


PARTNERS

in Grace

Speaking 2003 in Review

This year was a busy one, but very rewarding. I had the opportunity to debate the topic of justification by faith in an hour-long radio interview with a Church of Christ pastor who strongly opposes the message of grace. Needless to say it was an exciting hour. We offered a CD of the debate through *Partners in Grace* to anyone who requested it. Dozens of CDs were mailed as a result!


I had the honor of speaking at four major conferences—our own GES conference and The Urban Alternative here in Dallas, Grace University Bible Week in Omaha, Nebraska, and the Evangelical Theological Society meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

In addition, your support made it possible for me to speak at over 30 churches in 12 states, plus one in Canada. Thank you so much for making these opportunities possible. We're looking ahead to 2004 with great anticipation! 

The Grace Conference

DFW Harvey Hotel

February 23-26, 2004

You may register online at www.faithalone.org. Or you can call us toll free at 1.877.292.2522. The registration fee for first time attendees is only \$50! Free Grace Pastors who've never attended may come free. The normal \$150 registration fee is still a bargain, and it includes one's spouse! We hope to see many of you there! 

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Website Making Great Strides

www.faithalone.org

There are various ways to measure web traffic, but one simple one is called page views. The way it works is that every time a person selects a new page (home, a newsletter or journal article, chat room, etc.), a new page view occurs. Here is a rundown of average page views per month for our site over the past four years: 24,334 in 2000; 33,291 in 2001; 46,984 in 2002; and 63,152 in 2003.

This steady increase in the usage of our site is a great encouragement to us. We see the web as a strategic way to expand our outreach to people around the world who need to hear about the gift of salvation available to all through faith in Christ alone. 



Michael Makidon, Director of Publications for GES, announces his engagement to Gina Marleny Salazar. The wedding is scheduled for July 2004.

Financial Report	
December Revenue	\$46,407 *
December Budget	\$25,919
Fiscal YTD Revenue	\$165,498 *
Fiscal YTD Budget	\$155,514



*Note: These figures are not final. At press time, we are still receiving gifts postmarked in December 2003. We count all gifts postmarked on or before December 31st, even if we don't receive the gift until January.


RidgePointe Fellowship

Dallas, Texas

December 21

Long-time GES Board member Bob Vacendak pastors this church. Bob is battling a brain tumor with a special diet and supplements in an effort to avoid surgery. Bob was hospitalized for several days the week before I spoke due to complications from his treatment. Since this has left him weak, several Free Grace friends filled the pulpit for him in December. I had the unenviable task of speaking the week after Zane Hodges had spoken. Following this great Free-Grace spokesman was a real honor and challenge!

I gave a Christmas message that was well received. Sharon and I enjoyed lunch with Bob and Kelly Vacendak and their two daughters, Nicole and Lauren. Bob's latest MRI taken on December 29th revealed that there has been no change in the size of the tumor. Bob and Kelly are now beginning the process of consulting with brain surgeons to explore other options.

Please pray for healing for him and strength for his family. 



Bob with Ray Charles, Mark Piland, and J.B. Hixson at the Pre-Trib Study Group



Bob & Sharon with Pastor Bob Vacendak and his family

Pre-Tribulation Study Group

December 10-13

As you might imagine, members of the Pre-Tribulation Study Group believe in the pre-tribulation rapture and the Millennium. But that is where their similarities end. On issues related to the gospel, the members are not united. There are Free Grace people who attend—and I was able to fellowship with a number of them—including John Niemelä, John Brumett, Ken Hornok and his brothers Richard and Dave, Charlie Bing, Fred Lybrand, Lew Schoettle, Earl Radmacher, Elliott Johnson, René Lopez, and others.

There are also people there who are Arminian, that is, who believe you can lose eternal life by unfaithfulness. And there are Reformed Lordship Salvation peo-

Highlights

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January 2004

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Bob visiting with Frank Tyler and other GC members



Sunday morning at Grace Chapel



Bob and Sharon with Bob's mom Jean Wilkin

Grace Chapel Orange, California December 28

This was my third or fourth time to speak at Grace Chapel. I always enjoy visiting there. A number of GES partners are members and leaders at this church, including Frank and Babbette Tyler, Richardo and Laurie Campos, and John and Diane Niemelä.


The Pastor, Dr. George Meisinger, who is also President of Chafer Seminary, was out of town on vacation, as were several of the other members. So I was speaking to a smaller group than normal.

The title of my message on Matthew 1:18–2:12 was “Christmas Is about Jesus’ Coming Righteous Reign.” Many think of Christmas as God becoming a man. That is fine, as far as it goes. But why did God become a man? Why Christmas?


The full answer isn’t even found in the cross and justification by faith alone. That is merely a means to the ultimate end. The ultimate purpose of Christmas is that Jesus will save Israel from the consequences of their sins and will thus establish His righteous kingdom in Jerusalem. We in the church will be a part of that coming righteous kingdom. It is for that reason that Jesus came—to fulfill the original purpose of creation before the Fall.

On this trip Sharon and I were able to visit with my mom, Jean Wilkin, and my sister, Pam Goodrich, and some of my nephews and nieces, Ethan, Michelle, and Bobby.

Thank you for your prayers for mom. She is doing well. While she misses her house, she enjoys the board and care facility in which she lives.

This was a great way to end the year, visiting with mom and with Grace friends in Orange. Thanks so much for making it possible for me to minister in so many places. 

Secure and Sure Not Yet Assured

While we’ve made progress over the past few months on *Secure and Sure* (working title for my book on assurance of salvation), it has been slowed by all of the pressures of travel, speaking, writing for *Grace in Focus*, the Journal, and *Partners in Grace*, as well as keeping up with daily correspondence, and counseling with people. We hope to get this book to the printer by April, but there is still some writing and a lot of editing to do. So we would appreciate your prayers. 


Pre-Trib Group continued from page 1

ple as well. Papers presented at this conference usually cover eschatological issues and for the most part avoid what would be divisive soteriological issues.

I heard many excellent papers on subjects like Progressive Dispensationalism (PD), Hermeneutics (principles of interpretation), and the Kingdom.

Here are a few of the nuggets I came away with:

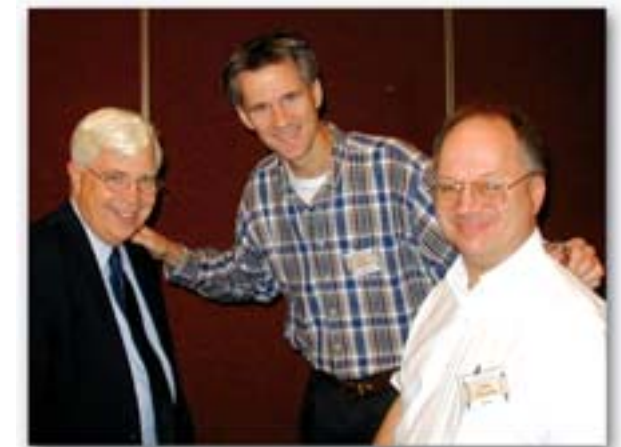
- PD rarely speaks of the rapture, believes in one people of God in the eternal state, sees an overlap between the church age and the Millennium (with Jesus ruling on the throne of David in both eras), does not believe the kingdom was re-offered to Israel by the apostles, and adopts a hermeneutic that is no longer a literal hermeneutic.
- A number of Classic Dispensationalists (CDs) are now arguing that there is no sense whatsoever that the kingdom is already here. Men like Stan Toussaint argue that the kingdom is entirely future. It did draw near during the ministry of Jesus. But the kingdom was rejected and will not arrive until after the Tribulation. Such people reject the already-but-not-yet idea entirely.
- Many of the students at schools which formerly taught CD but now primarily teach PD tend to be unaware of what CD is.

I enjoyed this conference and the opportunity to hear a number of excellent papers and visit with Free Grace friends. Thank you for making it possible for me to represent the Grace Movement in ways like this. 

Kirk Muller Goes to Be With the Lord



It is with great sadness that we report that Pastor Kirk Muller went home to be with the Lord on December 29, 2003 after a long battle with cancer. Kirk has been in the GES family for many years and has spoken at previous conferences. Our prayers are with his wife Sheryl and sons Greg and Trent during this difficult time. 



Bob visiting with Drs. Elliott Johnson & John Niemelä



The RidgePointe Fellowship choir

Grace on the Go

January 10-14	Emmanuel Baptist Church, Starkville, MS
January 19	GES Board Meeting
January 24-25	Cypress Valley Bible Church, Marshall, TX
February 22	RidgePointe Fellowship
February 23-26	GES Conference
February 28-29	Alvin (TX) Bible Church
March 9-21	Fellowship for Evangelising Britain's Villages Sheffield, England