

Works of Grace

GRACE COVENANT INTERNATIONAL

April 2023

Baptism of Love!



Missionary Rick Bernard with wife Carie, led a prayer of affirmation and blessing for Missionaries Callie and Tyler Franca.

The theme of our GCI Ministry Conference 2023 in March was “Ministry from More than Enough.” Our core scripture was: **“God is able to do much more than we ask or think through His power working in us.” (Ephesians 2:20)** With streams of revival flowing in different parts of our nation, our desire was to receive our portion. In the words of the old hymn, “Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others you are calling, do not pass me by.” We prepared for our conference with days of prayer and fasting. People were spiritually engaged and gathered with expectation. Each conference God does a unique sovereign work. This year, we received an extra measure of His love. The outpouring of the love of God causes people to open their hearts in deeper ways to the Lord



and to each other. Love in the room enables people to feel safe. There is a willingness to be humble and vulnerable before the Father. There is relational engagement beyond the superficial. The first fruit (love) of the Holy Spirit is manifested. The atmosphere becomes infused with unity and commonality from diversity. **“All the believers were together and had everything in common.” Acts 2:44** It’s spiritual fusion. The Holy Spirit stirs in the midst of people from different backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities, like ingredients in a blender. The Spirit’s flow of liquid Love creates a Holy chemistry of oneness. The whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Wholehearted commitment to God creates unrestricted embrace of His Presence. He has freedom to move on lives. God’s affection streams through hearts in tangible touches of acceptance, affirmation, encouragement and empowering. The supernatural outflow is the connected embrace of those in your ministry circle. This family is rising up in the strength of the Lord!

--NEX GEN RISING



Three years ago, the Lord emphasized to us that we need to be identifying and investing in our next generation of ministry leaders. We have seen a good response. We are making significant strides in building connection and community. We are seeing our churches and ministries encouraging their involvement in our ministry events. The result has been a growing chemistry of community through their engagement. We are being intentional to make room for this emerging generation. They are rising up to take their place and make glorious contributions in our ministry family. We saw our largest NEX GEN attendance ever at this year's conference. Pictured are NEX GEN peeps from the West Coast, the Midwest and East Coast who were able to attend. And we have more! This train is rolling!



It is our great privilege to introduce to you Geony Rucker. She is the Founder and Director of Value Unconditional, a faith-based non-profit that helps trafficked and traumatized individuals

in the Kansas City metro area. God is expanding the reach of her ministry to other parts of the United States and world. Recently, she was invited to speak at a conference in London, England. Then she made a short trip to Spain to connect with Stephy Eddy-Moroni, (Bill and Marie's daughter) who works with YWAM and reaches out to trafficked girls in the north of Spain. At our March conference, we commissioned Geony as a minister. She is now part of our ministry family. GCI is partnering with VU. You can support this effort. See our website.



Stephy Eddy-Moroni and Geony Rucker as they met recently in Madrid, Spain. God is making connections.



In March, Value Unconditional celebrated the "ribbon cutting" in their new building in Kansas City, MO. Apostle Pam Brown (left) has been instrumental in our connection with Geony. Also pictured are the VU staff with Geony and family.

Honoring Mission Pioneers >>>

Rick and Carie Bernard served as GCI Missionaries to the Dominican Republic for 20 years. God used them to pioneer and establish DR Missions. They persevered through some tough times. Ministry works for Jesus remain as testimonies of their faithfulness to their Kingdom calling. The Canaan Ministry Center offers a daily meal and other programs to 85 street children. The Esther House gave girls a stable home. Thousands of mission team members were hosted and impacted the DR. God impacted their lives also. We are grateful for Rick and Carie's service. They raised up Callie and Tyler Franca to which they now pass the baton as Directors of DR Missions. They're well-positioned for this next season.



Chavez Update

This is an update from Antonio and Graciela Chavez, GCI Missionaries –Nepal. (Antonio suffered a mild stroke while at our conference in Peru.)



Dear Family of Grace Covenant, From rugged Nepal, a country where the Lord brought us to fulfill his purpose, we greet you to tell you that we are very grateful for the financial and spiritual support you give us, allowing us to consolidate established places and plant new ones at this time. We are also very grateful to the Lord for the recovery of Antonio and for the beloved brothers who were already waiting for us here. We pray for you every day. We bless their lives, jobs and church. Have a great Easter celebration, as we will here too. Hugs and more and more blessings.



Ladies, mark your calendar for the GCI Women's Conference 2023. It will held at Holsey Chapel -St. Joseph, MO on June 23-24. It will begin Friday evening at 7pm. It will continue on Saturday 9:30am-5pm. We will be getting more information to you soon.

DR Bound >>>>>>>>



Meet Hannah Hoose. She has been called of God to be a missionary in the Dominican Republic. This June she will join our team there. Hannah was approved as an Associate Missionary with GCI. She is now raising her missions support. See our website for more information and ways to give. Hannah has served internships with DR Missions and is from Santa Rosa Beach, FL.

Unpacking the Resurrection

By Dallas Elder

Sometimes an event is too hard to imagine or believe even if you are told. Such an event was the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus clearly informed his disciples, often within the sound of His voice, that He would die and be resurrected on the third day. There are 21 such references in the Gospels. Read the personal accounts of the empty tomb, there was not one of His followers who believed what He said regarding His resurrection. Everyone was shocked that the Sunday visit revealed the grave was open and the body of Jesus was gone. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary went early on the Sunday morning to the tomb. The stone was removed and his body was missing. They ran and told the disciples. ***"They taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't where they have put him."*** (JN 20:2) The disciples didn't believe the women. Then Simon Peter thought that he should go check out the story. Their question could have been, "Well, should go look for the missing corpse? Afterall, it is Jesus." So Peter started running to the tomb and John out ran him. Peter went in the found it empty and then John peeked in.

Later Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb. Grief had been added to grief. She had witnessed her Lord crucified, now thieves have apparently taken His body. Double grief! As she wept at the site, she inquired from a man, she assumes he was the gardener, about the body. He calls her by name. She didn't realize it was the resurrected Jesus, then her eyes were opened and she recognized her Lord.

Next He went to the upper room where His disciples were behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, ***"Peace be with you!"*** then ***He showed them His hands and His feet. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*** (JN 20:19-20)

Continued next page >>>

GCI EVENT CALENDAR

- ⇒ June 23-24 GCI Women's Conference At Holsey Chapel-St. Joseph, MO
- ⇒ August 3-10 Mission Team to the DR
- ⇒ August 14-15 GCI Midyear Conference At LifePoint Church-Oakdale, CA
- ⇒ Sept. 20-23 Ignite Ministry Conf. At Platte City, MO
- ⇒ October 27-28 Stronger Men's Conf. At Holsey Chapel-St. Joseph, MO

>>> Mission Team to the DR

We are organizing a Mission Team to the DR for August 3-10. Get on this team! Cost \$700 plus airfare from your location.

The Apostle Paul states to the Corinthians his proofs of the Resurrection in I Corinthians 15:1-11. *“Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.”*

Paul states the cites six appearances of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, one of which was a appearance to him. There was his Damascus road experience and some believe personal instruction of the Gospel. Regarding the Gospel he preaches he said, “...I received it by revelation from the Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:12) So says, the apostle who was “abnormally born.” Another interesting fact that Paul brings to the table is the appearance of Jesus to more than 500 believers at one time. I’d like to know more about that scene.

It is interesting that Paul mentions James, the half-brother of Jesus. James didn’t embrace his brother’s God’s Son claim. Call it sibling rivalry or just a brother not believing. Jesus made it a point to seek James and show him His resurrected self. James not only believes that Jesus is the Christ, he becomes the leader of the Jerusalem church and recognized by the apostles.

The list of Paul references were not a complete list. There were other Resurrected Jesus encounters. There were the two guys on the road to Emmaus. There were the seven guys who were fishing. Jesus helped them with a huge catch and fixed them breakfast. Jesus took the occasion to help Peter (who denied Jesus) with inner healing and recommitment to his apostolic calling. There was also the gathering of the disciples as Jesus blessed them and ascended to heaven.

I’ve never thought about it before, just how significant it was that Jesus took 40 days (from His Resurrection to His Ascension) to confirm to His followers that He had risen from the dead. They needed to process all the events and become convinced of the mighty works of God.

No one initially believed that Jesus rose from the dead. In His life and ministry, He told them numerous times that He would be put to death and on the third day rise from the dead. There were other vivid, visual references points of people that He raised from the dead. There was Jarius’s daughter. The was the widow’s son in the funeral procession. Jesus stopped the pallbearers and raised the boy to life. Then most recently Lazarus, along with Mary and Martha, who were some of Jesus’ closest friends. The event had become so widely know that a significant crowd gathered whenever Jesus visited the risen from the dead Lazarus. This crowd went before Jesus into Jerusalem as He road in on a colt. They placed coats and palm branches before Him, honoring Him as the Messiah. But no one believed that He would be physically resurrected. A lot quickly took place. There was His arrest and conviction. The suffering and death of the man His followers loved. There was sorrow upon sorrow. There was much to unpack. But...He is risen!

GRACE COVENANT INTERNATIONAL

PO BOX 588 PLATTE CITY, MO 64079

Phone: (816) 431-6217

Email: GC@GraCov.com

Website: www.GraCov.com



Platte City, MO 64079

PO Box 588

Grace Covenant International