

GRACE *and Truth*

For the law was given through Moses, but GRACE AND TRUTH came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

Celebrating 25 Years
GRACE†
1992-2017

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Thoughts on Christian Education

by W. Ryan Steenburg

“The aim of Christian instruction should impact the head, heart, and hands of the learner, which is the image of Christ in ministry.”

Mrs. Richter was my kindergarten teacher at King’s Christian School, in Pennsauken, New Jersey. She used to celebrate her students’ birthdays by playing her piano while persuading the entire class to sing along. After a boisterous round of “Happy Birthday” she would proceed to confer upon her students “birthday spankings.” These were merely light taps on the hind-end which every child enjoyed much more than any spanking mom or dad may have conferred. But the part that the students looked forward to the most was after the final thump on the tail, Mrs. Richter would give them a little pinch with a hearty, “and a pinch to grow an inch.” Mrs. Richter taught her students much more than just how to sing and celebrate birthdays, and she did not place all of her confidence for growth and maturity in her pinch. As a Christian educator, Mrs. Richter placed her hope and trust in God. She sought her truth and guidance from her Bible, although her daily plans included counting, colors, and the “ABCs.”

Christian educators should have the confidence to know that they have not been left to wonder and wander, but have been entrusted with the truth of God’s Word for the instruction and edification of their students. Therefore, it is necessary to have an understanding of the Bible, and its full application in daily life in order to develop the student into a mature Christian.

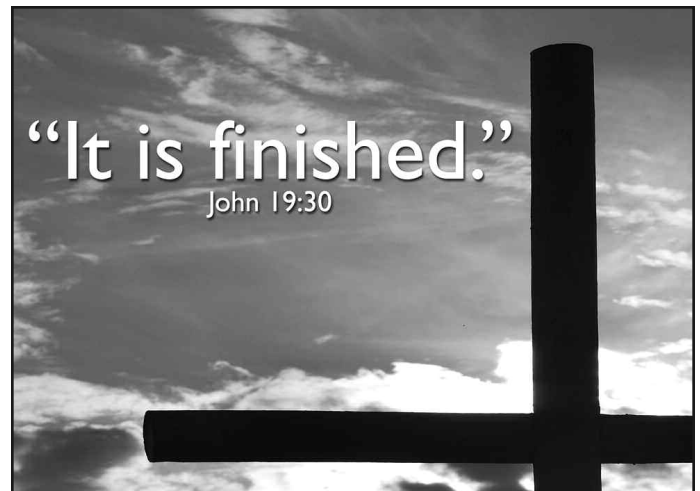
Christian education, whether in the context of a classroom, living room, or Sunday school room must be thought of as Christian ministry. This does not, however, mean that Christian education is limited to Christians. All truth is God’s truth, even when presented as the world’s truth. In order to establish some biblical principles, it would be helpful to con-

sider the biblical examples. When surveying the Old Testament, one will find a variety of teachers in a variety of settings. The primary role of a prophet was to communicate the words of the Lord (Jonah 1). A significant role of the priest was to teach the people the ways of the Lord. Scribes were experts on the law and could share the truths of the law with the people (Mark 12). Rabbis, too, were experts on what the Word of the Lord contained, sometimes legalistically so.

As one examines the book of Deuteronomy, it becomes apparent that all of the laws and commands that Moses was communicating were intended to be instructions to the people (Deuteronomy 4:32ff). It is significant to consider that the teachings were not to be left stagnant with those who heard Moses’ commands, but that they were to pass on the teachings to their offspring (Deuteronomy 6). The Psalter even declares, “Give ear to my teaching.” (Psalm 78:18)

The New Testament, as well, is full of examples of teachers. The leaders of the faith community were considered teachers. These include, but are not limited to, Apostles and apostles, prophets, bishops, elders, and Christians in general (1 Timothy 3; Titus 2; Matthew 28:19f).

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Visit our website at www.indygrace.org

Updating Our Disciple Life Classes

by Josh Georgen

As many of you know, Grace Evangelical made a number of changes to its teaching ministries in the fall of 2015. We began rotating teachers and topics in the adult classes, integrating the youth and seniors into those offerings, and bringing children of younger ages into the worship service. I think it's fair to say that there were some very positive things that came from those changes. However, overall we feel that the change has not accomplished what we'd hoped, and after prayerful discussion and many conversations with our church families, we would like to bring back some of the things we previously had. Here are the details:

1. **Brief Rest:** This teaching quarter ended on March 19, and we're taking a short break from our 9 a.m. DiscipleLIFE classes until April 23rd. This will allow our teachers to rest and us, as a church body, to focus on Lent and the coming of Resurrection Sunday.
2. **Long-Term Adult Classes:** Beginning April 23rd, we want to start one or two DiscipleLIFE classes that will not end with each quarter but instead will continue on. Michael Smith and Brent Hendricks will be leading one group, and teachers are being sought for the other. Our hope is that this model will give participants in those classes the chance to study more deeply and develop stronger relationships with each other. This would look similar to the Fellowship Groups we had in 2015.

3. **Youth Ministry:** Our hope is also to start developing more for our youth. To gain insight into how to move forward, we spoke with some of the families currently engaged in youth discipleship, including the Sudler, Ball, DeHoff, and Monfreda families. Together, we determined to start a youth-oriented class on April 23rd that emphasizes topics relevant to teens, integration with older adults in learning and fellowship, and opportunities for service and evangelism in and outside the church. Teachers and curriculum are being finalized, but we're excited to get started.

If you haven't been involved in a discipleship ministry at Grace Evangelical Church, this will be a great time to begin. Please feel free to ask the GEC Elder Board if you have any questions (elders@indygrace.org), and pray for the collective efforts of our teachers and leadership as we make this transition. Many of you have expressed support and interest in these new efforts, and we look forward to "growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" alongside you!



Finding Grace ...

To celebrate Grace's 25 year anniversary, we'll be printing testimonies from YOU each month in this column. If you have one to share, please send it to newsletter@indygrace.org.



by Char Urban

My first time visiting Grace was Sept 29, 2013. My husband Eddie and I had been told about Grace through Bill and Tammy Graham. Bill is a close friend of my husband as Bill had worked under Eddie at one time. Elijah and I visited because Elijah wanted to get involved with youth and planned on becoming a youth leader/pastor. This particular Sunday we were met by Kari Jo Doerksen and got the grand tour as she was directing us to the youth classes. We then told her that we were going to meet with Tammy and Bill. We sat in on the Sunday School class that Tammy and Bill were teaching and I was floored with not only the way the class was taught, but with the responses of these young kids! From that time on David Spence (who was one of the kids in the class) has left a major impression on me!

After that Sunday we returned and decided that this was where we wanted to make our new home church. That

day we felt that the people here were awesome, open and very caring, and showed God's love through the message, songs by the youth who sang that morning, and the pastor. We have been members ever since. I am blessed to be able to be a part of the praise team and now serve as a deaconess for this body of believers.

I have had a few struggles after I became a part of Grace. My vehicle ended up needing a new engine and several people tried to help me find one. Robert Griggs was one who said that he would have a friend of his look out for an engine and when I told him I was grateful, he said to me, "We are family aren't we? That's what family does." I also had Mike Monfreda ask me about the engine and he was able to find one, and with the blessing of Grace, I had my car back!

There have been several other times when I have said things and was told that I had a family here at Grace and that I was not alone. This is so much a true statement and I can tell others that Grace is my family! I am so blessed by being a part of this family, and I hope that I am a blessing in return. I am honored that I can say that I am a part of God's family and the family of Grace Evangelical Church, and that He has given me the opportunity to serve Him here!

Thoughts on Christian Education

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When surveying Scripture, one can derive four basic principles that must be adhered to as essential biblical principles of Christian teaching and learning. The first is to mind the fact that all authority resides in biblical revelation over and above reason, traditions, and experience (Matthew 28:18). Reason, traditions, and experience share some value in education due to the fact that God has bestowed common grace, but they are secondary to the Bible. Secondly, conversion is necessary. As much as Christian education is not limited to the Christian, for Christian learning to take place, it must begin with conversion through Christ. Christian education involves knowledge of basic theology through instruction (converted teacher) and application (converted learner). The third principle is to consider the work of Jesus Christ. Christian education is practical, it is ecclesiology, anthropology, Christology, soteriology, and includes the doctrine of God. Finally, Christian education inherently embraces a biblical position of piety. John Calvin has described piety as a union of reverence and love, a love towards God which the knowledge of his benefits inspires.

The aim of Christian instruction should impact the head, heart, and hands of the learner, which is the image of Christ in ministry (2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-16). A pitfall of secular education is the introduction of the concept that learning is king. All Christians should readily admit that Jesus is King, and learning should always be about Him and His glorification, not human constructs or self-actualization (Matthew 16:25). Biblical teaching should always be a trajectory away from the self.

Mrs. Richter probably could not get away with her birthday spankings in today's culture, even in a Christian education setting. But there was a lot more to Mrs. Richter than the spankings she provided to each child once a year. Mrs. Richter saw each child as an individual gift from God. To her, each child was made in the image of God, and had potential because of what His Son did on the cross for all who would believe. Mrs. Richter found her truth, hope, guidance, love, and instruction in the pages of Scripture. Her philosophy, although possibly influenced and even marked by the contemporary learning theories, was well rooted in the pages of Scripture. Her method may be questioned, but her message should never change.



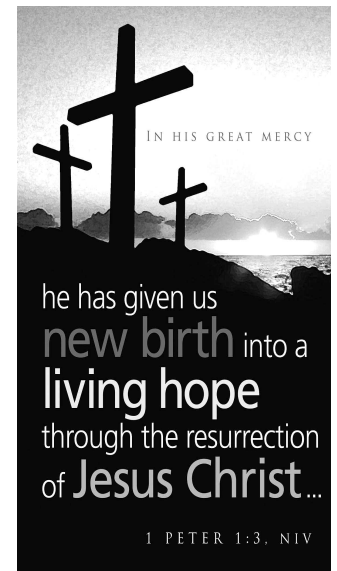
APRIL

- 4/03 Christina Wilson
- 4/04 Larry Cooney
- 4/04 Kyle Black
- 4/07 Cody Ball
- 4/07 Logan Ball
- 4/07 Collin Ball
- 4/11 Cheryl McCabe
- 4/11 Barb Andry
- 4/17 Chelsea Engle
- 4/18 Kevin Via
- 4/20 Zach DeHoff
- 4/20 Tricia Sparks
- 4/24 David Moore

ANNIVERSARIES

- 4/10 Allen & Tricia Sparks

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."
John 11:25-26 (ESV)



News From the Children's Department

by Holly Phoenix

The Children's Department is looking forward to our annual Eggstravaganza on Saturday, April 8. Be sure to invite your friends and family! Thank you to those who have already donated candy. We are still in need of volunteers to help set up and hide eggs and clean up. If you can help, there is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board, or you can contact me at holly@indygrace.org. All candy donations need to be turned in by April 5.

We will be combining the Foxes and Penguins classes starting April 2 during second hour. All preschoolers will go to service for singing and then come back to class. If you have any questions or concerns about this please let me know.

Remember, there will be no first hour classes March 26-April 16. We will resume on Sunday, April 23. Thank you to all our Children's Department volunteers last quarter! If you are interested in helping first or second hour, contact Holly Phoenix (holly@indygrace.org).



Ethan and Joel Yao had a great time at last year's Eggstravaganza.