



March 2013

Greetings to those who desire to be designated as the Metaxoi of Christ,

I trust you are growing well in your walk with the Lord and that you are remaining faithful to the sacred deposit of your ministry. I know it has been a while since the last volume of the Memo so let me get right to it.

Commentary

I continue to sense that over the past 6 months the Phoenix Metroplex has continued to grow toward a variety of Reformed Theology. Traditional Reformed Theology is known by the “TULIP”. I have no problem with some of the ideas of Calvin and the reformers. The real issue has to do with its Lordship Salvation emphasis. Many of these pastors and leaders, from the traditional reformed views are part of the organization called “Gospel Coalition” in conjunction with “Together for the Gospel”. This is national group that holds its national conference with the most famous speakers in the reform movement. It also has a variety of state chapters. Recently, this past February, the chapter in Phoenix had a one-day seminar at Trinity Bible Church. The speakers were Mike Mckinley and Dr. Wayne Grudem. I was only able to attend two of the sessions that day, but Dr. Grudem’s session was a frontal attack on Free Grace Theology. My name was mentioned numerous times during the discourse. But the main issue was the error of Grace Theology. I did not personally find the argumentation compelling and in fact it seemed to be outdated and unaware of what the Free Grace movement actually believes. However, the hundred or so pastors and leaders from Phoenix and Flagstaff were well indoctrinated, and had their five-point Calvinism reinforced with great rhetorical skill.

You would do well to sharpen your theological foundations for it is very clear that many from the reformed camp are continuing to be indoctrinated and resourced in traditional five-point Calvinism and Lordship salvation.

Current Items

On a brighter note, in March we were able to hold the Grace Line Spiritual Life Conference. We had over 300 in attendance and five plenary speakers with 10 workshop leaders. It was an excellent day of instruction and encouragement, and people said they had a wonderful time of fellowship as they grew in a variety of topics. If you're interested in hearing the plenary sessions you can go to www.GraceLine.net and see a pictorial collage as well as listen to the messages or download them if you wish.

Let me encourage you to take periodic looks at the Grace Line website and the Free Grace Alliance website (www.FreeGraceAlliance.com). Both provide resources for you in some of these key theological issues in the form of book reviews, articles, and opportunities to blog. I especially encourage you to go to the FGA website and offer insights and resources for our blog. This will allow you to be informed by others and help you to inform others concerning theology and ministry issues. Information is power!

Resources

Many books have come on the market and are having a significant impact. I know it is true that the writing of books is endless and wearisome to the soul. But given the people reading them, it seems best that we read them as well so that we can be ready to give the defense for the hope that is in us and keep the theology of the gospel clear.

[Am I really a Christian?](#) by Mike McKinley, Crossway books 2011; was recommended to me by Bob Kerrey. It is a popular exposition of the doctrine of perseverance of the saints and its stepchild, assurance by works. One of the chapters, *You Cannot be a Christian if you Love your Stuff*, basically says it all. There's not much exposition worth reporting on. It is basically a running diatribe of Reform Theology projecting its way through the New Testament. However, the book is easy to read, short in its duration, and most Christians will not know how to refute the authoritarian pronouncements by the author given his close association with Crossway

Publishing, Mark Deaver, and the Gospel Coalition.

The Great Evangelical Recession by John Dickerson, Baker books 2013; is a tremendous book that spells out in no uncertain terms that the evangelical church in America is losing ground as well as theology. John graduated from Phoenix Seminary, is Pastor of Cornerstone Church in Prescott, Arizona and is also a recognized journalist. The book is endorsed by Cal Thomas, a columnist for Fox news, and John Phillips, a journalist for the New York Times. John writes with such clarity and simplicity that he allows the facts to speak for themselves. And the facts are the evangelical church is shrinking in its numbers, diminished in its impact, and its future is up for grabs. This is a book that each of you must read if you want to be aware of the cultural impact the evangelical church is having and not having, and how you can employ some of the recommendations that John supplies into your ministry. The book is riveting. He is also free grace in his theology.

Another riveting read is the latest book by Os Guinness, A Free People's Suicide: Sustainable Freedom and the American Future, IVP 2012. If you like Guinness' writing you will enjoy this book immensely. However, the topic says it all. America is in the midst of self-annihilation. As always the solution has to do with the church being salt and light, and the pillar of truth. If you're interested in excellent social commentary from the Christian-based mind you can't afford to miss this one.

Many of you are aware of the new edition of Reign of the Serving Kings by Jody Dillow entitled, Final Destiny: The Future Reign of the Servant Kings. The book is 1130 pages and much of its original source material has been revised and edited and another 500 pages have been added. You will not agree with everything in this book, but you will be challenged by every page. For those who are familiar with Dillow's original work you know the importance of the topic. I encourage you to get it, digest it, live in light of it, and teach accordingly. You can order it through the Grace Line website.

John Correia, Pastor of West Greenway Bible Church, has produced a very helpful volume entitled, Refreshing Grace: God's Will Our Will in Focus. It is an excellent primer that compares and contrasts Calvinism, Arminianism, and Molinism. This is perfect for pastors to use with their elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and anyone in their church who is interested in

understanding the sovereignty/free will theological issue. It is quite irenic, very hip, and easy to read. You can order this from the Grace Line website if you wish.

Finally, most of you are aware of the fact that many conservative evangelical Old Testament scholars have now moved toward the view of theistic evolution. They have abandoned their understanding of Genesis 1-11 as being literal history and see it perhaps more from a metaphorical and literary view. The likes of Bruce Waltke, Tremper Longman, and Peter Enns have led the charge within the evangelical world. There are many books trying to deal with this issue. One of them is Mapping the Origins Debate; Six Models of the Beginning of Everything by Gerald Rau, IVP 2012. It's not an easy book but it will give you a lay of the land so that you can speak intelligently to people you influence.

Personal

I want you to know that I pray regularly for many of you. I know you are in the midst of significant ministries and that means significant spiritual battles. I know many of you are being pressured and attacked at a personal level and at a professional level. Add to that the uncertainty of a culture and its financial difficulties and ministry can be flat out hard. Let me remind you that we are "Marines" in terms of the ministry. We are often the first ones in the battle and the last ones out. We often face the most difficult challenges in the most dangerous assignments. This is a description of the Metaxoi, those who will be partners and companions in leadership with King Jesus in His coming Kingdom. He did not promise an easy road and He does not ask for us to become famous. He simply demands that we remain faithful to Him.

Serving Him with you
Until He comes for us,

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