

# Notes & Letters from the Debate

Bob was very clear on the grace message of salvation and that we can know we have eternal life simply by faith and not by trying to look at our lifestyle. It was very obvious that Bob held strongly to the Scriptures and James White was not as clear. It was very clear that Bob knew he has eternal life while James White was not 100% sure.

J.B. - Stillwater, OK

Again and again, I kept waiting for him [Dr. White] to nail Dr. Wilkin's hide to the wall with solid exegesis and straightforward argumentation. This did not happen as much as I felt it should. It appeared that Dr. White failed to sufficiently prepare for this debate, merely picking a couple data-points and "winging it" from there. Hardly indicative of the quality of his past work and impressive reputation.

Disappointed Dr. White Supporter - Oklahoma City, OK

I found the debate to be very encouraging. Bob challenged Dr. White forcefully yet gracefully as he responded to unbiblical teaching with clarity and thoroughness. I especially liked how well Bob explained 1 John and James dealing with perseverance. In the end, Dr. White left with his Calvinism, Bob left with his Bible.

B.S. - Irving, TX



The Hills after Bob's message at MBC

It was a highly charged atmosphere which showed the stark contrast between two systems of theology. One system where man has virtually no human free will, where faith includes obedience, repentance and surrender, and where an uncertain assurance is based on works and perseverance. The other system where God's love and salvation is available to all, where faith or belief alone in Jesus is required for eternal life, and where a certain assurance is based on the promises of God's Word.

M.L. - S. San Francisco, CA

I really enjoyed the debate. I thought you [Bob] did a better job on addressing why you believe what you believe from a biblical standpoint rather than simply being critical of the other's position, as Dr. White seemed to be.

B.W. - Stillwater, OK

Bob did an excellent job of staying on focus and not getting sidetracked with peripheral issues. He clearly presented why James White's definition of faith is faulty and why assurance is impossible when perseverance is required. He challenged the audience and James White to consider the biblical definition of faith and assurance based on God's Word.

L.L. - S. San Francisco, CA

# PARTNERS

## in Grace

### Debate with Dr. James White

Oklahoma City, OK

April 22

The debate ran two and a half hours. During the first hour we debated the relationship between faith and regeneration. In the second hour we debated the relationship between good works and assurance. Then we had 20 minutes of questions from the audience and five minutes each for closing statements.

GES Partners Mike and Letitia Lii came from San Francisco for the debate. GES Board member J.B. Bond came from Stillwater, OK and he brought over 20 people from his church with him! There were about 150 total in the audience, and about 30 of those were Free Grace people. So the crowd was heavily weighted against our position.

One of the people from Stillwater commented to J.B. after the debate that when I was speaking Dr. White often frowned and shook his head, whereas when he spoke I smiled and listened intently. It was clear by his comments in the debate and afterwards and by his body language that he was very upset.

Debate continued on page 2



Dr. White and Bob before the debate

### Men's Retreat New Orleans, LA

April 1-3

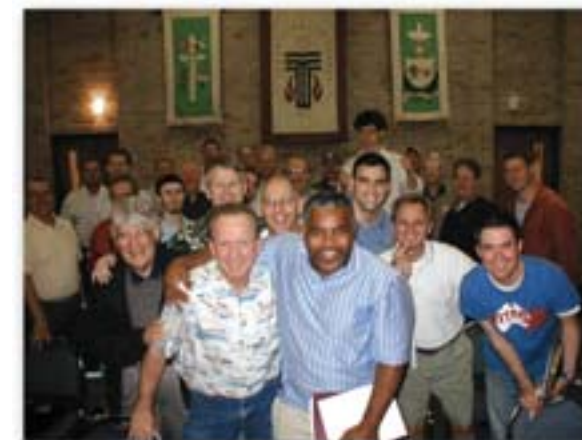
I've known Erik Garcia for about 6 years now. I first met him when I spoke to a group of Young Life leaders in New Orleans. He was a college student at Tulane then.

Now Erik is married with a one-year-old son. He attends Canal Street Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, where Mike Hogg is the Pastor. When they spoke of their annual men's retreat, Erik recommended me.

This retreat involved around 40 men ranging in age from 18 to 75. They were from Canal Street and another conservative PCUSA church in New Orleans, Woodland Presbyterian Church.

We met in Northern Louisiana within a mile of the Mississippi at the Feliciana Retreat Center. My topic was "authentic Christianity," meaning I was seeking to relate grace to daily Christian living.

Men's Retreat continued on page 3



The men before one of Bob's talks at the retreat

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## Financial Report

April Revenue	\$35,587
April Budget	\$27,320
YTD Revenue	\$311,899
YTD Budget	\$273,200



## Highlights

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May 2005



Bob visiting after the debate

## Debate

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Here are a few highlights:

1. Dr. White seemed unfocused the whole debate.
2. He was extremely reluctant to admit he wasn't sure he has everlasting life. I said he wasn't sure, and I challenged him to tell us he was sure each time I spoke. He only admitted he wasn't sure at the very end in his closing comments.
3. His failure to respond to my comments on Matt 7:21-23, Luke 8:5-15, John 4:14, 5:24, 11:25-27, and a host of other texts was quite telling.
4. He spent about 5 minutes at one point quoting from 2 confessions and from a number of Reformed theologians. I pointed out that this was a waste of time as this was a debate about what the Bible said on these issues. I said I believed in Sola Scriptura. That really made him angry.
5. He criticized me for being overly concerned about works-salvation. I responded by saying that the reason

he wasn't "overly concerned about works-salvation" is because his view of faith is works-salvation. This too upset him.

6. I spoke with Zane Hodges about the debate the Monday after and he said he thought the reason Dr. White was unfocused and didn't respond to my arguments was because he probably has never been confronted like that before. It is rare for someone to tell a Calvinist that he doesn't believe the gospel, that he isn't sure he has eternal life, and that he is preaching a false gospel. Zane said that Dr. White was probably also upset because he likes to use these times to show how great his position is. In this debate, he couldn't do that. In fact, the glaring weaknesses of his position were exposed, especially the lack of certainty prior to death. Hopefully the Lord will use this debate in the lives of many people. Dr. White's ministry says it will distribute this debate on CDs and DVDs. Plus we will distribute CDs and possibly DVDs too. So lots of people who weren't even there may be influenced. We should have more details about the audio and video soon.

Thank you for your support that allows us to do cutting edge things like this. 



## Grace on the Go

<b>May</b>	
15	Christ Comm. Church, Modesto, CA
<b>June</b>	
5	Brenham (TX) Bible Church
19	Grace Chapel, Tustin, CA
26	Lake Cities (TX) United Methodist Church



A panoramic shot of the audience from the debate


## Mandeville (LA) Bible Church

April 3



On Sunday night I spoke at a special evening service at Mandeville Bible Church. GES Board member Dr. Doug Hill and his wife Becky and their four children go there. I spoke on 1 Cor 9:24-27. Afterwards we had a time of fellowship and Q & A at Doug and Becky's home, which is just a few doors down from the church.

The pastor of MBC is Nick Greco, a fellow DTS grad from 1984. I was in the doctoral program at the time.

My thanks to Nick and Doug and Becky and all at MBC for their warm hospitality. It was a pleasure ministering there. This was my first time at this church. 




Sunday night at Mandeville Bible Church

## Jansen (NE) Bible Church

April 8-10

I've gone to Jansen Bible Church about once a year for the last 5 or 6 years. They are a great group. Paul Carpenter is pastor there. Paul had many in the church read my new book on assurance before I came. Then I gave four messages on assurance tied in with the book.

There were many good questions and some good answers, I hope. Hah.

My thanks to Paul and Carol and their three children still living at home for their hospitality. I enjoyed breaking bread with them on several occasions. 



Jansen Bible before Bob's message on Sunday morning


## Men's Retreat

continued from page 1

I spoke 6 times on the following topics: Sowing and Reaping (Gal 6:6-10), How to Share the Gospel Clearly, You Can Be Sure, Faith without Works Is Dead (Jas 2:14-17), Keep Your Eyes on the Prize (1 Cor 9:24-27), and the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

One young man in his early 20s kept questioning about eternal security because he thought it wasn't true. Then at the end of the conference, he was coming around. He emailed me a few days later and said, "I am thoroughly convinced that faith in Christ for everlasting life is the only criteria for salvation, according to Scripture." Later in the email he said, however, that he is not yet convinced of eternal security. I emailed him back and tried to persuade him. We will see.

What a joy it was to see this young man grappling with the truth of eternal security. And it is likely that a number of others not only grappled with it, but came to believe that blessed truth that weekend!

I pulled lots of muscles on Saturday playing ultimate Frisbee and touch football. But it was a lot of fun. 



Some men from the retreat visiting with Bob