

**Did Zane and GES change the Gospel? NO!**  
**Workshop GES2010 Conference - by Don Reiher**

**Introduction**

Unless you have been living under a rock the last 10 years, you are familiar with the conflict over a supposed "Crossless" or "Promise-Only" Gospel, veered off into recently by Zane Hodges, Bob Wilkin and others in GES. In *Partners in Grace*, October 2007, Bob W. stated "We have not veered, nor are we veering, from the purpose and direction we set over 20 years ago. We continue to promote the message that the Lord Jesus guarantees everlasting life that can never be lost to all who simply believe in Him for it (e.g., John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35). This was our message in 1986 and it remains our message today. Since this is the message that the Lord Jesus Himself proclaimed, we are not free to adopt any other position."

There are several key players who have taken the lead in the accusations of a "Crossless Gospel" since 2005. Most of these key people claim to have left GES because of this radical shift in doctrine. Many of those who have left claim they were part of GES from the beginning; claim to have been associates with Zane and/or Bob and claim they spoke with Zane and/or Bob, about these concerns. I asked several people about these attempts to talk with Zane and/or Bob, and it is not clear to me whether or not discussions took place where genuine dialogue could actually occur. A common response I heard went something like, "I asked Zane to clarify what he said about people not needing to believe in the Deity of Christ, or the Cross to be saved in the 2 talks, and Zane told me that he meant exactly what he said in the papers." I think that Zane assumed that everyone who asked him this question understood what his main point was. With all due respect to Zane, I think it is obvious that most people did not understand. Some people who thought Zane had changed the Gospel actually never really understood his position all along! These people convinced others who convinced others, and the whole situation spiraled out of control. Nevertheless, the alleged radical shift is that Zane and Bob and everyone in GES had PREVIOUSLY believed that in order to be saved, a person had to believe in 3, 4 or 5 elements such as the Deity of Christ, and/or the death and resurrection of Christ as the OBJECT of faith, at the moment of saving faith, in addition to believing in the PERSON of Christ alone as the OBJECT of our faith.

In talking to those accusing Bob and Zane of a "reductionistic Gospel," there was no agreement, other than that Bob and Zane are wrong about a "core" minimum. It was not clear exactly what a person HAS to believe in, in addition to believing in the PERSON of Christ alone, nor was it clear exactly what a person has to believe in Christ FOR. The most common views seem to be that a person has to believe IN the Deity, Death and Resurrection of Christ, and that one has to believe in Jesus FOR forgiveness of their sins, OR ELSE believe in Jesus FOR eternal life. They were all in agreement that the death and resurrection of Christ has to be coupled somehow with the actual Person of Christ, as the OBJECT of saving faith. The whole idea is that you have to believe in the "right Jesus" to be born again. If you don't have the facts right about the person and work of Christ, then if you believe in this "wrong Jesus" for everlasting life, you may not be born again. In other words, at the moment of saving faith, your faith in Jesus is allegedly invalidated by the holes or flaws in your Christology at that time.

Zane, Bob Wilkin and others in GES have allegedly made "shocking statements" that a person gets everlasting life the moment they believe in the historical person of Jesus Christ alone, for everlasting life, regardless of the deficiencies, flaws or holes in their Theology. According to Bob and Zane, salvation comes from faith in the Christ, spoken of in the New Testament, but the details about the person and work of Christ are not what we believe IN. Zane's and Bob's motives were to give people Biblical truths about the person and work of Christ (the basis) until they get to the tipping point where they believe in the PERSON of Christ (the object) for their eternal life or salvation. At the moment they believe in Him, as the object of their faith, they are born again. No specified bare minimum level of knowledge of the basis of Christ's offer is needed. No second step, such as "decide to put your trust in Him," is needed. Until the unbeliever gets to that sine-qua-non, or "core," where they believe in the promise Jesus makes of everlasting life, then they are not yet born again. For some people the Holy Spirit may take a matter of

minutes to get them to that point, others a matter of years. Every person is different in what it takes to get them to this "core" or sine-qua-non.

This workshop will attempt to support the view that Zane and GES did not change their view in this regard. Scripture nowhere specifies an exact minimum level of doctrinal sophistication at the moment of faith. Normally, a person needs to hear the basic facts before they will believe in Jesus. However, there is no "bare minimum" of facts about the person and work of Jesus specified in Scripture that validates the moment of faith. Everyone needs a different set of truths about the person and work of Christ to bring them to the moment of faith. That was Zane's point. I will also attempt to show that Zane, Bob and GES have not advocated a method of evangelism of giving people only a "Bare Minimum" mini-Gospel (such as a 6 word statement) with no doctrinal support.

#### **A. Objective**

My objective is to demonstrate that Zane and GES have not recently crossed over into a so-called "Crossless" or "Promise-Only" Gospel. After doing careful research, I believe the evidence clearly shows that Zane and GES have always held to the view that believing in the historical person of Jesus Christ alone, spoken of in the New Testament, for everlasting life was always the goal, the core, or sine-qua-non that a believer should have in mind during evangelistic presentations. This never changed. Other information about the basis for Christ's offer, what is generally known as facts of "The Gospel" (including the Cross, unless they are church goers and already believe Jesus died on the cross) is given until the evangelist senses God the Holy Spirit has moved the hearer to the "tipping point" where they are convinced (believe) the core message of faith in the historical person of Jesus Christ as the guarantor of everlasting life.

#### **B. Goals**

1. I want to show that Zane's deserted island illustration in his message "How to Lead People to Christ Part 1," and related statements about how a person does not have to have detailed knowledge of who Christ was and what He did, have been taken out of context, and blown out of proportion. In fact, Zane's opponents seem to believe that the illustration was the core of what Zane was saying, and one opponent in particular spends a large amount of time speculating and analyzing how the person on the island could NOT be born again. Zane's actual point was that a person is born again by faith in the right Jesus (the one in the Bible) for the right thing (everlasting life). His point was that a detailed knowledge of the person and work of Christ was not demonstrated by the people Jesus evangelized in the NT, and therefore, it is not needed today. All of the converts in the New Testament had the person of Jesus as the object of their faith, and they were born again, irregardless of deficiencies, flaws or holes in their Theology.

2. I want to provide some good examples, gleaned from spending many hours listening to Zane's messages, that demonstrates Zane's main point: our objective, in evangelistic encounters with unbelievers, is to lead people to faith in the person of Jesus Christ alone, and not to believe in the person of Christ PLUS some set of FACTS about Jesus Christ as the OBJECT of faith. The "normal" context of this belief in the person of Christ, as the sole object of our faith, is a careful presentation of the Biblical truths about who Jesus was, and what He did to provide the offer of eternal life as a free gift to us. Zane clearly stated that the Cross and Resurrection of Christ are the normal context that we should present in order to "move a person increasingly toward faith in the Person of Christ."

3. I want to point out the needlessly harsh and divisive nature of the accusations being made are often based upon faulty citations. We need to take care WE don't take the statements of others out of context, and falsely represent them either.

4. I want to stress the fact that Zane's insistence upon a "Saving Message," "a core," or sine-qua-non {my preference} was based upon a hermeneutical methodology which is legitimate and consistent with what Zane has taught all along. A sine-qua-non REALLY exists, otherwise assurance of salvation would not be possible. Although some of Zane's accusers say that there was consensus, among all people who are "Free Grace," about all the

details of the issues being discussed, it should be noted that the only real consensus was that Lordship Salvation was wrong because it added to the Bible's clear proclamation of "Faith alone in Christ alone." The only way this could be true is IF a sine-qua-non exists, where nothing is added to faith in Christ alone. Everyone in the Free Grace camp did not believe exactly the same details about what a person had to believe in order to be born again. "Grace People," as Zane used to call them, agreed to disagree on many details, such as the role of assurance being of the essence of Saving Faith. However, they were unified in their goal to improve and refine their language, in order to be clear during evangelistic presentations that a person is born again by, "simple faith alone in Christ alone, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else," as stated so well by Richard Seymour at a GES workshop.

5. I want to stress that Zane, or anybody else who challenges long-held traditional views, makes themselves vulnerable to being misunderstood and misrepresented. Zane's bottom-line from the beginning, as well as that of GES, is that vigilant, prayerful inductive study of the Word of God is constantly needed in order to more clearly represent the Biblical teaching about salvation because Satan is at work 24x7 to confuse all the issues. Because false traditional views of Theology are so ingrained in the minds of Christians today, any view based upon vigilant inductive study will inevitably conflict with traditional views. Conflict is to be expected as further refinements are made in terminology, and Christian love is called for every step of the way. We need to agree to disagree with not only those outside of GES circles, but also within our own camp. Let's not lose sight of our goal, that more people get born again, NOT that we agree in every detail.

6. I want to encourage careful discussion of our differences in private and off of the public forums. There is no need to publicly spread differences and disagreements all over the internet and fracture the entire Grace movement. It may be too late to get everyone to work together again. The arguments and emotions have been so intense that there may be no way for some individuals to listen to reason anymore. The wells have been poisoned, and people are entrenched in their views. People from time to time (such as Steve Lewis) have advocated a plan that we need to talk together in private, and come up with carefully worded statements for public consumption, to show our agreement on the major issues, and to demonstrate charity with our disagreement on the finer details.

7. It never used to be necessary for everyone in the Grace camp to agree on every detail. I want us to see the value of agreeing on the Free Grace hermeneutical assumptions Zane so clearly practiced, insisting on better definition of terms, agreeing to disagree on minor points, and working together in a way similar to the way the Reformed/Calvinists like MacArthur, Mohler, Dever, Sproul and Mahaney work together. As Dr. James Scudder stated, "The Lordshippers don't separate."

8. I want to encourage the value of not burning bridges with those who have left GES for whatever reason. We should have open arms to welcome people back, ESPECIALLY if they have been misled by some of the more blatant misrepresentations of Zane and GES. The Grace Movement would be much stronger if people would stop fighting, agree to disagree, and work together again.

9. Lastly, and most importantly, I want to encourage those of us in GES to be careful how we word things, and to try our best to define terms in such a way that others will not misrepresent us. Nobody should agree with everything Zane or Bob or GES speakers have taught. Grace people have always managed to work together in spite of their disagreements, because we agree on the goal of NOT complicating the clear message of salvation by faith alone, in the person of Christ alone, for eternal life.

## **I. The Accusations of "Crossless" and "Promise-Only" directed toward Zane and GES**

### **A. Quotes from Zane in Stegall's articles on "The Tragedy of the Crossless Gospel."**

Here are some quotes from "How to Lead People to Christ" used by Tom Stegall, "The Tragedy of the Crossless Gospel," Part 1. I could have picked other

sources, but since Stegall's work is now public, I will use his first article as a point of reference. (Please note that Stegall began his articles before Zane died, yet continued to publish the book AFTER Zane died.)

Stegall observes, "The content of the saving Gospel has been tampered with."

Stegall observes, "There was once virtual unanimity among us in the Free Grace position that in order for a lost sinner to receive eternal life, he MUST believe that Jesus Christ is God-incarnate who died for his sins and rose again to save him forever. However, today there are a growing number in our camp who no longer believe these are essential as part of the saving Gospel that is necessary to be believed for eternal salvation. That old Gospel is now considered "flawed." It is something that some Free Grace advocates now consider to be "adding to the gospel" and something which makes them "shutter" and feel "extremely uncomfortable. As one who considers himself Free Grace in soteriology and opposed to the false teachings of Lordship Salvation, I am deeply disturbed by such sentiments and by the shocking statements coming from leading representatives of the Free Grace movement these days."

Stegall quotes from Zane's paper "How to Lead People to Christ" where a friend of Zane's commented, "I know that I trusted Christ for salvation before I realized that Jesus was the Son of God.' I was surprised because I had never heard anyone say this before. But I did not quarrel with that statement then, nor would I quarrel with it now."

Stegall quotes Zane, "Neither explicitly nor implicitly does the Gospel of John teach that a person must understand the cross to be saved. It just does not teach this."

Stegall quotes Zane, "The simple truth is that Jesus can be believed for eternal salvation apart from any detailed knowledge of what He did to provide it."

Stegall quotes Zane, "Without the name of Jesus there is no salvation for anyone anywhere in our world. But the flip side of the coin is this: Everyone who believes in that name for eternal salvation is saved, regardless of the blank spots or the flaws in their theology in other respects. Another way of saying the same thing is this: No one has ever trusted that name and been disappointed. In other words, God does not say to people, 'You trusted my Son's name, but you didn't believe in His virgin birth, or His substitutionary atonement, or His bodily resurrection, so your faith is not valid.' We say that, but God's Word does not."

Stegall quotes Zane, "In recent years I have become aware of a way of presenting the gospel invitation that troubles me. I believe I have heard it from my earliest years, and I admit it didn't really bother me for a long time. Now it does. I have heard people say this: 'In order to be saved you must believe that Jesus died on the cross.' In the context of our present discussion, I mean that this is their summary of the requirement of faith. It is not just one item, among others, to be believed. Whenever I hear that nowadays, I get extremely uncomfortable."

Stegall quotes Zane, "Now I know that the statement I am evaluating leaves a lot of things unspoken that are still implied by the speaker. Most of the time people who say you are saved by believing that Jesus died on the cross mean that He died for our sins. Indeed the phrase "for your sins" is often added. But even with that addition, there is still unspoken material that the person usually has in mind. They usually mean to say, for example, that this belief in Christ's death is all that is necessary for salvation. Thus they are normally proclaiming salvation by faith alone. Also unspoken, but usually implied, is the idea that Christ's work on the cross is sufficient to provide for our salvation. Thus they mean to say that we are trusting in the sufficiency of His work for salvation. Let me be honest. I don't like this way of presenting a gospel invitation." Hodges later concludes, "I would like to see grace people abandon this form of invitation to faith." It is apparent from their numerous books, journal articles, newsletters, and public speaking on this subject that these Free Grace leaders are absolutely convinced of their new gospel and they are actively promoting it. They would like the rest of us to "abandon" our old approach to the Gospel."

### **B. Evangelizing on the streets of India (Grace Conf 2009)**

{Context: During the panel Q&A, a question was asked, "Do you have to believe in the Deity, Death, and Resurrection of Christ to be eternally saved." All of the panel basically said yes, Robert Lightner said you do not have to have a perfect understanding of those things but you do have to believe them. Dr. Radmacher was the only one who said, "Then you believe the Apostles were not saved."

Dr. R. then proceeded to demonstrate that the Apostles did not understand these things yet they were saved. Dr. R. did not come right out and say NO, but he was seeking to get people to think about what they were saying. He said, "You better think it through." "(Today) We preach Christ Crucified." Most assumed he meant "NO" although he really never said it.}

Dr. Scudder: "You know never to disagree with Dr. Radmacher but I really believe that if I was in India and I just said believe in Christ I don't think . . . they would just add Him to their . . . as another god. And I truly think that we have to believe in the death, burial and resurrection, and I'm not going to, I am, Yes, I do understand I agree with what he said about the apostles because He hadn't died yet and they really didn't understand it, but they understand it later and that's what they preached. We're going to have disagreements. That's one I would have, because if I just went to India, and I said would you all believe in Christ, hundreds of thousands would, because they don't mind having one more god. They have to understand what He did and that's just my belief. Maybe I'm wrong, and this man of God knows a lot more than I know (applause) Let's not do that. This is a great man of God, and 99% of what he said I agree with, but I just can't {believe} that. And we're going to have disagreements like that, but that doesn't mean we need to separate. The Lordshippers don't separate. But I'm going to speak what I believe, and he is going to speak what he believes. He's a great man of God and I can't wait to hear him, because he said so many things I 100% agreed with. And he may be right and I'm wrong. I just had to say what I felt."

### **C. Message in a bottle (FGS Conf 2010)**

In the 2010 Freegraceseminary conference, a speaker delivered a message on "The Right Jesus." In it, he spoke about a person who gave an illustration about a person on a deserted island. He said that a message in a bottle washed up on the beach and said, "Believe in Me for eternal Life. . . (signed) Jesus." The speaker went on as if Zane's deserted island illustration represents the sum total of the content we should give in personal evangelism!

**D. If you follow Zane's view to it's logical conclusion there is no reason to include the cross, etc., in any part of gospel presentations.**

(This is from Fred Lybrand's open letter to GES)

Dear Dr. Chay,

Fred, at your request I am finally, and reluctantly, addressing the issue concerning the Grace Evangelical Society (GES) and the 'crossless gospel', so called. I say 'so called' because I would name it the GES Gospel. I am not aware of it being held by anyone, anywhere, in history; it is solely owned and promoted by GES. Of course, I am sure that when most GES folks present the gospel, they include a mention of Christ's death and resurrection. However, when one asks, "What must one believe to be saved?" --- Then the cross and resurrection are clearly unnecessary pieces of information for saving faith and eternal salvation in the GES Gospel view. And as any objective person can see, eventually this line of thinking will invade their presentation of the saving message.

. . . The one thing I hope that might be acknowledged by those representing the GES Gospel, is that they openly affirm that those of us who believe and teach that the 'cross' is necessary to understand and believe in order to be saved from hell to heaven--- that we are not proclaiming the same gospel from eternal damnation that Zane Hodges and GES affirm. In simpler terms, we should all acknowledge that the GES Reformulation is clearly a different gospel than that which we who are classic Free Grace advocates affirm.

I know for my own part, I do not believe the GES Gospel is the gospel by which anyone can be eternally saved. For some time the conversation has been misdirected with the claim that those who advocate the GES Gospel do preach the cross---which I do not doubt and will address in a moment--- I say misdirected

because what they openly preach is not what they insist one must BELIEVE in order to be eternally saved. In time however, if they continue on this present course, I don't believe there is any intellectual reason for them to continue to include the cross, etc., in their gospel presentations.

## **II. Overview of Zane's style and video clips where Zane clarified what he meant by "Content"**

I have spent countless hours listening to Zane's videos, especially the 3 "deserted island" messages. I assume that Stegall was not misrepresenting Zane on purpose, in order to ruin Zane's reputation. However, it quickly becomes apparent that he was unfair in his citations. I think this is a very common error today, and isn't limited to the anti-GES crowd. We should be careful that we do not do the same thing when we deal with them or with Lordship people.

Because Zane spoke so much on evangelism and the saving message, it would indeed be surprising if he did not challenge and provoke people to think with his messages. Zane did not water those things down that he learned from inductive study of the Bible, and neither should any of us, in the right contexts. A GES conference was a totally legitimate forum for his messages. It does not take long to see that what Stegall is saying is indeed possible to be implied from the selected quotes he uses, especially in light of Zane's teaching method and style at GES conferences. In my opinion, either Stegall does not believe a person is saved by faith alone in the person of Christ alone, or else he has misunderstood Zane's main points in his 3 messages. This is indicated by the quotes that Stegall did NOT include from Zane's messages! Unfortunately, it takes a long time to listen to all of the things Zane said, to find the important clips that Stegall omitted. In Stegall's article, Part 1, he is insisting that "the content of the Saving Gospel has been tampered with."

Stegall also states that "There was once virtual unanimity among us in the Free Grace position that in order for a lost sinner to receive eternal life, he MUST believe that Jesus Christ is God-incarnate who died for his sins and rose again to save him forever." I believe neither of these assertions are true. From the very outset, Stegall is misrepresenting not only what Zane said, but also he is claiming to be the authoritative spokesperson for the entire Free Grace movement. There has never been perfect unanimity in the "Free Grace Position" about all the details of what a person has to believe in order to get everlasting life. I have read and listened to many GES people that have written and spoken through the years that disagreed with what Bob and Zane were saying about the details. In fact, almost every one of the key accusers were allowed to present their views at GES conferences! GES has always welcomed genuine and fair discussion of the issues. The only unanimity I have seen through the years is that based upon inductive study of texts such as John 3:16, 5:24, a person does not have to add anything to faith in Christ alone. This was one of the only prominent points of agreement.

For almost 30 years, Zane and GES have been at the forefront of opposition to what used to be called "Lordship Salvation." It is my observation that opposing Lordship Salvation has been a unifying factor which people have always agreed upon in the GES camp. I have been a fan of Zane since the mid-80's, and of GES since the late 80's, and I never got the impression that everyone from GES had to agree on all the finer details. After studying everything I have found from Zane, his stress was always on believing in Christ as the object of faith, for eternal life, and he never stated clearly, and unequivocally that a person had to also believe in Christ's death and resurrection (as additions to Christ alone as the objects of their faith). He never added those things. In fact, I am not aware of a single verse in the entire Bible clearly implying what Stegall says about believing in Christ, plus His deity, death and resurrection, for the forgiveness of sins. I have discussed this with several people who accuse Zane of a Crossless message, and they admit that in fact there is no passage that clearly states this as our message to unbelievers today. You have to combine passages from various locations in the Bible. They also claim that there is a "Post-Cross" Gospel, that now is different from the "Pre-Cross" Gospel, in other words, that the OBJECT of saving faith changed since Christ died.

Zane, Bob and GES people never advocated omitting the Cross in evangelistic conversations. The death and resurrection of Christ, and many other facts, are part of what Zane called "The Full Gospel Story" or the "Normal Context" which

should be shared when trying to give something for the Holy Spirit to use to invoke faith in the heart of a person during an evangelistic presentation. I do not feel that there is adequate basis for Zane's accusers to attack him based upon the view that the object of saving faith changed. It is a very common view that the object of faith did not change. Of course, there is progress of revelation, but that does not change the object of saving faith, it only gives more detail about that object. Zane, Bob Wilkin, and GES people are not the only ones who believe this. Zane was very careful to insist upon preaching and teaching the person and work of Christ to all unbelievers. The argument about the Cross actually being the OBJECT of saving faith is a debatable point among Bible believing theologians. Zane held that the Grace view has always been that the object of faith is the person of Christ Himself, and not Christ plus anything else.

What unsaved person comes to Christ without deficiencies, holes or flaws in their theology? Without the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts to overcome those flaws, who would ever be saved? Is that not how people in the OT gained eternal salvation for thousands of years, until the end of the law, (i.e., the death of Christ on the cross)? Zane was not saying that we should go around evangelizing like they did in the OT. That was not his point. He was saying that, when we are doing evangelism, we should keep our "core objective" in mind, not in the sense that it is the ONLY thing we say, but that a person can believe every word about Christ in the Bible, yet go to hell because they do not believe in the "core" of faith alone in the person of Jesus Christ for their eternal life. Zane's point was that we should allow solid grace theology to affect both the focus of our our content and the goal we have in mind when doing evangelistic presentations. Zane advocated giving people both the "Full Gospel Message" (lots of content) AND to NOT forget to stress the "Core Minimum" (the invitation to believe in Jesus).

In order to stress this "core minimum" (the goal we should have in mind), Zane proposed a strange scenario, where a guy on a deserted island reads the inspired words of John 6:43, and then John 6:47. He somehow becomes convinced through this small portion of the written Word of God to believe in the living Word of God, the Jesus of the New Testament, for his everlasting life. Zane's view was always that this necessary convincing work, was a work of the Holy Spirit. It was a hypothetical scenario to demonstrate what the "core minimum" we need to have in mind when we give the facts about the Christ to unsaved people. The scenario was not to demonstrate how Zane or anybody else should now do evangelism. At the beginning of the first message Zane stated, "I am not going to tell you how to do evangelism."

What was his point then? Zane stresses that a person who believes in Jesus of the New Testament for everlasting life, does not go to hell because they do not know enough sound doctrine. Many people will be in hell with impeccable Christology. A person will go to hell because they do not believe in Jesus Christ alone for their eternal salvation. That is what Zane meant by the "Core Minimum." It is also what he meant when he said the text of Scripture nowhere requires a list of doctrines to be believed by the hearer in order to be born again. The object of our faith needs to be the person of Christ, and not a list of doctrines.

### **III. CLIPS from Zane where he clearly emphasized the content and object of faith.**

**(The clips are at the end of this paper. PLEASE read the rest of this paper BEFORE reading the clips.)**

### **IV. My Analysis**

#### **A. Zane's method and style**

1. Zane tailored his speaking style to his intended audience.
  - a. When Zane would speak at a church, such as at Victor Street, he used simple terminology and would assume very little on the part of the hearers.
  - b. However, when Zane spoke or wrote for GES, he assumed a high level of Biblical knowledge on the part of his hearers. He seemed to assume people were

tracking with him, so he did not spend a lot of time on background material and defining terms.

2. Zane appealed to Scripture as his authority.

a. Zane sought to base his arguments on explicit arguments from Scripture, which he used to explain other passages that were not clear. Dr. Bruce Waltke has a good chapter in his and Moises Silva's book, "Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics." In Waltke's chapter, "The Theological Use of the Bible," on pages 249 to 252, he explains the concept of using clear passages to interpret the unclear, by referring to the clear passages as "Chair" passages where the Bible speaks clearly and authoritatively. In other words, there are some crystal-clear passages in the Bible which set the boundaries for all other passages dealing with related subjects. This is actually a common hermeneutical principle, and Zane is not doing something unusual here.

b. In Q&A times at GES, people often asked Zane questions which could not be answered from Scripture. Zane would say "I don't know," often following up by saying, "In my opinion" to show that he did not feel the Scriptures were clear on the point in question. People seem to have an insatiable desire to get leaders to make authoritative pronouncements from the text of Scripture about things it does not explicitly teach. Zane never hesitated to say, "I don't know."

3. Zane did not speak at GES as if it was a hostile audience.

a. Zane assumed that GES audiences were tracking with the teaching from him, Bob Wilkin and other GES speakers. For example, you can tell from the questions that people asked, that even GES people were not tracking with him regarding the "deserted island" and the "bare minimum." People were asking questions about things he had just clearly explained in his presentation.

b. Zane was assuming that his hearers shared his view that the Scriptures should be used on a regular basis to clarify, correct and/or refine our views. The Bible is our sole authority. Zane operated from the assumption that we need to analyze our Theology based upon what the Scriptures say, and we should not hold as authoritative the traditional understandings which are "read into" the text.

c. All of Zane's statements, especially those in his papers on "How to Lead People to Christ," need to be examined in light of his main points. He would often embellish his papers, while he read them, in order to clarify his main points and to answer questions ahead of time. This worked most of the time, but, often, people still did not get his main points, and they still tripped up on the concepts that were new or unfamiliar to them, such as "Assurance is of the Essence of Saving Faith."

d. At GES conferences, Zane was being a seminary prof and challenging our thinking instead of spoon-feeding us. He expected us to take his observations and to study the Scriptures for ourselves, and not to take every word he said and start preaching it in church when we got back from GES. Zane assumed he could present non-traditional concepts at GES, and that people had the ability to check them out on their own and either accept them, or else agree to disagree with him. He did not expect people to accept everything he said at GES conferences as infallible.

**B. Assessment of the accusations**

1. Zane did not change his Theology to the degree his Crossless accusers indicate.

a. His accusers seem to imply that it was wrong for Zane to refine anything when dealing with Salvation issues. However, the Grace movement has ALWAYS been solidly based upon studying the text for what it says and does not say, and, based upon that study, making corrections to traditional views. The Grace movement would quickly die if we stopped studying the Bible inductively and we never grew or developed in our understanding of Biblical truths.

b. Zane believed in the precedence of Biblical Theology over and above Systematic Theology. In the Bible departments of the excellent schools I have

attended, there was always a tension (sometimes healthy, sometimes not) between the Bible Department and the Theology Department. Each one thought their department should correct the other. Somebody has to be the authority, though, and according to Paul, the Bereans were correct in checking out everything by studying the text of Scripture to correct Paul if need be.

c. In my opinion, the greatest change in Zane's theology over the years was his position that Repentance means more than simply a change of mind. This and other changes were adjustments or refinements, based upon careful, inductive study of the text. This does not constitute heretical teaching. For example, there are many people, including advocates of Reformed and Perseverance Theology, who agree with Zane's view that repentance is more than just a change of mind. Zane's view of repentance is shared by a large number of good Bible teachers.

2. Zane never deviated from key assumptions held by the Grace Movement since the mid 80's.

a. Zane held to the careful examination of the Scripture to determine whether a text was addressing Justification issues, or Discipleship issues. The failure to distinguish between passages directed to unbelievers and passages directed to believers, is the basis for the errors of Perseverance Theology. For example, whenever the word "saved" or "salvation" is used, one should ask the question, "salvation from what," rather than make the reductionistic error of assuming every use of "saved" means "saved from hell."

b. Almost all of the Free Grace teachings about the simplicity of faith, are based upon what is NOT included in the clear verses in the Gospel of John such as John 3:16. For example, John 3:16 does NOT say "whosoever believes in Him and perseveres to the end of their life in good works has everlasting life." The addition of requirements to "believeth in Him" is normally called an "argument from silence." If there were codicils, provisos, or hidden stipulations then John is badly misleading the reader. These additions are usually added to invalidate a person's faith by those who believe in Reformed Perseverance Theology. In other words, these people would ask a person questions like, "Did you REALLY believe?" "Did you repent of your sins?" "Did you promise to obey God for the rest of your life?"

c. John's Gospel, which contains "Chair passages," is the authority for the teaching that one believes in Christ to get everlasting life. Of the some 98 times that the words *pistis* and *pisteuo* are used in John, many times the text specifically calls for a person to believe in Jesus to get everlasting life. In most of the other texts, eternal life is implied, unless of course, the words for faith or believe are referring to discipleship issues. The Gospel of John is the only book written with the express goal of leading a person to believe in Jesus as the Christ, resulting in eternal life. This is a VERY common view and recognized by all Biblical scholars, not just Zane or GES. If there were codicils, provisos, and hidden stipulations, which are required to be believed in, in addition to Jesus as the Christ, then it is very strange that John does not mention them in his book. Keep in mind, the Gospel of John was written long AFTER the Cross. There are no indications in John that the Gospel that Jesus preached had changed and had to be added to.

d. Most Grace people have held that Old Testament believers did not get eternal life from knowing the facts about the Messiah from the Scriptures. It is commonly held that the OT saints (including Christ's disciples) had to believe in the coming Messiah, or, in the case of the people alive when Jesus was there, believe that Jesus was the Christ. This belief was ultimately belief in God Himself. (For a valuable discussion about the "ultimate content" or object of faith being God in all dispensations see "Salvation in the Old Testament" by John S. Feinberg, in the volume "Tradition and Testament.") Obviously many disagree with exactly how people were saved in the Old Testament, but I think the key is to understand that people had to believe in a person, and not a set of facts. Until Jesus came, this faith looked forward, now this faith looks backward to Jesus who came as the OT Messiah, and who demonstrated that He was the Christ. The facts about the object changed due to progress of revelation, but the object stays the same.

e. Clear passages such as John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, 1 Tim 1:16, teach that simple faith in Christ brings eternal life. Other "faith" passages in John, or

in the rest of the Bible, that have no mention of eternal life or permanence have to be examined in context to determine whether they are talking about Justification Salvation, or other kinds of Salvation. The clear passages are used to explain unclear passages which seem, at first glance, to say eternal life is based upon good behavior of some sort. A related concept is the idea of multiple kinds of salvation, typically referred to as Justification Salvation, Sanctification Salvation, and Glorification Salvation. The context determines which kind of Salvation the author has in mind.

f. You cannot add anything to that (simple) faith alone in the Person of Christ alone for eternal life, as described in John, and 1 Tim 1:16, because otherwise you would never know exactly how much you would have to add to faith in the person of in Christ order to have that life. This would eliminate the possibility of knowing for sure that you have assurance of everlasting life, which is a crucial part of saving faith.

g. The phrase "eternal life" or "everlasting life" in a context where its reception is based upon the condition of faith alone, refers to the kind of life that is needed to live with God forever when we die. Although "eternal life" is the clearest term, there are other terms that can be used as synonyms, such as "eternal justification," "eternal salvation," etc. Part of the reason the Grace Movement exists is because so many people are confused and we need to use the clearest possible language when talking to unsaved people. When the Bible teaches that "eternal life" is based upon a condition of works, it is dealing with rewards, or Sanctification Salvation. The context determines the meaning.

h. The Bible uses terms of permanence, such as everlasting life, in conjunction with "believe" in the Gospel of John and in 1 Tim 1:16. This makes assurance "of the essence of saving faith," because the moment of saving faith cannot occur outside of assurance. If a person believes in Christ for everlasting life, then at least at that point in time, they are sure of it. The promise of eternal life is what we believe in Christ for. Believing in Jesus as the "guarantor of eternal life" (one of Zane's favorite expressions) means we are not believing in ourselves at the guarantor of it. Eternal life cannot be lost by living badly, because we did not get it by behaving well.

i. The examples that Jesus gives in the Gospel of John are the clearest source of evangelism examples today. Other passages can be used, but they should be used in conjunction with the clear teaching of the Gospel of John. When witnessing to unbelievers, passages should be used which demonstrate very clearly that a person needs simple faith in the person of Jesus for the everlasting life He has made available.

j. The Scriptures teach that when Jesus died on the Cross, his death was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Because Jesus paid for every sin that has ever been committed by any person who has ever lived, people do not go to hell to pay the penalty for their sins. This view stands in stark contrast to the Reformed view of limited atonement, which holds that Jesus only died to pay the penalty for the sins of the elect. That means that the reason the non-elect go to hell is because their sin is still the problem which dooms them for eternity in hell. Contrary to this, John 3:18 indicates that the reason a person is bound for hell is because they do not believe in Christ, and not because the penalty for their sin was not paid.

### **C. Ways Zane could have been more clear, and how WE can be more clear (Keep in mind, hindsight has 20/20 vision)**

1. Zane's deserted island illustration was a bit difficult for people to grasp. People thought Zane was saying that we should evangelize using some sort of new "bare minimum" Gospel presentation, but I do not believe this conclusion is warranted.

a. Perhaps Zane could have used a different illustration, and possibly a more traditional evangelistic passage such as John 3:10-15. Illustrations often seem to break down. It might have been better had he not used any illustration at all!

b. It is difficult, if not impossible, to illustrate the least amount of content that GOD is able to use in order to convince a person to believe in Jesus Christ for their everlasting life. You cannot objectively prove all of the things that a person does NOT have to believe. The Bible only states the moment of saving faith in terms of what we HAVE to believe. Perhaps Zane could have provided a number of examples of people who had deficiencies, flaws or holes in their Theology at the moment they believed in Christ for eternal life.

2. Zane should have spent more time emphasizing the perspicuity and the inspiration of Scripture including the words of John 6:43, and 47. He should have spent more time emphasizing that it is not our dynamism or persuasiveness, but the Holy Spirit's work, by using His inspired Word that causes people to be convinced to believe in Jesus. He should have explained that God can use obscure texts to lead people to faith in Christ, but that we should try and use the clear texts to avoid confusion.

3. Zane needed to spend more time explaining what he meant by "core" or "bare minimum." I think he should have used a term such as sine-qua-non, rather than "core" or "bare minimum." This would have implied that all the information we give a person about the person and work of Christ, has belief in the person of Christ alone as its goal.

4. Zane used the word "Gospel" in two different senses. A person could easily misunderstand which sense he meant, if they were not "tracking" with him.

a. Sometimes he used the word "Gospel" in the sense of the sine-qua-non of believing in Jesus for everlasting life. Sometimes he used the phrase "invitation to faith" or "faith in Christ" to refer to this sense of the moment of saving faith. This is what Zane was referring to when he said, "All forms of the Gospel that require greater content to faith in Christ than the Gospel of John requires are flawed." He could not have been implying that if you tell people about the Cross then your presentation is "flawed," because he later insists on telling everybody about the Cross. His point was that since the object of faith was the person of Christ alone in John's Gospel, if we add to the person of Christ as the object of our faith, then we are adding more content to that object than John gives.

b. Sometimes Zane used the word "Gospel" to refer to all of the information about who Jesus was, and what He did as a basis for His offer of eternal life based upon faith alone in Him. Zane referred to this in statements such as "I at the same time give them the Full Gospel Message and the Bare Minimum." This "Full Gospel Message" was NOT what he was referring to in point (a) even though he used the word "Gospel" for both a and b.

c. Technically, both (a) and (b) are "content" because there are texts of Scripture that teach both. In other words (a) is the proposition that we need to believe in the person of Christ, in order to have everlasting life. On the other hand (b), which can include dozens of Biblical truths, is also "content," but the amount of this kind of content can be different for each person we talk to, depending upon how ignorant they are of the Scriptures.

d. Zane is not the only one who uses the word "Gospel" in more than one sense. It is difficult to define the term every time it is used. However, we should be careful that our hearers know what we are talking about when we use the term "Gospel."

5. Zane's point about a two-step approach to faith could be easily misunderstood by his "Crossless" accusers.

a. Some of Zane's "Crossless" accusers think that "trust" is a better term than "believe." Zane was always careful to insist that trust can be used as long as it is not used exclusively, thinking it to be a better term than believe (implying that more is needed beyond simple belief). There are a few meanings of trust which are synonymous with the word believe, so if our hearers know that when we use the word "trust," we really mean "believe," then our use of the word trust is legitimate. In order to define words with other words which have meanings that do not have a perfect overlap in meanings, one should start out with the more general term, and move to the more specific term in an evangelistic presentation. In other words, start with the word "trust" and then

later use the word "believe," to clarify what you mean by "trust," rather than starting with the word "believe" and then using the word "trust" to clarify what you mean by "believe."

b. Zane's statement that step one is "believing the facts," and step two is to "decide to trust in Christ" could be misunderstood as saying that a statement of facts is unnecessary to give people in evangelistic presentations. In other words, they may think Zane was "uncoupling" the truths about Christ from faith in the person of Christ (making them "excess baggage" in the evangelistic presentation). This was not Zane's point.

c. Zane held to the view that since "believe" means to be persuaded or convinced that something is true, then you cannot really DECIDE to believe. In other words, Zane was saying that a person is not saved by deciding to trust Christ; one comes to believe in Christ (see d. below). His point was that, a second step confuses the simplicity of faith alone in Christ alone.

d. Instead of "deciding to trust Christ" as being the second step, Zane was saying that normally a person comes to faith during the first step, while they are being exposed to the truths about Christ. He was not advocating giving people no truths at all, nor was he suggesting we totally make the facts unrelated to the object of their faith. Zane's point was that the Scriptures focus on believing in the person of Christ as the object. The truths are essential, in that the Holy Spirit uses them to point to the person of Christ as the true object of saving faith, and a person is born again the moment they believe in Jesus for everlasting life, right where they sit or stand.

6. Zane could have explained more clearly what he meant by terms such as "invitation to faith," "the core" and "content." I think Zane's accusers assume Zane was implying that it was actually wrong to give people facts of the Gospel, or that there is some sort of "bare minimum" or new mini-Gospel that we should all use in our evangelism. I believe this is what Stegall meant when he said "The Gospel has been changed."

a. What Zane was referring to by "invitation to faith" or "faith in Christ" was the actual response of faith, which he sometimes called "the Gospel." Zane was emphasizing the response of "faith in Christ" at the moment a person is at the place of believing in Jesus alone. This was the "Core Minimum" or sine-qua-non {my term}, without which a person who possesses all the FACTS about Christ remains unregenerate.

b. Zane could be misunderstood to be saying that all of the truths about Christ, such as the death and resurrection, were "excess baggage." The "excess baggage" to which Zane was referring was not giving people supposedly excess truths about the person and work of Christ. He was referring to the time when, as a child, he went forward and prayed a prayer before he understood what he was doing. The "excess baggage" would be things like, raising a hand, praying a prayer, standing, going forward, etc.

7. Zane stated that "oftentimes the free gift makes no sense until we explain the teaching of the cross," or "But more often than not, we have difficulty leading them TO Christ, unless we lead them through the full Gospel message."

a. People may misunderstand "oftentimes" or "often" to mean that Zane regularly witnessed without telling people about the Cross. He should have stated that oftentimes, in Old Testament times and in the time of Jesus, people believed without any knowledge of the Cross, but that today, "normally," the free gift makes no sense until we explain the teaching of the Cross.

b. I think Zane should have explained that in the OT dispensation the norm was for believers to not understand the teaching of the Cross, and that today it is the exception. Zane DID clarify his point by stating, "In my previous article I discussed getting the core of our message to men clearly in mind. Our objective is to lead them to belief in Christ to provide their eternal salvation. The Gospel message about His death, burial, and resurrection is the NORMAL {emphasis mine} context for our presentation of this core objective. But at the end of the day, anyone who trusts Christ for eternal life is born again."

8. I think Zane could have clarified that the idea of presenting a "core minimum" might be more applicable in the case of personal evangelism, than in preaching to groups of people.

a. Zane should have emphasized that the idea of a "core minimum" really does not have anything to do with how little content you give in an evangelistic message to a crowd. That is because an evangelist preaching to a crowd needs to custom-tailor the information to be preached about the person and work of Christ to the kind of audience he has. The core minimum would still be the same, which could consist of some sort of closing statement that probes whether the people in the audience understand and believe that Jesus gives everlasting life to those who believe in Him for it, and that they have eternal life right where they sit or stand. No second step is required.

b. I think many of Zane's "Crossless" accusers are pastors and/or preachers, and they thought that Zane was talking about how they should REDUCE the amount of truth that a person needs to preach about Christ in their evangelistic sermons. That was not Zane's point.

9. I think Zane could have explained the fact that the literal statement "We believe in Jesus Christ for the promise of everlasting life," is not in the Gospel of John.

a. There are levels of implication in the text of Scripture. I think Zane's booklet on "Did Paul Preach Eternal Life" is helpful at examining various kinds of implications in Scripture. There is one passage in 1 Tim 1:15,16 that does explicitly state "believe in Him for everlasting life" in those EXACT terms. In Zane's paper on "How to Lead People to Christ, Part 2," he discusses the problems with the following summary of faith: "Believe that Jesus died for your sins." Zane explains that people who close a Gospel presentation that way are technically incorrect because that phrase is not in the Bible. Zane explained that the hearer may actually believe that statement, but may assume they have to work to get to get everlasting life. The idea of believing in Jesus for everlasting life is not clearly expressed by "Believe that Jesus died for your sins." Zane admitted that if the person somehow understands the implication that they get everlasting life by believing in Jesus alone, who died for their sins, they might be born again. However his point was that it is best to make the core message explicit rather than implicit.

b. John Niemela delivered a message, "Must we Believe the Promise," at a GES2006 regional Conference in Spokane, where he distinguished between implicit belief and explicit belief. John gave an example of how he asks people "Why should God guarantee that you should live with Him forever?" He then describes some possible answers the person may give in response to that question, in terms of whether they understand the "core" message. Response number 1 is "My Good works outweigh my Bad works {which is why I should live with Him forever}." That one is way off-target. Number 6 is "I believe that Jesus paid for all my sins {which is why I should live with Him forever}." If the person understands the unexpressed implication for number 6, and is not trusting in their works to get them to live with God forever (i.e. believes Jesus guarantees their eternal destiny) then they will be born again. Probably most people in a Catholic or Christian church believe Jesus paid for all their sins, but they don't believe in Jesus alone as the guarantor of everlasting life. Some Grace people would say they are saved, Zane would say they are not because they are trusting in Jesus plus their works. Responses 7 through 9 are similar, in that they are close, and the person may still get born again, but they still do not explicitly communicate the "core" message. Response number 10 is, "I believe in Jesus' promise of everlasting life to me." Number 10 is the bulls-eye which makes explicit the actual core, and does not rely on the person to somehow figure out the unexpressed implication. It would have been helpful for Zane to describe the subtle interplay between implicit belief and explicit belief.

c. Although, "Believe in Jesus for Everlasting life," is not explicitly stated in John, a case can be made that verses like John 3:16 make crystal clear what a person is believing Jesus FOR. What else would they believe in Him for, from that text?

d. A key passage used by Zane's accusers, 1 Cor 15:3, does not state that an unbeliever gets everlasting life by believing Jesus did all of the things listed in that text. Zane should have explained that whole chapter of First Corinthians is directed to "brethren" in the context of encouraging believers to stop denying the resurrection. It is not stating a list of facts they had to believe in to be born again in terms of a "Core" message. It describes vital truths about the Person of Christ, WHOM the Corinthian believers had already believed in for everlasting life at some previous time in their lives. Of course this passage is helpful to describe to the unsaved person who Jesus was and what He did on their behalf. Zane taught that this passage was one that could be used to tell unsaved people about the Cross. However the text does not contain the "Core" message. This is not an uncommon view. Other truths have to be understood if this passages is used in an evangelistic invitation. Many Catholics and other mainline Protestants believe every word of 1 Cor 15 but they are working to get everlasting life. UNLESS a church-going person believes in Jesus as the guarantor of their eternal life, and they are NOT trusting in their works, then they are NOT born again. If you talk to most people in churches today, they believe in 1 Cor 15 but they also think they can get to heaven by their works. That was Zane's point. You can't believe in Christ AND your works.

## **V. Conclusion**

### **A. Looking at the Big Picture**

1. Realize that Satan loves the prospect of fracturing the Free Grace movement.

### **B. Dealing with the accusation of a Crossless Gospel**

1. Realize the intensity of the emotions in the "Crossless" accusations and that some people feel threatened by change.

a. The argument has been festering for years now. The lines have been drawn, and the intensity of the argument seems to shut down true constructive dialogue.

b. For many people, there is more at stake than just a "view." If some of these "Crossless" accusers changed their view, and challenged traditional views, they may lose their jobs, their reputations or their donor base.

c. Realize that those of us who are "tracking" with Zane, Bob and other GES speakers and writers are truly blessed by God. We need to be understanding toward those who view many things Zane and Bob say as a threat. Some folks may not have the freedom to rethink traditional views, or to change ANY of their views, at least in public.

2. Point out the misunderstanding of Zane's REAL point in the 3 "deserted island" papers:

a. When we witness, while giving all the facts, including the Cross, we are not to neglect the "core". . . telling people that they need to believe in the historical Jesus for everlasting life. We are to give them "The full Gospel story AND the Core Minimum."

b. Zane did NOT believe in giving a "reductionistic," stripped down "Mini-Gospel" in evangelism.

1) Rather than have a scripted evangelism approach, we should dialogue with people, and vary the quantity of truths about the Person and Work of Christ that we tell them, based upon how much the person already knows and believes. We also need to vary the amount of truth that we give a person, based upon how close they are to the point of being persuaded or convinced that they get eternal life by faith alone in Christ alone.

2) Zane was espousing the method of giving them as much information about the person and work of Christ as is necessary to communicate the "Core Minimum," which is the tipping point at which they are convinced them that Jesus gives everlasting life to all who believe in Him for it. He was not advocating some sort of 5 point message, and then a call for a decision to

trust in Christ. In other words, there is no bare minimum of 3, 4 or 5 facts that we give people, and then we invite them to "decide" to trust in Christ. That method, which is confusing, may lend itself to a "bare minimum" approach (i.e. the 3, 4 or 5 points), but that is not what Zane meant.

3) Zane did not believe in giving people a bare minimum number of facts. Each person requires a different presentation of Bible truths depending upon their understanding and background. At the point when the hearer has enough information about Jesus to believe in Him for their everlasting life (the core), THEN they are born again. No decision, or outward sign, or prayer is necessary, and, in fact, these confuse the issue.

3. Show the opponents this paper/mp3 and show them my video clip DVD from this session.

4. Give the opponents the "Best of Zane" DVD set, and instruct them to mentally set aside what they have read from Stegall and others, and strive to objectively listen for what Zane's main points really were.

**C. Develop a good attitude, and don't make the same mistake the "Crossless" accusers have made.**

1. Be aware that some actually disagree with the main points for which GES has stood from the beginning. For example, some people such as Stegall say, "There was once virtual unanimity among us in the Free Grace position that in order for a lost sinner to receive eternal life, he MUST believe that Jesus Christ is God-incarnate who died for his sins and rose again to save him forever." This was never GES's official position.

a. In other words, every time Stegall and others saw the statement "Believe in Christ" in Zane's and Bob's writings, they must have assumed the implication that a person had to believe in Christ PLUS additional facts about Christ. Somehow they must have thought belief in Christ alone as the object of one's faith is invalid unless they have some sort of "Bare Minimum" level of theological understanding, with an emphasis on the Cross. In my opinion THEY are the ones with a "bare minimum!" We should not invoke some sort of bare minimum level of understanding facts about Christ to validate a person's faith in the person of Christ.

b. Don't "couple" the basis for Christ's offer of Salvation with faith alone in Christ alone as the OBJECT of saving faith. We are leading them to Christ as the object of their faith, and not to a set of doctrines. In my understanding, if Zane were to have 60 seconds in which to talk with an unbeliever, he would not omit the fact that Jesus died on the cross for their sins. He would not ask people to "Believe in Jesus who died and arose" because people may hear that all the time and may ignore the words. He would say something like "Jesus died on the cross to pay for every sin you ever did from the day you were born until the day you died. The moment we believe in Him for everlasting life, we have it. Do you believe this?"

2. Don't go for the bait of pejorative questions such as "Does a person have to believe in the Deity of Christ, or the Cross to be saved?" They are asking a question that cannot be answered by a "Yes" or "No" answer. The answer is that a person does not have to have perfect theology to be saved, and in the "Church Age," the truths about the person and work of Christ are the normal context which direct a person to believe in the person of Christ as the object of faith because they show that eternal life has been paid for and is a free gift, and that all they need to do is simply believe in the person of Jesus Christ for it.

3. Don't be bitter and whiney. Some people (Yes even Christians!) are looking to start a fight, just to walk away leaving you angry. Some people just love to argue. Just learn to let it go if you have to.

4. Encourage people who recognize Zane's points as valid and possible, even if they don't agree with everything Zane said.

5. Show an attitude of love towards those who are confused about what the Bible really says

**D. Conclusion - Zane did not advocate a "Crossless" or a "Promise-only" Gospel in preaching to the lost.**

1. Zane was assuming the Biblical distinction between the facts about what Jesus had to do, as the basis for the offer of the free gift of eternal life (what Zane referred to as the Full Gospel), and faith in the person of Christ alone for everlasting life (what we refer to as the "Saving Message"). Thus, he did not teach a "Crossless Gospel." He taught a "Full Gospel" which includes many truths about Jesus, but he taught a "Saving Message," which was simply Faith alone in the PERSON of Christ.

2. Zane taught that the "normal context" for a person to come to believe this saving message is through the message of the Cross. The "Strange" scenario where a person would require a miracle to "somehow be convinced," was a hypothetical example, given to emphasize what the core (or the sine-qua-non) was that should not be OMITTED in our evangelistic presentations. Such a deserted island type of scenario might never have happened, but who knows what kind of strange circumstances God COULD use? If people believe in the Jesus Christ of the New Testament for everlasting life, they are believing the right person for the right thing. Nobody from the "Crossless" accusers can deny that. It is common knowledge that nobody has a perfectly developed theology at the moment of Saving faith. Everyone must agree with that also.

3. It is totally acceptable to have a Gospel presentation that you can make at a store, or in an airport, where you have to give the whole thing in a minute. Every time anyone does this, they will omit a lot of important truths about the person and work of Christ, but any "Grace Person" should never walk away from an unbeliever without telling them the "Core" of Faith alone in Christ alone for everlasting life. No grace person would ever omit something about the Cross. It only takes 5 seconds to tell people that Jesus died on the Cross to pay the penalty for us. Zane was not advocating walking up to strangers and saying the six words, "Believe in Jesus for everlasting life" and then thinking he had given enough information. He was assuming that you would dialogue with people as much as possible in the time you have. His point was that you should not walk away until you tell people, at some point, the "Core": that a person gets everlasting life by believing in Jesus alone for everlasting life. That is CRUCIAL because it's usually the ONE thing that most people are confused about.

4. Zane believed that ultimately it is not our personal dynamism, or eloquence, but the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, using Scriptural truth, that brings a person to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life. The Holy Spirit can work using many different means in people's lives, including exposure to a few clear passages of Scripture, because every word of every passage is inspired.

5. Although a person can believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life with badly deficient theology, Zane also believed that the "normal" means to lead people to faith was by giving GOOD theology to the unsaved hearer, ESPECIALLY, the teaching about what Jesus did on the Cross in dying to pay the penalty for all of our sins, in order to offer us the free gift of eternal life. I was unable to find any place where Zane ever disagreed with this "normal context" of bringing people to faith in Christ.

Let us examine some of the clips that indicate Zane's main point, and rather than picking out things we disagree with, please look carefully at what his main point really was. I have quoted him extensively in this version of the paper to make sure you see the context more clearly. Stegall was misrepresenting Zane, by not providing the context and flow-of-thought of each statement.

(My OLD point III.) CLIPS from Zane where he clearly emphasized the content and object of faith.

**A. Examine several statements from Zane GES 1997 - Assurance is of the essence of saving faith**

My topic this morning as you have already been told is, Assurance is of the essence of saving faith. A recent political cartoon in USA Today caught my attention, and it is very relevant to my subject this morning. In the cartoon a man and a woman were facing each other. Both of them looked like somewhat offbeat types. In the first panel the man said "Elvis is alive." And the woman said something like, "I agree with you." In the second panel the man said, "I was kidnapped by aliens. And the woman said, "I believe you." In the third panel the man said, "Congress and the White House are cooperating on the budget." And the woman turned away from him and she said, "NUT!" Of course the cartoonist is engaging in some political satire there. Somewhat hyperbolically he is suggesting it may be easier to believe that Elvis is alive, or that alien kidnappings occur, that it is to believe that a Democratic president and a Republican congress can cooperate on something of political significance. But along with his satire it seems to become a reminder about the ordinary common sense way of talking about belief. As the cartoonist and all the rest of us know, believing may have very little to do with the amount of evidence for what we believe. A person can believe that Elvis is alive, even though the evidence for that is presumably rather meager. The same goes for the idea of alien kidnappings. On the other hand, some people would argue that the idea of republican and democratic parties cooperating on something important does require a lot more proof than we have of that at the moment. In fact I have read recently that the budget talks have collapsed. But the fact remains that if a person thinks any of these things are true, he obviously believes them. Saving faith is really not any different from that. A person either believes the offer of eternal life, or he doesn't. It really isn't relevant how he came to believe it, or how good his reasons are for believing it. The issue is not how a person came to believe, but whether or not he does believe.

But that leads me to the subject for today. If someone does believe the offer of eternal life as the Bible presents this offer, he will also be sure that he has eternal life. This is what we mean when we say that assurance is of the essence of saving faith. What we do not mean by this claim is that saving faith and assurance are synonymous. Let me repeat that. We do not mean by this that assurance and saving faith are synonymous. There is still objective truth to be believed. But assurance is the necessary result of believing that objective truth. That is due to the character of the truth itself, and not to any special quality that attaches to the faith that believes it. I will try to defend this claim Biblically, in a moment, but let me just restate the matter in order to make it clear. The nature of the Gospel message is such, that when a person believes it he necessarily has the assurance of eternal salvation. No matter what else he might believe, if he is not assured, he has not believed the Gospel. The fact of the matter is, that a person may believe certain things about the Gospel, without actually believing the true Gospel. Or, he may believe something very close to the true Gospel which is not in fact the Gospel. In either case he will not have the assurance that goes with saving faith.

**B. Examine several statements from Zane, Dillow, Bing and Wilkin in the panel discussion GES 1997**

Q: Could you elaborate on the content of the Gospel that needs to be believed as far as who Christ is, and what is essential for salvation?

A: Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. What is the content of that? John 11:25 and 26, that He guarantees, that He is the guarantor of eternal life and resurrection to everyone who believes. That's the content. Now you can say to a person, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?" And he might say yes, but not believe that he was himself saved. He hasn't believed the content yet. You could say to a person, "Do you believe that everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and on their way to heaven forever. He would have to say yes or no to that. If he said no, then of course he's not saved. If he said yes and he understands what he is saying, he is saying, yes I am born of God, and I'm on my way to heaven.

{Bob} Just one clarification, and I know we talked about this before, it wouldn't necessarily mean he's not saved, it would either mean he's not saved, or he's a confused believer, right?

{Zane} If he said at this moment in time I do not believe that He is the Christ. For purposes of the illustration I am giving pure categories here, that the person either believes this or not, had never believed any differently than he is telling me right now.

Q: Another point, back to John 11, if you were talking about this, would you or how would you bring 1 Cor 15, where it seems you have the message of what the, some more of the content of the Gospel, Christ died for our sins, and he rose. Would you relate that to some degree on that?

Comment [M1]: Zane stressed over and over that there was "truth" or content to be believed. This included the teaching of the Cross.

{Bob} OK let me just expand this question a little, because this one comes up a lot. In 1 Cor 15:3-9 Paul says that his Gospel is the death, the burial, the resurrection, the appearances of Christ. And so the Question comes up a lot, can you share the Gospel without mentioning all those things. What if a person mentions the death and the burial of Christ but doesn't mention His resurrection. What if a person mentions the death of Christ, but not His burial. Or his resurrection, but not His appearances. Do you have to mention all those elements, and doesn't that create a problem because in the Gospel of John it seems the way Jesus shares the Gospel many times, He never articulates, many times he never articulates His death or His resurrection, and yet He leads people to faith in Him. And the Gospel of John is written after Pentecost, to tell people how to be saved so, what gives here. Why do we have two different ways of articulating the Gospel. Who would want to comment on that?

A: {Zane} I'll take a shot at it. I think what we need to distinguish between is what we might call the full Gospel story and the bare minimum that one has to believe to be saved. There is no question that the full Gospel story is how Jesus provided for salvation, and then what is the term or condition on which we receive it. And let me just say here, in all our experience in dealing with people shows, that when you are talking with them about a free gift which they only have to believe to be in possession of, they are going to say, "How can it be free?" And what is obviously the Biblical explanation of that and the one that works with people, if they are willing to believe the Gospel, is that Christ paid for this. He made the total payment and therefore there's nothing for us to pay and all we are asked to do is believe. That makes the offer of a free gift intelligible. I very much believe in preaching the Cross to people. Because in the light of the Cross alone do we really understand the freeness of Salvation. But if you ask me what would I have to tell a person, if I had 2 minutes in the airport to do it, then I would probably tell them what we have in John 11:25 and 26. So I think we can say, yeah, Paul is talking about the Gospel in 1 Cor 15 but he's not necessarily talking about the bare minimum which it is necessary to believe in order to be saved. We want to begin the Gospel in eternity past, and the birth of Christ, the Virgin birth is part of the Gospel story if we expand it. But I am not going to tell a person that unless they believe the Virgin birth then they are not going to be saved. However that helps to explain how God has provided Salvation.

{Charlie} I would say in the terms Christ in John 11 that you quoted, a lot of theology is implied, like to be a guarantor of our eternal life, He needs to be a living Savior. Even though it might not be preached explicitly as Paul chooses to do as Paul chooses to do in 1 Cor 15. And certainly implied to a person logically I think they need to derive that conclusion. So the conclusion that they are a sinner and need that Salvation. So there's a lot implied and I think it is tricky to boil it down to a minimum.

Q: So there's nothing wrong with preaching the full Gospel?

{laughter}

A: {Zane} Is that the soft curve that all baseball batters like to get?

No thats from Mormon land.

Q: Going though the Gospel with a person, and she says, well I need to think about it for a few days, and then he goes through a whole series of questions about, Do you believe you are a sinner, do you believe Christ died for you, do you believe He is the sole source of salvation and this sort of thing, and she answered yes to all these and then he said, "Well then you're saved." And she was still, I take it she was still skeptical. So how would we respond to that?

A: Well one obvious thing that you did in that series of provisos that you quoted there, when you got the last one you said that he said, "If you trust in Christ you will be saved." If you trust in Christ. She is probably going to be thinking in her heart, "Yeah, if I do, but I haven't decided to do that yet." So what he could have said was, "Do you realize that the moment that you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you have everlasting life and will be resurrected?" And if she says, "Yes, I realize that." Then I could say to her, "Well then don't you have everlasting life and aren't you going to be resurrected?" And if she says "No," then well then you didn't believe the previous statement.

Q: My question might be as it relates to the person. Does the prior knowledge of the person enter into that? I'm thinking of a missionary who is witnessing to somebody who has never ever heard of Christ before as opposed to witnessing to somebody who is in the cultureal mileau over here in America?

Does the person's background, what is the minimum Gospel in those contexts there? Does the minimum presentation of the Gospel change.

{Bob} There is a book called, "What's gone wrong with the harvest, and I didn't find much that I really appreciated in the book, but there was one thing I appreciated. There was a little chart from minus 10 to plus 10 on salvation. And it listed 10 things that kind of preceeded saving faith, and some things that followed saving faith. And for example, it said that a logical precursor to believing in Jesus for eternal life was being a Theist. If you don't believe God exists it is awful hard to believe in Jesus for eternal life. Believing in life after death. It is hard to believe in Jesus for eternal life if you don't believe there is life after death. You know there are certain things that are logical precursors to believing in Jesus for eternal life. And some of the things you are talking about here might be logical precursors. But anyway, lets deal with the question, what about a person who has never heard anything about the Bible or whatever. Do we have to articulate the Gospel differently?

A: {Charlie} I don't know. That is one area of confusion is do you have to share the Gospel differently depending on the culture. I moved from the Northeast down to Texas, and that kind of would be true of me. Everybody here was already a Christian. They have been baptized in a Baptist church somewhere. So they have to have some content that they bring to it. You know like the Hindus would say they believe in Jesus

**Comment [M2]:** The Bible nowhere gives us some sort of inspired list of doctrines we have to believe in order to get everlasting life. We need to give people as much information as possible, but the bottom line is that at the point where a person believes in Jesus as the grantor, and guarantor of everlasting life, then they are born again. I am not sure that Zane could have been clearer on this. People just did not seem to get it.

**Comment [M3]:** Zane believed that "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ" is synonymous with "Do you believe in Jesus as the grantor and guarantor of everlasting life to all who believe Him for it?"

and they put Him up there on the shelf with their three other deities. But they don't understand what Jesus is saying. They don't understand His claims about himself. There has to be some content.

A: {Jody Dillow} I was going to say in China it is common issue if you started out with a typical Chinese, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life," your're already in trouble because many don't even believe in God. Those who do have a completely different concept of God. Some of them it is polytheistic. Typically there is an Eastern pantheism of some kind. So you really have to have a 5 spiritual laws, you start into a discussion typically in evangelism about the nature of God. Who it is you are approaching to have fellowship with Him. I am saying the same thing you said, Bob.

{Zane} It seems to me also that even in this country, every individual is a law unto himself. So that if I am talking to Mr. X, I need to tell Mr. X everything that will enable him to understand the offer of salvation. If I am talking to Mrs. Y, I've got to tell her everything that will be necessary for her to understand salvation. I may have to say less to Mrs. Y than I say to Mr. X in order to bring that comprehension. The point I think that we all agree we are getting at, no matter what culture you are in, you have to give them enough Biblical information so that they understand the Biblical offer.

#### C. Examine several statements from Zane in the panel discussion GES 1999

Q: Is there a difference between telling people to believe in Jesus for eternal life, and telling people to trust in Jesus for eternal life? Do we have any comments, any takers on this question?

A: {Zane} I don't want it, but I'll take it. I think that depends entirely on what the person who uses "trust" means. Because trust has a range of meanings now, some of which would be synonymous with the word, and some of which would not. I could say, I sent Bob Wilkin downtown to deposit my check, and I'll hope he will do it, I guess I've got to trust him. That is not the same thing as believing that Bob Wilkin is going to deposit my check. On the other hand there are contexts in which the word trust is used by us as a synonym for believe. I like the title of the book somebody wrote, "Whatever happened to the Word Believe?" Why are we always substituting things for believe? I liked the emphasis that Earl, you gave, and that others have given, that we need to tell them what it is that they need to believe. And then we won't be fishing around for something that substitutes for the Biblical word believe.

{Charlie} I just want say that I don't have any big problems with the word trust. I am not ready to abandon it. I do prefer to use the word believe, I think that is the Biblical word obviously. But sometimes when you try to explain what it means what it is to believe you have to use other words. When I look at the Gospel of John I see a lot of analogies and pictures of what it means to believe like, look, hear, know, enter, eat, feed, come and drink and things like that. So trust can be a useful tool in one degree, I think the question he is asking is what is the involvement of the will and I have already expressed my opinion on that. It depends on what you mean by trust and dividing up the will and mind and heart and all that makes me feel uncomfortable anyway. You are safe with believe, that's for sure.

{John Hart} Well I'd like to talk to Zane on that a little bit more. I am not sure I feel comfortable with the word believe. I find people seem to misunderstand that as much as anything. I frequently in personal conversations actually replace it with the word trust. And I may need to be corrected later here, maybe I need to be. But I find if I ask the person, "Are you a born-again Christian." And they say, "Yeah sure I believe in Christ." My response to them is going to be, "Oh, that's wonderful. When was the first time you trusted Christ as your only hope for eternal life, and you abandoned all of your own works as getting you there?" And so I find it profitable to replace it with the word trust. You don't have to be trusting Christ, but I ask them, When was the first time you trusted Christ for your eternal life, to get you to heaven, and you abandoned all of your works as a possibility of contributing to it. So in that kind of setting I like to use the word trust when I feel like a person is using the word believe in a very loose way, "Yeah I believe in Christ," doesn't always mean I am believing in Him for eternal life.

{Zane} Why did he hand me the microphone {laughter}. I'm not really uncomfortable with anything you said John and, uh {laughter}. . . But, I guess the point I was making was that the word trust also contains pitfalls. I think that John would probably agree with me that the word trust contains pitfalls. And, after all the New Testament does articulate in terms of something that we can believe. "These are written that you might believe that, THAT Jesus is the Christ, and that believing you might have life through His name." 1 John 5:1 "Everyone that believes Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Now what does it mean to believe that Jesus is the Christ? Well I think obviously it means to believe that He is the one who gives to every believer, eternal life. "I am the resurrection and the life, he that liveth and believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet will he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." And then He says to Martha, "Do you believe this?" And notice that what He said is first of all I am the one who is the source of resurrection and eternal life to everyone who believes in Me. And if you believe this, Martha, then you have said that I am that person, and you have the guarantee of resurrection and eternal life.

And I wish that we could get to the place, I totally agree with John, that if you just ask a person, "Do you believe in Christ," if they are in any kind of church at all, they will say "Yes." What's the purpose of being in a Christian church if you don't believe in Christ. What I want to know is, what do you believe about Christ. What is the truth that you believe saves you. And I probably will stand corrected, and I will watch myself in the future talking about saving faith, after hearing Dr. Radmacher's very cogent critique of that, because really it's not the, the word saving ought to be attached to the truth which when believed, saves us. And so I think that its very important for us to make clear to people what it is we are asking them to believe. And when we make that clear, I don't think we need to substitute for the word "believe" very often. But I'm not uncomfortable with the use of trust, and I believe that when a person realizes that is what they are believing about Christ, what they are doing in effect is putting their trust in Him for eternal life.

**Comment [STUDENT4]:** The implication is that when they get to the point when they believe in the Jesus of the NT for everlasting life, then they are born again. Zane would have NEVER done what Dr. Scudder said, that is, walk through the streets of India, say "Believe in Jesus" and then think they were saved! The very thought is preposterous!

**Comment [M5]:** The important thing is the content.

{John} I wanted to say that's exactly what I said, wasn't it? {laughter} If you heard me right I said, When was the first time you trusted THAT, Jesus Christ was your only Savior and you abandoned all of your works. I put a lot in there didn't I? To clarify for them so that they might come back and say, "Oh I was talking about the time I was Baptized" and then I know we need to move on to the clear Gospel here, a clear understanding.

{Zane} Amen!

{Earl} It seems that one thing that comes out to us very very clearly is a communication problem, of understanding what I mean by words, and what they mean by words. And someone says, well thats just a semantic issue. Yeah, everything is. Everything is. That's the name of the game. Words. What do words mean?

...

I have to ask people, people ask me if I am a fundamentalist. I remember one of my colleagues asked what's a fundamentalist? He's one that doesn't have any fun, he has too much damn and no mental at all. So if that person happens to think that's what a fundamentalist is, I am certainly not going to acquiesce to saying, "Yeah I'm a fundamentalist." I want to know what do you think by what you are asking. How are you using these words. And then I want to be careful that I use words that person will understand correctly. And this is a MAJOR task for us. This is hard work for us.

{Bob} One thing that we might follow up on is the trust issue Paul is bringing up. Some ways this is stated is here are all the facts of the Gospel, now would you like to trust. In other words you tell the person all these things and you say, "Do you accept that as true," and they say, "yes I accept that as true." And then they say, "Now would you like to trust it?" For example, how many of you here are familiar with the chair illustration? Pretty much everybody? Or Niagra Falls? Or the Lifeboat Illustration? Those illustrations all say that you can believe this thing will save you, or hold you up, or whatever, but it doesn't count until you get in the chair, get in the boat, get on the thing. How about if we talk about that? Because it is a little different than what we've been talking about thus far on trust and faith. Because now we are talking about, "Is there actual dichotomy, that first we believe and then we trust, or first we accept and then we trust?"

{Zane} I never have learned how to dance, and don't know how to do the two-step, and I really don't like a two step faith process. Now I have to admit to you that in my early days of preaching the Gospel I have used the chair illustration. You believe this chair is able to hold you up? Do you believe all the facts about the chair? Then I say to kids, usually, what do you have to do now? And the answer was supposed to be, sit down in the chair. What had I done? I had created a two stage belief. So I think what we need to do is to get before them the truth that they need to believe, by believing which they are saved. And I think we are in serious trouble when we start to use illustrations that imply there are two stages of belief. Then we have taken the first step towards some kind of redefinition of saving faith.

...

{Bob} How prevalent among free grace people do you think is the inadvertent use of Lordship terminology or quasi-Lordship terminology. For example asking someone, "Have you accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior? Or maybe talking about commitment. Have you committed your life to Christ, or have you given your life to Christ, things that are either mildly Lordship or at least a little bit confusing maybe, and how disturbing do you find this?"

{Charlie} I guess one of the reasons I am so patient with people is that I still do these things, I really do. I slip up all the time, I catch myself using language I shouldn't use, and I get mad at myself for doing it. It is hard to let go of some of the old terminology that you learn and grow up with. So I am very patient with those who do it. It doesn't mean that their theology is that way, it is just that they are using the language. And I think we need to give them a lot of slack on that. Let their language catch up with their convictions sometimes. That's my opinion of it.

{Zane} I think that's a good word and I also think it is important to say that, I think one of the things that GES has done is to sharpen our thinking in all of these areas, and to help us to be more careful about our terminology. I think my terminology has improved from day one when I began to discuss these issues to the present time. And I assume my terminology will improve in the future like dropping "saving" from faith.

{Earl} I got saved at this conference!

{Zane} That's right. And I think we need to be patient and considerate with people who are not in this orbit and sit down with them and try to talk about the terminology. I think there are people who preach the Gospel who say, "Commit yourself to Christ," and what they really mean is "believe in Him for eternal life," but I think we can all be Priscillas and Aquillas and pull them aside maybe and give them a little bit of clarification on these terms.

#### D. Examine several statements from Zane GES 2000 - How to Lead People to Christ, part 1

How to lead people to Christ. The title of my two talks at the GES pastors conference this year may lead you to expect that I am going to talk to you about how to do personal evangelism. Hopefully you will get some ideas about personal evangelism from the things that I say but that is not my major objective. Instead, I want to talk about how Grace Theology should effect the way we present the Gospel whether we are presenting it to individuals or to groups.

...

The question I am raising in my talks is a basically simple one. Here it is. Have we allowed solid Grace Theology to properly affect the way we proclaim and share the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

**Comment [M6]:** The reason I include this discussion, is that it represents how Zane and John could interact in a gracious manner, even though they were articulating the same thing (talking about the moment of saving faith in terms of trust or belief) in different ways. I think this is a good model for how we need to graciously dialogue together, and to disagree agreeably if necessary!

**Comment [M7]:** What is so pernicious about this is that these illustrations are redefining faith in terms which are not Biblical!

**Comment [M8]:** I think the whole purpose of studying the Bible is to "improve" our terminology. Who can ever say that they have arrived at a perfect understanding of every term in the Bible?

Have we really allowed our Grace Theology to impact our sharing of the Gospel? Now I propose to address that issue under two headings. The two headings are these. Number one, **the content of our message**, and number two, our invitation to respond to it. Now I want to consider the first of these topics this afternoon, and the second one, God-Willing, in the discussion tomorrow morning.

So this afternoon, the Content of our message. Let me begin with a strange scenario. Try to imagine an unsaved person marooned on a tiny uninhabited island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. He has never heard about Christianity in his entire life. One day a wave washes up a fragment of paper onto the beach. It is wet but is still partly readable. On that paper are the words found in John 6:43-47, but the only readable part of the paper are these, "Jesus therefore answered and said to them" in verse 43 and "Most assuredly I say to you, He who believes in me has everlasting life." That's verse 47. Now suppose that our unsaved man somehow becomes convinced that this person called Jesus can guarantee his eternal future since He promises everlasting life. In other words, he believes Jesus' words in John 6:47. **In other words, he believes Jesus' words in John 6:47. Is he saved? I suspect that there are even some Grace people who would say that this man is not saved because he doesn't know enough.** For example, he doesn't know that Jesus died for his sins on the Cross, and rose again the third day. Needless to say there is a lot more that he doesn't know either, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, or the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. But my question is this. Why is he NOT saved if he believes the promise of Jesus' words? It is precisely the ability of Jesus to guarantee eternal life that makes Him the Christ in the Johannean sense of that term.

...

A full theology of the person of Christ is not necessary for salvation. If we believe that Jesus is the one that guarantees our eternal destiny, we have believed **all** we absolutely have to believe in order to be saved. Did you notice how I said that? The way I said that is kind of important. If we believe that Jesus is the one who guarantees our eternal destiny we have believed **all** that we absolutely HAVE to believe in order to be saved. In other words, we have believed the bare minimum that is necessary in order to be saved.

...

We are not saved by believing a series of theological propositions, however true, however important those theological propositions are. We are saved by believing in Jesus. That's why the man on the deserted island can get saved with only the barest minimum of information. When he believes John 6:47 he is believing in Jesus as the Christ.

...

The simple fact is that the whole fourth Gospel is designed to show that its readers can get saved in the same way as the people that got saved in John's narrative. John wants us to do what they did. To say anything else than this, is to accept a fallacy. It is to mistakenly suppose the fourth Gospel presents the terms of salvation incompletely and inadequately. Now that's what the Lordship people are stuck with. But I sincerely hope that no grace person would want to be stuck with a position like that. Let me repeat. **Neither explicitly nor implicitly does the Gospel of John teach that a person cannot be saved without understanding the Cross. It just does not teach that. If we say that it does, we are reading something into the text, and not reading something out of it. What is my point, that we should not preach the Cross of Christ to men? Not at all. Are you all awake? That is NOT my point. I will make it emphatically clear a little later that I think we should. Instead I am arguing that we need to focus on the core issue in bringing men and women to faith and eternal life. What is the core issue? Very simply, it is this. We want people to believe that Jesus guarantees their eternal destiny. May I repeat that? The core issue is we want people to believe that Jesus guarantees their eternal destiny. Of course we would like them to believe a lot more than that. But this at least must be believed. Our failure to clearly define our goals in evangelism can have a negative or impeding effect on our efforts to lead people to simple faith in Christ.**

Most of us in this auditorium deplore the efforts made by Lordship people to add provisos to the message of faith in Christ. According to them true faith has not occurred if it is not accompanied by surrender, or if it is not accompanied by a commitment to live for God. We rightly reject such ideas. But in our own circles there is a tendency to add theological information to our message of faith. Let me repeat that. In our own circles there is a tendency to add theological information to our message of faith. Some people even regard belief in the Virgin Birth as essential to salvation. And in the absence of such belief they would not admit that a person is saved even though they believe that man is saved by faith alone. They do this despite the fact that the Gospel of John makes no effort to present this doctrine.

...

Let me say this. All forms of the Gospel that require greater content to faith in Christ than the Gospel of John requires are flawed. Let me repeat that one. **All forms of the Gospel that require greater content to faith in Christ than the Gospel of John requires are flawed.** Evangelism based on such premises will also be flawed because we will be tempted to test professions of faith in terms of the doctrines we think must be believed. Instead, we should be focusing on whether an individual believes that Jesus has given him eternal life. **Evangelism therefore is intended to bring men and women to the place where they believe that Jesus guarantees their eternal destiny. If a person does this, and we insist on more than that, we will be guilty of seeking to invalidate the simple exercise of faith that actually does bring salvation. Even in the Grace Movement, even in the Grace Movement we are sorely tempted to make the Gospel more complicated than God makes it. Why can't men leave the Gospel alone? Why can't they let it be as simple as the Gospel of John makes the Gospel? We can hardly bring ourselves to believe that a man who is largely ignorant of evangelical theology, yet genuinely trusts Christ for his eternal well-being is truly saved.**

...

I think in the Grace Movement we need a renewed emphasis on the power of Jesus Name. As Peter

**Comment [M9]:** He was not talking about content (i.e. the FULL Gospel). Zane was talking about the core message, "believe in the person of Jesus as the OBJECT of our faith for everlasting life. This is obvious if you look at his discussion which follows. In the next message he is looking at the actual response.

**Comment [M10]:** Zane implied that in this illustration the man SOMEHOW (in other words it is miraculous) becomes convinced to believe in Jesus. This has nothing to do with personal evangelism, as there is nobody who evangelized the man. It was a miraculous example where God used his inspired Word to save the man. It was not a new mini-Gospel that GES believes we use in all personal evangelism.

**Comment [M11]:** Is it legitimate to invalidate a person's belief in the Jesus of the NT for everlasting life solely because the person does not know enough? There is no Scripture which teaches this.

**Comment [M12]:** I think Zane should have worded this, "we have believed WHAT we absolutely have to believe in order to be saved." By saying "all" he made it sound like he was advocating going around witnessing this way. I think if he used the word "what" it would have communicated the sense of a sine-qua-non, in the context of presenting other facts. For the sake of his deserted island illustration, I think he used the word "all" to point out this fact. Obviously people were not tracking with him on this.

**Comment [Teacher13]:** Nobody is able to prove that Zane is wrong here, because his statement is accurate. If the Apostles were saved without understanding the Cross, then it is indeed possible to be saved in that way. That does not mean it is the norm today to evangelize without telling people about the Cross, but since John does not implicitly or explicitly insist on believing in Jesus PLUS the Cross as the object of faith, then Zane's statement is technically correct. However, he was not saying we SHOULD NOT preach the cross today.

**Comment [Teacher14]:** He did not say believe IN more than that, he said we want them to believe more facts about who Jesus was and what He did.

**Comment [Teacher15]:** This is the Sine-qua-non, which is the goal that we must not lose sight of while giving people "a lot more" facts.

**Comment [Teacher16]:** See my evaluation. Zane was not saying people should not have more information about Christ, he is saying that at the moment of faith in Christ a person does not need to raise a hand, say a prayer, commit their life, repent of sin to get eternal life.

**Comment [Teacher17]:** Zane was referring to the narrow sense of the word Gospel, meaning faith alone in Christ alone, and not all of the other facts (The Full Gospel story) about Jesus that lead a person to believe in Christ alone.

declares in Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." If there is one salient fact about the proclamation of the Gospel in this present age, it is that God saves all those, and only those who believe in this name for eternal salvation. Another way of saying this is that the Name of Jesus is the one and only way to God. No one comes to the Father except through Him. John 14:6. Naturally that eliminates the idea that a pagan person who has never heard the name of Jesus can be saved by believing in something like the light of creation. That doesn't happen. Therefore that is why we must always have missionaries and witnesses to the saving power of Jesus' Name. Without the Name of Jesus there is no salvation for anyone, anywhere in our world. But the flip side of the coin is this. Everyone who believes in that Name for eternal salvation is saved irregardless of the blank spots or the flaws in their theology in other respects. Another way of saying the same thing is this, No one has ever trusted in that Name and been disappointed. No one has ever trusted the Name of Jesus for eternal salvation and been disappointed. No one.

{The following was in Zane's paper, but he did not read it}

In other words, God does not say to people, "You trusted in my Son's name but you didn't believe in His Virgin birth, or His substitutionary atonement, or His bodily resurrection, so your faith is not valid. We say that but God's Word does not.

...

No one on earth will possess more than a rudimentary understanding of our Savior's person and work. Even the most profound theologian has only begun to scratch the surface. But if I know I can believe on Him for Salvation, and I do, He is too great to fail me. It is this conviction that ought to arm us for the work of sharing the Gospel with people.

In the final analysis, therefore, salvation is a result of believing in Jesus to provide it. Salvation is not the result of assenting to a detailed creed. Salvation does not even require an understanding of how it was provided or made possible. All it requires is that the sinner understands the sufficiency of the Name of Jesus to guarantee the eternal well being of every believer. Thank God that Salvation is so wonderfully simple.

{The following paragraph is included in Zane's paper, but he did not read it}

In the light of what we have just said, should we preach the cross of Christ? The answer to that is emphatically yes. And the most obvious reason for doing so is that this is what Paul and the other Apostles did.

{end of paragraph}

According to Paul's own statement when he came to Corinth to preach, he was determined not to know anything among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 1 Cor 2:2. Later in the Epistle Paul describes his Gospel as one that declared that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor 15:3. I don't need to tell you, do I, that the great word for "Gospel" euangelion, as well as the word for preach the Gospel, euangelizo, are words that are both frequently found in Paul. Peter also uses these words a total of 4 times in his first epistle. Luke uses the verb many times in Luke and Acts, the noun twice in Acts. Matthew and Mark have both words. Are you ready for this? John never uses either word in his Gospel. He never uses either word in his Gospel. Why? Because as I have already suggested, John makes the person of Jesus, not a set of doctrines, the object of the faith that brings eternal life. Fundamentally he is trying to get people to believe in Jesus for their eternal salvation. But this is precisely where the preaching of the cross becomes so important. Why should men trust Christ for eternal life? The Gospel gives us the wonderful answer. They should do so because Jesus has bought their salvation at the cost of His own precious blood. And God has placed His seal on the work of the Cross by raising Jesus from the dead. As Paul states, "He was delivered up because of our offenses, and He was raised again because of our Justification. The preaching of the Cross greatly facilitates the process of bringing men to faith in God's Son.

This brings me finally at the end of this message to the bedrock issue of leading people to Christ. After all, that is the title of my talk and I mean by it just what the title says. We need to lead men to CHRIST. In my manuscript here the word Christ is in capital letters. We are to lead men to CHRIST. Winning souls is a matter of leading people to a person to whom they may safely entrust their eternal destiny. We are not leading them to a message, but to Jesus Christ as the object of their faith.

But more often than not, we have difficulty leading them TO Christ, unless we lead them through the full Gospel message. May I repeat that? That's a fairly important transition in the thought. More often than not we have difficulty leading people TO Christ, unless we lead them through the full Gospel message. The Gospel message is normally the avenue through which men and women come to understand why they can trust completely in the Savior. To be sure, trust in Christ can occur without knowledge of the Cross, but more often than not, it doesn't. The message of the Cross clarifies God's way of Salvation. On a very practical level, when I am dealing with an unsaved person, I find that if I simply tell them that he only needs to believe in Christ, that this usually doesn't make sense to him. Why should it be so easy? Why are not works required? To the unregenerate American mind it doesn't sound reasonable. So I find it not only useful, but indeed essential to explain that the Lord Jesus Christ, bought our way to heaven by paying for all our sins. In recent years I have liked to emphasize the fact that He paid for all our sins, all of the sins we would ever

**Comment [Teacher18]:** Zane is not saying that the 5 letter name "Jesus" is somehow like a magic formula. He is using the word "Name" in the Biblical sense of the person of Christ.

**Comment [Teacher19]:** The preaching of the Cross is now vital to evangelistic presentation because it gives people a huge reason why they can believe in Jesus Christ for their everlasting life. Their sin is no longer the issue keeping them from everlasting life with God. All that is necessary is simple faith in Christ.

**Comment [M20]:** Zane is stressing that our goal in evangelism is to communicate with people that we need to believe in CHRIST as the object of faith.

**Comment [M21]:** I think that Zane did not mean that he never told people the facts about who Jesus was and what He did. In other words the normal means for leading people to Christ, in this age, is the context of the message of the cross. He brings this out in his second message.

**Comment [M22]:** Zane is using the term "Full Gospel message" in the broader sense of the facts about the person and work of Jesus.

commit, from the day we were born till the day of our death. This serves to stress the completeness of the payment He made. It is usually the only in the light of so perfect a payment that people can come to see the reasonableness of a Salvation that is absolutely free. Now I have found this in personal work, if I only told them you need to believe in Christ, even if I quote the verses from the Gospel of John, oftentimes I will meet a blank wall in the individual until I explain to them what Jesus did that made this possible. I say to people Jesus paid it all and there is nothing left for you to do or pay. All you have to do is believe in Him for the free gift of everlasting life.

...  
Q&A time

Q: Zane I think it has been very helpful for you to provoke us to think through how we present the Gospel and the content of it. And maybe this is just a point of clarification coming from your opening example of the guy on the beach. **Wouldn't someone need to know something about Jesus, who He is in His identity apart from just that 5 letter name?** Isn't that in fact what John does with his Gospel. He didn't just write 6:43 to 47, he wrote all 21 verses [sic] and that's what he is trying to communicate who Jesus is.

A: There is no question that John is giving us a lot of information about who Jesus is, but the issue that I'm raising is basically the issue of the core minimum which is necessary for Salvation. The first question is, Is the Jesus mentioned in John chapter 6 the Jesus who really offers eternal life? The answer to that question is yes. And therefore, if the person believed that this Jesus will do what He has promised to do, he has believed the promise of the Word. **Now I think what you are really thinking is, Is it likely that a person with that minimal type of information about Jesus would exercise faith in Him on the basis of that fragmentary verse. I will admit to you that's not very likely and that is why we try to present the Person of Christ, the Work of Christ. What we are really doing is painting a portrait of Jesus that invites men to increasingly to believe in Him.** So if in my illustration about Sam. Sam comes up to me and he offers to meet my financial need, and maybe I don't know a single thing about Sam, but Sam sounds honest to me and for some reason or other I trust him. But that's probably not going to happen too often. Maybe I am even a little gullible there. But if I find out that Sam has enormous resources, that would certainly enhance the offer that he makes to me. **But I think the basic issue is, is the Jesus being referred to in John 6:43, the Jesus who does indeed fulfill His promises. And the answer to that question is yes.**

...  
Q: (Gary Alby) I just wanted some clarification. I am still a little unclear about what a person needs to know about Jesus especially in light of new age religions today and confusion. Say someone that believed or thought that Jesus was equated with Buddha, but yet named the Name of Jesus, but did not understand who He was in the light of Biblical truth. **Is there a minimum that people need to understand as far as His person is concerned?**

A: That's a very good question, and **I'm very thankful that I don't have to make all the refined decisions that are related here.** Quite obviously there are concepts of Jesus that move away from any kind of Biblical presentation of Him. I am aware of a movement that finds in Jesus simply another manifestation of the same phenomenon that can be found in Buddha and all of the great mystics, and that sort of thing. **My first question is, if there is somebody who believes that way, is he really going to believe in the exclusive claims of Jesus. But, suppose he does? Then I am going to leave it to God as to whether he had his focus on Jesus or he was just believing in Jesus, Buddha or somebody else. That is something, I frankly would not even venture to try to decide because really God knows the heart of each individual who believes. The bottom line is, if the Jesus whom we are focusing our faith on is the Jesus of the Bible, that's the person we are talking about, if we are trusting in Him for the provision that the Bible says He makes for the believer, that's the person who is saved. I am going to admit there are cloudy areas here that God alone will be able to penetrate.**

Q: So if I am talking to an individual who had some belief such as this would you try and clarify or would you give them assurance of Salvation?

A: I would definitely try to clarify! Absolutely. Yeah.

...  
Q: Two questions, one related to the discussion just before this, in a society where Jesus means all kinds of things. **In your clarifying talk with that person wouldn't you focus on the, not so much who is this Jesus, as He is the only means of Salvation and that its a matter of my placing my trust in Him alone, and not in Him AND my followings of this, that or the other thing, or my walk on the Buddha life or whatever. So wouldn't you focus on what it is that we are trusting Him for, and we are trusting Him for eternal life solely.**

A: Yeah, I would agree with what you said. I would take the Gospel of John and try to introduce him to the real Jesus from the Gospel of John. We have to remember that what I was talking about was, and this is not really an answer to your question, but to a question that may be floating around here. We have to remember that what we were talking about just now is the bare minimum which it is absolutely necessary to believe. But, very few people get saved by believing a bare minimum, so most people have more information than the bare minimum suggests and certainly the Gospel of John gives us more information than the bare minimum, although we can conclude from the Gospel of John what the bare minimum actually is. But the whole Gospel of John is designed to present a person who is not only worthy of our trust but who has every right to demand it. And so if I find obscurity in people, and their having trouble trusting Jesus, then I want to give them everything I can give them from the Bible to invite their trust to Him. That's why the Gospel serves. That's why the truth of the person of Christ serves. We're not talking about the salvation of loads and loads of people on bare minimal theology but if we don't get our focus clear, that was my point today, if we don't get our focus clear, and we don't focus on what the core that we are driving for is, we will

**Comment [Teacher23]:** Zane did not imply that a person could go through the streets of India and tell people to believe in Jesus and then walk away thinking he had given them enough content. The very notion that Zane would have done this is ridiculous.

**Comment [Teacher24]:** That is not what Zane meant. Again, people were not tracking with him.

**Comment [Teacher25]:** We give people information about the person and work of Christ to bring them closer and closer to the point where they believe in Him for everlasting life. In other words, there is a point at which a person, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, reaches that tipping point where they believe. There is not a fixed set of facts (i.e. a bare minimum) which Zane was teaching. He was saying there is no bare minimum amount of facts about Jesus we give every person. He was saying there is a CORE minimum of belief in Jesus for everlasting life, without which a person is not born again, no matter how many facts they believe about Jesus.

**Comment [M26]:** The Jesus in John 6:43 is the right Jesus. However, it would take a miracle for this person to believe with this little evidence. That does not mean it could not happen! It can be argued that whenever anyone gets saved, it is a miracle.

**Comment [M27]:** Zane was not claiming a new way of presenting the Gospel.

**Comment [Teacher28]:** Only God knows people's hearts, and what the "bare minimum" number of facts that a person needs to hear before they believe. It is different for every person. Even today, with all of the facts, we still need the Holy Spirit to work in people for them to believe in Jesus.

**Comment [Teacher29]:** Zane would **not** give this person assurance of salvation. They most likely did not believe the "core minimum" that he is talking about in this message.

make confused presentations and we will introduce auxiliary conditions and all the rest of it.

...

Q: I previously heard you say that you can't believe in a person apart from a proposition about that person as in Gordon Clark's writings. Now, was I hearing you say a person can believe in a person without believing in a proposition about that person?

A: No! You did not hear me say that. You are very alert to have raised that question. Because if you will notice what I was saying all the way through here is the person here is believing that Jesus guarantees their eternal salvation. So that is the proposition that they believe but, they are focusing on the person who guarantees that, and not the auxiliary truths that support it. So, at least in my own mind I am free of contradiction. I appreciate the question. I agree with proto-Hodges and deuterio-Hodges both.

#### E. Examine several statements from Zane GES 2000 - How to Lead People to Christ, part 2

If I may judge from the number of questions that were raised yesterday, and the flood of humanity that poured down here around the podium area after the presentation I got you to thinking. I am delighted that I did, that is one of the main purposes of a conference like this and I happen to believe that the grace movement needs to do some very careful thinking about some very important issues that are related to the basic message that we preach. And if I send you away from here searching the Scriptures, I've done my job. That leads me to a preamble to my presentation today.

I have often thought that one of the reasons that God allowed the Lordship controversy to arise was for the purpose of waking up the Grace people. Lordship theology really swept in while we were asleep at our post. Few of you can remember as I can, because I'm older by considerable years than many of you, but a few of you can remember when the Southern Baptists and the Plymouth Brethren held up the true gospel in a majority of their churches. That situation is now gone and alien theology is to be found almost everywhere you look. Institutions that used to be pillars of grace have become hotbeds of reformed and lordship theology. But now that so many grace people are wide awake we can begin to see at least part of what went wrong. We ourselves had been sloppy and fuzzy about the doctrine of Salvation. Without realizing it, we ourselves had clouded the Gospel message by careless terminology and by an unwillingness to think in a disciplined way about our basic commitments. Without realizing it we had added theological codicils and provisos and stipulations to our core message. We have so many of these in fact that even many grace people struggled with assurance. I hope you realize that that is true. Many people in grace churches struggled with assurance because they were asking themselves the questions, "Did I believe the right way? Did I believe the right thing? Did I understand this when I believed? Did I understand that when I believed? Did I understand the other thing when I believed?" You'd be surprised how many people like that there have been. We have sort of become a church of jailhouse lawyers. You know a jailhouse lawyer spends hours in the prison library pouring over the legal books to discover every conceivable technicality that might be appealed to to reverse his sentence. In the case of the church, we have invoked technicality after technicality after technicality to invalidate conversion experiences.

So I may say to someone, "Joe Smith just believed in Jesus for eternal life." But I might get any of the following responses. "Did he have a real conviction of sin? Did he know about the deity of Christ? Did he believe in the virgin birth? Did he understand the substitutionary atonement? Does he believe in Christ's bodily resurrection?" And what if I said No to all of this and said, He just believed that Jesus would give him eternal life. Was his faith misplaced? No indeed. He was believing the right person, and he was believing the right person for the right thing. But when we invoke technicalities and invalidate someone's faith, we open the door to Lordship salvation which invokes a whole new set of technicalities. Now we have, if you don't believe and surrender. When you believed did you dedicate yourself? Did you submit yourself? And on it goes. In other words, the differences we have with Lordship salvation are sometimes only a matter of degree. The church's fuzzy thinking about faith has created a theological monster, I would perhaps say a theological dragon, whose primary operation has been to devour the assurance of salvation. That leads me to the presentation of the day, how to lead people to Christ.

Yesterday we talked about getting our core message to men clearly in mind. Our objective is to lead them to believe in Jesus Christ to provide their eternal salvation. The Gospel message about His death, burial and resurrection is the normal context for our presentation of this core objective. But in the end of the day, anyone who trusts Jesus Christ for eternal life is born again. And that's what I said yesterday, and if I had only said that much I probably wouldn't have caused anywhere near the ripples that I caused. Because after telling you that I said there were no hidden provisos. There were no hidden codicils. There were no unexpressed stipulations. I got into the China shop like a raging bull and I broke a lot of glass. But what I have said to you is just exactly what I mean. We are trying to get people to believe in Jesus to provide their eternal salvation. Now obviously, and this I hope emerged from the question session, there are two non-negotiables here. Number one, no salvation anywhere for anybody apart from the Name of Jesus. Now by that we are talking about the Jesus of the New Testament. Not Jesus Espinoza who lives in the Barrio in Los Angeles. And we are certainly not talking about Mr. X in whom we have believed, and oh, we discover later that it's Jesus. No. In this age you have to believe in Jesus, the Jesus of the New Testament. That's one non-negotiable. The other non-negotiable is that you must believe that He guarantees eternal salvation, or that He gives everlasting life. Dr. Charles Ryrie used to say, if you could lose everlasting life then it has the wrong name. It is not everlasting. So the two non-negotiables are very simple. Number one, the Jesus of the

**Comment [Teacher30]:** Zane is not saying we should not introduce auxiliary facts about the basis of the offer, such as Christ's death and resurrection. He is saying we should not add to faith alone in Christ alone at the moment of faith. He did not advocate some sort of mangled mini-Gospel that you ask people to decide to put their trust in.

**Comment [Teacher31]:** Zane stressed that we are not presenting a contentless Gospel. He emphasized that our focus in evangelistic conversations should be the person of Christ as the guarantor of eternal life.

**Comment [Teacher32]:** Any view that seeks to invalidate belief in Christ of the NT for eternal life is wrong, even if it is from "Grace" people.

**Comment [Teacher33]:** If a person believes in the Jesus of the NT for everlasting life, then they are saved, regardless of the holes in their Theology. We are talking about a person being prompted by the Holy Spirit to believe in Jesus during evangelistic conversations. If the Holy Spirit is not working, then no matter how correct their theology is, they will not believe in Jesus and be born again.

**Comment [Teacher34]:** The sole purpose of adding provisos, codicils, and stipulations is to invalidate faith, and take away assurance of Salvation. This is the core problem of the Reformed/Lordship view.

**Comment [Teacher35]:** The object of faith is the person of Jesus Christ of the Bible, not a set of facts about Him.

**Comment [Teacher36]:** Zane said, THE GOSPEL MESSAGE about His death, burial and resurrection. Is this a Crossless Gospel? NO!

**Comment [Teacher37]:** If you believe in the Jesus of the NT, you are believing in the right Jesus, even if your theology is haywire.

New Testament must be the focus of a person's faith, and the person is believing that the Jesus of the New Testament provides and guarantees his eternal destiny.

Today I want to talk about the process of seeking a response of faith from those with whom we share our good news. Yesterday's talk laid the groundwork for much of what we would like to say today. Now today's presentation is divided up into some subsections. Subsection number 1 is, Believe that Jesus died on the Cross. In recent years I have become aware of a way of presenting the Gospel invitation that rather bothers me. I believe I have heard it from my earliest years and I admit it really didn't bother me for a long time. Now it does. I have heard people say this. "In order to be saved you must believe that Jesus died on the Cross." In the context of this discussion today I mean that this is their summary of their requirement of faith. This is not just one item. Okay? You say how does a person get saved? They say, "Believe that Jesus died on the Cross." Whenever I hear that nowadays I get extremely uncomfortable. For one thing, is there anyone in a Christian Church, unless it is a radically liberal church, who doesn't believe that Jesus died on the Cross? For that matter, even some very liberal theologians would consider that a true statement, although they might balk at the doctrine of resurrection. You can see why I feel uncomfortable. Now I know that the statement I am evaluating leaves a lot of things unspoken that are implied, or at least usually implied by the speaker. Most of the time people who say you are saved by believing that Jesus died on the cross mean by that, that He died for our sins, in fact that is often added. You must believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins. But even with that addition, there is still unspoken material that the person usually has in mind. They usually mean to say, for example, that this belief in Christ's death is all that is necessary for salvation. The statement they make doesn't quite say that, but that's what they usually mean. Thus they are normally proclaiming salvation by faith alone. Also unspoken, but usually implied, is the idea that Christ's work on the Cross is sufficient to provide for our salvation. Thus they mean to say that we are trusting in the sufficiency of His work of atonement. But the statement by itself doesn't communicate that. Let me be honest, I don't like this way of doing a Gospel invitation.

{The following is in Zane's paper but he did not read it}

But before I go any further, I also want to say that I believe that this kind of presentation has been used by God to the actual salvation of souls. But that doesn't make it the best way of reaching people or making the truth plain to them.

{continue}

The very first disadvantage of this kind of invitation to faith is that it cannot be found in the Bible. Just think for a minute of John 3:16, John 5:24, 6:47, Acts 16:31 and so on. Not one of these verses invites us to get saved by believing that Jesus died on the Cross. Why is it we like to verbalize our message in ways the Bible does not do? What is wrong with Biblical language? What ever happened to Bible language? And the associated question is this, "What is wrong with our language?" The simple fact of the matter is that the statement I am criticizing is technically incorrect. People are not saved by believing that Jesus died on the Cross. They are saved by believing in Jesus for eternal life, or eternal salvation. If we say it in the Biblical way we will be able to support our claim by direct Biblical statements. But suppose a person I am witnessing to says, "Where does the Bible say that we are saved by believing that Jesus died on the Cross?" What am I going to do then? In that case I would be compelled to take him to a number of Scriptures and try to combine them to prove my point. But even then, I would not really have a statement from the Word of God that was exactly in line with the point I was making. I would like to see Grace people abandon this form of invitation to faith. Let us always point men to Christ Himself as the object of faith, rather than to some idea or concept that must be theologically clarified before it can really be understood.

...

Subsection 2, which I call "Doing the 2 step."

Here is another technique that bothers me. Many good grace people employ what I would call a two step approach to faith. First they invite people to believe the basic facts of the Gospel. Then they ask them to appropriate the truth for themselves. In describing the second step, they often prefer the word "trust" to the word "believe." I happen to think the people who take this approach to evangelism are at least sometimes running scared. They do not want to be accused of making faith "mere intellectual ascent." Thus they try hard to make clear that just believing the facts doesn't save us. Appropriating those facts for ourselves, that is, trusting Christ for our own salvation is the crucial issue according to them. This approach to things opens the door for the famous illustrations about the chair, or the elevator, or something similar. Here is an elevator, they would say. Do you believe that it can carry you to the top story of this building? If the answer is yes the next question is, "What do you need to do to get to the top story of this building?" The answer is supposed to be "trust in the elevator by getting on." Now in the distant past I used such illustrations myself, and I confess this fact with embarrassment. If I could wear sackcloth and ashes this morning for doing so I would. Illustrations of the type I am referring to do show considerable creativity, but I am afraid that creativity here is badly misused. What is created is another idea that is absent from the Bible. Where in the New Testament do we find any such presentation as this? Sorry friends, it just isn't there. And if you heard yesterday's talk you know one of the reasons that it is not there. You see as we noted yesterday, the facts surrounding the Gospel message, such as the death and resurrection of Christ are important facts for what they tell us about the reasons for trusting Christ. But, believing these facts doesn't save anybody. People are only saved when they believe that Jesus gives them eternal life the moment they believe in Him for that. Let's return for a moment to that deserted island in the Pacific Ocean that I invented for yesterday's talk, and where apparently a lot of you were trapped. My hypothetical unsaved man has just read the words of Jesus in John 6:47, "Most assuredly I say to you He who believes in me has eternal life," and I hasten to add here because somebody asked me this question. How does he know he is believing in Jesus, because the verse

**Comment [Teacher38]:** Zane is talking about the RESPONSE of FAITH. He is not talking about the content that leads a person to that response.

**Comment [Teacher39]:** He is talking about the invitation at the end of the conversation, not the "normal context" of the "Gospel about the Death and Resurrection" which everyone gives during their normal evangelistic conversation.

**Comment [M40]:** He did not say that he used to say this to people and that he changed. He just said it did not bother him to hear it..

**Comment [Teacher41]:** Zane was not saying that a person could not be saved by this kind of invitation, but that it requires the person to make the implicit connection between believing that Jesus died on the cross (which almost everyone believes) and that we need to believe in Jesus as the guarantor of everlasting life, (which almost nobody believes).

**Comment [Teacher42]:** Zane was not implying that Grace people who do this are heretics. He was saying that Grace people who use this form of invitation are not being as clear as the Bible is in passages such as those in the Gospel of John and in 1 Tim 1:16.

**Comment [Teacher43]:** Zane is not saying these are not the Gospel in the broad sense of the term and that they are unnecessary in our evangelistic presentation. He is talking about the "Gospel message" in terms of the core invitation to faith in the Jesus of the NT.

doesn't say the name Jesus? That's why I said he got a scrap of paper that included John 6:43 to 47, and he could read 43 that said, "Jesus said," and then they read 47. So the Name of Jesus is in this illustration, just to clarify that. So he reads the words of Jesus in John 6:47, Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in me has eternal life." All this person needs to do is to believe that statement and eternal life is his. There is no 2 step process at all. The issues involved in eternal salvation are significantly muddled by the two step approach I am discussing. The two step approach seems to imply that two acts of faith are essential to ones salvation. The first of these is belief in the facts. The second is an act of personal trust. So this approach ignores the instrumental value of the facts of the Gospel in bringing men to faith in Christ. And it tends to elevate them to the level of a preliminary condition which must be followed by a second step, namely trust. Please notice, that the approaches I have objected to so far in this talk, tend to blur the necessary focus on the person of Christ as the object of faith. In the case of belief that Jesus died on the cross, the focus is on an action He performed and admittedly and indispensable action. In the two step scenario that we approach Christ first by believing certain facts about Him. The simple truth is that Jesus can be directly believed for eternal salvation apart from any detailed knowledge of what He did to provide it. I am not saying that happens often, but when it happens its real. In other words, the sufficiency of Christ is the true focus of the faith that brings salvation. Can I repeat that, that is a core statement. In other words, the sufficiency of Christ is the true focus of the faith that brings salvation. I am contending today that until we have that concept clearly in mind, we will be vulnerable to making appeals to faith that tend to cloud the issues rather than clarify them. If I didn't think there was a danger here I wouldn't be talking to you this morning about it. If anybody in the world should be able to present a crystal clear Gospel message, and a clear appeal to faith, it ought to be Grace people like ourselves. But in a lot of cases, we are not doing nearly as good a job as we should.

...  
Subsection 5, What about "Trust Christ?" I know that many Grace people like to invite the unsaved to trust Christ for eternal life. I really do not have a strong objection to this phrase and occasionally I use it myself when I want to use a synonym for believe. But mark it well, I never use the word trust as my exclusive or preeminent term for the faith that brings salvation. However I do resist the idea that is sometimes advanced that trust is a better term than the word believe. Of course trust is often a synonym for faith in the English language, but often in the English language trust has a diminished force that is equivalent to something like this. "I just have to hope he will do it." In that kind of statement the speaker is expressing a significant degree of uncertainty. This is not what we mean by faith.

...  
However, let me add a proviso, uncertainty is very far from being the normal implication of the English word trust. In the American Heritage Dictionary, 2nd College Edition, in the discussion of trust in relation to synonyms like faith, confidence, reliance, dependence, the statement is made that all these nouns reflect a feeling that the person or thing will not fail in performance. Trust implies depth and assurance of such feeling which may not always be supported by proof. So the note of complete confidence belongs to the word trust just as it does also to faith and to the verb believe. So in that sense trust is an acceptable synonym for faith. The fact remains, however, that no English translation that I am aware of has opted to use trust as a replacement for believe in any significant number of contexts. If you know of a translation that does that, and there are some translations that do strange things, there might be one out there somewhere, but no major translation that I know of does it. It just so happens that believe works better where the text is specifying the content of belief. For example, 1 John 5:1. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." It would sound strange in English to say, "Whoever trusts that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." The English word believe has the distinct advantage of working well in almost all of the salvation verses. Thus the word trust is only helpful if we are looking for a synonym to assist the unsaved person to understand what it means to believe. But since our English Bible would use the word believe consistently and constantly I think we are better off using the word people find in their Bibles. "To trust" may be a synonym for "to believe" but there are no real grounds for preferring it when we do evangelism. If for some reason or other we are afraid of the word believe, and there are some people who are afraid to use believe because they think it carries undesirable connotations. If for some reason or other we are afraid of the word believe we ought to reexamine our fear and get past it. And as I have already said the use of trust to express the second part of a two step process of believing has no foundation in Scripture. I would certainly urge that we firmly reject any alleged distinction between believing and trusting which is thought to favor the word trust over the word believe. That would amount, it seems, to me to a misuse of one or both of these words.

...  
That leads to the 6th and final subsection.

Inviting people to believe. So now lets talk about leading a person to faith in Christ. In my discussion to this point today I have been largely clearing away brushwood. I have been trying to point out that there are some mistakes that are made in inviting people to believe. Now lets consider the issue from a positive standpoint. Lets suppose I am talking to Ralph. It just so happens that the man who introduced me is named Ralph but I not talking to him. He is a saved man. Even if he thinks I'm going to miss the Rapture, he's still saved. Let's suppose I have been talking to Ralph, an unsaved young man. I have given him the Gospel about the death and resurrection of Christ. I have emphasized the point that the Lord Jesus by His death on the Cross has completely satisfied God in regard to Ralph's sin. Christ has paid for all the sins Ralph would ever commit from the day of his birth to the day of his death. Thus Jesus has purchased Ralph's way to heaven. When I am talking to an individual I always go through that. Okay? The one thing Ralph needs now is eternal life. People who don't have this go to hell according to Revelation 20:15. Without new birth we are unable to

**Comment [Teacher44]:** Zane used a difficult illustration to get us to think. Many people at GES right then and there, did not track with what he was saying and thus did not understand Zane's point. Here he clarifies his point.

**Comment [M45]:** We are not saved by believing in facts. We are saved when we believe in Christ about whom the facts testify.

**Comment [M46]:** This is his point. He is not saying people who do this are heretics, or that he used to do this, and not does not. He is saying it tends to blur the necessary focus on the person of Christ as the object of faith.

**Comment [M47]:** By "often" Zane is not saying that today we witness "often" by neglecting to tell people what Jesus did on the cross. Zane said that today the norm is that we present the message of the Cross to people to get them to believe in Him for everlasting life. He says we believe in the "sufficiency of Christ" which refers to His work on the Cross. This is not a "Crossless" gospel.

**Comment [M48]:** Here Zane is using the term "Gospel" in the broad sense of the term.

**Comment [M49]:** Zane ALWAYS goes through that, just like all Grace people do.

**Comment [M50]:** Many people believe Jesus died on the cross for their sin, but do not believe He is the guarantor of their eternal destiny. They are relying on Christ plus their works.

enter the Kingdom of God despite Jesus' death for our sins, John 3:3. And the alternative to eternal life is to perish, John 3:16. However, I tell Ralph eternal life is available on one condition alone. That condition is faith in Jesus. I now turn to verses like John 3:16, 5:24, 6:47, and especially 6:35-40, one of my favorite passages for evangelistic purposes. I spend time on these verses, but I particularly want to focus the individual if possible on John 6:35-40. Let me now give my presentation to Ralph in the 1st person.

I am going to speak as follows to him. "Ralph, notice how Jesus stresses the fact that believing in Him has permanent results. In verse 35 He insists that the person who comes to Him for the bread of life will never get hungry for that bread again. The person who believes in Him will never be thirsty for the water of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, he that believes in me shall never thirst. Let me put it this way to you Ralph. If a person could lose the bread or water of life after coming to Jesus for it, he would be hungry or thirsty again, wouldn't he? But notice, Jesus says that can't happen. He says the same thing in a different way in verse 37. There He says that if a person comes to Him, He will never throw him out. Look also in verses 38 to 39. Here Jesus says that He came down from heaven to do His father's will. And His Father's will is that Jesus should lose none of those the Father has given to Him and that He should raise them all up at the last day. And then I say to Ralph, and then notice how He repeats this idea in verse 40, everyone who believes in Him gets eternal life and will be raised up at the last day. Notice, Ralph, that it all depends on Jesus doing God's will, not on us doing God's will. If I believe in Jesus for eternal life I get it and He does the rest. He does God's will so He will never throw me out. He will raise me up at the last day. I will never again hunger for the bread of life. I will never thirst for the water of life. Do you think you understand this Ralph? Hopefully Ralph says he does. If he says he doesn't I will ask him, "What seems to puzzle you Ralph?" Now in my experience in working with unsaved people tells me that at this point in the presentation, I will often get a question like this. Oh, do you mean that if I believe in Jesus for eternal life then I can go out and do anything I want and still go to heaven? I want you to know I am delighted when I get that question. Because it indicates to me that I have gotten it over that this is a gift and that it is not withdrawn from us even if we behave badly. My usual way of responding to that question is that being born again is like being born into a family. We are always members of that family, even if we are scoundrels. But if we have good parents, they are not going to let us run wild. They will discipline and correct us and do their best to get us on the right path. Then I point out that after we get eternal life, God is our Heavenly Father, and He is the best parent we could imagine. He will not let us run wild. He will spank us, if need be, and may even take our physical lives away, but Jesus will never cast us out of the family. I use this explanation over and over, and I am here to tell you that so far as my personal experience goes, I have not ever found anyone for whom it was not an adequate answer. Especially parents. They understand this. . . my kid is my kid, good bad or indifferent, from the day of his or her birth, no matter what they do. Even if they go down to the courthouse, sometimes I even elaborate on this a little bit, even if they go down to the courthouse and change their name. If I had a little Zane Hodges Jr. he might say, I don't want to be the son of a Rabbi that might miss the rapture. So he goes down to the courthouse and changes his name to Zane Wilkin. He isn't Wilkin's son, he is still my son. We all recognize that. The relationship we have to our parents when we are born into our families is a permanent relationship. You can't go back and undo it. You can leave home, you can run away, you can resist, you can rebel, you can do all these things. But good parents step in appropriately at the appropriate moment, and God is very, very good parent. People usually find that a satisfactory answer. So if I have successfully answered Ralph's questions and he tells me he understands what I've been saying to him, I can get down to the bottom line. Here is one approach that I feel comfortable about. Okay Ralph. You say it is all clear to you, and maybe as we talked you not only understood Jesus' promise but you also believed it. If you have believed then you now have eternal life. Do you remember how we went over John 5:24? Well if you have heard Jesus' word and believed it that verse says that you have eternal life, and that you will never come into judgment before God to decide your eternal destiny, that you have already passed from death to life. At this point of course I could ask him directly if he does believe. It depends on the situation whether I will ask that or not, or let him volunteer it. If he says yes, I can also ask, "Then do you know for sure that you have eternal life and will be with the Lord Jesus forever?" If he also responds affirmatively, to this and gives me no reason to doubt his veracity I can and should regard him as saved. At one of the conferences we had I told the story about the young Hispanic man that I was witnessing to. And I said to him after going through this process, I said, "Now I don't want you to tell me anything right now. It may be that you have believed while we were talking, and if you have your girlfriend, he was hoping to marry a young lady from our church, you should tell your girlfriend, I would like to know about it too. And I said it may that you'll believe somewhere down the road and if that happens why then just go ahead and tell her and tell me. I said you don't have to say anything right now. And he violated my instructions radically. He said, Zane, I do believe. I know I have the gift of eternal life, I'll be with you in heaven. The evangelistic process was over at that point. After that, it's all discipleship.

**Comment [M51]:** The model he is using here looks like one on one evangelism. How else could you have reason to doubt a person's veracity? In a group, the invitation needs to be a little different.

Notice please that I do not ask the person to pray, or to make a decision for Christ, or to do many of the other things that people often ask unsaved people to do. All I have done is ask if he has understood the truth we have discussed and I have asked if he believes it. I absolutely insist that this is all the personal worker needs to do. I am encouraging the unsaved person to believe but I can't make him do that. If he does believe, a prayer is unnecessary. If he doesn't, a prayer will be confusing since I may direct him to say things that he doesn't yet understand or doesn't yet believe because God has not yet opened his heart. I should know about this problem. You see when I was a little boy I went forward at an evangelistic meeting and I said a prayer before I really understood what I was doing. Actually I was saved years later. But that prayer confused me because I spent years wondering if I got saved when I prayed it. I don't think I could actually say that I believed the prayer saved me but I had gone through the process that the pastor had given. And so I wondered if, you know, maybe it worked. The pastor even thought I had gotten saved because he came to visit my mother and told her so. That was news to her because I hadn't told her and it was kind of news to me because I wasn't sure about it. I can remember listening to him talk to her in the other room. I wasn't in the room with them but I could hear the conversation and he informed her that I was saved, which however was not correct. I now realize that no one is saved by praying a prayer. They are saved when they understand God's offer of eternal life through Jesus, and believe it. That's when people are saved. And that's the only time when people are saved. All of the excess baggage that we bring into our encounter with unsaved sinners is just that, excess baggage.

In this brief make believe encounter with Ralph I tried to give him something to believe about Jesus Christ. I wanted him to realize that you could believe Jesus' promises about eternal life that when you did you were saved forever. That's all I basically wanted. Everything that I might have included in my presentation, and as I suggested I would include a great deal. Everything that I might have included in my presentation leading up to the issue of faith was designed to prepare the way for that faith. I work on the conviction that if a person understands God's provision for salvation through the Cross of Christ, it will be easier for him or her to believe in Jesus for eternal life. But the bottom line is this. I want people to know that the moment they believe in Christ for this free gift, that they are saved, and saved forever. Let me add one final word. I find this a most liberating approach to evangelism. I have done my part if I have presented the message clearly. But faith in the heart is the work of God's Spirit, not a function of my technique, and not a function of my evangelistic dynamism. The simple Word of God responded to in simple faith, that's what leading people to Christ is all about. Questions? Let me grab a glass of water before you.

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Q&A time

Q: (Bob Bryant) I might have missed in your talk with Ralph, did you start with John 6. I didn't hear you say anything before you started talking to him about John 6. Were you jumping into the middle of a discussion with him?

A: Yes, I was moving to my appeal section because that is what this discussion is about, but I did mention in the presentation that I had gone over the matter of the death burial and resurrection of Christ, the fact that Christ died for all of Ralph's sins from the day Ralph was born to the day he died, in other words, I set my appeal in the context of the work of the Cross.

Q: So, in talking to Ralph, you would have already explained the death, burial and resurrection (Zane: yes) for our sins (Zane: yes). Alright. Could you comment on a passage, or a way you would explain that part of it.

A: Well you could of course use 1 Corinthians 15 for this, you could use 2 Corinthians 5, you could use Romans 3 if you needed to do this. But, since my presentation this morning was on how do I elicit faith from him I passed over this part lightly, which would have been a very substantial part of the conversation up front. I might want to know, for example, before I start with Ralph, where he's coming from religiously. And very often I will start a conversation, "What do you think it takes to get to heaven?" or something like that. And then I get them to articulate and then I will give them the Biblical alternative starting with the provision that God has made for him.

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#### F. Examine several statements from Zane GES 2001 - The Spirit of AntiChrist

##### Part 1: The Danger of Not Being Open To God's Word

It may seem strange to say it, but the grace movement must face the danger of not being open to the Word of God. Most grace people probably feel that openness to God's Word is a highlight of the grace movement, and to a great extent, it is. After all, we are willing to allow the Scriptures to speak even when they contradict traditional views, or long held positions? The doctrine of rewards, for example, is one of the areas in which the grace movement seems fully prepared to let the Scriptures speak clearly. And I certainly agree that this has been a strong point of the grace movement up until now and I hope it will continue to be. But there are some warning flags.

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Can grace people still search the Scriptures honestly when some traditional view of their own is called into question? Are we open to the Word of God whether it agrees with us or not? That's a good question that we all need to answer

**Comment [M52]:** He was not inferring that the teaching about the Cross was excess baggage. He was saying that adding in things like praying a prayer is excess baggage. He is using his experience as an illustration here.

**Comment [M53]:** Zane would have included a great deal. He did not believe in a contentless message.

**Comment [M54]:** Here Zane is stressing that it is the work of the Spirit is absolutely necessary at the point of belief.

**Comment [M55]:** I was not there, but I think I would have missed it too. Even those of us who track with Zane, missed his point.

**Comment [M56]:** People missed his point. He was talking about eliciting faith from people, and not talking about preaching about the basis for the offer of salvation. He was talking the goal of our evangelistic conversation, and not the path to the goal.

**Comment [M57]:** Again, Zane did not believe in preaching a contentless message.

**Comment [M58]:** For many people, and for various reasons, the answer is NO!

## Subpoint B: Fudging on the Simplicity of Faith

There is another area where we need complete openness to God's Word. That area involves the amazing simplicity of Biblical faith. **I am convinced that some committed grace people are still a little scared by the simplicity of believing in Christ.** They are eager to avoid the charge that we teach mere intellectual assent. It is hard for people like this to agree that faith and salvation occur when the core message of the Gospel is simply accepted as true. Instead they wish to hedge this position with the requirement that faith must include some personal element like trust. Or that I must make some personal appropriation of the saving offer. This is the perspective that rapidly leads to urging, or even requiring, a prayer of faith. Now, I have argued elsewhere that trust can often be used as a synonym for faith. But when trust is viewed as an *improvement* on the word faith (or as an improvement, on the word believe) the door to confusion is open. What often results is a two-step view of faith: step 1: believe the facts; step 2: trust Christ for eternal life. The Bible knows no such distinction as this. At the conclusion of John 9, the Lord Jesus says to the former blind man: "Do you believe in the Son of God?" The former blind man replies, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus' response is majestic: "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." Then the former blind man says to him, "Lord, I believe." This is an impressive passage. The issue of concern is in no way what "believe" may mean. Rather, the former blind man feels only a need for information. The term "Son of God," of course, was a functional equivalent of the term "Christ," as John 20:30, 31 show. The blind man understood that Jesus must be telling him that the Christ was present somewhere. His confidence in Jesus is so high that he needs only to find out who Jesus is referring to. Jesus informs him that He is referring to Himself. So the man believes. That is, he believes that Jesus is the Christ and is thus born of God in conformity with John 20:30-31 and 1 John 5:1. But if the former blind man had been a 21st century evangelical, he might have said: "Lord, what do you mean by believe?" Or he might have said: "Do you mean personal trust?" "Do you mean intellectual assent?" "Do you mean commitment of the whole person?" I hope you can see that, in the context of John 9, such statements are actually theological nonsense. They are the result of failing to take the Biblical treatment of faith at face value. When it comes to believing something, the Bible does not contradict normal usage or common sense. Theologians, however, have been known to do both! I hope you see, that in the context of John 9, there is no excuse, really, for not seeing the simplicity of Biblical faith. The question is, however, whether we are open to this aspect of the Biblical testimony about faith. Or will we continue to hedge our view of faith with alternate expressions and with unbiblical provisos? To put this another way, can we present the Gospel so clearly that we could actually ask someone, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ?" And would we be satisfied if they said, "Yes, I do"

Comment [M59]: We now know this quite well.

## Part 2: The Danger of Losing the Historicity of the Gospel

Now we come to the major burden of my talk this morning. A second danger that confronts the grace movement is the loss of the historicity of the Gospel message. My reference to the former blind man in John 9 was definitely not a throw-away illustration. It happens to impinge directly on my chief concern this morning. Did you notice that when Jesus said, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" the blind man did not say something like, "Well, of course I do"? Instead the blind man said (and I'm paraphrasing here): "Well, I'd love to believe in Him but before I can do that, I'll have to know who He is!" Are you impressed by that? I am. You see, it is sometimes suggested that a heathen person in some far-away land can get saved just by trusting the Creator God to save him. Acting on the light of nature he puts his eternal destiny in the hands of his Maker and is born again. Without knowing it, he has believed in God's provision through Jesus Christ. I'm sorry. It's a beautiful scenario, but very contrary to the Scripture. What it does in fact is this. It denies the essential historicity of the Gospel. It does this by denying that the Gospel is inseparable from the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. **If the truth which men must believe to be eternally saved is separated from Jesus, it is also separated from history. This separation in turn results in a separation from the Biblical revelation itself and from the Messiahship of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Comment [M60]: The right Jesus is the Jesus of the Bible. If you believe what He said, you are believing in the right Jesus.

## Subpoint A: Back to the Deserted Island

Last year I created a deserted island scenario that some of you may remember. The man who is marooned on that island gets a fragment of the Gospel of John washed up on the beach. That fragment contains the opening words of John 6:43, "Jesus therefore answered and said to them" and everything is unreadable until we reach the words of John 6:47, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life." My question was, **is that enough information for the man to get saved? My answer, of course, was "yes."** But now I want to offer you a variation on my deserted island scenario. Suppose the portion of John 6:43 containing, "Jesus answered and said to them," was missing. **Does the man still have enough information to get saved?**

Comment [M61]: He did not say that he would definitely be saved. He said that the man had enough information. In other words if the Holy Spirit led him to genuine faith in the Jesus of the Bible, then lack of information would not invalidate his faith. That was Zane's point.

This time my answer is, "no." Note well, that even though the entirety of John 6:47 is legible for our marooned man, he does not know who the "I" or the "Me" refer to. He would have to enquire about the identity of the "I" and the "Me" of this verse, just as the blind man enquired about the identity of the Son of God. **Let me state this issue in terms of the purpose of the Gospel of John. According to John 20:30,31, the book was written that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ."** Please notice that it was not written simply that we might believe in the Christ. No, instead, it was written that we might believe that "JESUS, JESUS, JESUS is the Christ." Think about this for a moment. **We are not being called to believe that the Christ gives us eternal life. Rather we are called to believe that Jesus gives us eternal life because *Jesus is the Christ.***

Comment [M62]: Zane did not say we could believe in any person named Jesus. We have to believe in Jesus who was the Christ, that is, the Jesus of the Bible.

Or take 1 John 5:1. "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." Did you notice something? It is not, "whoever believes in the Christ for eternal life is born of God." But once again, the issue is Jesus. If we believe that JESUS is the Christ, then—but only then—do we have a promise of eternal life. The NT offers eternal life exclusively to those who believe in Jesus for it. There is no other offer of eternal life in the NT. None. Zero. Zip. Nada. Jesus is man's only way to God. He Himself says so. In words familiar to all of us, Jesus said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). No one gets to the Father apart from Jesus. In the context of the Gospel of John, this *does not mean* that men may come to God and not know that they come by means of Jesus. On the contrary, John is always at pains to point the believer to the historical Jesus as the Object of faith.

**Comment [M63]:** Zane was not preaching a contentless message about an unknown Messiah. That was NOT his point.

#### Subpoint B: Faith in Jesus Saves

As you can see, the Gospel of John teaches that people are saved by believing in Jesus. Not by believing in God. Not by believing in an unknown Messiah. But by believing in Jesus. Regardless of how people were saved in the OT, I am very comfortable with my good friend Bob Bryant's presentation there. But regardless of how people were saved in the OT, what we are saying now is how they are saved today. This is certainly not contradicted by John 5:24. We are used to reading that verse this way: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life." But the first thing we must notice is that there is nothing in the Greek to correspond to the word "in." So we really should read the verse like this: "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and *believes Him* who sent Me has everlasting life." Notice carefully: the believer hears Jesus' word and, when he believes it, he is believing the God who sent Jesus. The point is, of course, that Jesus' word is God's word. To believe Jesus' word is to believe what God says. This is a very important point for John.

...  
As far as I am aware John never makes God the Object of *pisteuo eis*. John's point is *not* that we can "believe in" God for eternal life just like we do when we "believe in" Jesus for that. On the contrary, his point is that when we believe Jesus' word we are, in fact, believing something God Himself is saying to us. And of course, faith in Jesus' word is still faith in Jesus. But obviously, the saving experience of John 5:24 cannot come to someone who has never heard Jesus' word. No matter what he believes about the Creator, the heathen person still needs to hear the message brought by the Savior whom the Creator has sent. And note well: when the unsaved person believes the word of Jesus, he is not simply believing God but believing *the God who sent Jesus!* To put it plainly, *God apart from Jesus* is never the Object of the faith that brings eternal life. Of similar significance is the way the Samaritan woman of John 4 is led to faith in a specific historical person. Jesus first draws her attention to the water of life that He can give to her. Then as the exchange between her and the Son of God draws to its climax, the woman states: "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." As you already know, the climax of this unforgettable interview comes when our Lord announces: "I who speak to you am He." Like the blind man of John 9, she places her faith in the person of Jesus. Someone may wish to haggle here and raise the question, Did she know His name was Jesus? To this we may say two things: (1) it would be surprising if she did not. After all, this is a mere fragment of the total conversation. Would they not have introduced themselves to each other at some point? But (2) it doesn't really matter. It was the historical person called Jesus that she believed in. Who is the Christ? "You're looking at Him," says Jesus.

I am reminded also of the statement Jesus makes in John 6:40: "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees *the Son* and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Once again, identification of the historical Jesus is the issue. Of course, an individual can be saved without seeing Him as John 20:29 makes clear. But if someone sees Him and believes in Him, he has obviously believed in a particular historical person. The Gospel of John is completely adamant that the historical person of Jesus must be the focus of our faith if we are to have eternal life. As the Apostle Paul has put it, God is "just and the justifier of the one who has *faith in Jesus*" (Romans 3:26). There is no salvation for anyone outside of faith in the historical person of Jesus. The NT promise of eternal life is made exclusively to believers in the historical Jesus. Nothing else has even a shred of Biblical evidence. If the grace movement should ever lose its grip on this simple fact, it would have subverted the Gospel and subverted the worldwide evangelistic enterprise. Just as grievously, it would have failed to properly honor the name that God has placed above every name. Someday, every knee will bow to that name, and every tongue will confess, the exalted name of Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. God has ordained that the name of Jesus should be the one and only name in the universe that is a source of eternal life. If the grace movement ever loses all this, it will richly deserve to die.

**Comment [M64]:** I don't see how Zane could have been clearer. He did not say a person was saved by believing in some unknown person named Jesus.

#### Q&A time

Q: I was wondering do you think someone has to believe the humanity of Christ, but not necessarily the Deity of Christ in order to get eternal life?

A: I think the person has to believe there was a historical person named Jesus, yeah.

Q: But not necessarily understanding the Deity?

A: Yes, that would be my view. The woman at the well and the Samaritans did not have this concept. And it is interesting that the term "Son of God" is not used by them in their confession of faith. The point here is that there is a person who walked the planet in the land of Palestine, a flesh and blood person, not an imaginary person as the Docetists sometimes wanted to say. And He is the object of faith. Now when we talked about what you have to believe in order to be saved, what we really said was that you make Jesus

the one that you believe in for eternal life. If you believe that Jesus can guarantee eternal life, then you are saved. Now it is a lot easier to believe that He can guarantee eternal life if you also believe that He is the Son of God and God manifest in flesh. But it is not inconceivable that a person might not come to the knowledge of the Deity of Christ until after he has come to saving faith. Many years ago when I was washing dishes in the Seminary dining room to earn my food, there was a janitor who came in every night. We talked theology and one night he really shocked me. He says, you know I am sure that I was saved before I knew that Jesus was God. He had trusted Jesus for eternal life. That is the first time I had heard anyone say it to my face, you know. I didn't challenge him, and I believe that was a true testimony on his part.

**Comment [M65]:** I know of many people (myself included) who did not understand the Deity of Christ at the moment they were saved. I still do not fully understand it, and I have taken Bible College and Seminary classes on Christology.

Q: Zane, in your discussion, in your definition of Christ as the sole guarantor of eternal life one of the questions, I even had this question last year and didn't get to ask it was, it seems like we are sort of minimizing what the Jewish understanding of the Christ would be as a prophet priest king. And even when Paul spoke at Athens he spoke of Jesus as the righteous judge. Are we giving an accurate enough definition of the Christ in saying that He is the sole guarantor of eternal life in light of what Jewish expectation would have been?

A: I'm glad you asked that question because it does allow me to address something that I wanted to address when Bob was up here and it slipped my mind while he was here. I think it is very important for us in considering the issues that you raised and the issues that I have raised, at the last two conferences, to realize that all we are really talking about is the core minimum which must be believed to be saved. That is all that we are talking about. We are not saying that other things cannot be believed at the same time. We are not saying that the other information is not helpful to believing in Christ. The other information is profoundly helpful. The death for our sins. The resurrection from the grave. His identity as the Son of God. All of these things are very important things and all of them can be part of our presentation of the Gospel. I think they should be part of our presentation of the Gospel. We are only asking the question what is the minimum amount of knowledge which an unsaved person must have in order to be saved. That is all that we are doing. One could argue that that's a theoretical and theological issue mainly, but in my view until we know what we believe to be the core essentials of saving faith we will not be able to put the whole package together as clearly as we can if we know that. So I would be the last person to deny that it is functionally tremendously valuable to have the full Jewish view of the Christ as the Son of God. But I raised the question particularly from John 4 whether the Deity of Christ is implied in the term Son of God was a necessary part of the core element of the Gospel. Again let me also say to the audience to feel free to disagree with me on this. One of the purposes of these conferences is to make us think about these issues, right? So I am challenging us to think about, if you had a guy out on a deserted island, or if you were in the airport and you had only one minute to give him the gospel, what would be the things you had to say? What is the core minimum? I think that's a practical question frankly. And just because I may never present the Gospel using only the core elements, doesn't mean that I don't know what the core elements are. And if I do know what the core elements are then I know whether the individual is getting the essentials or not, when I am interacting with him. So the purpose of these talks is to challenge us to think these things through. And I am perfectly aware that there will be grace people who will come to a differing conclusion on this and that's great. As long as we don't muddy the Gospel into some variant of the Lordship monstrosity we'll be doing alright. So I hope that this is understood. We are only talking about core minimum, and we are talking about that in order to clarify our total thinking about the Gospel and we welcome questions, problems disagreements on any of those areas.

**Comment [M66]:** Here Zane repeats his main point. The "core essential" is something without which a person is not born again. A person can believe the teaching about Jesus in the New Testament and not believe the "core minimum." Many people are in this predicament.

**Comment [M67]:** Again, Zane's point was that since the text does not make the Deity of Christ part of the core message in John 3:16, then we need not do this today. He did not say that we should not tell unsaved people that Jesus was God. He was saying that we should keep the invitation to faith as simple as John makes it.

#### G. Examine several statements from Zane in GES2005 Calif in the Q&A panel discussion

(The question is not included in the video. The question was something like)

Q: What is the content of the Gospel.

A: . . . I have at the same time given them the whole Gospel, and the bare minimum. But I have not said, OK, now you can forget about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and just do this. That would be ridiculous. So the term Gospel is our term for the whole message that God has given us to proclaim to men to bring them to faith in Christ. As I say, the New Testament obviously teaches us to preach the death and resurrection of Christ. Obviously it teaches us to tell the whole story to people. But it also warns us I think against complicating the terms on which man can believe and be saved. So when we get to the end of the story we can say, everything's been done for you. Now all you need to do is trust Christ for eternal life.

{Bob} What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?

It seems to me the Gospel of the Kingdom is the good news of the Kingdom. And it helps to talk about it that way. And so it seems to me it was something that was preached during the ministry of Jesus, and it's also something that's going to be preached during the tribulation. It seems to me it is not equivalent to "What Must I do to have eternal life. But its more a message that the kingdom is coming and that's Good News. Like when Jesus sent out the 70 they were preaching the Good News of the Kingdom. And it doesn't necessarily equate that's exactly identical to evangelism, but I would like to see what you meant. Well I was kind of responding to Neal's clarification of the question there and dropping the Gospel of the Kingdom out of that.

{Bob} I'm bringing it back. I've reintroduced it, I've thrown the ball back in the field.

{Zane} It's a good question. Yes I think it is a legitimate one. And it seems to me however that the Gospel of the Kingdom included the proclamation that Messiah is here. And that you believe in Messiah to get saved

**Comment [M68]:** I don't think the attacks being made are what Zane had in mind. There are ways to agree in a gracious manner, and I think that is not how certain people have been handling their "disagreements."

The bottom line is that the Bible nowhere explicitly states that a person has to believe in the Deity of Christ in addition to the person of Christ as the object of the faith that gives everlasting life.

**Comment [M69]:** Zane did not believe in giving people a new "mini-gospel." He believe in giving people the "Whole Gospel" in the broad sense of the term, which included preaching about the Cross, but all the while, not omitting the "bare minimum" of believing in the person of Jesus as the object of their faith. Zane always believed in giving both aspects of the Gospel in evangelistic presentations.

and enter the Kingdom. So I don't think the Gospel of the Kingdom is something that is totally distinct from what we preach now. It's true that we preach the future advent of the Kingdom but we do not say what John the Baptist said and what Jesus said in His early ministry, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But the conditions for entering the kingdom of heaven are the same conditions today as they were at that time. And therefore I don't see, all that we're really saying by the Gospel of the Kingdom is that we preach the message of salvation in the context of the soon appearance of the King.

{Arch} How would the Gospel of the Kingdom relate to the Gospel or Good News that was preached in the Old Testament? I know that it does not use the word Gospel, but there evidently was Good News, wasn't there if you were living in the Old Testament times, regarding Messiah and His coming.

{Zane} I am interested in your text

{Arch} I don't have a text I was using . . .

{Bob} Well there is one in Galatians 3, God preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham.

{Zane} But I still don't quite get the force of the question. Maybe you should clarify?

{Arch} Well, I think I agree with you. I mean that the Gospel of the Kingdom was that in every way it was Good News about Jesus Christ, that the King is coming, that He is offering eternal life for those who put their faith in Him and the opportunity to enter into the Kingdom. So I see what you're saying. My point being is there some sense in which this was a culmination of the Gospel. It wasn't called that, I'm calling it that, the Good News that was preached in the Old Testament to Old Testament Saints. Because we are often accused of having 2 kinds of Salvation as you know and is there a way we can clarify that, in terms of Old Testament Saints.

{Zane} Well we often speak of the Proto-Evangellium in Genesis, where the seed of the woman is going to bruise the Serpents head. We were talking the other night about regeneration in the Old Testament. The Good News, it seems to me in Old Testament form would be God is going to send a Messiah who will provide salvation and therefore believe in him. But the Old Testament person was not told its right next door.

{Arch} But its still Good News, it would have been the Gospel.

{Zane} Oh yeah! Yeah. That's great news.

{Bob} Well Zane, before we leave this, I think you would take the view that any person regenerated in the Old Testament believed that by faith in this coming Messiah they were eternally secure, did they not? Isn't that your view?

{Zane} That is my view but I would be hard pressed to prove it conclusively from Old Testament Scripture. Now there is the statement of course about Moses that Moses counted the reproach of Messiah greater treasure than the riches of Egypt. So that implies that Moses had some notion of Messiah that we would not have picked up from just reading Exodus, right? And the fact that the apostle Paul could talk about the promise to Abraham in that way suggests there was understanding there. That is also what we were trying to say the other night, that if we take the prophesy of the New Covenant and project it back in the Old Testament it sheds light on some of the things the Old Testament says. We need to remember and think this is very important, through most of the historical period of Israel's existence as a nation, they not only had inspired Scriptures at hand, of course some of them hadn't been written, in the early stages, but they also had a prophetic tradition, they had prophets who received direct communication from God and communicated that to the people. So for example, starting with Samuel here is a man who gets revelation from God. I take it that Samuel was saved by something God told him the night He appeared to him, and so on. So we shouldn't put the Old Testament people exactly in the box that they had to figure this all out unassisted from the Old Testament Scriptures. they had prophets there. Now some of the prophets have a pretty clear view of Christ, for example, Isaiah 53. By his knowledge, Isaiah says, of the servant, by His knowledge should His righteous servant justify many because He should bear their iniquities. That sounds like the New Testament Gospel to me. So I think that truth was known in the Old Testament and my personal opinion is that's the way people were saved by believing in. But if you press me to the wall, and are lighting the fire under my feet, as I'm being burned at the stake, I might say, well, there is a possibility that. . .

{Arch} I think you said it very well. I think the Old Testament was written about a nation so you don't have a lot about personal accounts there of salvation experiences that the people had, when in reality it was looking more at the salvation of a nation in the future coming.

{Zane} And just one footnote to that, how many of us would have drawn the conclusion which I think we have to draw from the New Covenant and the references in Samuel, that the Israelites in their own day and time would frequently say to their brothers, know the Lord, you need to know the Lord, you need to know the Lord, I need to know the Lord. So there was evangelization going on in Israel.

#### **H. Examine several statements from Zane in GES2006 What Do We Mean By Propitiation? Does It Only Count If We Accept it?**

Before I go any further, let me confront an objection. Someone might argue this way: "The propitiation that Jesus made on the cross is real. It is fully adequate for all men. However, it is only effective if men believe it."

. . .

Listen to the words of the Apostle John in 1 John 2:2, referring to Jesus Christ: "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

. . .

Did you hear anything in 1 John 2:2 about Jesus Christ being *potentially* the "satisfaction" for the sins of the world? Neither did I. The Apostle flatly states that Jesus *is the propitiation* for the sins of "the whole world." He *is* that. Not that He *can* be, or *potentially* is, but He simply *is*. Note, too, that this statement is exactly

parallel to the truth that He is the propitiation for *our* sins. In whatever sense He is the propitiation for *our* sins, He is also the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Very simply put, the propitiatory work of our Lord Jesus Christ is *universally* effective. That is true whether anyone believes it or not. On the cross, Jesus paid for every single sin that has ever been committed by any person who has ever lived on the face of the earth. That is magnificent and overwhelming!

Of course, the same truth is stated by the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor 5:19 where he writes, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them . . ." At the cross, God imputed the sins of the *entire world* to Jesus Christ and did *not* impute them to the world.

...

For the same reason, John the Baptist declared in John 1:29: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Unfortunately, many Christians do not understand the splendid universal sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross. They frequently misrepresent it when they evangelize the unconverted. Fortunately, one does not have to have a perfect understanding of the cross to be saved. If that were the case, probably no one would be saved.

At this point, someone will ask, "But how can God send anybody to hell if Jesus paid for all their sins on the cross?" Good question. In fact, so good that it is a shame that grace people haven't tried very often to answer it clearly. Reformed people, however, have faced this issue and have an answer of their own. In their view, if Christ died for all of a man's sins, then that man can't be sent to hell. Therefore, he must be among the elect. This leads directly to the conclusion that Christ really died only for the elect. This is the doctrine of limited atonement. Christ did not die *effectively* for the sins of all humanity. The key word, of course, is *effectively*.

In some sense, a Reformed person might suggest, the cross may be viewed as sufficient for all, but effective only for the elect. Obviously, the Reformed answer is inadequate for grace people. But what should *our* answer be like? Let me state it and then try to support it. Here it is: **Since Christ effectively died for the sins of the entire world, nobody goes to hell for their sins. They go to hell because they do not have eternal life.**

This suggested answer is confirmed by the biblical account of the final judgment found in Rev 20:11-15. The first thing that strikes us about this account is that there is no mention of sin. That is very important: *there is no mention of sin in Rev 20:11-15.*

...

To be sure, a review of anyone's works will involve looking at his or her sins. But at the Great White Throne, the issue will not be sins *as such*, but works, both good and bad. And even so, notice one important fact. Men are not condemned to hell even on the basis of their works. As the text of Revelation makes clear, there is another book opened at the Great White Throne. It is the Book of Life. But this book is consulted only after the review of men's works based on the *other* books. Yet when it *is* consulted, its verdict is clear. We are told, "And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15). Men do not go to hell because of their sins or their wicked works. They go to hell because their names are not found in the Book of Life. They do not have eternal life.

We all understand that human beings suffer the consequences of their sinful conduct while on earth. Trouble, sickness, rejection and dozens of other experiences—including physical death—are included in the ways in which sinners suffer these consequences. We often call this the law of sowing and reaping. Paul tells us (Gal 6:7) that "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." God has built this law into human experience. As long as a man remains a sinner he is subject to this unchanging law. Christians are also subject to the law of sowing and reaping. Paul makes that clear in Gal 6:7-8. He tells the Galatians, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." When any man, including a believer, lives sinfully and thereby sows to his flesh, he reaps corruption. Paul insists on that. But a believer has another option. He can also sow to the Spirit and reap an enrichment of his experience of eternal life.

...

We may think of hell, therefore, as an extension of the law of sowing and reaping. Those who go there are reaping eternal corruption. In fact, it is the only suitable place to put unsaved sinners. It is the only place that fits their sinful nature and character. Hell is justified, therefore, because its inhabitants do not share God's kind of life. They do not have eternal life and, as a result, they cannot live with Him. Instead, they must endure everlasting corruption. The cross of Christ eliminated sin as the grounds for *judicial condemnation*. It satisfied God's righteous demand for a *judicial* punishment for human sin. It made possible the justification and new birth of all who believe. As Paul puts it so beautifully in Rom 3:26, God can now be "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

...

The distinction that has just been made is perfectly natural and quite common whenever we talk about consequences. At the cross, Jesus Christ suffered the punishment that God, the Judge of all men, demands for sin. It cannot ever be paid again. No one will ever suffer a *judicial* punishment for sin, because Jesus paid that.

...

What is the bottom line? It is this: Men are not sent to hell for their sins. They are sent there because they are not listed in the Book of Life. But the death of Christ does not cancel the law of sowing and reaping. When people who are dead in trespasses and sins go to hell, they are *eternally* reaping what they have sowed. Hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels as stated in Matt 25:41. But hell is the only

**Comment [M70]:** Zane was not saying that we should not try to communicate this to unbelievers. His point was that the Bible nowhere gives a list of doctrines to be believed, in addition to believing in the person of Christ, in order to get everlasting life.

appropriate place to send unregenerate people who die in their sins. As Jesus said in John 8:24, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

...

Hell is the inevitable consequence of remaining *dead* in trespasses and sins. This deadness leads first to the death of our physical bodies, and then to the second death, as well. That is, it leads to the lake of fire (Rev 20:14).

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the result of this brief article will be to magnify our view of the cross of Christ. So splendid is the propitiation accomplished at the cross, that every human being that has ever lived is freed from judicial condemnation for his or her sins. When we sing, "Jesus paid it all," we mean it. God does not exact from any man the judicial penalty that Jesus paid at the cross. Jesus Christ's completely sufficient suffering on the cross for the sins of the world will never be repeated in the case of any human being whatsoever. Furthermore, as a result of the cross, every man or woman is eligible for the free gift of eternal life. All they need to do is believe in Jesus for that gift. But those who do not believe remain dead in their sins and subject to the corruption that sin always brings. Though eligible for *life*, they have remained in spiritual death. Hell is the consequence of remaining dead to God.

In hell the law of sowing and reaping goes on and on and on. The fire is never put out and the worms of corruption never die. In hell, the superlative gift of life, paid for by our Savior's blood, has been missed forever. But that splendid gift is for *everybody*, for the simple reason that Christ died for *everybody* equally. That's wonderful! Let's get out there and tell people about this.

### I. Examine several statements from Zane in GES2006 Saved or in a State of Grace

#### Q&A time

Q: If the saving proposition is that one must believe in Jesus for everlasting life, then do you believe that equivalent expressions such as believing for forgiveness of sins or believing for justification ultimately point to permanent life with God in heaven, or do you have to say everlasting life?

A: Let me see how I want to articulate that. It is obvious in the Gospel of John that the primary terminology is everlasting life. But I think it can also be sustained from other passages of Scripture that when a person is regenerated he receives the forgiveness of sins. He also is justified at the moment of faith. Now these other statements occur however in documents that are primarily aimed at regenerate people. The problems that arise in connection with them are similar to the one that we discussed in the paper today, Acts 16:31. Where if the verse is correctly understood, then it can be believed and salvation can occur. But in other contexts outside of the Gospel of John it would be easy to bump into a verse that is not immediately clear, referring to some of these ideas. Or to bump into a verse that can easily be misunderstood as applied to saved people and not otherwise. So we have to do exegesis of the individual books and the individual passages. Let me see if I can summarize. That's too long an answer to be absolutely succinct. If its long its not succinct, its kind of mutually exclusive. I much prefer the terminology everlasting life. However, I frequently hear the Gospel offered as and offer of forgiveness of sins. But there are a number of senses in which sins can be forgiven, so the person will have to make clear to me what he means by offering the forgiveness of sins, when he is preaching the Gospel. I don't think there are any passages where justification refers to Christian experience, but justification is not a term that is immediately clear to unsaved people and it also requires explanation. Let me just say this bottom line. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, the author of the Gospel of John wrote the only book that is expressly written for unsaved people. His choice of language and terminology is something we should be very careful not to depart from without good reason. Alright? And if we will let the Gospel of John guide us in our dealing with unsaved people and always make sure that no matter what terminology we use, we are giving them the same concept that the Gospel of John gives them. Then we'll be alright. But I find myself a lot more comfortable as the years have gone by, with giving them just the direct statements of the Gospel of John, because they are so clear, so simple, so uncomplicated. Whereas in other contexts even the concept of forgiveness of sins is very complicated because we also get the forgiveness of sins do we not, when we confess our sins, and that isn't related to salvation at all. So we introduce a lot of fudge factors when we depart from terminology of the Gospel of John. Why introduce fudge factors to a generation of people who are confused. Why not be as clear and simple as we can possibly be, and when they get into the church, we can teach them these other things.

Q: Do we have to look at this issue as black or white? Say someone believes in Jesus with no thought whatsoever as to whether they are eternally secure or not. Later they are taught and accept eternal security. When were they born again.

A: When they are taught and accept eternal security. A lot of people believe in Jesus. You won't find a good Roman Catholic who doesn't believe in Jesus. And I don't know why we think just because the name protestant is attached to a church, that therefore, if a protestant believes in Jesus he's saved, but if a Roman Catholic believes in Him he may not be saved. What we are really saying here, and I hope that you understood the bottom line of this passage, we are not saved by believing Biblical language, because Biblical language can be misused. We are saved by believing Biblical truth. So if the truth that I have believed is not the saving truth – I believe something, but I am saved by believing the truth of the Gospel, the offer of eternal life.

**Comment [M71]:** Zane's point is that we should be as clear as we can by stating explicitly what a person has to believe in Jesus for, rather than force an unsaved person to try to figure it out on their own.

**Comment [M72]:** I think Zane used the phrase "Eternal Security" because that was the term used by the question. I think that Zane did not mean that a person had to have a formal understanding of the doctrine of eternal security. I think he meant that a person had to understand Eternal Security in the simplest terms of , Believing that Jesus guarantees everlasting life, and that I will never lose it by failing to behave well.

**J. Examine several statements from Zane in GES2007 Law and Grace in the Millennial Kingdom**

Q&A time

Q: A person might recognize they are a sinner but not recognize that they are dead, that they are spiritually dead. And on the other hand if they grasp they are dead, even if they did not know specifically that they are sinners they wouldn't grasp the key issue. I think that's the tone of the question.

A: What is the intended purpose of that question?

Q: As far as the life death issue, you do present that when you evangelize, right? The idea that everlasting life is what we need and don't have.

A: You certainly should. But you can understand--sometimes when people speak only of forgiveness of sins they do it in a context where that means you are going to live forever with God. Then you have included the life-death issue.

{Bob} A person could get to the idea of the life-death issue, the irrevocability of life without ever mentioning everlasting life.

{Zane} That's conceivable.

{Bob} If they talk about forgiveness that could never be lost, or justification that can never be lost, or salvation that can't be lost, those things you would see more or less as synonymous? Not exactly, but they are giving the same concept?

{Zane} Yes. Let me elaborate my answer to that a little bit. Obviously we are wise if we use Biblical terminology. And if we could read the Gospel of John and never use it's terminology, something is radically wrong with our perspective. On the other hand, we are not saying that the essence of the truth in the Gospel of John might not be communicated in the context of a presentation of the Gospel that didn't explicitly mention eternal life. I think that sometimes happens. It becomes clear to the person that you are addressing that you are offering them something that guarantees their eternal destiny with God. And you may not have used the terminology of the Gospel of John, but you may have made that clear. The problem with that, however, is that when we repeatedly ignore the terminology of the Gospel of John, the chances of making it unclear, and confusing people is enormously increased. And I'm hoping that everybody in a group like this wants to be as clear and specific in their offer of the Gospel as the possibly can be. If your style of presenting the Gospel differs radically from the way Jesus presented it, revise your style. Okay?

**K. Examine several statements from Zane in GES 2007 Water Producing Water**

Q&A time

Q: Do you believe that the requirements of what must be believed for salvation were different before or after the cross? I think the questioner means, were they different before Jesus died on the cross, during His lifetime before He died on the cross, and then after He died on the cross.

A: Of course not! The Gospel of the New Testament is the Gospel preached by Jesus. Nobody changed it. And anybody who changes it now is not preaching the Gospel that Jesus preached.

There's an i.e. here. Could the woman simply believe that Jesus was the Christ and be saved, but now must people believe that He paid for their sins?

The woman believed in Jesus as the giver and guarantor of everlasting life. That's what it takes to be saved now. If the question implies, "Would I preach the Cross to people?" I certainly would. Because what I find in preaching to people is that they don't understand why it should be so easy until they hear that Jesus Christ died on the cross for them and paid for their sins and rose again from the dead. So that is the message that I preach. But basically the Gospel of John shows us that people are regenerated when they believe that Jesus is the one who guarantees everlasting life.

**L. Examine several statements from Zane in GES 2008 Miraculous Signs & Literary Structure in John**

Q&A time

Q: Can you relate Justification and Eternal Life. How are they related and distinct.

A: Justification, it seems to me, is a judicial decision about the person who already has eternal life. In other words, when God gives us eternal life, He says, this person is justified, because this person now has the life of my Son, and there is nothing wrong with the life he has. So justification is logically subsidiary to but it is temporally at the same time with the experience of new birth. But the fact that, we all know, do we not, for example, the word "Saved." Is there any word in the current religious vocabulary more confusing than the word saved? I mean, people use it in all sorts of senses with all sorts of definitions, and we as individual believers would be very much helped to get back to the Gospel of John and start talking about eternal life, and then correlate this basic truth with the other truths. I think there is for example some indication in the teaching of Jesus that He anticipates the Pauline doctrine of Justification. But I think that anyone who reads the words of Jesus in the New Testament will admit that Justification is not a prominent part of His teaching as far as that's recorded in the New Testament.

Q: Here is a question you might like. It is sort of a changeup, right over the plate. It's to a Cincinnati Red's hitter. How should our reading of the Gospel of John inform us in our evangelism. Is it a prescription for our evangelism?

**Comment [M73]:** Zane was not saying that unless people use the exact terminology that he suggests, that a person is not born again. He was saying that we should make it clear who we are believing in, and what we are believing in Him for.

**Comment [M74]:** Zane said, "Nobody changed it." Not John, Paul, or Zane or anybody else! People are regenerated when they believe in Jesus as the object of their faith, and not Him plus some minimum list of doctrines. That is not to say we should not teach doctrines about who Jesus was and what He did to unbelievers, we are not asking them to believe IN those doctrines. We are asking them to believe in Jesus of the Bible, about whom those doctrines teach.

A: Well some Red's hitters cannot even hit a changeup. I want to think about how I would answer that. I would take that the word prescription, if the word prescription in the question means something that is prescribed and mandatory, then I don't think I would take it in quite that sense. There are other ways of presenting the Gospel that are not in Johanine terminology. But if we present the Gospel, and the meaning of our presentation is different from the Gospel of John, then that is a wrong way of presenting the Gospel. And frankly, I don't know of any book that serves better as a handbook or guidebook for this than the Gospel of John. Let us remember that Romans, or 1 Corinthians, all of the New Testament Epistles were written to Christian audiences who already understood many of the things we are talking about here. But in the Gospel of John we are writing to people who don't necessarily have any understanding of those things. So the Gospel of John is a very clear path in the direction of simple and clear evangelism. We ignore it at our peril.

**Comment [M75]:** Zane was not saying that we cannot use other texts! He was saying that when we use other Scriptures than John, then we need to make sure we do not confuse people by defining faith differently than the Gospel of John defines it. Obviously people can be saved by any number of texts. However, we should do whatever we can to avoid confusing unsaved people. We should not expect them to understand the difference hermeneutically and contextually between John and James or Paul, that a person is not saved by faith in Christ plus works, but a person is saved by faith in Christ alone apart from the works.