

## In Memoriam

# BERNARD GRAD: THE LEGACY LIVES ON

by Lenore Wiand, PhD

Bernard Grad, PhD  
Born Feb 4, 1920 - Died December 27, 2010

**Keywords:** Bernard Grad, Wilhelm Reich, orgone, hands on healing, energy healing, healing research, spiritual healing

**D**r. Bernard Grad, a Canadian biologist, is considered one of the foremost researchers of laying on of hands energy healing. His influence and legacy remain today, historic and groundbreaking.

He received a B.Sc. and PhD from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. He became an associate professor at McGill, where he continued his research. His initial work could be thought of as being conventional, easily fitting in the academic milieu. He was involved with research related to the endocrine system, aging, and cancer. Yet, his interest began to expand to include the not so conventional. While still studying at the university, he also began studying with Wilhelm Reich in Rangeley, Maine. His work and thinking were profoundly changed through his contact with Reich and Reich's controversial work. He was captivated with Reich's ideas related to Orgone and the concept of life energy and considered him to be a mentor. The time with Reich and Reich's death significantly impacted him. It was, also, near the time of Reich's death, that he met the Hungarian healer, Estebany. It was thru this meeting, that Dr. Bernard Grad came to experience personally the felt sense of energy healing. These experiences altered the direction and course of his research.

It is important to remember that at the time Dr. Grad began doing his research on healing, the attitudes regarding research of this type were quite different than that of today. In my conversations with Dr. Grad, he would comment regarding his research on healing as having "met with resistance". He became concerned about letting people know he was doing non-conventional research. He was "afraid" of losing his job. This was in keeping with the attitude of the times. He was keenly aware of the controversy that had surrounded Reich's work. Dr. Grad continued his traditional university research openly, that which was scholarly accepted. At the same time, more guardedly, he continued the research on healing, the research he was passionate about and felt compelled to do. He did this research more in quiet, carefully, so as not to attract attention from the academic community.

He began researching healing and its effects. He researched wound healing in mice, comparing the healing rates of mice held by an identified healer, to those of mice not held by a healer. His research showed an increase in the rate of wound healing times with the mice that were held by the healer's hands. He looked at the growth rate of seeds and plants which had been watered with water held and treated with energy by different people (including the healer Estebany, a lab technician and a depressed patient) and compared it with the growth rate of seeds and plants where untreated water was used. He found a significant increase in the growth rate of seeds and plants exposed to the "treated water". He found that when healing energy was involved, there was an identifiable difference in positive outcome greater than the control in which no healing energy was used. This research and others were done through 1957 on into the later 1900's.

Dr. Grad's research laid groundwork and opened doors for future research in the field of subtle energy and energy medicine. This early work was done in a climate of "resistance", which is not uncommon when new and evolutionary ideas come into play. It was a time where science was beginning to meet and explore and actually research what had previously been only anecdotally spoken of. Throughout time and around the world, there have been gifted people, healers, medicine people, shamans, spiritualist healers, etc. Yet, this was a time of exploring more scientifically, the subtle energy that appeared to be involved. Dr. Grad continues to be quoted and acknowledged in scholarly works, articles and books, for his significant contributions. It was only later in life that he was formally honored and received recognition for his vanguard research on healing. It is both interesting and significant, that in the month of his passing, the December, 2010 issue of Oprah Winfrey's popular *O Magazine*, referenced Dr. Grad's scientific research in an article by Susan Casey, "Leap of Faith", regarding spiritual and energy healing. His work is now being recognized and acknowledged even within the more public arena.

During conversations within the last few years of Dr. Bernard Grad's life, he commented on his research, stating he wanted to be "factual". He wanted to do "scientific work... to get to the mystery of it [his research]". Even when he could no longer do research himself, he would encourage others and would continue to get excited when ideas of certain types of energy or healing research were talked about. He, also, repeatedly talked with enthusiasm about concepts related to "the origin of life". Towards the end of his life, he even described continuing doing research... in a lab... in his dreams.

Dr. Bernard Grad had many experiences, beyond the scientific, that impacted his life and his research, and deepened his interest in learning more about the mystery. He had developed tuberculosis as a young man, which interrupted his studies at university. His experiences during his stay at a TB sanatorium influenced his early interest on health and healing, as well as increased his awareness of energies not usually seen or felt. He loved his family, his wife Renee, a gifted artist, his two sons who became caring people and physicians, his grandchildren, and his extended family. His spiritual perspective took a turn and deepened in his search for greater understanding with the unexpected loss of his daughter at a young age. His spiritual life continued to deepen throughout the rest of his life. He was known for his unique way of responding to questions with an unexpected profundity and unusual twist. He is loved and well respected by colleagues, friends, and family. He will be missed... though his legacy lives on.

It is easy to imagine Dr. Bernard Grad continuing his research... somewhere...

I asked him once...

"What would you like to say to the world, that you have not yet said?"

His reply,

"Two and two does not [always] equal four."

I am reminded of the Shakespearean quotation of Hamlet's "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

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Lenore Wiand, PhD, a researcher of ancient sacred music and healing was introduced to Dr. Grad through Elmer Green, PhD, a mutual friend and the founding president of ISSSEEM, the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine, researcher and author. Through shared collegiate interest for research on healing and interest in spirituality, respect and friendship ensued.

Deborah Gagne, R.N.C., a holistic nurse who experienced Dr. Grad as a mentor, continues in the process of helping write his memoirs (working title), *Biogenesis: On the Road to Healing*.

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