

## **The Associates for Restored Truth, 2008 Law and Grace Symposium, in Dallas, Texas**

### **A Review by a Participant:**

The Associates for Restored Truth, or “ART” as it is abbreviated, is led by Art Mocarow, Al Carrozzo, Tom Roberts, and Tom Carrozzo, who stated their purpose as:

“Our methodology is simple: we will **gather the most informed opinions** on any given topic from far and wide and invite a cross section from all levels of understanding, education, and experience to contribute. **We will publish, disseminate and distribute a variety of points of view** from these sources and then you, the reader can decide what to embrace.”

Doesn't that sound innocent enough? Yet what was the conference like? What was really said? Are **there additional motives?**

During the **four day Symposium** held from **January 30 through February 2, 2008**, about fifteen speakers from all over the United States delivered speeches on a variety of subjects very loosely based around the twin subjects of “Law and Grace” before a combined group of about thirty-three. Most were pastors, but some represented research or academia. The meetings were held at the posh Crescent Hotel near downtown Dallas.

Opening comments described a need for examining different points of view, and urged a **greater “unity”** among the independent people and churches of God. These are worthy goals as long as no one is trying to wipe out diversity of belief among the independent churches and smother them into one ignominious paralyzed mass. Yet throughout the symposium, there was a dangerous “double speak” prevalent among the associates, as if there was something slippery and illusive being brought forward and then withdrawn before we could focus on it clearly.

There was plenty of **lip service to “love”** that failed to be demonstrated, **and to tolerance** which was present only if one agreed with the beliefs of the associates. Presentations that openly backed God's Law, Grace joined with Law, or God's Holy Days as reflections of God's Plan—these presentations were met with hard, stony silence. Other nebulous, smoke and mirrors, **“through grace we attain a higher plane” which no longer requires “the letter of the law”** – these presentations were rewarded with loud “amens” and hearty approval! The more quotations from “theologians” from any past century, the better the reception— whether the speaker shared the same opinion as the quoted theologian or disagreed. Just mentioning a multitude of names of long dead theologian philosophers earned a speaker some respect among the “associates” no matter how inane the theologian's opinion.

Citing scriptural references was not deemed relevant if the scriptures quoted disagreed with their own high vantage point. Obviously, their viewing point was attained while standing elevated upon the mountain of their perceived self worth.

Sir Anthony Buzzard of Georgia assured the audience that **Jesus did not pre-exist** before his birth. When asked why Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,” in Luke 10:18, Buzzard speculated that Jesus was only speaking “metaphorically,” and admitted that there were “still a few scriptures yet to work out.”

June Narber of North Carolina clearly explained the goals and needs of the scholarship fund of the Bible Sabbath Association, and then gave a powerful presentation that **urged purity for the Church** as the “Bride” of Christ.

A soft-spoken Mormon speaker who had translated the book of Isaiah, reassured us that if we persevere through our life-long trials, eventually we will **become angels**.

Dianne D. McDonnell’s presentation “Our Lord’s Banquet Table” illustrated **God’s Holy Days as based on Jesus** and **outlining God’s plan**. Right in the middle, one of the “associates” angrily stalked out, and the rest of the “associates” whispered and laughed loudly throughout the rest of the presentation. Directly afterwards another woman protested that their actions lacked the respect given to all the other speakers and were rude. Following her comment, **Art Mokarow confronted the woman** in the hall outside the meeting room. He berated her so loudly that his shouts could be heard over the next presentation. His **brutal response** to the woman’s criticism of their actions continued for a long time. The young woman finally returned to the audience about an hour later wearing fresh make-up. Ah—so much for love in actual practice, or showing respect for differing beliefs.

Art Mokarow and the associates were generous in funding lavish meals, luxurious rooms, and providing an attractive meeting room for the daily marathon of presentations. Yet he was miserly in respect towards the invited women presenters, and toward any speakers present who had the audacity to present views that countered his own “right” viewpoint.

What are they up to? What are their true purposes? Much of the time it remained veiled by nebulous phrases cloaked in generally acceptable expressions such as “upholding God’s Law”. Yet as the intentions began to become more evident, phrases like “**walk after the spirit, not the law**” began to reveal a darker intention. It wasn’t until the last day that the dangerous “double speak” began to part and the glimmer of a dangerous vision became barely visible.

Tom Carrozzo of California said of the Ten Commandments, “Whether you keep them or not, you are under Grace.” He also spoke vaguely of a “**higher attainment**” of love and the fruits of the Holy Spirit which he felt finally “**freed**” one from “**the letter of the law**”. Again, that is a very dangerous “double speak” that can become a one way passage to sin and destruction.

Lennox Abrigo from Washington, D.C., maintained that “**All truth is tentative and hypothetical.**” Then he added to that evil little academic gem some equally destructive words: “Cross examination is the only form of truth.” All of this would have made perfect sense to Pilate who asked Jesus, “What is truth?” in John 18:38. Yet **Jesus told Pilate** “...for this I came into the world, **to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth** listens to me.” John 18:37. Jesus’ favorite saying was, “**I tell you the truth...**” noted in Luke 23:43, Mark 14:18, Matt.5:18, John 5:24 and many other verses.

How could Jesus testify to the truth if ALL truth is tentative and hypothetical? **Obviously our Savior would have been wasting his time if there is nothing** that is **absolutely true!** This “no absolute truth” doctrine is both ancient and dangerous—like a shining blade ready to rip apart the entire testimony of Jesus and wind up thrust into the side of His Church. **There IS indeed such a thing as absolute truth!** And anyone teaching differently should absolutely not be trusted!

The presentation of Abrigo bounced hard against the spiritual shield and solid persona of Louis Williams, a Maryland pastor who presents his own television program. **Louis Williams is totally blind physically, but seemed to be seeing clearer than anyone else** there. This well-educated pastor used his perfectly modulated voice and impeccable reason to explain that Christ magnified God’s Law. Then Williams mentally looked ahead when millions will be living and obeying God’s Law. His powerful voice boomed out, “We walk by faith, not sight!” His faith and sound teaching provided illumination for everyone there, and his blind eyes showed us vistas beyond our own sight.

It wasn’t until the afternoon concluding session of the Symposium when Art Mokarow set out to link everything together that some other real dangers crept openly up from dark corners. He started in an almost fatherly manner saying that there are “all kinds of covenants, —different ones for different people”. “One of us could be under one covenant,” he espoused, “and **another one of us could be under another covenant!**” (So much for portraying God as being fair and unchanging.) At one point he stated ominously, “Keeping the Law in the letter kills you!” Mokarow quoted Mal. 3:8, “Will a man rob God?...in tithes and offerings” as he told of his desire to “do a work”, and gave as example the widow giving all that she had. Exactly what that work would be didn’t appear until later in his speech.

Art Mokarow’s final speaking style as he concluded the last minutes of the Symposium can best be described as a verbal assault. It consisted of loud yelling

with dark undertones of threat, and was punctuated by repeated harsh echoes of “Am I right?” His style of delivery had the finesse of someone making a physical attack on his audience while swinging an aluminum baseball bat. His eyes glared darkly at the audience, and his voice escalated into an upward rising cadence of destruction. He shook his white hair and pointed a pale finger to emphasize his shouted barrage of words.

One quickly summarized **goal** that Mr. Mocarow stated in his final summation was **to establish a “clearing house for doctrine”** with all doctrines to be presented in a rigid “systematic theology” approach rather than in a scriptural explanation. In other words, creating a pope and bishop’s counsel for the churches of God! Taking this at face value, they wish to maneuver themselves into position to become the narrow gate through which all doctrines must pass. Then **their decisions would decree and set doctrine for all the independent Churches of God!** Together they seem to be desiring a position of power and control over independent leaders and churches—while espousing “grace as a higher plane” and other “double speak” phrases.

In summation, beware of the Associates for Restored Truth. Inside their golden fantasy structure being wheeled into the courtyard of God’s Churches, there is **a panel of judges looming ready to judge you and your church.** Thank you, gentlemen, but we already have a very high ranking Judge and an Advocate. He is gentle, truly loving, leads us well, and doesn’t yell at us.