

NEW CONCENTRATIONS • GRACE STAFF GROWS • 2014 GRACE BANQUET

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GRADUATING CLASS OF 2014

Grace celebrated Commencement on May 17 in The Woodlands.



GRACE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A SEMINARY
TO THE WORLD

YOUR AMAZING GRACE

By Dr. Albert Letting



Several months had gone into planning for our Grace trip down south to Central and South America, specifically Panama and Ecuador. We had been talking with contacts to set up meetings with local Christian leaders and pastors in Panama City and Quito. For me, it would be two more countries, Numbers 34 and 35, to add to my list.

I added Number 1 about 45 years ago when I traveled to Mexico to learn Spanish. After that, I had the privilege of visiting many countries during my time in the Navy and as a missionary. During my tenure at Grace, I have already visited the Philippines, El Salvador, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Germany, and Mexico to search out leads for potential Grace Teaching Sites.

However, on this particular trip I had a problem. My severe headaches persisted each day, every day, and into the nights. It was difficult to concentrate and give my all, but I pushed on even though my medicine wasn't working that well. Meanwhile, our international hosts scheduled several strategic meetings with potential students and local leadership.

During five straight days, we had the unique opportunity to share the Grace Vision and Mission. We shared how we were taking the true message of God's Grace to any who would hear at a price they could afford. So many students were interested in taking classes. We (*Dr. Abella and Dr.*

Serrato were also on the trip) met with so many that I lost count.

Every conversation included the exclamation, "We need an accredited seminary in Latin America that is affordable and that can come to us. We cannot leave our families and ministries – please come!" Then, inevitably, the next statement was, "We know of another group of 20, or 30, or 50 churches in the next province or over that mountain range over there," pointing to the east. The requests kept coming for days – the connections, the networking of pastors who knew other pastors – all who asked for Grace to come. I remember a few times just holding my head, wondering how in the world we were going to do this.

Migraine and excitement mixed together to make it difficult to sleep that last evening. The A/C was weak, so I put on some music. It was a song from one of Glenn Campbell's final albums entitled *It's Your Amazing Grace*.

***Everything I have in this world / I give it to you
Everything I see in this world / I see it through you
You're all that's in my heart
You're all that's in my head
You know I believe this / It's your amazing grace***

After all these years, I couldn't believe that I was in South America making all these connections. But hearing that song made me realize that I was doing this all through His Amazing Grace. My closing prayer, with tears in my eyes, was: "Thank you, Lord, that you brought me here to do your work through Your Amazing Grace."



GRACE OFFERS NEW CONCENTRATIONS

Master of Ministry and Master of Divinity students now have the option to select one of four ministry concentrations. While Grace's core courses lay the foundation for a multifaceted ministry, the concentration courses address the students' need for ministry skills unique to the students' concentration. The determination of concentration will vary based on students' academic record, background, interests and calling.



Concentration in Church Planting

This concentration is designed to equip students for church planting in local and cross-cultural settings. Courses will cover church planting principles and practice, including the elements of vision, strategy, and leadership.



Concentration in Pastoral Ministry

This concentration is designed to prepare students for the task of effectively leading the congregation of a local church. The student will have opportunity to develop skills necessary in exercising servant leadership.



Concentration in Global Outreach

This concentration is designed to equip students with the skills necessary to conduct outreach ministry in various cross-cultural settings, whether local or global.



Concentration in Biblical Counseling

This concentration is designed to equip students with basic theories and skills for Christian counseling in a non-professional environment.

ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Grace School of Theology is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) [15935 Forest Rd., Forest, VA 24551; Telephone: 434-529-9539; info@tracs.org] having been awarded ACCREDITED status as a Category III institution by TRACS' Accreditation Commission on November 6, 2012; this status is effective for a period of five years. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

Grace School of Theology is an Associate Member of The Association of Theological Schools (10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1110; phone: 412 788-6505) having been approved on June 25, 2014. Associate Membership is effective for a period of five years. Dr. Tom Tanner, a member of the ATS staff, recently conducted a campus site visit as part of Grace's application for Candidacy Status. The Candidacy Site Visit Report compiled by Dr. Tanner and all documentation submitted by Grace will be considered for vote by the ATS Commission on Accrediting during their February 2015 meeting. The decision on Candidacy for Grace will be determined at that meeting. Please continue to pray as we rapidly move forward in this affirmation of quality and accreditation process.



YOUR GRACE FINDS ME

By: MICHAEL MANCHA

FOR JON PYLE, FREE GRACE IS SOMETHING THAT RESONATES DEEPLY IN HIS HEART BECAUSE IT FREED HIM FROM HIMSELF AND TRANSFORMED HIS LIFE FOR GOD.

Jon says the early days of his spiritual journey were often marked by unspiritual motives, but God still redeemed it. Growing up, Jon's home wasn't a Christian one. Jon's parents made the choice not to raise their children in a Christian home. But about the time Jon was finishing middle school, his grandmother – the only one in his family that attended church – passed away.

"One of the things that she desired was for everyone to be saved," he said. "She wanted all her grandchildren to accept Christ."

While attending her funeral, the officiant gave an altar call, and Jon made his way to the front. Jon says that it was more about honoring her than anything else.

Little did he know that God would begin drawing him closer. In high school, Jon was invited to a youth group and he decided to give it a try.

"Again, the wrong motivation for me. I just wanted to go hang out with friends. I didn't really know about this Jesus guy," he said. "Slowly but surely, the stuff starts to sink in."

Not too long after that, Jon would get the opportunity to go on a mission trip to England. His first reaction, he says, was just getting to go on a cool trip and having fun. He says his motives, once again, would steer him wrong. He raised the money he needed, attended all the classes, and was even baptized. But in the midst of it all, God had done a work in him – subtle and real.

FINDING A PLACE

After college, Jon began to move in a direction in his life that seemed to make sense. He found a job that he was good at and excelled.

"I assumed I was going to be a CEO someday. That's kind of the path that I was going on," he said, "but God obviously had different plans."

Wanting to start a family, Jon and his wife left California and moved to San Antonio. He worked a series of declining jobs that eventually led to a year of unemployment that he describes as one of the hardest years of his life.

"You can see the trajectory now that God had to bring me real low to do some business with Him," he said.

Through all of this, God eventually led Jon down a new path when he began working at Bandera Road City Church.

I ASSUMED I WAS GOING TO BE A CEO SOMEDAY. THAT'S KIND OF THE PATH THAT I WAS GOING ON, BUT GOD OBVIOUSLY HAD DIFFERENT PLANS.



Jon baptizing his father

THEOLOGICAL DOOFUS

Not long after he started working with the church, the leadership asked Jon if he wanted to launch a new campus.

"I don't know what they saw in me. I'm the creative pastor's assistant. It wasn't like I was some guy that had a theological background," he said.

It was a conversation with pastor Brent Saathoff, who is also a professor at Grace School of Theology, that brought light to Jon about his future.

"He told me that if I wanted to be a leader in this church or any church, I needed to have theological training," Jon said.

"His exact words were, 'We are not going to hand this church over to theological doofuses,'" Jon said jokingly.

It was in that conversation with Dr. Saathoff that Jon began to realize that the need for theological education was, as he said, a no brainer. Being that his church was a teaching site of Grace, the accessibility of this education was a God-send.

WHY GRACE?

Jon's attraction to Grace School of Theology was first the free grace soteriology. The idea of free grace had

been so prominent in his journey to truly know Christ and it was something that resonated with him.

And secondly, it was Grace's convenience. Jon was able to take his classes at his church and online.

"It allows me to continue my full-time job in ministry, without having to move to Dallas or anywhere else and attend a seminary full-time," he said. "Grace offers an alternative to that where I can continue to do the work that God has called me to and get trained to do even more work, and better work."

Jon has been most impacted by the personal transformation that has accompanied his theological training. He says that Grace has changed the way that he approaches life. He's been able to apply the principles he learns to his life, principles like free grace and the importance of spiritual disciplines.

Grace has also changed his family: "We've learned godly ways to be married, but this is now allowing us to talk theology as a couple," he said. "We talk about things for hours that we never would have talked about if not for me going through seminary."

These conversations are not just with his wife but also with his son. Jon says that

when you learn the right theology, you can explain it simply so that even a two-and-a-half year old can understand it.

Lastly, having the deeper understanding of theology that Grace provides has changed the way that Jon is able to share the Gospel and has given a lift to his ministry.

"What does it mean for the guy that is punching a clock at the manufacturing plant?" he said. "Theology is just as important to him as it is to me that attends seminary. You have to be able to help people apply it to their lives because what they feel about themselves and what they feel about God is at the core of every problem they are going to face."

GRACE IS...

Since the beginning of his journey, Jon has been on a path to answer God's call. Through the ups and downs, he has faithfully taken each step of that journey, and Grace School of Theology has been an important part of his transformation as a disciple and a minister.

"Grace is the best place I know for you to get the theological training you need to be successful in ministry," he said. "It's not watered-down teaching. It's real theology, and it's the best expression of it that I've seen."

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

2014 Friends of Grace Banquet

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2014
WOODLANDS WATERWAY MARRIOTT



Guest Speaker:
Gov. Mike Huckabee

When we look in God's Word, we find amazing stories that demonstrate the power of people working together. Whether it be the children of Israel marching around the walls of Jericho or a small band of disciples carrying the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, the results are truly miraculous when God is in it. At Grace, we believe we have a God-given vision to reach the world, so we are counting on the power of God's people partnering together to make that vision a reality.

In November, we will host our largest event of the year, and I want to personally invite you be a part of it. Our annual Friends of Grace Banquet will take place on Thursday, November 6, at the beautiful Woodlands Waterway Marriott in The Woodlands, Texas.



In addition to great food and fellowship, you will also enjoy a special message from Governor Mike Huckabee. He is currently the host of the #1 rated weekend show in all of cable news as well as the syndicated radio commentary, "The Huckabee Report," heard three times daily on almost 600 stations. Governor Huckabee is also the author of 11 books, five of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers. He is a man of faith, a respected public servant, an insightful commentator, and a charismatic communicator. I know you will be encouraged by his life and his message. In addition, we have an amazing selection of silent auction items worth more than \$50,000 that you don't want to miss.

To find out more or to reserve your spot online, visit gsot.edu/rippleeffect. You can also contact Karen Nix via email, knix@gsot.edu, or call 713-897-8029 to purchase your tables/tickets.

I hope you will prayerfully consider being a part of this wonderful evening.

By His Grace,

Dave Anderson

President, Grace School of Theology

PARTNERS in GRACE: Ministry Report

WELCOME OUR NEW STAFF:



Dr. Fernando Abella: Join us in welcoming Dr. Abella to the Grace family as the Director of the Spanish Bible Program and International Affairs. Dr. Abella has a gift for building relationships, and we are already seeing the fruit of his efforts in our international outreach efforts. He earned a Master in Pastoral Counseling from Liberty University, a Master of Religious Education from Cornerstone University, as well as a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from Dallas Theological Seminary. He has extensive ministry experience as a church planter, pastor, translator, and professor.



Tammie Jurek: We are blessed to welcome Tammie to the Grace family in the role of Event Coordinator. Her vast gifts are already well demonstrated in her direction of this year's Friends of Grace Banquet. She will also be coordinating other Grace events in 2015.



Lourdes Waller: We are blessed to welcome Lourdes Waller to the Grace family in the role of Bursar & HR/Finance Coordinator. Lourdes' gifts, talents, and experience will contribute greatly to our ministry. Originally from Mexico City, she is trilingual (Spanish, French & English).

A SEMINARY TO THE WORLD GLOBAL OUTREACH INITIATIVE

This fall we are equipping **142 credit students**, including 23 international students representing **10 countries**. An additional 20+ new applicants are pursuing enrollment for Fall Module 2. Please continue to pray as we respond to this amazing growth and the opportunity to equip leaders around the world.

BECOME A MONTHLY INVESTOR:

To increase ministry focus and impact by maximizing financial stability, we are prayerfully seeking partners to invest monthly in our strategic ministry. We are asking the Lord to provide a team of 1,000 ministry partners investing \$100 or more per month via unrestricted gifts to the Grace Fund. If you are interested in giving, please contact Rafael, rpaez@gsot.edu, for more information. Would you mark your calendar and pray on the first of each month that our Lord would provide these 1,000 monthly investors in Grace?

SUPPORT GRACE TODAY: Visit gsot.edu/donate or complete the enclosed support envelope.



2014-2015 YEAR-TO-DATE		ACTUAL	BUDGET
TUITION & FEES	Received YTD:	\$79,941	TOTAL: \$393,335
	Remaining Expected:	\$313,394	
ANNUAL FUND GIFTS	Received YTD:	\$343,870	TOTAL: \$3,615,047
	CURRENT NEED:	\$3,271,177	
OPERATING EXPENSES	Ministry Budget for July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015		TOTAL: \$4,008,382

Thanks to your faithful support in prayers and giving, Grace School of Theology finished FY 2013-2014 strong. We are grateful for your partnership with us and look forward to another year of impacting the world for Christ. Grace School of Theology is a 501(c)(3), charitable, non-profit organization and is financially accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.





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FRIENDS OF GRACE BANQUET



NOVEMBER 6, 2014 • WOODLANDS WATERWAY MARRIOTT • GUEST SPEAKER MIKE HUCKABEE
Find Out More or Register Online: gsot.edu/rippleeffect