

Sunday, February 16, 2014—Grace Life School of Theology—*Grace History Project*—Lesson 127
The Life and Ministry of C. Richard Jordan: The Grace Alternatives, The Testimony of Pastor Ted
Fellows, Part 2

Introduction/Review

- In our previous lesson we continued looking at the manner in which the Grace Alternative Doctrines (GADs) came to be understood. We did this by considering the testimony provided by Pastor Ted Fellows in a document titled *The Grace Alternative Doctrines in the 80s and 90s: My Testimony*. Pastor Fellows drafted this document in order to answer some questions regarding this critical period of history that I asked him about in July, 2013. It is important to note that Brother Fellows was one of the original six students in Grace School of the Bible.
- 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.
- In Lesson 126 we presented Brother Fellows testimony regarding the “Discovery” of the GADs. By way of review, we want to highlight the following aspects of Pastor Fellows' testimony regarding the “Discovery” of the GADs.
 - 3 Pillars of the GADs: 1) The written word of God is complete; 2) The believer is complete in Christ; and 3) The grace of God is sufficient.
 - 3 Principals that Birthed the GADs: 1) 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. 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; 2) the Bible issue, making the written word of God, and its' power and authority an active dynamic that generated tremendous spiritual life and joy; 3) 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*!
 - Order of Discovery: Resting on the 3 Pillars and a consistent application of the 3 Principals outlined above, Pastor Fellows said that from his point of view the GADs were “discovered” in the following order: 1) the first GAD was the authority of the KJV and effectual working of the word in the inner man; 2) The second GAD was the issues of Pauline prayer and God's intervention in the believer's life. 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!

- We would now like to turn our attention to the testimony of Brother Fellows regarding the Disclosure and Dissent aspects of this process.

Disclosure

- “I became the pastor of Berean Grace Church in March of 1985, approximately half way through the second year of the original Grace School of the Bible (GSB) class. I had a very heavy schedule in those days, working over forty hours at the factory, pastoring full time and preaching four times a week, as well as trying to maintain my studies with GSB. It was natural to overlap my studies into my preaching responsibilities. I taught the grace life issues as I taught the book of Romans, as well as held an open stand for the KJV as the preserved word of God. I did not yet understand the issues of providential healing, of Pauline prayer, or fully the issue of the will of God.”
- “Yet with a Pauline understanding of Romans 1-8, particularly chapters 6-8, I taught the grace life with a clear emphasis on the sufficiency of God’s grace, the nature of our life in a fallen creation, and the importance of sound doctrine and the authority of God’s word in the believer’s life. The issue of prayer and nonintervention was present, but not emphasized. The teaching was well received by the congregation. I did a series called “Grace in Action” (January 87) presenting the issues of the inner man and Pauline edification, which was an outgrowth of the Ambassadorship class, that was particularly well received. That series did not as yet reflect the GAD view of all the gifts in Ephesians 4 having ceased.”
- “In Genoa City there was a mixture of several well established grace families, and some newer folks that, as a general rule, were receiving the basics of the grace life and the GAD’s. I had a strong emphasis on the word of God and the sufficiency of God’s grace and the ministry was going well. I graduated GSB in August of 1986 and, as a class, we were working through the issues of prayer and intervention. I would say by that time we had a clear understanding, and were working through how to communicate them effectively. By early 1987 some “old school” folks had begun to realize that I had an alternative approach to the “yes, no, or wait, God was in control, and would work things out according to his will” traditional view of prayer.”
- “We began to discuss the issue and there were some who clearly differed with me, but also others who were seeing that the alternative view made sense! The issue was on the table, but really blew up the summer of 87 when Pastor Jordan resigned from BBS, and escalated after that through the summer of 1988. It was in 88 or 89 that I clearly came to understand all the gifts of Ephesians 4 were temporary and had passed away, for I held that view when I relocated and assumed the pastorate at Berean Bible Church in Ohio in February of 1990.”
- “With a fresh start in Ohio I began going once again through Paul’s design for the edification of the believer teaching the book of Romans on Sunday morning, and basic right division at

different times in the other services. There was already a strong commitment to the KJV so that was a nonissue as far as controversy goes. The saints at Berean Bible Church were wonderful and open to be taught! We had several discussions about intervention, and while not all embraced fully the doctrine of Pauline prayer and nonintervention, the love for the clarity of the grace life was in the forefront and edification and growth were taking place.”

- “The book of Romans was followed by Ephesians by the mid 90’s. We had gone through a growth spurt and the ministry was going very well. As I came to Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21, unbeknown to me, I was rocking the world of a couple of the wives of key families, as I spent quite a bit of time going through the issue of prayer and the inner man. I was being quite clear that prayer was to conform us to the will of God, and produce the life of Christ in us, not the traditional approach of God’s intervention in issues of life. They told me later how shook up they were, but as they thought about it and talked together, it made real sense and they realized how liberating and simple it really was! And they realized how superstitious and circumstantial others were.”
- “The church, as a whole, embraced these issues and was helped greatly by them. A few, still to this day, do not agree that God does not ever heal by intervention but realize that people go overboard claiming God is in control and doing all the things folks claim that he does.”
- “**Disclosure summary**, Saints come to see the GAD’s the same way the original GSB class did. It begins with a clear understanding of right division, being a serious student and trusting the KJV. Then, as they learn the design for edification in Paul’s epistles, the sound doctrine in their heart produces growth and maturity, and understanding of how God works today. The foundation in the book of Romans, and the word of God working effectually in a believers’ life leads to the Sonship walk!”

Dissent

- “**The KJV issue was the first** to raise a stir in the established grace movement. At Berean Grace Church in the early 80’s, Dick Ware was going through his own change in the issue of final authority. The Bible version issue is at the heart of the GADs because the Bible has the final say when it comes to all the other issues of the Christian life. The traditional “establishment” of the grace movement fought that issue from the early 80’s on, wanting to continue to adjust the written text at will, basically accusing the KJV guys of an extreme position and making much ado about a minor issue.”
- “As I look back at **the negative reactions to the GADs of prayer and intervention**, first in Genoa City, and now over the last twenty plus years, there are three common threads of the traditional views of prayer, even by grace people. **First**, there is a mindset of we are God’s “children” and God will protect me and care for me as His “child” because He loves me. Our prayer life therefore, is my coming to him looking for healing and protection, provision and guidance, almost as a minor child depends on his parents. They think the GADs limit God, and

have reduced the Christian life to a mere mental exercise of pull yourself up by your bootstraps and tough it out all by yourself.”

- “**A second** problem is the common view that “God is in control”. As we pray then, the outcome of every situation, good or bad is His “answer” to our prayer. God’s will then, becomes the outcome of events and situations in our life, rather than God’s revealed plan and purpose that He seeks to accomplish for Himself. Prayer becomes us centered rather than God centered. This plays into self-absorption with my life, my problems and my needs, which is exactly how a child thinks! God takes care of me as a father does his children.”
- “**Thirdly**, the fundamental issues in Romans 6, 7, and 8 are not understood, not fully appreciated, or a combination of both, especially our adult Sonship status and life in a fallen creation, and totally equipped to live as more than conquerors. The Spirit of adoption provides for us to live as adult sons under grace, not children under the law. It takes time to grow to maturity in life in general, and spiritually as well. Some who are positive towards sound doctrine will grasp it quickly while others will fight them because they live on the spiritual junk food of the tradition in the religious system, walking by sight, looking at experience only, associating God’s care and love being real by his intervention in the details of life.”

Conclusion

- “The GADs grew out of a clear understanding of right division and Paul’s design for the edification for the believer. The grace movement had three things established by the past generation, the three pillars of: **1)** the complete word of God; **2)** our completeness in Christ; and **3)** the sufficiency of God’s grace, but had applied these things only to the basic dispensational distinctions related to the battles they were fighting in the 50’s & 60’s.”
- “The second generation grace believers of the 60’s & 70’s longed for the grace message to address the practical issues of life but grew up under the basic traditional views of Christianity without Paul’s design for edification, with mainly the basic dispensational distinctives defining what the grace message was. Without the doctrinal basis of preservation, many also either abandoned the KJV, or adopted an unbiblical view of the English Bible. The grace movement either never went beyond the dispensational distinctives, leaving a vacuum in the area of Christian living, or looked to evangelical Christianity and psychology to fill that vacuum.”
- “GSB maintained the KJV and clarified the issues of right division and the **3 foundational pillars**, but **with the Pauline design and a grasp of the prophetic program**, were able to go on with the GAD’s and the grace life. The KJV and Paul’s design led a group of men to a clear understanding of how God works today and a positive application of God’s grace that challenged the traditional view of prayer and intervention. Without Paul’s design, the established grace movement clung to the traditional views and remained in the myriad of superstition and confusion. Those who are open to Paul’s design usually grasp the GAD’s and find them very helpful and liberating!”

Further Comments on the GADs

- During my interview, Richard described a progression of thought stemming from the doctrine of Total Forgiveness. Jordan said that this thought progression served to clarify things for many of the men studying these issues.
 - Total Forgiveness—Chastening—Physical Intervention
- I first encountered the GADs at the Soldiers Training for Service in April, 1998. I heard Dan Gross, Tracy Plessinger, John Versteegen, and Richard Jordan teach on the GADs. I purchased the eight tape album *Understanding the Grace Alternatives* in the book store at Shorewood Bible Church and devoured the information through the summer of 1998. The studies in the album had been prepared for the saints in the Philippines prior to November and December, 1997 when Ted Fellows, Dan Gross, and Richard Jordan traveled there to preach. The studies in this series included:
 - “Introduction to the Grace Alternatives” by Richard Jordan
 - “Understanding Forgiveness” by Dan Gross
 - “Understanding the Will of God” by Richard Jordan
 - “Understanding Spiritual Gifts” by Dan Gross
 - “Understanding Prayer” by Ted Fellows (mentions the saints in the Philippines)
 - “Understanding God’s Intervention” by Tracy Plessinger
 - “Understanding Chastening” by Alex Kurz
 - “Understanding Bible Versions” by John Versteegen
- According to Jordan, in the late 1980s the question was raised, “How do we explain to people what we are saying?” It was out of these discussions that the expression “Grace Alternatives” came to be used to describe these doctrines. Richard said that by 1980 and 1981 he had already come to the conclusion that there was a difference between a mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalist and a Grace Believer.
 - Mid-Acts Dispensationalist (MAD)—believes the gospel of the grace of God, Paul is our apostle, starts the body of Christ in the middle portion of Acts with Paul, the Great Commission is not for today, water baptism is part of Israel’s program, only One Baptism for the church of this dispensation (Spirit Baptism), pretribulation rapture of the church, bodily return of Christ to establish his Kingdom and fulfill the temporarily suspended promises to Israel.
 - Grace Believer—agrees with the MAD about all the points listed above but looks to an understanding of Romans 6 through 8 to be the well spring for Christian life, walk, and service. Understands and seeks to live life on the basis of “Grace Motivation.”

- All Grace Lifers are mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalists but not all mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalists are Grace Lifers.
- The brethren in the BBF who attended the Cedar Lake Conference had the correct dispensational perspective and understanding. Jordan said that the real issue within the Grace Movement in the 1960s was over the life issues. Having by and large nailed down the correct dispensational understanding, many within the Grace Movement were starving for answers to the life issues they were facing. Instead of moving forward and applying their mid-Acts Pauline Dispensationalism (MAPD) in search of answers, many within the GGF turned to other venues, such as psychology, for the answers they were looking for. Meanwhile, Stam (BBS) and the BBF maintained a faithful and consistent stand for the distinctive message and ministry of Paul but clung to very traditional answers when it came to life application.
- In my opinion, the GADs were the result of the consistent application of MAPD to life issues. I believe the GADs to be the result of taking MAPD to its logical conclusion. Remember when we were discussing the Fundamentalist/Neo-Evangelical controversy? Recall Stam's position, the new-evangelicals were retreating from truths that had been recovered by Scofield, Chafer and others on account of Fundamentalisms refusal to move forward in the recovery of Pauline truth. Please recall the following statements we observed from the pen of Stam in *The Present Peril*:
 - “However, whereas some neo-evangelicals hold that this decline among fundamentalists is due largely to their having embraced dispensationalism, we hold that their decline is the direct result of their failure to go on in dispensational truth as God has given them light.” (Stam, 9)
 - “It is not passing strange that the further development of dispensational truth since the Scofield era has been opposed, misrepresented and ridiculed; that its enemies have warned the Christian public of its growing influence, yet withal not even a 100-page book has been published to answer it scripturally. Seeing that, in the words of Nash, ‘the evangelical does not shirk his responsibility to square his faith with the facts,’ we urge our neo-evangelical friends to consider these further developments of dispensational truth without delay, to determine whether the decline in fundamentalism is indeed largely due to its espousals of dispensationalism or whether it is not rather due to its failure to go on in dispensational truth.” (Stam, 15)
 - “There can be no question that there has been a retreat from Dr. Scofield's dispensational position among recognized fundamentalist leaders, and apparently they do not wish to consider the possibility that they may be going in the wrong direction. They are more zealous to be orthodox than to be Scriptural. They have determined not to go beyond the teachings of the “fathers”—Darby, Scofield, Gaebelien, Ironside—and thus have actually departed from the best that these men taught. This, essentially, is what has produced neo-evangelicalism.” (Stam, 16)

- In 1951 Stam stated the following in the “Preface” to his most enduring and influential work—*Things that Differ*.
 - “Great strides have already been taken in dispensational Bible study by such men of God as Darby, Scofield and Larkin, but it would be a mistake to suppose, as some seem to, that the ground has now been completely covered, for in "rightly dividing the Word of truth" the field is as large as the Book itself. Indeed, for the past years the need for another systematic book on dispensationalism has been increasingly felt as it has become evident that the popular writings now in existence on the subject fall short in at least one significant respect; namely, their failure to present clearly and consistently the distinctive character of Paul's message and ministry as the apostle of the present dispensation. . .

Though we have sought to make this book as comprehensive as possible, it is not presumed to be exhaustive for, as we say, the field of dispensational study is as great as the Bible itself. Should there still be some time remaining before the Lord returns to catch His own away, the Spirit will enlighten the hearts and minds of others to see what we have missed and other writers will doubtless improve upon what has here been written.

As we send these studies forth, we humbly pray that they may prove a substantial contribution to our readers' understanding and enjoyment of the Scriptures, and a distinct help in their service for Christ.

As the days grow darker, may God lead us all further into the light of His truth so that we may be more intelligently and effectively used, "to the glory of His grace."”

- The Grace History Project believes that what Mr. Stam did in opposing the GADs was the same thing he accused the Fundamentalists of the previous generation of doing with respect to MAPD i.e., refusing the move forward in the understanding of Pauline truth. O’Hair, Stam, Baker, and others were all attacked by Fundamentalists as being aberrant because they were not following the dispensationalism of the Scofield Reference Bible and Chafer, and said water baptism is not for today. When it came to the GADs, Mr. Stam treated these men in a similar fashion to how he had been treated by mainline Fundamentalists a generation earlier. Supporters of the GADs sought to apply the MAPD that they learned largely from Stam to new areas of study. Stam opposed them and accused them of being heretical for not maintaining traditional thinking regarding God’s working in time during the dispensation of grace. Fundamentally, this is no different from the treatment Stam objected to on the part of Fundamentalists in *The Controversy* in the early 1960s.
- Speaking metaphorically with respect to doctrinal understanding, what this ought to teach us is the need to pitch doctrinal tents that can be moved if need be, based upon further light as opposed to building permanent structures that cannot be moved as though one has arrived at the end all be all understanding of dispensational truth.