



The G.E.M.

Edition 4

The Grace Electronic Magazine

April 2007

FOCUS ON THE CROSS

Easter is one of the times of the year that people tend to look to the church and question us about our faith. With that in mind, this month's issue of *The G.E.M.* focusses on items relevant to our lives and our witness during this important event in the history of the church, and indeed the world.

One way we can help people build up their faith is through the Alpha Course, so have a look at our *Spotlight on Alpha* on page 2. There are sure to be a couple of products there that you may not be aware of.

This month we have a great Easter promotion with products that are perfect, either as gifts or to enjoy yourself while having some well-deserved time away from the office over the Easter weekend.

Be sure to also visit our website. We have made a few additions for your information and enjoyment.

For those of you who have been blessed this past month with the CD of the *Father's Love Letter* that we have been giving out, please remember that it is non-copyright and you may give out as many copies of it as you wish. It is an ideal gift for someone who is feeling distant from God or who is ill in one way or another.

Until your next visit to the store, the website, or the next edition of *The G.E.M.* God bless.

Glyn and Linda Williams



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LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." Romans 12:9 (NIV)

The Christian life is not nearly as complicated as we sometimes make it out to be. It really boils down to two things:

- ➔ Hate what is evil, and
- ➔ Love what is good.

Everybody knows the difference between good and evil. You do not even need to be a Christian to realise that there is evil in the world and how to recognise it. Just by glancing at the news, reading a book or watching a movie, we can see the world's separation of good from evil. In the Bible, evil is pictured as being darkness, and righteousness as being light.

Throughout the centuries, since Adam and Eve at the beginning of time, evil has been systematically destroying people and the world. It has caused humanity to lie, cheat, steal, abuse, and even kill one another. Only God knows all the suffering that evil has inflicted on people throughout history. And why does God hate the evil in our lives? Not only because it separates mankind from him, but simply because it brings us pain and heartache. He loves us so much that it hurts him when he sees what evil does to us.

However, the more we become like Christ, the more we begin to see evil for what it is. Our response should not be to simply avoid it, but we should despise it, as Christ does. We should hate sin for what it does to us and to others. We should have no tolerance for it in our own lives. Rather, as Paul said, we should cling to what is good.

Have you become comfortable around evil? Are you tolerating sin in your life? This Easter focus on what Christ did for mankind on the cross. Look at your own life and thank him for what has personally done for you. Confess your sins to him, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem, and repent of them. Ask God to give you the strength to resist temptation and sin. Finally ask God to give you a holy hate of sin, and a holy heartburn for the righteous things of God.

SPOTLIGHT ON ALPHA



Alpha

Looking for answers? Then the Alpha course is the perfect opportunity for you to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed, non-threatening manner over ten, thought-provoking weekly sessions.

It is low key, friendly and fun, and it is supported by all the main Christian denominations.

More than 2 million people worldwide have found it a worthwhile experience, completing the Alpha course in churches, homes, schools, universities and prisons.

In fact, even if you have been a Christian for many years, one can still benefit from the Alpha Course as it brings one back to the essentials of our faith.

For most people, the Alpha Course needs no introduction. But did you know that there are a number of other courses and guides available. Guides appropriate for teens, students and seniors. Not to forget the courses focused on marriage and those dealing with other aspects of our Christian life.

Alpha in the Workplace

by Nicky Gumbel

ISBN: 978-1904-07461-8

The Alpha Course is currently running in diverse working environments, ranging from factories to multinational corporations. This guide is designed to take you through the various stages of setting up and running the Alpha Course in a workplace setting. It has been written using experience gained by course leaders from around the world.

Sections include:

- Planning your course – key steps check-list
- Sample course timetables
- The Alpha Weekend or Day Away
- Frequently asked questions

Leaders' Guide: R37.00

The Marriage Preparation Course

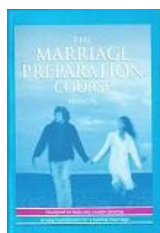
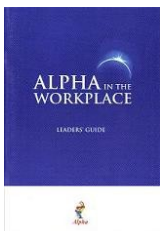
by Nicky & Sila Lee

The Marriage Preparation Course is a series of five sessions designed to help you develop strong foundations for a lasting marriage, covering:

- The importance of commitment
- Expressing feelings and learning to listen
- Keeping love alive & developing a fulfilling sexual relationship
- Resolving conflict
- Talking about goals and values

Participants' & Leaders' Guide: R37.00

DVD Set: R750.00



The Marriage Course

by Nicky & Sila Lee

The Marriage Course is a series of seven sessions designed to help any married couple strengthen their relationship.

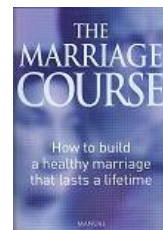
The course covers:

- Building strong foundations
- The art of communication
- Resolving conflict
- The power of forgiveness
- Parents and in-laws
- Good sex
- Love in action

Participants' Guide: R37.00

Leader's Guide: R20.00

DVD Set: R750.00



Searching Issues

by Nicky Gumbel

ISBN: 1-898838-24-0

Searching Issues is a 7-session course in which Nicky Gumbel tackles the following common objections to the Christian faith:

- Why does God allow suffering?
- What about other religions?
- Is there anything wrong with sex before marriage?
- How does the New Age Movement relate to Christianity?
- What is the Christian attitude to homosexuality?
- Is there a conflict between science and Christianity?
- Is the trinity unbiblical, unbelievable and irrelevant?

R35.00

Simplicity, Love & Justice

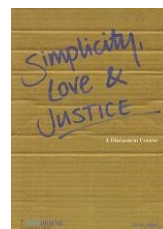
by James Odgers

ISBN: 1-904074-63-4

This discussion course on simpler living is designed to:

- Work out the relationship between our faith and our lifestyle
- Gain a Biblical understanding of the issues involved in simplicity
- Become more familiar with the social and global context within which we are living
- Develop community and support

R100.00



Visit our website for a complete list of all the Alpha Course materials available through GRACE MEDIA.

THE LOST ARE WATCHING US

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."
2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV).

Notice how many questions concerning Jesus' death and resurrection seem to surface just before Easter? People are trying to find some sort of evidence to disprove Christianity and the truths of the Bible, and all the non-Christians interrogate us, expecting us to have an answer for them.

But to really be an ambassador for Christ, our witness does not start or end there. In fact, everything that we do and say as Christians is under constant scrutiny by the non-Christians. How often do we as Christians really stop to think about how we are representing God? Do we ever spare a thought about how the things we do and say affect the non-Christians around us? How often do we really think about how non-believers view us?

In fact, what we do and say affects non-Christians far more than we realise. The non-believers are constantly watching us to see when we will fail in order to justify their non-belief. We need to understand that we can be either good or bad ambassadors for Christ simply by what we say or the way we live our lives.

Unlike Christians, the lost really do not know why they believe what they believe. There are some exceptions, but in most cases non-believers just believe what they believe because that is what they believe. As Christians we have a foundation for our beliefs, but our non-believing friends have nowhere to go to support their belief system. With nowhere else to go, they look to us to give them the reasons to deny God. They will grab at anything they can because they need it.

WHAT WE DO AND SAY AFFECTS NON-CHRISTIANS MORE THAN WE REALISE.

Have you noticed that every time someone claims to have found some incredible new evidence that the Bible is wrong; every media outlet in the world jumps on the bandwagon and automatically portrays it as proven truth? When that happens, non-believers hang onto every word and believe it without evidence because they need to. However, when those kinds of things do not happen, where are non-believers looking for something to hold on to? They are looking at us!

We need to remember that we are walking, talking representatives for Jesus. What do you think a non-believer thinks about that one off-colour joke we tell at work? What about when we criticise another Christian

or another church? What about that one crude word we still use because we have decided it is acceptable even though it is questionable? What about that one time we rip someone to shreds because we could not control our anger? Or simply, the person we discriminate against just because they look different or rough? We have all been guilty of these things, but we need to think about how these things affect the non-believers who hear or see them. We need to try to represent God as best we can, so as not to give the non-believers more reasons than already exist to criticise Christianity. Non-believers should be able to look at us and wonder what it is we have, and how they too can have it.

WE CAN SAY WHATEVER WE WANT TO, BUT WE LIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE.

One of the greatest sins we could ever engage in, is doing something that could give our non-believing family and friends fuel for their choice to not believe in God. We all have people in our lives that we love, respect and admire immensely, but who do not believe in God. Nothing in our lives is more important than seeing them begin a search for the truth. Will that ever happen? I do not know but what I do know is this, we must not be the stumbling blocks that keep them from spending eternity in heaven. We must try to make sure that the words that come out of our mouths, the acts that represent the way we live our lives, and the love that flows from our relationship with Jesus are the things that they will look at and hopefully someday begin to wonder about. We can not make their choices for them, but what we can do is make sure that our choices represent our God in a positive and loving way. Always bear in mind that we can say whatever we want to, but we live what we believe.

Our most important role on this earth is to find ways to bring those who do not believe, into a relationship with Jesus. If we cannot control our actions or the words that come out of our mouths, then we will not ever be able to represent God the way he deserves to be represented.

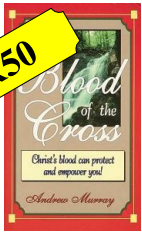
Jesus spoke directly about our responsibility to represent him in Matthew 5:16 when he said, *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* (NIV).

We need to let our good deeds shine out for all to see, but we need to recognise that our bad deeds are also out there shining for the world to see. The non-believers around us are watching our bad deeds far more closely than our good deeds. We owe it to Jesus to do the best we can to honour his sacrifice on the cross, and we need to recognise that the lost of the world are watching to see how we are doing.

ON PROMOTION

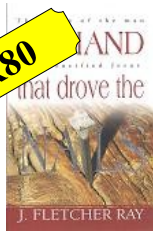
EASTER 2007

R50



The Blood of the Cross
by Andrew Murray

R80



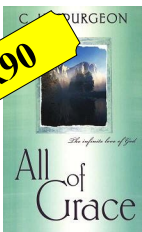
The Hand that Drove the Nails
by J. Fletcher Ray

R220



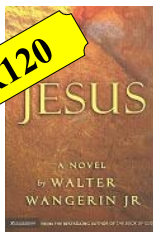
The Passion of the Christ

R90



All of Grace
by Charles Spurgeon

R120



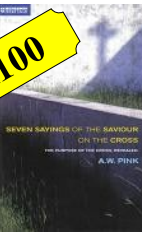
Jesus: A Novel
by Walter Wangerin Jr

R170



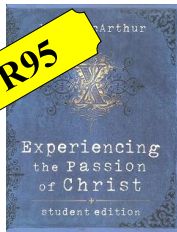
The Gospel of John

R100



The Seven Sayings of Christ on the Cross
by A. W. Pink

R95



Experiencing the Passion of Christ
Study Guide
by John MacArthur

R143



The Beginner's Bible
Children's DVD Series
(ook beskikbaar in Afrikaans)

R100



Fifty Reasons why Jesus Came to Die
by John Piper

R45



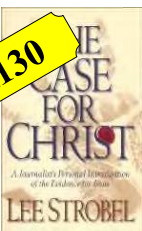
The Easter Swallows
by Vicki Howe

R120



Holy God
by Brian Doerksen

R130



The Case for Christ
by Lee Strobel

R60



Resurrection Eggs
The Easter Story for Children

R105



Mighty to Save Live
by Hillsong

JUST ARRIVED FROM U.S.A.



Messengers of Faith
Talking Bible character dolls

R350



Intelligent Design vs Evolution
Board Game

TRADING HOURS:

Monday – Friday:
9am – 5pm
Saturday:
9am – 2pm
Closed Sundays and some Public Holidays

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Essexwold, Johannesburg
Tel: 011-454-6045
Fax: 086-654-2996
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shop@gracemedia.co.za

From the N3, take the Linksfield Rd off ramp. Turn right up hill. Stay in left lane. Turn left into Civin Dr. At 4th set of lights, turn left under bridge. At t-junction turn left. Through the boom. We are ± 200m on the right hand side. Entrance is in Penhurst Ave.

