

4-1-2013

# Measuring grace: Further development and validation of a grace measure

Rodger K. Bufford

*George Fox University, [rbufford@georgefox.edu](mailto:rbufford@georgefox.edu)*

Amanda Blackburn

*Richmont Graduate University*

Rodney Bassett

*Roberts Wesleyan University*

Timothy Sisemore

*Richmont Graduate University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp\\_fac](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp_fac)



Part of the [Clinical Psychology Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Bufford, Rodger K.; Blackburn, Amanda; Bassett, Rodney; and Sisemore, Timothy, "Measuring grace: Further development and validation of a grace measure" (2013). *Faculty Publications - Graduate School of Clinical Psychology*. Paper 6.

[http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp\\_fac/6](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gscp_fac/6)

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Clinical Psychology at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - Graduate School of Clinical Psychology by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University.



# Measuring Grace: *Further Development and Validation of a Grace Measure* CAPS, 2013

Rodger K. Bufford<sup>1</sup>, Amanda  
Blackburn<sup>2</sup>, Rodney Bassett<sup>3</sup>, &  
Timothy Sisemore<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>George Fox University

<sup>2</sup>Richmont Graduate University

<sup>3</sup>Roberts Wesleyan University

# Introduction

The world believes:

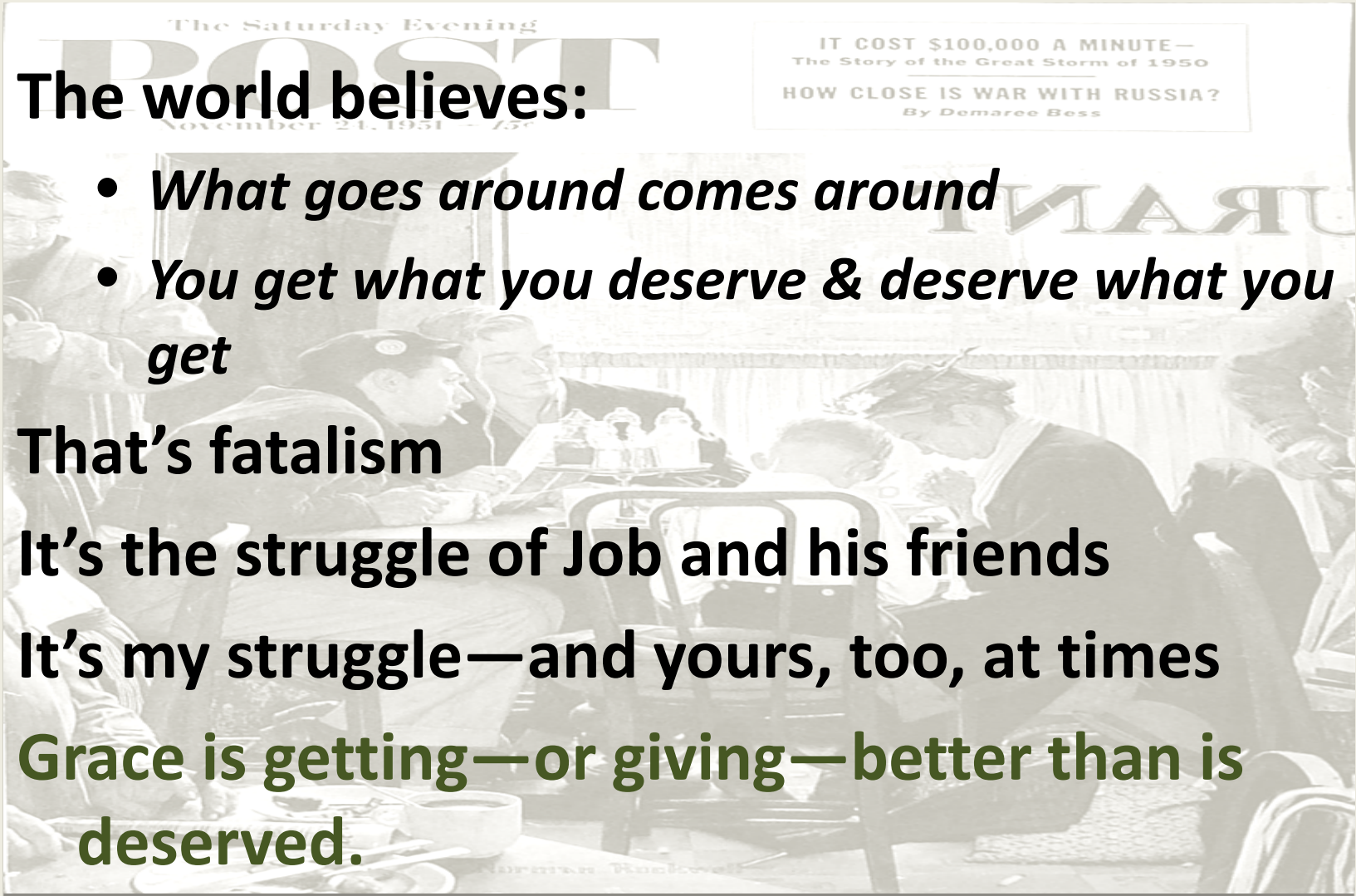
- *What goes around comes around*
- *You get what you deserve & deserve what you get*

That's fatalism

It's the struggle of Job and his friends

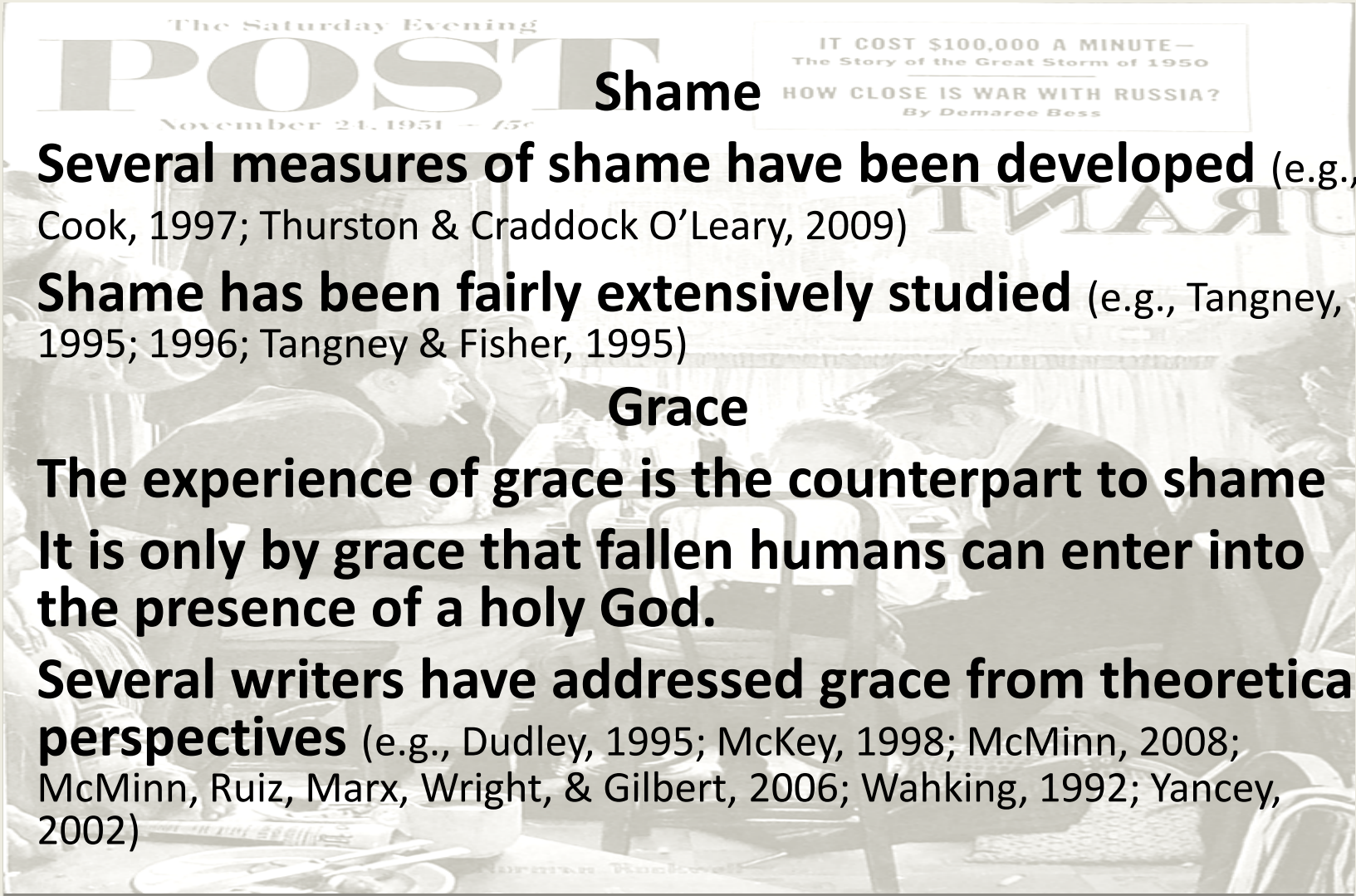
It's my struggle—and yours, too, at times

Grace is getting—or giving—better than is deserved.





# Introduction



## Shame

- **Several measures of shame have been developed** (e.g., Cook, 1997; Thurston & Craddock O’Leary, 2009)
- **Shame has been fairly extensively studied** (e.g., Tangney, 1995; 1996; Tangney & Fisher, 1995)

## Grace

- **The experience of grace is the counterpart to shame**
- **It is only by grace that fallen humans can enter into the presence of a holy God.**
- **Several writers have addressed grace from theoretical perspectives** (e.g., Dudley, 1995; McKey, 1998; McMinn, 2008; McMinn, Ruiz, Marx, Wright, & Gilbert, 2006; Wahking, 1992; Yancey, 2002)

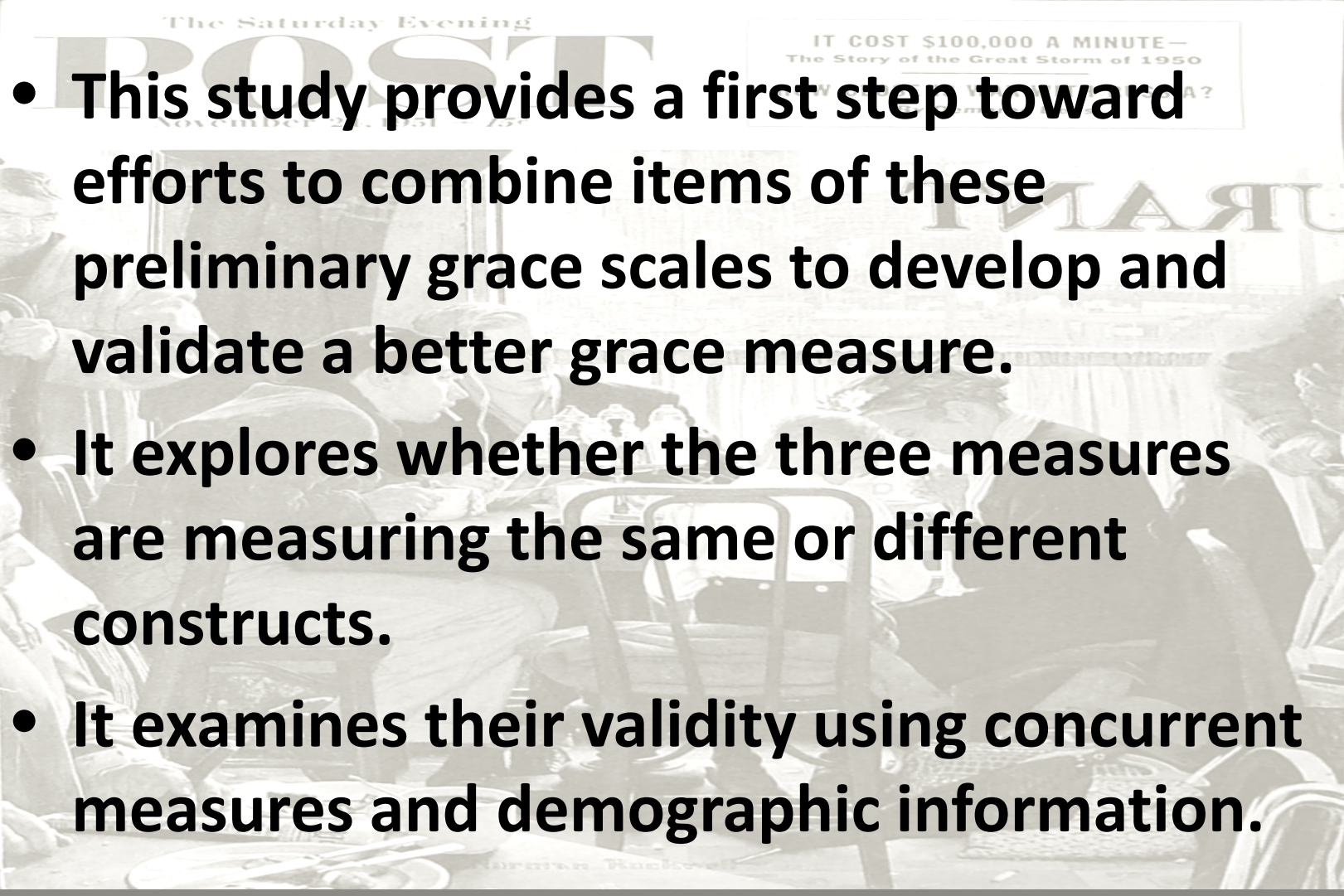
# Introduction

## Grace remains little studied empirically

- **P. J. Watson and colleagues introduced study in the 1980s** (Watson, Morris & Hood, 1988; Watson et al 1988a, 1988b, 1989)
- **Recently, three grace measures have been developed and each used in one or two studies:**
  - **Grace Scale** (Payton, Spradlin, & Bufford, 2000; Spradlin, 2002)
  - **Richmont Grace Scale** (Blackburn, Sisemore, Smith, & Re, 2012; Sisemore, Swanson et al, 2011; Watson, Chen, & Sizemore, 2011)
  - **Amazing Grace Scale** (Bassett, Fallinski et al, 2012)



# Introduction

- 
- This study provides a first step toward efforts to combine items of these preliminary grace scales to develop and validate a better grace measure.
  - It explores whether the three measures are measuring the same or different constructs.
  - It examines their validity using concurrent measures and demographic information.

# Method

## Participants

- A total of 152 participants responded. Of these 23 provided incomplete data.
- Ethnicity:
  - 83% (126) were Caucasian
  - 11% (17) African-American
  - 1.3% each were Asian and Hispanic (2 each)
- Among participants
  - 27% (41) were male
  - 73% were female (110)

# Method

## Participants

- Participants were mostly Christian
  - 88%; N = 126),
  - 4% indicated no religious affiliation (N = 6),
  - 2% Agnostic (N = 3), and
  - .7% (1 each) responding Atheist and Islamic.
- In response to the Dawkins question on atheism,
  - 62% (94) indicated “I know God exists,”
  - 25% (38) indicated strong belief that God exists
  - 17 (12%) were less confident or expressed the conviction that God does not exist
  - two participants did not respond to this item



# Method

## Materials

- **Demographic Questionnaire.**

### Grace Measures

- **Grace Scale** (Payton, Spradlin, & Bufford, 2000; Spradlin, 2002)
- **The Richmond Grace Scale (RGS).** (Blackburn, Sisemore, Smith, & Re, 2012; Sisemore, et al 2011; Watson, Chen & Sisemore, 2011). Alpha in this study was .93.
- **The Amazing Grace Scale (TAGS).** (Bassett, Felinski, et al, 2012).

### Criterion Measures

- **Internalized Shame Scale (ISS).** (Cook, 1987)
- **Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB)** (Ellison, 1982; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1981; Paloutzian, Bufford, & Wildman, 2012)..
- **Brief R-COPE.** (Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000; Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011)
- **Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale (ACES).** (Felittit, Anda et al, 1998).
- **Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6).** (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002)
- **ACORN Scale.** (Minami, Brown, McCulloch, & Bolstrom, 2010)

# Method

## Materials

- **Demographic Questionnaire.**

- age
- education
- gender
- ethnicity
- religious affiliation
- frequency of attendance at religious services
- engagement in personal religious activities (devotions, prayers or rituals)
- life satisfaction
- importance of religious beliefs and practices
- degree of belief in God
- Dawkins Atheism Question

# Method

## Grace Measures

- **Grace Scale (GS; Payton, Spradlin, & Bufford, 2000; Spradlin, 2002)**
  - 40-item measure of the experience of grace. It showed
  - Adequate internal consistency
  - No gender differences.
  - Inversely related to shame
- **The Richmond Grace Scale (RGS; Blackburn, Sisemore, Smith, & Re, 2012; Sisemore, et al 2011; Watson, Chen & Sisemore, 2011).**
  - 27 item measure
  - adequate internal consistency
  - expected convergent and divergent validity
- **The Amazing Grace Scale (TAGS; Bassett, Felinski, et al, 2012)**
  - 15 items
  - Good internal consistency
  - Positively correlated with intrinsic religious orientation, empathy, forgiveness, and gratitude

# Method

## Criterion Measures-A

- **Internalized Shame Scale (ISS; Cook, 1987)**
  - 30 item self-report measure of shame. It has demonstrated
  - adequate internal consistency and provides a
  - face-valid measure of shame
- **Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB; Ellison, 1982; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1981; Paloutzian, Bufford, & Wildman, 2012)**
  - 20 items
  - Measure spiritual well-being in terms of a vertical dimension involving relationship with God and a horizontal dimension involving relationship with others and the world around us. It is
  - One of the most widely used measures of religion/spirituality with extensive support .
- **Brief R-COPE (R-COPE; Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000; Pargament, Feuille,&Burdzy, 2011)**
  - 6-item version of R-COPE that preserves the original two dimensions of positive and negative religious coping
  - Religious coping has been found to be a preferred form of coping for many individuals in the U.S.



# Method

## Criterion Measures-B

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale (ACES; Felitti, Anda et al, 1998)**
  - Ten-item list of adverse events that many individuals experience during
  - Yes/no responses about emotional neglect physical and sexual abuse, etc.
  - Suicide, repeated medical complaints, substance abuse, cancer, HIV positive status, and a variety of adult illnesses were powerfully related
- **Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6; McCullough et al, 2002).**
  - Six-item self report measure of grateful attitude in adults
  - Gratitude is an emotional trait, mood, or emotion (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002)
  - A virtue (Emmons, 2004)
  - A moral barometer, reinforcer, and motive (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001)
  - Related to relationship quality, generosity and compassion (McCullough et al, 2002; Wood et al, 2010)
- **ACORN Scale (Minami, Brown, McCulloch, & Bolstrom, 2010)**
  - A short measure of global distress
  - Approximately 10-15 of 100 items are used interchangeably due to their high internal consistency
  - Mean item scores are reported so scores are independent of the number of items employed
  - 14-item version formerly adopted by Western Psychological and Counseling Services was used

# Method

## Procedure

- Volunteers were solicited from students at George Fox University, Roberts Wesleyan College, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Richmond Graduate University,
- Participants completed an internet survey provided using *Survey Monkey*
- No personally identifying data were gathered.
- Participants may have received academic credit for research participation in this or alternative studies in their respective institutions

# Results

## Gender

- No gender differences were found for any of the grace measures.
- Women scored higher on the R-COPE Negative scale ( $F_{1, 138} = 4.80$ ;  $p = .03$ ).

## Ethnicity

- No differences related to ethnic background were found for any of the grace measures.
- A significant main effect was found for gratitude ( $F_{1, 138} = 11.01$ ;  $p = .001$ ), with @@@

## Religious Affiliation

- Significant main effects were found for all three grace measures on the single demographic item on religious affiliation ( $F_{4, 119} = 4.85$ ;  $p = .001$ ), ( $F_{1, 124} = 4.18$ ;  $p = .003$ ), ( $F_{4, 125} = 17.78$ ;  $p < .001$ ) for the GS, RGS, and TAGS respectively

# Results

## Religious Profession

- Significant main effects were found for all three grace measures on the single demographic item of Christian profession
  - GS ( $F_{3, 125} = 10.59; p < .001$ )
  - RGS ( $F_{3, 133} = 18.40; p < .001$ )
  - TAGS ( $F_{3, 134} = 52.61; p < .001$ )



# Results

## Dawkins Atheism Scale

- Significant main effects were found for all three grace measures
- GS ( $F_{2, 134} = 14.32; p < .001$ )
- RGS ( $F_{2, 134} = 12.70; p < .001$ )
- TAGS ( $F_{2, 134} = 52.61; p < .001$ )
- Those with belief in God scored higher on all grace measures

# Results

## Dawkins Atheism Scale

- For this item responses of 3 or higher were combined
  - 87 participants responded 1, indicating they “know God exists
  - 32 participants responded 2, indicating they “strongly believe” God exists
  - 19 scored higher, indicating doubt in the existence of God to strong certainty that “there is no God”
- Those with greater belief in God scored higher
- Post hoc Scheffe tests indicated that the third group scored lower on the GS and RGS measures than the first two, which did not differ significantly [(1 = 2) < 3]
- For the TAGS scale all three groups differed significantly (1 > 2 > 3).

# Table 1

## Descriptive Results and Internal Consistency for Research Measures

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Alpha</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Skew</u>	<u>Curtosis</u>
Grace Scale (40 items)	.73	182.89	19.64	-.28	-.60
RGS (15 items)	.93	149.04	25.63	-.73	-.16
TGS(27 items)	.97	82.36	19.56	<b>-1.12</b>	<b>1.03</b>
Internalized Shame	.96	97.95	33.85	.49	.04
Spiritual Well-Being	.92	92.10	16.98	-.38	-.64
– RWB	.94	45.94	11.69	<b>-.97</b>	.53
– EWB	.86	45.85	8.08	-.23	-.61
Brief R-COPE					
– R-COPE Positive	.93	20.08	5.81	-.57	<b>2.72</b>
– R-COPE Negative	.87	11.77	4.64	<b>1.25</b>	<b>1.71</b>
ACES	.81	1.58	2.18	<b>1.52</b>	<b>1.59</b>
GQ-6	.82	36.13	6.27	<b>-1.43</b>	<b>2.72</b>
ACORN	.91	2.49	.72	.69	<b>1.31</b>

## Table 2

### Correlations of Grace Measures with Other Scales

<u>Measure</u>	<u>GS</u>	<u>RGS</u>	<u>TAGS</u>
Richmont Grace Scale	.66**		
The Amazing Grace Scale	.55**	.65**	
Internalized Shame	-.56**	-.32**	-.14
RWB	.57**	.65**	.79**
EWB	.55**	.48**	.44**
SWB	.65**	.68**	.77**
Gratitude-6	.38**	.42**	.38**
R-COPE Positive	.45**	.60**	.80**
R-COPE Negative	-.37**	-.32**	-.09
ACE	-.24**	.17	-.04
ACORN	-.37**	-.09	-.10

Note N ranged from 129 to 144.



**Table 3**  
**Analyses of Variance for Grace Scale with Dawkins Atheism Scale**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Item M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>GS</b>					
Know God Exists	4.71	.46	2, 110	14.39	< .001
Strongly believe God Exists	4.49	.40			
Other	4.08	.45			
All	4.57	.50			
<b>RGS</b>					
Know God Exists	5.74	.85	2, 110	10.61	< .001
Strongly believe God Exists	5.39	.94			
Other	4.67	.88			
All	5.51	.95			
<b>TAGS</b>					
Know God Exists	5.98	.83	2, 110	39.47	< .001
Strongly believe God Exists	5.17	1.30			
Other	3.51	1.46			
All	5.44	1.36			

# Discussion

**All three grace measures showed adequate internal consistency. However, the Grace Scale was weaker in this respect.**

- Item-total correlations suggest some of the items may not belong for this measure
- Alternatively, more than one dimension of grace may be present

**The three grace measures are significantly and strongly related, but appear to be measuring somewhat different underlying constructs.**

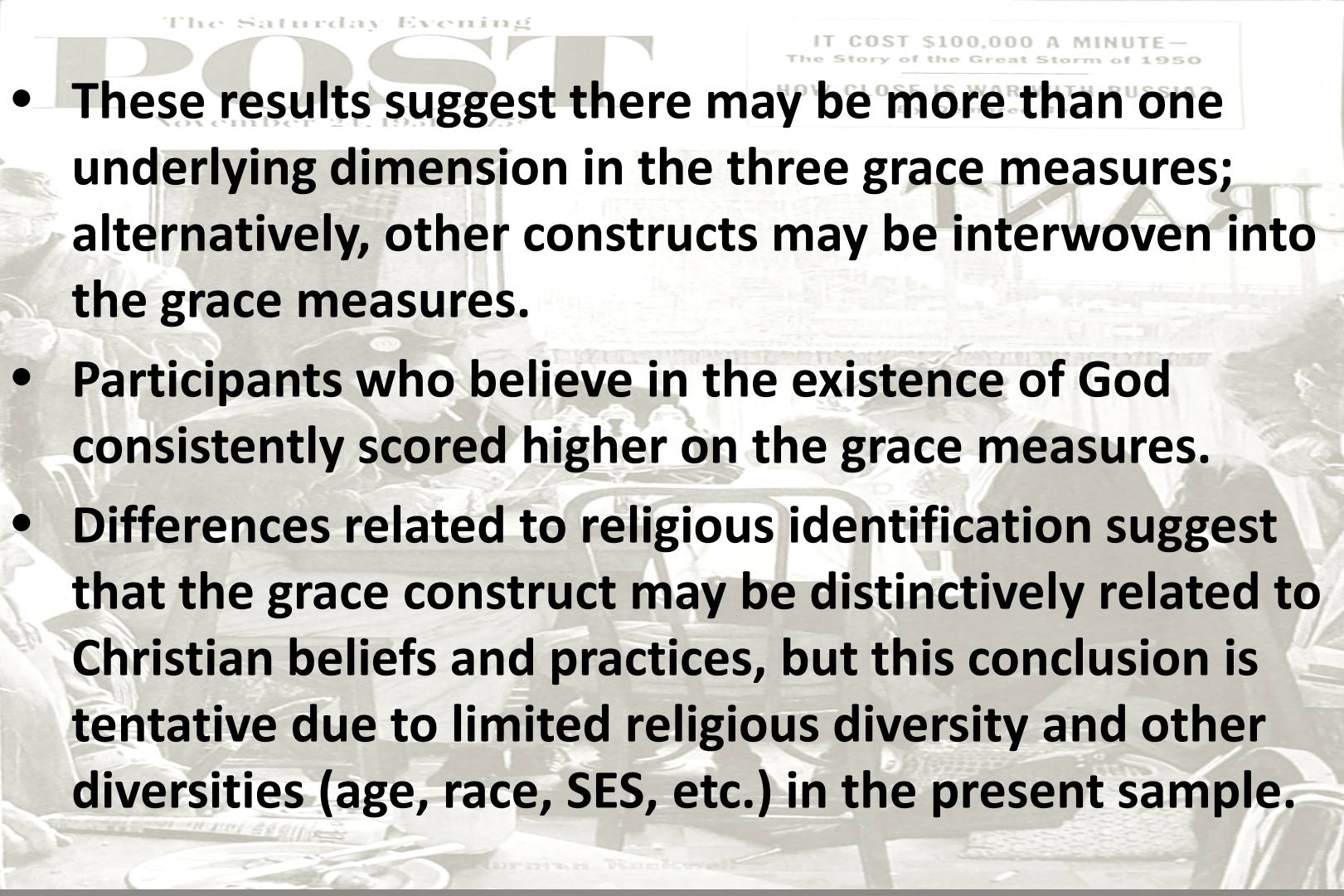
# Discussion

The three grace measures are significantly and strongly related, but appear to be measuring somewhat different underlying constructs.

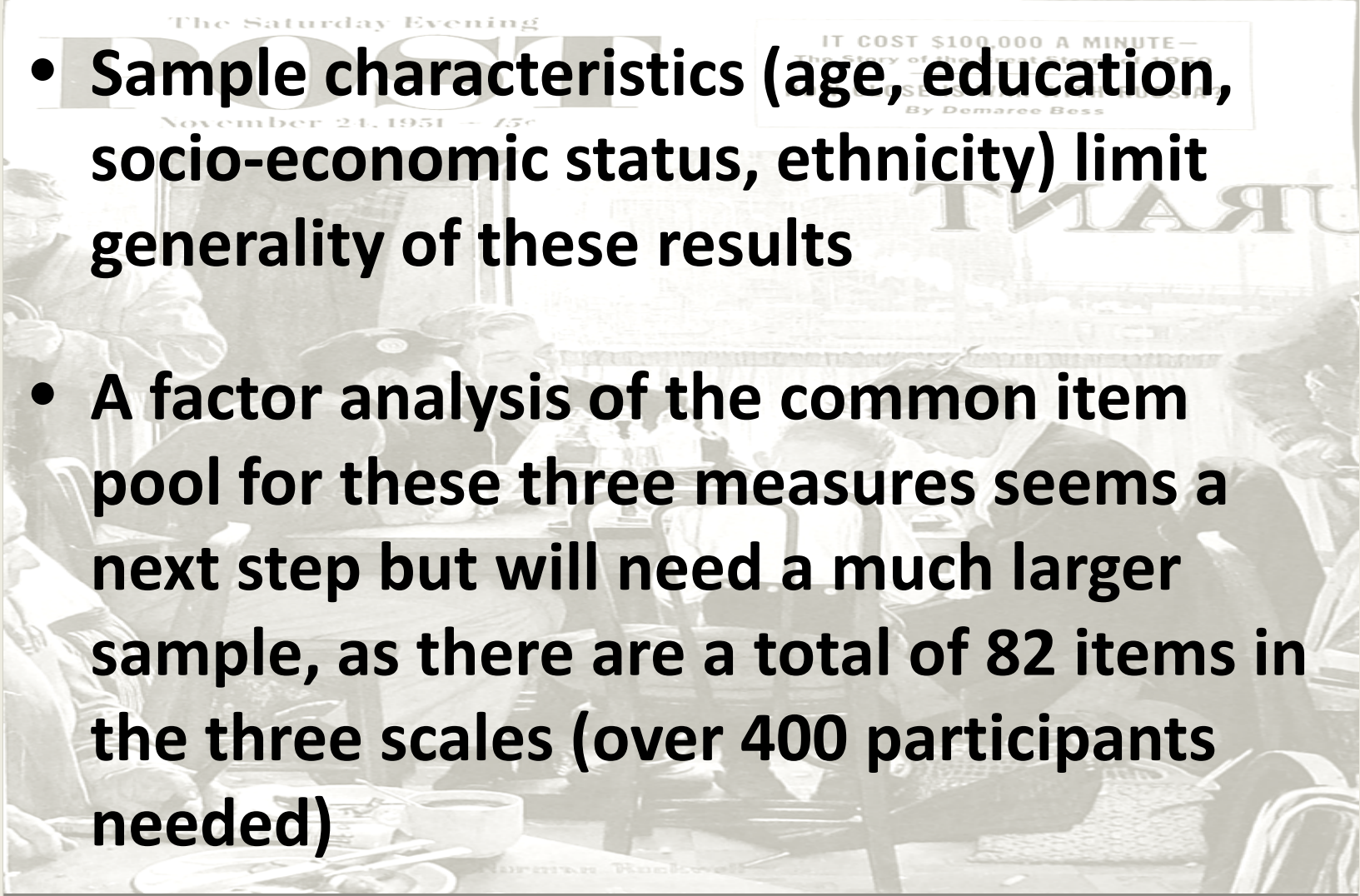
- The Grace Scale was significantly related to all measures and inversely related to negative religious coping, childhood adversity, and symptoms of psychological distress.
- The Richmond Grace Scale was similar except that relationships with childhood adversity, and symptoms of psychological distress were not significant.
- The Amazing Grace Scale was more strongly related to religious well-being and positive religious coping than the other grace scales, but did not correlate significantly with negative religious coping, childhood adversity, and symptoms of psychological distress.
- Internalized shame was related to the GS and RGS, but not to TAGS



# Discussion

- 
- These results suggest there may be more than one underlying dimension in the three grace measures; alternatively, other constructs may be interwoven into the grace measures.
  - Participants who believe in the existence of God consistently scored higher on the grace measures.
  - Differences related to religious identification suggest that the grace construct may be distinctively related to Christian beliefs and practices, but this conclusion is tentative due to limited religious diversity and other diversities (age, race, SES, etc.) in the present sample.

# Discussion

- 
- **Sample characteristics (age, education, socio-economic status, ethnicity) limit generality of these results**
  - **A factor analysis of the common item pool for these three measures seems a next step but will need a much larger sample, as there are a total of 82 items in the three scales (over 400 participants needed)**

# Conclusion

## Questions & Audience Discussion

# Selected References

- Bassett, R. L., Falinski, K., Luitich, K., Pahls, K., Suhr, J., Tenore, C., White, A., & Wigle, A. (2012, March). *Amazing Grace*. Poster session presented at the meeting of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Washington DC.
- Blackburn, A. M, Sisemore, T.A., Smith, R.E., & Re, D. (March, 2012). Hope and Forgiveness as Mediators of Enacted Grace in Christians: A Survey with Implications for Psychotherapy. Presented at CAPS Conference, Washington, DC.
- Bland, E. D. (2009). The divided self: Courage and grace as agents of change. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 28*, 326-337.



# Selected References

- Brown, G.S. (Jeb), & Minami, T. (2009). Outcomes Management, Reimbursement, and the Future of Psychotherapy. In Miller, S. & Hubble, (M. Eds.), *Heart and Soul of Change* (pp. ). American Psychological Association Press: Washington.
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., et al. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *Am J Prev Med*, 14(4), 245-258.
- Payton, J. T., Spradlin, J. D, & Bufford, R. K. (2000, March). *A Measure of Grace: Preliminary Development of a Grace Scale*. Paper presented at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies annual meetings, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

# Selected References

- Spradlin, J. D. (2002). *Shame, grace, and spirituality: A comparison of measures* (Doctoral dissertation). George Fox University, Newberg OR.
- Thurston, N. S., & Cradock O'Leary, J. A. (2009). *Thurston Cradock Test of Shame*. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.
- Watson, P. J., Chen, Z., & Sisemore, T. A. (2011). Grace and Christian Psychology – Part 2: Psychometric Refinements and Relationships with Self-Compassion, Depression, Beliefs about Sin, and Religious Orientation. *Edification: The Transdisciplinary Journal of Christian Psychology*, 4, 64-72.

The Saturday Evening  
**POST**  
November 24, 1951 - 15¢

IT COST \$100,000 A MINUTE—  
The Story of the Great Storm of 1950  
**HOW CLOSE IS WAR WITH RUSSIA?**  
By Demaree Bess

