

# G.R.A.C.E. News

## Grace For Today

December, 2005  
Volume 5, Issue 12

G.R.A.C.E. Website  
[www.gracemmaus.org](http://www.gracemmaus.org)

### Inside this Issue

- 1 From our OUTGOING  
Community Lay Director:  
THANK YOU
- 3 From our NEW Community  
Lay Director: GREETINGS
- 3 Two poems and a letter:  
A song of life;  
And God said  
Letter from Sidney Heard

### Next Gathering

Thursday

January 12<sup>th</sup>

@ 7:00PM,

Lanes Chapel UMC,

Tyler

G.R.A.C.E. REGISTRAR  
P.O. Box 132212  
Tyler TX.  
75713-2212

Dear G.R.A.C.E.

From the Lay Director's desk,

THANK YOU!

Brothers and sisters of GRACE Emmaus, I purposely reserved this time to speak with you today. I want to share some of "what the Emmaus walk has meant to me," and "what I have done about it." I also want to take a look at the past, present, and future with you.

My name is Bill Burgdorf, and I took my walk to Emmaus on GRACE Emmaus walk #5 in 1999. I sat at the table of St. Stephen. My family worships at Lane's Chapel UMC, in Tyler.

"What the Emmaus walk has meant to me." What a wonderful question. I have listened to so many tremendous testimonies about the walk experience shared by many of you. Your interactions and collisions with the Holy Spirit have been inspirational, heartbreaking, and comforting. I have marveled at those who during their Emmaus walk had shattering experiences of awakening and invigoration that we hope all on a walk DO experience. For me the walk to Emmaus was a confirmation, a reassurance, and a vigorously renewed commitment. You see, my experience with the Lord has been one of steady progress, continued growth, challenge, and movement from one plateau of understanding to the next plateau. I cannot claim a moment in time when the Spirit EXPLODED into my being. He has been there for as long as I can remember. We have walked together for a long time – some times walking, other time running -- the Spirit in front leading and me catching up or balking at times. The Spirit and I started hanging out together a long time ago, when I was around 12 or 13 years old.

My friends, I had a great friend in Reverend Hooks, a retired UM minister, who worked with me on a Boy Scout award called God and Country. For many months, we spent afternoons together each week working in the scriptures, memorizing verses, and discussing the abilities and presence of the Almighty. This time had a profound impact on my life, so much, so that the foundations laid at that time have stood the test of time for over 43 years. At that time, the Holy Spirit and a 13-year-old boy decided to walk together, and He has not left yet. Therefore, the Walk to Emmaus meant that I once again recognized my good friend, saw His presence, and again – as so many other times in my life – saw the Spirit dancing for joy at the situations and circumstances that allowed others to engage with Him. My walk was a recommitment to doing what the Spirit wants me to do.

Brothers and sisters, I count myself extremely fortunate to know what the Spirit of the living Lord wants me to do. I know because He told me what he expected of me a few years ago. In my career at that time, I was struggling with what I wanted to do. A job opened up to manage a sales office in Phoenix and I knew that I was the best person for the assignment. So, I proceeded to position myself for that job. Oh, I prayed for it, told the Lord that it was the right job and I was the right person, said that I wanted His will to be done, and then promptly went and did my will. I interviewed, postured, positioned, and assured all involved that there was only one legitimate choice – me! By coincidence, immediately following the interview, I left for a business trip to Phoenix, and all the way there, I was bothered by the interview and job. I kept churning it over and could not forget it or let it go. It was so bothersome that once I checked into the hotel in Phoenix, I got to the room and dropped to my knees to pray. I prayed that what I really wanted was a strong relationship with the Lord. By this, I meant the Lord's will to be done, not my will, HIS! What I did ask for was strength – if the job is for

me, give me strength; if the job is not for me, give me strength. It was during this prayer that I felt a warmth and comfort come over me that I have never before experienced – I was safe, secure, and loved. Then, AS CRYSTAL CLEAR as I am talking with you I heard His voice tell me that everything was alright, I was okay, and what I am supposed to do is “HELP OTHER PEOPLE.” At that split second the telephone rang, it was one of the interviewers telling me that I was not the successful candidate for the Phoenix job (to this day, I don’t know how they knew where to contact me because I had not called into the office – it was coincidence, if you accept my definition that coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous). I WAS ECSTATIC; the interviewer thought I had lost my mind. You see, I know what I am supposed to do now, I do not know exactly how to go about it, but the Spirit will reveal **what** I am supposed to know, **when** I am supposed to know it. I **do know** that the Spirit revealed my gift – it is to teach -- teach others as Reverend Hooks taught me. Brothers and sisters, my purpose for sharing this event is only to recognize the glory and greatness of the Almighty. I am humbled beyond explanation that this happened, and I give God the glory.

So, “what have I done about my walk to Emmaus?” I believe that the world is doing everything it can to fill the heads of people (believers) that what is wrong, is right. Unless believers are rooted in the word of God – the Bible -- how can we be able to withstand the world? Our direction is to live in the world, but not be consumed by the world. My gift is teaching, and today I teach Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and savior in a Sunday school class, a Wednesday night Bible study, a Sunday night Bible study, and a Sunday night **Disciple** Bible study. This is my understanding of how to “help other people,” and with the Spirit’s sustaining, I will continue.

Now, during this year, the GRACE community has had the opportunity to hear from various

members of the GRACE Emmaus board. Purposefully, it has been important for the community to hear from those who you have elected to provide leadership; to hear their responses to the two questions – “what did the walk mean to me” and “what have I done about it.” Unless you hear testimony from those, you elect how can you ever support them? My friends, we have a healthy and alive community of fantastic members in GRACE. This past year, we have struggled mightily looking for way to reach out to the community, and in particular how to provide better communications. As with any group, **we face an abundance of activities and commitments that pull our members** away from gatherings, attending reunion groups, serving on walks, and other events of the GRACE community. Remember, the first talk you heard during your walk. It was the talk about priorities. **Obviously, because of your presence at today’s gathering, you have had to prioritize your life events.** I applaud your choice. Now, how can we reach out and include more of the other 1000 + members of GRACE? What is a better way to get the word to everyone? This answer still eludes us and it will take our collective minds to solve. It is not just the responsibility of the GRACE board, **it is OUR responsibility.** Do you have an idea, a better way to do things, other suggestions? Then hold your hand up and ask to be involved. The easiest thing to do is sit there; the most difficult thing to do is become involved.

The GRACE board needs members working on many support committees to accomplish all that our Lord Jesus wants to have done. Fifteen directors sitting around a table once a month cannot be the support structure for GRACE Emmaus. Our supporting teams and committees must come from you -- the community. Are you ready to volunteer and assist in making certain that newsletters get printed and distributed; that literature gets ordered and displayed at gatherings; that prayer clocks and agape are

arranged for, collected, and delivered on time for walks; that the community trailer is inventoried, restocked, and reloaded after the walks; that a clean up committee is working for each walk; and the opportunities go on and on. The best way to become involved is to **ASK, and I am asking YOU – PLEASE, GET INVOLVED.**

This past year, we have successfully implemented using two camps -- Disciples Crossing and Camp Gilmont. This action was in response to our growing community. This action was to make the walks more accessible to the most people. We have also successfully implemented a transition of using the Upper Room Emmaus model that has the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By making sure that we stay focused on the Spirit in our Walks to Emmaus, and not on what WE want or what I want to do, we stay anchored in the Spirit. After all, Brothers and Sisters, **it is not about YOU or ME, it is ALL ABOUT the Holy Spirit and the pilgrims.** On this point we all must agree, there is no ME in community only UNITY. Applaud yourselves for successfully transitioning and changing as we move forward. **Glory to God, the Spirit knew we could do this, and He has been way out in front waiting for us to catch up.** Thank you Lord, we did that, now what is the next challenge – communications; stronger reunion groups; building up sponsorship; creating community committees of talented, sharing members? The answers to these issues reside with you, and with the Spirit’s guidance, the right decisions will be made.

The future for GRACE Emmaus community is glorious because the Spirit is alive and well and leading this Emmaus movement. Our inclusion as GRACE is but a small part of a worldwide movement. On any given weekend there are 100’s of Emmaus walks being conducted? At no other time has the work of Emmaus been more needed and necessary. The church of our Lord Jesus is under attack from so many directions – some obvious, others more subtle and devious. Emmaus is

called to work with influential persons in individual churches; to provide an experience of renewal, invigoration, and interaction with the Holy Spirit. Then dispatch them back to their churches after the Emmaus experience to engage in the Spirit's will. This 4<sup>th</sup> day, called GRACE, continues to support and strengthen the body of Christ – the church. What we do as a community matters tremendously. **Your involvement matters and not one of us has a right to say that my participation or involvement doesn't make a difference.** Not one of us has the right to say, "Well, let someone else take care of something." Not one of us has the right to say, "It isn't my responsibility." Not one of us should ever say, "Well, that's not the way it was done of my walk." Were any of these a message from the Holy Spirit? At the conclusion of your Emmaus walk you've already testified that you are counting on Christ. What does the message say that is on the back of your cross – **Christ is counting on YOU! How about it GRACE, where are we?**

It has been my privilege to serve this community for three years, and in particular as Lay Director this past year. I've actually had the unique opportunity to have been in this role for over a year. Our brother and friend, Roger Lineberry, made my tenure a little longer when he wanted to get our attention with some heart difficulties in '04. Praise God he is well and recovered. My friends, you have elected to the GRACE board some members whose hearts are in the right place. They truly want to see good things happen, and prayerfully work hard to make the right decisions. Please help and support them, as you have me during this past year. As a community, we are financial solvent and continue to provide walks supported in a large part through your generous offering given at gatherings.

It is now a real honor for me to hand the leadership of our community over to Bob Meyers. He is able, ready, and has a heart aligned with the Holy Spirit. Assist, support,

and sustain him. **Bob, you are responsible for GRACE**, a loving community of fantastic brothers and sisters who truly try to do God's will. ***There will be many opportunities where a person or persons want to exercise their own individual agenda or want to challenge the methodology of Emmaus. Why, simply because we are people – prideful, selfish, arrogant, and self-centered. Thank God for redemption.*** We need to continue to pray for faithfulness and steadfastness; we need to speak in love and through mutual support assist each other to understand more. **Brothers and sisters, WE have a charge to keep, and WE call ourselves EMMAUS.**

 **Grace and peace**  
*Bill Burgdorf*  
G.R.A.C.E. Community Lay Director



**Season's Greetings GRACE Emmaus Community, from the NEW Community Lay Director.**

As 2005 quickly comes to a close, I am looking forward with great anticipation to a wonderful and exciting 2006, filled with the Holy Spirit at work in our personal lives, in our churches and in our Emmaus Community. The March Men's and Women's Walks are fast approaching and I know many of you have been in prayer about who God wants you to sponsor for these Walks.

As Your Community Lay Director for 2006, I am filled with anticipation for how we, as an Emmaus Community, can work together to further the Kingdom of God here on earth. I am sure that all of us know at least one person that would benefit from the Emmaus experience. That means there are 900 or more people out there that should be signed up for one of the upcoming Walks. Obviously, we could not accommodate all 900 in one year with only four Walks, but that does tell me

that there should be waiting lists for every Walk, if all of us 4<sup>th</sup> Dayers are doing our job! Remember, ***“Christ is counting on YOU!”*** and just as importantly, ***“You can count on CHRIST!”*** Please be in pray about who God wants you to sponsor, get the Sponsor's Packet, either on line or at one of the Gatherings, and get busy filling up those Walks!

 **Bob Myers**  
G.R.A.C.E. Community Lay Director

This is submitted by a couple of guys in the hospice section of the Michael Unit at Tennessee Colony. Hipolito is grateful because he has been healed from Hepatitis C and from Cynrhosis of the liver.

Victor was unconscious and near death when I saw him yesterday.

Please pray for them and all the others at the prison hospice.

Vince Piotet and Tom Cussen see them every week.

**A song from my life**  
by Hipolito

My life was like a rotten wound

And everybody gave me up;

Out of the trash, **YOU** picked me up

Once I was lost, but now I'm found.

What a disgrace if I left **YOU**,

If I gave up my faith in **YOU**

To live in sin apart from **YOU**

Away from **YOU** back into the trash.

My life was just a painful wound,  
When from the trash **YOU** picked me up;

Cleansed me and blessed me with  
**YOUR** love,  
And now **GOD** loves and lives in  
me.

---

**And God said**

**By Victor**

**I said, "God, I hurt"**

And **GOD** said "I know".

I said "GOD, I cry a lot"

And God said: "That is why I give  
you tears".

I said, "God, I am so depressed"

And **GOD** said "That is why I  
give you sunshine".

I said, "God, life is so hard"

And God said "That is why I give  
you loved ones".

I said, "God, my loved ones died"

And **GOD** said "Mine did too".

I said, "God, it is such a loss"

And God said "I saw mine nailed  
to a cross".

I said, "But God, your loved ones  
live"

And God said "So does yours".

I said, "Where are they now"

And God said "Mine is on my  
right and yours is in the light".

I said "God, it hurts"

And God said "I know".

---

---

**The last part of this month's  
newsletter is a letter from a very  
dear friend of mine.**

Dear brothers and sisters of the  
Emmaus and Kairos family,

I would like to say that I am  
deeply sorry that I have  
disappointed all of you by being  
back in jail again, (a technical  
violation for drug use). It comes  
down that I walked away from  
God's umbrella of loving grace,  
and started to do what I wanted  
to do of the flesh, yes I said flesh.  
I was still going to church, reading  
the word, but I was also trying to  
live a side of my life away from all  
of you that have cared and prayed  
so much for me. I started to do  
drugs again. I stopped listening to  
the wise counsel of the ones who  
have loved me unconditionally and  
started to follow my desires. It  
cost me my marriage to a loving  
and Godly wife, it cost me my  
involvement in the Jail ministry  
and Kairos, it took me away from  
my reunion group, (actually, I was  
too ashamed to face them, and  
they were the ones who loved me  
most). Now you can see where all  
this put me, I am alone 63 years  
old and back in jail again, thank  
you Jesus for allowing me to burn  
myself again. I know that He still  
loves me and wants me to get  
right with him, I have know one to  
blame but myself. I had a choice  
and I chose the way of the flesh,  
instead of listening to my wife and  
friends, and waiting on the Holy  
Spirit to show me the way. I  
know it was wrong and after my  
heart bypass, I swore to God I  
was going to get right with Him. I  
was hurting so bad that I started  
to take more pain pills than I  
should have, and I prayed for the  
Lord to take me out of all this and  
I started getting depressed. I  
knew I was on my way back here  
and I couldn't stop, to counteract

the pain pills, I started smoking  
more crack, it was a vicious circle  
and I considered suicide. I prayed  
that God would save me from the  
living hell I was putting myself  
thru that I needed help, and He  
provided. I know that this is my  
wake up call to get my priorities  
straight. This is my last chance,  
He did not save this fat old sinner  
from a major heart attack to go  
down like this, I know He has  
more for me to do for His  
kingdom, and that is what is  
keeping me going. I needed this  
to get my life back on the right  
track. Keep me in your prayers, I  
will be sent to a substance abuse  
facility, and that by God's grace, I  
will be back out again someday.

Your brother

Sidney Heard GRACE Walk No. 19

---

Please keep Sidney in your  
prayers, as I write this he has  
been transferred from the Smith  
County jail to an overflow jail in  
Limestone County. He has been  
one of my closest friends, and I  
pray that this will be the straw  
that breaks that fat old mans heart  
and gets him back to us as a free  
man away from drugs and sin.

DeColores

Tom Perdue, editor

