

Sunday, February 9, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 126
The Life and Ministry of C. Richard Jordan: The Grace Alternatives, The Testimony of Pastor Ted
Fellows

Grace School of the Bible Update

- As these lessons regarding the life and ministry of Richard Jordan have begun to circulate on the internet we have been contacted by some saints who desire to share further details regarding Grace School of the Bible. One such saint is Rita Bauschard from Pennsylvania. Rita works with Brother Bob Barlow in his ministry by taking care of the sale and distribution of Bob's written works such as *The Apostasy of the Christian Church*.
- On Monday, February 3, Rita sent me an email sharing some further details regarding the ministry in China. Rita said that Bob trained a Chinese National using GSB when he was still in China who, in turn, is actively training some of his countrymen. In addition to establishing some underground house churches in China, this dear brother has crossed the border and founded seven or eight churches in Tibet as well, using the model he learned from GSB.

Introduction/Review

- In our last study we began considering the process by which the Grace Alternative doctrines came to be understood during the 1980s and 1990s. In Lesson 125 we observed that when Richard Jordan moved to Chicago in 1979 he already understood the issue of Total Forgiveness and that I John 1:9 was not for the church of this dispensation. In addition, prior to his move, Jordan had already grasped the concepts of Grace Motivation, the sufficiency of the cross, and the believer's completeness in Christ.
- It was while Jordan was studying to teach the classes that now comprise GSB in 1983 and 1984 that he began to question some of the traditional understandings regarding prayer and spiritual gifts. It was through organized study sessions with the men in the Pastoral Training Class (PTC) that some new understandings began to percolate. When video students began taking the PTC, the pool of students studying these issues enlarged.
- In my interview, Jordan described the emergence of the Grace Life doctrines as the result of the collusion between two great principles: 1) the sufficiency of the cross and the grace of God; and 2) the sufficiency of the Scriptures. Different men stressed different principals in their individual study which were later combined to form some truly profound new understandings. Richard described two groups of men who joined in on these discussions. The first group was the original students of the PTC. The second group was video students and men that Jordan networked with via the regional Bible conferences.
 - First Group: Ted Fellows, Chuck Wilcher, Art Johnson, Dick Stator, Chris Markko, and Alex Kurz (joined six months after the classes started)

- Second Group: John Verstegen, John and Fred Bekkemeyer, Russ Hargett, Tracy Plessinger, and to a lesser extent Keith Blades
- There was no clear order in which the doctrines that comprised the Grace Alternatives were understood. In my interview, Jordan described an organic grass roots process that was stretched out over a number of years amongst various groups of men studying around the country. Developing a strict chronology regarding the development of the Grace Life issues has proved to be more elusive than we originally hoped. We can present the following general chronology:
 - Total Forgiveness—believers do not need to keep short accounts and confess their sins according to I John 1:9.
 - Spiritual Gifts—at the 1984 Cedar Lake Conference, Richard begins to question the traditional understanding of Ephesians 4. This was described as a process occurring over a number of years.
 - Prayer—in 1984 Jordan preached a series of studies to the saints at Shorewood on the subject of Pauline prayer. Jordan realized that the main issue with prayer was not what one says to God but what one expects God to do for them when they pray.
- The Grace History Project has reached out to some of the men whose names are mentioned in the above lists in an attempt to ascertain what these men recall from these days of doctrinal discovery. On Monday, July 22, 2013 we sent an email to the following Brethren asking for their assistance with this project: John Verstegen, Ted Fellows, Tom Brusha, Alex Kurz, Russ Hargett, Rick Jordan, and Art Johnson. Below is our message to them:
 - “I hope that this message finds all of you well and rejoicing in the Lord. As most of you know, I have been working on a church history project for the last four years. The time has come for me to begin winding it down. However, I do not want to do so without telling the story of how the Grace Life/Alternative Doctrines were uncovered and understood. Most of you also know that I interviewed Richard for four hours last month as part of the project. In doing so, he recommended that I reach out to you men for your remembrances of how we arrived where we are doctrinally.

Herein lies the goal of this email. I would like your input and insight into the process during the 80s and early 90s that led to the production of the Grace Alternative tapes in the early 90s. Please give some thought to the following:

- 1) Who was involved in the process?
- 2) When did the process begin? How and when did you become personally involved? In what order were the Grace Life/Alternative doctrines understood (if there was one)? Did one lead to another? Were they discovered at the same time?
- 3) How were they received when you first began teaching them publicly?
- 4) Any other pertinent or useful information about the process.

I know you are all very busy with ministry but if over the next couple of months you would give some thought to these questions and get back to me, I would greatly appreciate it. In my opinion the Grace History Project will be incomplete without this information. Thanks for your time and consideration.”

- Life and ministry demands were a roadblock for many of these Brothers in terms of being able to respond. One, however, Pastor Ted Fellows, took the time to draft an extensive reply to my questions in a six page document titled, *The Grace Alternative Doctrines in the 80s and 90s: My Testimony*. It is to this testimony of Brother Fellows, one of the original students of GSB, that we now turn our attention.
- Fellows structured his reply by focusing on three aspects related to the Grace Alternative Doctrines (GADs): Discovery, Disclosure, and Dissent. It is our privilege to present the contents of Brother Fellows’ document in the remainder of this lesson. Please note that we have reformatted it slightly to make it fit the style and flow of our notes, however, we have not changed any of Pastor Fellows’ wording.

Discovery Phase

- **“Discovery** for me began before the GSB classes, in the early days of my friendship with Richard. Early on he shared with me the spiritual design in Paul’s epistles. That allowed me to become familiar with the format of GSB before there was a GSB. Paul’s epistles began to come alive to me! I read them over and over seeing the issue of Paul’s gospel and Godly edifying. In the first year of the school, we also established the power and authority of the written word of God in the KJV. For me, the first GAD was the authority of the KJV, and the power of the word working in the saint when it is believed. I had grown up hearing the Bible corrected only sparingly as I recall, from my pastor, Floyd Baker Sr. As a young man widening my exposure to other teachers at conferences, and different pastors, the Bible was questioned and corrected more and more. My first BBF conference was 1979, and the KJV was adjusted, corrected and changed constantly. After the first year of GSB and manuscript (mss) evidence, it was a thrill to know I had in my hand the inspired and preserved word of God in my language. The second GAD was Pauline prayer in the dispensation of grace, which the other issues flowed from that.”
- “The first two years of GSB covers a very thorough study of the book of Romans which, of course, lays the foundation of the Pauline design for the believer. The issues of total forgiveness, our perfect standing in grace, our life in Christ under grace, as well as the issue of our Sonship walk and the true nature of life and living in a fallen creation. Looking back now, we reaffirmed three foundational truths already held by the grace movement, and taught in Pastor Stam’s classic work, “Things That Differ”. Those three issues are: 1. The written word of God is complete; 2. The believer is complete in Christ; and 3. The grace of God is sufficient. The doctrine was teaching us how live today in the dispensation of grace as full grown adult sons under grace. Those to me are the **3 pillars** of the GAD’s.”

- “In the third year of GSB, (85 & 86), we together as a class began to “discover” we were not being consistent with Pauline truth in our thinking about prayer. If the word of God is complete, equipping us for all of life, and there is no more revelation, why are we asking God to “lead” us by circumstances, or to put thoughts into our minds, the minds of other people, and even lost people? We were praying and using the Biblical term; “the will of God”, following the traditional viewpoint echoed in Christianity, but not how our apostle taught us to think and pray, especially in his later epistles when the norm of the dispensation of grace is reached. And if God’s grace is sufficient, and his strength is made perfect in weakness, why are we asking God to heal our bodies?”
- “The grace movement had the right positions about right division, but had not moved beyond the basic dispensational distinctions when it came to the issues of prayer and God’s intervention in the believer’s life. The GADs were revolutionizing our thinking and it was exciting! The foundation of the grace life issues were already established in us by the book of Romans, but grace people had been studying the book of Romans for a long time. There were three other factors that together gave birth to the discovery (recovery) of the GADs.”
- “First, we had in my opinion, a much clearer understanding of right division than much of the rest of the grace movement, mainly because we had settled the issue of the 12 not being part of the body, and a clear and basic understanding of the prophetic program. This helped in our understanding as we studied and thought about prayer, parental forgiveness, chastening, and angelic intervention. Tradition (and the grace movement) gets much of its doctrine in these areas from the gospels and Hebrew epistles, and the denominational backgrounds grace people come out of.”
- “Secondly, we all had settled the Bible issue, making the written word of God, and its’ power and authority an active dynamic that generated tremendous spiritual life and joy! Our completeness in Christ and the sufficiency of God’s grace was a reality for us!”
- “Thirdly, there was *a group of men* that were clear on right division, had the word of God in hand which was working effectually in them, *that together* began to think through issues and refine our thinking, testing, proving, and studying the scriptures *together!*”
- “The 3rd year (85 & 86) Ambassadorship class, the Book of Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles, were when the GAD’s began to come together for us. We began to apply those 3 pillars the **first GAD was the authority of the KJB and effectual working of the word in the inner man**. All of us were teaching that before the original GSB classes ended in August of 1986.”
- “**The second GAD was the issues of Pauline prayer and God’s intervention in the believer’s life**. In that 3rd year, after one particular class ended, Dick Stater, asked for prayer for the Lord to help him sell his house. Pastor Jordan responded; “Is God in the real estate business? How is He going to help sell your house?” The light went on! We together realized the traditional view about praying for God to intervene in the lives of others, even lost people, somehow in some mysterious way alter their normal thought patterns and behavior to make our life easier was not

consistent with the Bible being complete and that revelation had ceased. Asking God for physical protection and healing our body was not consistent with Romans 5 & 8, and many passages in II Corinthians. We already had the positive side of prayer figured out with the issue of Sonship in Romans 8 and Galatians 4 and the word working in us.”

- “Studying the book of Ephesians, also in the 3rd year, included the great passage on prayer in 3:14-21, and passages on the will of God, 1:1, 4-6, 9-11, & 5:14-21, 6:6. The will of God was not the outcome of events like a coin flip! We did not have to ask God to work things out according to his will as if we did not know what it was. We had the complete will of God revealed in the complete word of God! Prayer was designed in the dispensation of grace to adjust the mind of the pray-er, enabling the Spirit of God to energize the inner man, and produce the fruit of the Spirit by the word of God working effectually in us!”
- “This eliminated all the superstitious guessing and experience based assumptions, and made the real issue Pauline truth applied in the believer’s life. Also in the 3rd year, the study of the Pastoral Epistles makes the main issue in the work of the ministry and the local church, Godly edification! Traditional prayer for intervention was based on the Calvinistic thinking that God manipulates the outcome of everything according to his preordained plan, and not the issue of Godly edification.”
- “**Summery**, the discovery of the GAD’s began with a group of men that believed and possessed the word of God, with a clear understanding of right division and the Pauline design for the edification of the believer, then applying those truths to the issues of prayer and intervention.”