

The Historical Development of the Doctrine of Original Grace in Church History
and Its Viability in the Context of Stone-Campbell Movement Soteriology

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as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Theology
In November 2010

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to investigate the historical and theological origins of the doctrine of Original Grace and test its viability within Stone-Campbell soteriology. Chapter 1 seeks to provide an exhaustive literature review of those works of the proponents of Original Grace in which they discuss the doctrine in order to demonstrate the place of Original Grace within each tradition, and to make specific connections from the ideas of each writer to their respective theological, philosophical, and historical influences. Chapter 2 explores the exegetical basis for the doctrine of Original Grace. The bulk of attention is given to Romans 5:12-21, as the principal passage cited in discussions of the subject, and to the exegesis of Jack Cottrell, who displays the most current and developed version of the doctrine of Original Grace. I seek, primarily, to delve deeply into the text to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the doctrine of Original Grace has been extracted from this text, explore the most detailed textual justification that has been provided for the doctrine, and ultimately determine what is at stake in the unique reading of the text that brings out Original Grace. Secondly, I seek to assess whether the Original Grace interpretation of the passage is successful on its own terms. Chapter 3 aims to make a significant contribution to Stone-Campbell Movement theology, and also contribute to wider contemporary theological conversations from within the Stone-Campbell Movement. Specifically, I seek to discover how the doctrine of Original Grace fares in conversation with other accounts of grace and salvation, both as a potential contribution, and by running the gauntlet of critique within that conversation. The chapter makes this contribution by discussing the theological and practical implications of Original Grace, identifying and analyzing both the doctrine's theological strengths and weaknesses, describing and evaluating the theological contribution of the doctrine of Original Grace in regard to the three most critical exegetical issues, and assessing the viability of

Original Grace as part of the traditional and contemporary Stone-Campbell
soteriological system.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Jack Cottrell introduced me to the doctrine of Original Grace in the Spring of 2004 in a graduate course from Cincinnati Christian University called “Doctrine of Grace,” which I took as part of my M.A. at the Seminary of Lincoln Christian University. I thank him for sparking my interest in a fascinating topic that has kept me going in my research for over four years. My research on this doctrine has added great value to my life and theological maturity. I still find Original Grace, its claims, and its related implications, compelling, interesting, and of immense value as a contribution to the theological conversation concerning original sin, despite the difficulties that this project has raised with the doctrine. Truth be told, Dr. Cottrell changed my life by providing a convincing case for my own assurance of salvation in Christ—a problem I struggled with for many years while growing up in the church. For that, and for all of his contributions to Restoration Movement theology, I honor him.

I give special thanks to my Supervisor, Dr. Mike Higton, for giving me his friendship, and for providing helpful and timely supervision during my sometimes difficult situation of studying at a distance. Thanks to my 2nd Supervisor, Dr. Mark Wynn, for his helpful input, both early in the project, and in the final days before the submission of this thesis. Thanks to those that welcomed me into each of their homes while in both Exeter (Richard Skinner & Jacqui Stewart) and Cambridge (Peterson and Helen Feital). Your generosity speaks of your faith and character.

I would like to thank all of those in my life that have mentored and guided me in my life, including my home church family and the ministers and teachers who taught me at Southside Christian Church in Ft. Pierce, FL. Thanks to our current church home, Canoe Creek Christian Church in St. Cloud, FL, for four years of tuition assistance and for providing a healthy place for my family to grow in Christ. My brother, Shawn Smith, has provided helpful support, both professionally and personally.

We share many interests and passions. I am proud to have him as a brother and as a fellow servant in our calling to biblical higher education. I also thank my parents, David and Denise Smith, for their support, in all forms, during my education. Also, I thank them for raising my brother and me in a Christian home. That foundation guided me into ministry.

Many of the faculty, staff, and administration of Florida Christian College have had a big part in my development. Thank you for accepting me as your colleague and friend. It is an honor to labor for Christ alongside all of you. Many of my colleagues have actively encouraged and assisted me in this process, especially Prof. Twila Sias and Dr. Les Hardin, who have provided direct support in the way of editorial comments, helpful suggestions on this thesis, as well as acting as sounding boards, Prof. Greg Hartley and Prof. Bob Ritchie, who are co-laborers with me in their own Ph.D. programs, Dr. J.R. (Tony) Buchanan for initially providing financial support, and President Bill Behrman and Dr. Terry Allcorn that have ensured continued support, both in terms of time and financial resources. Thanks to my office team, Diane Adams, Garrett Thomson, Bruce Dusterhoft, and Cathy Cottrell, for taking on more responsibility to allow me to complete this degree, and for listening to me talk through the epic saga of this degree. Thanks to Cathy also for helping with the final editing of this thesis. I would like to specifically thank Rebecca Owens, my intern for the 2010-2011 academic year, for her sometimes tedious work in editing this thesis, which has saved me substantial amounts of time, and has hopefully provided a helpful learning experience for her future graduate work.

Thanks to my wife, Samantha Anne Smith, for her seemingly endless love, patience, and understanding. Her hard work and devotion to our family (me included) has provided sufficient time to devote to my education and this project in particular. Thanks to my children, Jason (4), Aliyah (2), and Kylee (4 months), for loving me and

allowing me to love you. None of you fully understand, if at all, what I have been doing, but I know you will someday understand and be proud of me. I did this for the cause of Christ and for you, my family. I dedicate this thesis to Samantha, Jason, Aliyah, and Kylee.