

# NORTHERN KENTUCKY

## The Southern Side of Cincinnati.

### Northern Kentucky Church Planting News – 28 August 2007

Dear Friends,

We're getting settled. We've unpacked most of the boxes. We've been warmly welcomed by our neighbors, and we're enjoying getting to know them and other area residents. We've had people over for meals. We've been visiting fellow churches of the Ohio Valley Presbytery. Mary Lauren (3 ½ years old) and Matthew (2 months old) appear to be adjusting well to their new surroundings. She is having lots of fun riding her bicycle and playing with neighborhood kids, and he is spending time sleeping, eating and, as of late, smiling. Kentucky, in many ways, already seems like home. Our new mailing address and phone number are listed below.

Similar to today's somewhat common practice of publicly announcing the name of a child before birth, the new church that I believe God will establish here in Northern Kentucky has already been named. Why? Well, to name something is to describe it and to articulate a purpose and vision for its existence. Therefore, the church's name, Grace and Peace Presbyterian, will serve from the beginning to orient and anchor her members to two great truths of the gospel. Recently, I came across comments on the expression "grace and peace" by Martin Luther from his lectures on the book of Galatians that he delivered in 1531. And so I thought I would conclude this (slightly longer than usual) issue with his commentary on chapter 1, verse 3.

The terms of grace and peace are common terms with Paul and are now pretty well understood. But since we are explaining this epistle, you will not mind if we repeat what we have so often explained elsewhere. The article of justification must be sounded in our ears incessantly because the frailty of our flesh will not permit us to take hold of it perfectly and to believe it with all our heart.

The greeting of the Apostle is refreshing. Grace remits sin, and peace quiets the conscience. Sin and conscience torment us, but Christ has overcome these fiends now and forever. Only Christians possess this victorious knowledge given from above. *These two terms, grace and peace, constitute Christianity* [italics mine]. Grace involves the remission of sins, peace, and a happy conscience. Sin is not canceled by lawful living, for no person is able to live up to the Law. The Law reveals guilt, fills the conscience with terror, and drives men to despair. Much less is sin taken away by man-invented endeavors. The fact is, the more a person seeks credit for himself by his own efforts, the deeper he goes into debt. Nothing can take away sin except the grace of God. In actual living, however, it is not so easy to persuade oneself that by grace alone, in opposition to every other means, we obtain the forgiveness of our sins and peace with God.

The world brands this a pernicious doctrine. The world advances free will, the rational and natural approach of good works, as the means of obtaining the forgiveness of sin. But it is impossible to gain peace of conscience by the methods and means of the world. Experience proves this. Various holy orders have been launched for the purpose of securing peace of conscience through religious exercises, but they proved failures because such devices only increase doubt and despair. We find no rest for our weary bones unless we cling to the word of grace.

The Apostle does not wish the Galatians grace and peace from the emperor, or from kings, or from governors, but from God the Father. He wishes them

heavenly peace, the kind of which Jesus spoke when He said, "Peace I leave unto you: my peace I give unto you." Worldly peace provides quiet enjoyment of life and possessions. But in affliction, particularly in the hour of death, the grace and peace of the world will not deliver us. However, the grace and peace of God will. They make a person strong and courageous to bear and to overcome all difficulties, even death itself, because we have the victory of Christ's death and the assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

Here's how you could pray specifically in the next few weeks:

- On Sunday evening, 9 September we plan to host a dinner at our home for those in the area who have indicated an interest (however slight) in learning more about the new church. Please pray that I would be able to present clearly the vision for the church and plans for the fall. Also pray that the evening would be helpful in establishing the personal relationships that are essential to the healthy life of any church.
- Arguably the most comprehensive biblical "job description" of a pastor, minister, church planter, elder, etc. is that of a shepherd (see 1 Peter 5: 1-4, Acts 20:28). Therefore, please continue to pray that God would give me the upright heart (character) and skillful hand (competence) that will be necessary to shepherd and guide the people that God will gather to this new local church (see Psalm 78:70-72).

Thanks again for your friendship and for your prayers. You are a great help and encouragement to us.

Sincerely,

*Lee*

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