appeal for leniency, kindness and acceptance; not from God but from others. I didn't understand Christ's sacrifice but I knew it was a fresh start. Everyone seemed pleased that I was taking this step. Maybe I wouldn't get in so much trouble. Maybe people would like me more than they seemed to. I was just trying to survive. My motives weren't evil but I was sincerely wrong. Sincerity alone can lead you to dangerous places. Without Christ at the helm your ship is going to crash and burn on the rocks of your own foolishness.

I wanted to be good so others would think I was. I used God as a means to an end: the blessing of parents, teachers and friends alike; survival; acceptance. Innocently ignorant; I was using the gifts God gave to try and lift myself out of the insecurity, pain, emptiness and rejection I felt. I was so close to the well but dying of thirst; on a never-ending search for elusive happiness, peace, and comfort. My attempts fell far short. It's what happens when you don't acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of all. At the core of my being I was longing for Jesus and didn't even know it. The God-shaped hole couldn't be filled by anyone or anything else. I was spiritually blind; unable to figure it out without someone helping me.

My desire to be whole wasn't realized until I stopped trying so hard and relinquished control of my life to Jesus; until I bowed at the foot of the cross where my sins were paid for and true freedom was bought at the price of Christ's life. Until I recognized that "deep Were His Wounds, and Red" and in thankfulness said "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" for the blood and the sacrifice that was for me. Since then the battle has been a different one; one of me forgetting that Jesus is my life, my Savior and Lord; my Owner, Sustainer and Provider. When I yield control things work out the way God wants them to. Acknowledging God's sovereignty and Christ's sufficiency is key. And once God opens our eyes He wants us to help others see Him by faith too.

The pure in heart are those who don't separate God's gifts from the One who gives us all things to enjoy. When you separate the gifts from the Giver, true goodness is impossible; you create a false reality that really is a hell. Not until you acknowledge God in all His glory can you see. Praise God He is the One who opens blind eyes and heals running mouths for His glory. *I am thankful that God's mercy is not for those who are pure enough to deserve it but those who are humble enough to desire it and Him. I am thankful that it is He who brings us to that point over and over again.*

*Therefore
humble
yourselves
under the
mighty
hand of
God, that
He may
exalt you
at the
proper time*

1 Peter 5:6

a place
to grow
in
faith

Men's Ministry

By Tom Licata

Men's ministry is going strong! In October we had a great men's retreat with John Erwin as the speaker. We had a fun Men's Night Out in January in which we played volleyball, basketball, and had a pizza dinner. For those men with daughters we had two Father Daughter nights in February, one for those with elementary age daughters and one for those with teenage daughters. We also currently have a record number of men participating in small groups and we'd like more to get involved.

Here are a few things coming up:

March 21- Men's Paint Ball Extravaganza (8:00AM-4:00PM)

This is a unique event that will appeal to both fathers and sons (high school and above). Limited spots are available and price varies depending on need of equipment and or supplies. To RSVP or for more info, contact Dave Strozewski at (714) 538-0734.

May 1-3- Grace Brethren Men's Retreat: Following Jesus Fully

Our own Mike Sciarra will be the featured speaker. The retreat will be held at Pine Summit Christian Conference Center in Big Bear, CA. For more info or to register, visit www.highimpactmen.com.

April 18- Men's Breakfast

The 3rd Saturday of every month the men's ministry hosts a home cooked breakfast with a variety of speakers. This is free and open to men of all ages. Come and get to know others here at Grace.



Men's
Gym
Night

Men's
Retreat



Missions Team Update

Our Mission Team has new leadership. The team now consists of the following:
Simon Goodyear, Alan Weisenberger, Michael Lucas, and Mike Ayulo

On Mission Training

By Ed Trenner



Sponsored by GBIM West, *On Mission Training*, was a day of interactive workshops on mission related topics for churches, mission teams, and interested individuals. Hosted by Grace Church of Orange, the day was for all who lead or are interested in missions, both locally and globally . . . Missions Commissions, Committees, Teams and individuals wanting to get involved.

The all day event had 52 participants – 42 registered attendees and 10 presenters with a wealth of international mission experience. The session subjects included Being aware of interpersonal cross-cultural dynamics, Partnering with churches overseas, Reaching internationals in your schools and neighborhoods, Selecting and preparing a short term team, Stimulating more interest in missions in your church, Presenting missions to children and youth, and Mentoring people considering a career in missions. It was a good time of networking and learning how to be effective in mission ministry.



Alaska Team Welcomes Grace Team in Nicaragua



This March 16-26 a team of 6 from Orange will be joining at team of 25 from Soldotna, Alaska in a mission outreach in Somoto, Nicaragua. The combined teams will be building ten homes in a rural village, as well as, conducting medical and dental clinics, children and youth activities, and sharing their faith.

Our team consists of Oscar Chavez (Hispanic Church Planter from Lancaster, CA), Bud Gilbertson, Steve Manthorne, Ed Trenner, Paul Wan, and Alan Weisenberger.

Pictured is the mother, Gloria, and daughter, Cynthia (father, Marcos, is working in the city) who will receive the new house our team will be building. Please pray for the combined teams and their outreach in Somoto.

The Impossible: YWAM Mexico Missions Trip Update

By Glenn and Angela Parry

After 4 months of planning, our family, the Bush's, the Goodyear's and a number of others traveled south to exotic Mexico February 6-8th! Now before you get the idea that we were lounging around a pool, listening to mariachi music, and munching on chips and salsa, remember that this trip wasn't about fun and personal pleasure, though God definitely blessed us with both. We had the privilege of going into the poorest parts of Tijuana to build a house.

Within our diverse group of 21 people, there were no "professional" contractors. Isn't that often how God works? He providentially calls together a group of men and women, young and old, to labor alongside one another in the impossible. God's Word says, *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."* Mark 10:27

The impossible wasn't simply preparing to travel to Tijuana to build a house without experienced skills in construction, though some might find that impossible enough. It was also the need to raise \$11,000 in 1 month, especially in these tough economic times, in addition to fighting the temptation to harbor fear for our safety as the internet and television blasted imminent danger. We had to choose to put our trust in the Lord rather than in the mouths of the media. **"Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture."** Psalm 37:3

Now couple all of that with torrential rain as we built the house, adobe mud 6 inches deep everywhere pulling our boots off as we attempted to raise our feet from the thick goulash, wood siding and trim that had to be painted over and over again due to rain washing away the paint as soon as one had brushed it on, and no water to shower in. A few electrical tools with their cords lay in puddles with no shelter or respite from the rain, save the little room left in the one and only tool van that could actually drive up the muddy road. Now you have a glimpse of the "Impossible".

And yet, when we saw a beloved family, made in the image of God, standing with their precious 2-year-old and holding their darling 8-month-old baby, and knew that they had been living in a car, all of a sudden the word "Impossible" was no longer in our vocabularies or hearts. We began to realize that we were indeed standing on holy ground. Ground that God had sovereignly called us to stand on to help build a home for a desperate family who simply want their children to grow up healthy and safe and to know laughter and hope. It was a mere 16x20 foot cement slabbed wooden structure to us, but to them it was as if they had been given a home rivaling any from the "Extreme Home Makeover" show. Little did they know then, that by the weekend's conclusion, their house would be filled with furniture, a stove, table and chairs, curtains, toys, a pantry filled with food, and so much more.

Though the language caused barriers, they and others around the area watched and saw the hand of God through a few humble servants, with their hands steadfastly working in less than desirable circumstances. We were compelled to work even harder because we saw the need directly in front of our eyes and we heard God's voice quietly rising within our souls saying, "Nothing is Impossible with God!"

At the end of the memorable weekend, we stood encircled around this precious family, passing the key to their front door, all the while pouring out our hearts and souls in words of overwhelming gratitude to them, because we realized that we, by the grace of God, were privileged to be a part of the "Impossible", and it is we who have been changed forever. *Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."* Luke 18:27



The team



Team hard at work



Family receiving the home



A reminder of God's promises

Fountain Senior Assisted Living Worship Services

By Bryan Bush

Once a month, several families have been going to Fountain Assisted Living, in Orange, to bring a Worship service to those unable to get out and worship with others in Christ's body.



The first Sunday of every month we gather at 1:30 in the big multi-purpose room to worship the Lord and fellowship with one another. Each week we sing hymns, usually to piano accompaniment, but some times to other instruments as well. Alan Cech has come to play his clarinet.

It is wonderful to see the residents faces light up when they recognize a hymn they remember from long ago. Even those who can no longer see, still enjoy singing songs they remember from their youth.

Each week someone from our congregation reads Scripture and brings a short message. We have been blessed to have several of our young men give a short devotional, practicing to lead their own households in worship.



What a joy it is to see the smiles and cheery faces of our youngest children blessing the lives of those whose wisdom has spanned the decades. Leviticus 19:32 says to rise up before the gray headed and to honor the aged and revere God, for He is the Lord. Our families are doing this and teaching their children to do this when assisting in the worship services at Fountain Assisted Living.

To all who have come to worship and serve at Fountain Assisted Living, a huge heart-felt thank you. To everyone else, an invitation to "come and worship, worship Christ the new born King"! If you are interested in participating or learning more about this ministry, Contact Bryan or Tina Bush at (714)637-4453 or bushhome@sbcglobal.net.

Connecting Team – Helping People Find Their Way

By David Andritch

The GCO Connecting Team exists to welcome and serve the members, friends, and community members in various ways on Sunday morning. From a warm welcome as you arrive on campus from one of our Outside Greeters, receiving a bulletin and warm smile from our Inside Greeters as you enter the church, help from our Ushers in finding a seat in our rapidly filling worship center, to having your questions answered at our Information Kiosk, it is our goal to help everyone find their way at Grace.

With the rapid growth we have been experiencing at Grace of late, there is a need and opportunity to expand this ministry. The Connecting Team is a ministry that offers many meaningful ways to serve the Lord and Body with simple time and training requirements.

To join any part of this ministry, please contact our various ministry leaders as listed below.

Outside Greeters: Steven Zuniga – (714)791-1202 or stevenandcandice@sbcglobal.net

Inside Greeters: Mark & Christi Castleberry – (714)914-1711 or mark@mkhelectronics.com

Ushers: Norm Schrock – (562)355-1252 or nschrock@mac.com

Information Kiosk: Mark & Jody Kreider – (714)309-1800 or mark@wondermedia.us



Additional infant workers are needed to serve in our first hour nursery. Please contact Nancy Lauridsen to volunteer or for further information by calling (714)997-9419 or writing nlaurid@sbcglobal.net.

Sewing Circle

Over the past few years this service-oriented ministry has been making Lovie dolls, baby blankets, vests, and other items to donate to hospitals in Orange County through *Threads of Love*. All men, women, sewers, and non-sewers are welcome to join. They usually meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 9:00 – 11:30AM. Though this ministry will not be meeting until June, donations of the following items will still be accepted. If you are interested in learning more about this ministry, contact Jacque Schuler at (714)530-1662.

- *Satin ribbon: white, blue, or pink
- *White lace
- *Cotton or cotton blend fabric, plain or print
- *Flannel fabric, plain or print
- *Thread, any color
- *Polyester fiber fill
- *White eyelet material
- *Yarn, any color or type

Donations can be put in the blue barrel at the Info Kiosk.



Ed Trenner, Mike Sciarra,
and Don Byers

A Historical Moment

We had the privilege of having the three living senior pastors of Grace Church of Orange present with us on Sunday, January 4: Don Byers, Ed Trenner, and Mike Sciarra. Their years of service here at Grace represent 30 plus years of Grace Church of Orange pastoral leadership. We are grateful for their leadership, their commitment to bringing the Word to us, the community, and their desire to motivate us to be Salt and Light locally and globally.

SPRING CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



Daylight Savings Begins

Sunday, March 8

Set your clocks ahead one hour the night before.

BAJA FRESH
MEXICAN • GRILL

Tustin Ave. & 17th St.

Sunday, March 15

11:00AM-5:00PM

20% of each purchase goes toward the high school ministry. Come show your support. Flyers required at time of purchase and are available at the church.



Trenner Dessert

Sunday, March 29 at 6:30PM

Enjoy a night of fond memories and great fellowship as we say a final thanks to Ed & Carla Trenner for their years of service here at Grace.



Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 12

Come celebrate the remembrance of Jesus death and resurrection during one of our regular services. The annual brunch will be held during the bible class hour. **Note:** no childcare during the brunch so all may participate.



Getting To Know Grace Class

Sunday, May 17, 24, & 31

If you are newer to Grace and would like to learn more about our church history, ministries, membership, and more, then plan to attend this 3 week series that meets at 10:00AM in the conference room on Sundays.

VBS!!

June 22-26

Save the date. Be on the look out for more info.

Snap Shots

December 2008-February 2009



(Clockwise from top left: High School Winter Retreat, Misael at Men's Breakfast, Cookie Exchange, Fellowship 4 Dinner, and Byers Family)

Spring Calendar: March-May

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Daylight Savings | March 8 | Palm Sunday | April 5 |
| Welcome Dessert | March 15 | Evening Communion | April 5 |
| Baja Fresh Fundraiser | March 15 | Office Closed- Good Friday | April 10 |
| Nicaragua Trip | March 16-26 | Easter | April 12 |
| Men's Paint Ball | March 21 | Men's Breakfast | April 18 |
| Sparky Hike #2 | March 21 | High Impact Men's Retreat | May 1-3 |
| Budget Q&A | March 25 | Mothers Day | May 10 |
| College/Career Retreat | March 27-29 | Getting To Know Grace Class Starts | May 17 |
| Budget Vote | March 29 | Speechless | May 22 |
| Trenner Commissioning & Dessert | March 29 | Office Closed- Memorial Day | May 25 |
| Girlfriends Gathering | April 4 | Bread & Cup | May 31 |



2201 E. Fairhaven Avenue
Orange, CA 92869
714 • 633 • 8867

www.graceorange.org