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Faith alone in Christ alone

Greetings to you from all of us at Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We lack words and ways to properly express what God in His matchless grace is doing for and through Grace Evangelistic Ministries. Indeed, our imaginations cannot begin to fathom all that He has done through GEM in our first five years.

We are profoundly grateful to God our Father, the self—sufficient One. Only because of His marvelous grace do we have the privilege of serving Him. What an honor to be called the children of the Almighty God-what a sublime privilege to be servants of the Most High God! We can appreciate king David's mental attitude:

What is man (a mere creature) that You (almighty God) take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? (Psalm 8:4)

And the apostle John echoed,

[Behold] how great (*awesome, immeasurable, marvelous, unfathomable*) a love the Father has bestowed on us (*saved from our total depravity by faith alone*), that we would be called children of God (1 John 3:1)

He has extended His love and grace to this ministry in magnificent ways! We maintain that whatever God chooses to do through this ministry does not depend on any of us! It would be the quintessence of human arrogance for anyone in this ministry to claim success. Anyone thinking in that mode swims in the pool of arrogance and dries himself off with a towel of blindness to the doctrine of the grace of God. All successes are His doing alone.

The thrust of our daily toil is to utilize grace assets, particularly God's Word, the filling of the Holy Spirit, and His provisions to glorify God to the maximum. Concurrently, our joy abounds and your letters encourage us, showing that our labor in Him is yielding fruits to His glory.

Your letters tell us that many are turning to God by faith alone in Christ alone, and that quite a number of believers are taking interest in making perception and application of Bible doctrine the number one priority in their lives. Many have become partakers with us in worldwide dissemination of the gospel and sound Bible doctrine through prayers, the distribution of our doctrinal materials, and financial support. All of this is to the glory of our heavenly Father. We thank God for the privilege to witness all these marvelous things that He is doing in our time. It is intriguing to observe! We are particularly privileged and highly honored to be the servants of the most-high God.

We thank those from all over the world who have taken the time to write us. While we may not be able to reply to each and every one of your letters, we certainly do have the time to approach God's throne with gratitude in our souls and thanksgiving for what He ALONE has accomplished in the lives of those who have come in contact with our doctrinal materials, and for what He is yet to accomplish. God, the faithful One, who does all the work, is worthy of our praise.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, we want to remind you that God's Word cannot, should not, and will not go unfulfilled. We can illustrate this point by exploring the following premises:

- 1. "Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples; . . . Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot . . . " (Deuteronomy 28:64,65). This passage prophesizes national divine discipline, experienced periodically by Jews throughout their history. The final blow came in A.D. 70, when Judah, the last Jewish priest-nation to God, was destroyed as our Lord prophesied (Luke 19:43-44). Today, Jews are scattered all over the world. God keeps His Word. Often anti-Semitism has confronted them, however, we note that this is a terrible evil. God is capable of handling all discipline. Those who arrogantly try to help Him-through anti-Semitism or any other system—will find themselves the subject of discipline as well.
- 2. Christ said that until He comes again people would be "... hearing of wars and rumors of wars...." (Matthew 24:6) Two thousand years later His Word holds true! Not even the United Nations has succeeded in keeping wars in check, nor has it succeeded in securing world peace, nor can it! God's Word is settled forever in heaven (Psalm 119:89).
- 3. "For you always have the poor with you" (Mark 14:7) Twenty centuries later, no nation has been able to abolish poverty. God's Word is infallible.
- 4. "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20); and "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU" (Hebrews 13:5, quoting Deuteronomy 31:6).

We have shown in the first three of these premises that God has kept His Word. Obviously He is obliged to keep his promises in premise four. Our assurance is drawn from Mark 13:31: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." Therefore, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, as long as you continue growing in grace by learning and applying Bible doctrine on a consistent basis, you will enjoy His protection, direction, and provision to the maximum.

Throughout your life as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you are the object of God's love and grace, either in blessing or discipline. He has special interest in you as a child of God whether or not you choose to have interest in Him and His plan. Those who grow in grace are recipients of divine blessing; those who fail receive divine punishment. God is faithful. He honors His

word based on His own character without regard to anyone's response. In spite of sins and failures, historical circumstances, adversity or prosperity—whether national or personal—He continues to supply all believers' needs. But to have the capacity to appreciate Him, His perfect plan, and blessings for you-which are above and beyond all you could ask, think, or imagine-you must consistently grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ through the divine power given to you beginning the moment you believed in Him.

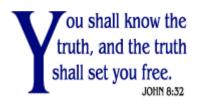
We not only challenge believers all over the world to keep on advancing to the high ground of spiritual maturity and glorifying God to the maximum, but also remind them of Satan's strategy to encourage them to abandon God's precise game plan. Satan and his minions work around the clock. They are all too aware that they have nothing to lose. After all God has sentenced them to the lake of fire forever (cf. Matthew 25:41).

For the vast majority of believers—operating on emotional feelings and the strengths of their own sin natures—Satan's forces have nothing to do; these have spiritually neutralized themselves. But for those who are advancing, they fight with determination to discourage consistent fellowship with God. How does Satan accomplish this? By DISTRACTIONS! He plays his cards well to ensure that you never make learning God's Word number one priority. He is aware that once you start learning and applying sound Bible doctrine that you will start growing in grace and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Peter 3:18), and that you will eventually reach the point where God truly becomes real to you. He knows that once this happens that you will stand on the same ground with the apostle Paul who proclaimed, "For me [living] is Christ, and [dying is profit!]" (Philippians 1:21).

My challenge to you is to ask yourself the following questions: Are you receiving sound Bible teaching from your pastor-teacher? Are you substituting fellowship with God with something else? Is Bible doctrine more important to you than everything else in your life? Is your spiritual life progressing? Are you taking the Lord's command seriously by making rewardable deposits in your bank account in Heaven (cf. Matthew 6:20-21)? Is the source of your happiness the Word of God or ENTERTAINMENT? Is your ultimate goal to reach spiritual maturity and glorify God by fully utilizing the spiritual assets designed and perfected by Jesus Christ? Using the humanity of Christ as his copybook, the apostle Paul could declare, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith (*learned and applied Bible doctrine to my life's experiences*); in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing (*those believers who finished the spiritual race successfully*)" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). You are a priest-purchased by the efficacious death of God's uniquely-born Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, the answers to these questions are a private matter between you and the Lord.

- "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2 Chronicles 16:9)
- "How blessed is he whose help is God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Psalm 146:5)
- "The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our [fortress]." (Psalm 46:7)
- "The eternal God is [our refuge], and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27)

Forever in the hollow of His hand, Moses C. Onwubiko, President Grace Evangelistic Ministries



Doctrine of Grace

By Reverend Moses C. Onwubiko (Lesson 7—Continued from volume 20 [Lesson6])

Beginning in this issue, our study of the Doctrine of Grace continues with a focus on:

PAUL—A TROPHY OF GRACE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tarsus, a Roman city located at the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea in the province of Cilicia, a center for trade and learning in ancient times, was Paul's birthplace. Many date his birth a few years after Christ's. His Jewish name was Saul. The common notion that the name 'Paul' was assigned at his conversion is incorrect; Paul was simply his Roman name (cf. Acts 13:9).

Paul was born a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin: "... I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia..." (Acts 21:39). He wrote, "... circumcised the eight day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law a Pharisee..." (Philippians 3:5).

When he was a very small child, his family moved to Jerusalem (cf. Acts 22:3; 26:4f). Paul held dual citizenship from birth. We may never fully appreciate what it meant to be a Roman citizen, but citizens were afforded special status and protections throughout the vast Roman Empire. Luke gives us insight into some of the privileges enjoyed by Roman citizens in Acts.

Flogging. It was common practice in the provinces to flog non-citizens who had been accused of a crime. In this way, the truth or a confession was often obtained before their courtroom interrogation. This technique was prohibited if the accused was a citizen. In Acts 22:24-28, we read:

"... the commander ordered [Paul] to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why [those in the Jerusalem mob] were shouting against him that way. But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion, who was standing by, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?' When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, 'What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.' And the commander came and said to him, 'Tell me, are you a Roman?' And he said, 'Yes.' And the commander answered, 'I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.' And Paul said, 'But I was actually born a citizen."

But on another occasion, Paul was scourged and put in prison before his court appearance. In Luke's account we read:

Now, when they came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore, come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, MEN WHO ARE ROMANS, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed (they must be out of their minds)! But let them come themselves and bring us out." And the policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were AFRAID when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. (Acts 16:35-39)

Read that again. The chief magistrates left their courtroom and came to prison! Why? Paul was Roman. You will recall that our Lord was literally skinned alive during His sixth trial (cf. John 19:1-3). He was not a Roman citizen. His scourging was so severe, that He became unrecognizable to those who knew Him (cf. Isaiah 52:14).

Restraints. Romans could not be handcuffed before they were convicted of a crime. In light of this, Luke wrote, "Therefore those who were about to examine [Paul] immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out he was a Roman, because he had put him in chains" (Acts 22:29).

Right of Appeal. Paul used the Roman right to appeal his case to the highest authority when he knew that he would not get a fair trial. The Jews wanted him dead. Contrary to Roman law, the chief priests wanted the Romans to hand Paul over to them (cf. Acts 25:15,16). Paul contended, "If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar(!)" (Acts 25:11).

PAUL'S TRAINING

It was the rabbinic custom that every male learned a trade. In this way, no matter what one pursued in life, he always had a marketable skill on which to depend. Our Lord learned carpentry; Paul learned tent making (cf. Acts 18:3). Although Paul often used this skill to support himself during his ministry, his training included much more than a trade.

Historians agree that Paul was among the most educated men of his day. One professor suggests that he held the equivalent of our double-doctorate. Though he developed a comprehensive understanding of Roman life, culture, and laws, he was brought up in Jerusalem under the tutelage of Gamaliel, where he was thoroughly grounded in Judaism (Acts 22:3; 26:4-5; Philippians 3:5) as a Pharisee, Judaism's strictest sect.

After conversion to Christianity on the road to Damascus, his theology was developed without consulting others; instead he independently sought God's guidance by withdrawing for a time into Arabia (Galatians 1:17). Today, Arabia denotes the whole of a vast peninsula bordered by the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, but in Paul's day Arabia was the desert region immediately east and south of Palestine inhabited by the Nabataeans. Some writers picture him traveling as far south as Mount Sinai (cf. Galatians 4:25), but it is unlikely that he took a long journey. Most agree that his trip to Arabia provided time to commune with the Lord Jesus Christ whose church he had so vigorously persecuted up to that time. Very quickly, Paul developed a keen sense of his mission and a profound understanding of church age doctrine. After returning to Damascus, it was three more years before he met Peter and James in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 9:29). With a brilliant mind, a thorough command of theology, and an ever-advancing love for God,

Paul stood above his peers in many matters!

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PURPOSE

As we read the letters of Paul, it is apparent that the Holy Spirit used his broad knowledge of the history and culture of the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews, and his mastery of Old Testament Scriptures and doctrines, to powerfully disseminate church age truths. Paul was providentially prepared to lead the missionary expansion of early Christianity. God uses prepared men; in Paul's case his preparation was unwitting. His was a grace package!

Have you ever thought about how God uses a person's background for His own purposes? Sometimes a person is thoroughly trained in a secular field only to discover that they have a spiritual communication gift; for example, an engineer might become a pastor. You might ask, "Why waste the time and money to become an engineer if it won't be used?" God never asks such questions. True, the engineer will essentially have to retrain to be properly prepared for advancing his congregation in their spiritual lives. He will have to study a huge body of ancient history in order to teach isagogically. He will have to digest the width and breadth of Bible doctrines in order to teach categorically. He will have to master the original languages of Scripture in order to teach exegetically. But the academic skills and the systematic thinking of one trained as an engineer are well suited to theological studies. God knew about his spiritual gift billions of years ago. Nothing is wasted unless he fails to prepare (and most tragically, it is transparently clear that the majority of those in pulpits today are totally ill-prepared).

Of course not everyone is called to the vigorous academic demands of the pastorate. Nonetheless, every believer has a spiritual gift and that gift becomes fully functional as we advance in the unique spiritual life of the church age. Our advance is predicated on daily learning Bible doctrine and applying it to every circumstance of life. Of course, we can learn nothing without the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is never what you can do for God; it is always what God can do through you. No matter your occupation or circumstances, it is prepare, prepare. God uses prepared believers.

Do you remember David, the shepherd son of Jesse? No one ever told him—and it is unlikely that he ever imagined—that he would become king over the Jews. As a shepherd, he was learning the ingredients of leadership, patience, caring, loving. Most importantly he was undistracted in learning and applying Bible doctrine—the thing that made his life so meaningful. What we are trying to hammer down is that wherever one finds himself-in the field of medicine, law, engineering, teaching, carpentry, housekeeping, or any other—when he has learned the doctrine, God will one day use every bit of his life's experiences to further the course of His Kingdom.

SAUL'S ENTHUSIASM TO SERVE GOD

(*Note:* We will use Saul to denote Paul before his conversion.) Stephen was the first Christian martyr. Like our Lord he was accused of blasphemy and brought before the Jewish court (Sanhedrin). Luke records his testimony before the court—a synopsis of Israel's history of failure and rejection of truth—in Acts 7. The court's reaction was immediate and violent; "And when they (*the Sanhedrin*) had driven him (*Stephen*) out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (Acts 7:58). Blasphemy was punishable by death (cf. Leviticus 24:16). He did not just stand by watching, but

Saul was in hearty agreement (*present, active participle of suneudokeo—not a passive consent*) with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (Acts 8:1-3)

In the following chapter we read,

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1, 2)

We must note Saul's mental attitude, his enthusiasm to serve God. Our purpose is not to favorably color Saul's blindness to the truth, BUT TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT GRACE IS ALL ABOUT. Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr., has summarized the protocol plan of God for every believer with four axioms:

- A wrong thing done in a wrong way is wrong.
- A right thing done in a wrong way is wrong.
- A wrong thing done in a right way is wrong.
- Only a right thing done in a right way is right.

Where there is a conflict between what a person thinks and what the Bible says, the Bible is always correct. Saul's desire to serve God was a right thing, but applied in a wrong way, which completely negated his enthusiasm. Anyone who alleges to serve God in a self-righteous, egocentric way should take notice. These will try to scare believers with the lake of fire (where they can never go) and add human works to the finished work of the Sacrificial Lamb of God (which negates the unbeliever's faith). God has never needed anyone's help in His affairs. Repeat, God does not need anyone's help—never has and never will—not then, not today and not ever!

SAUL'S PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

Paul wrote, "Although, I myself might have confidence in the flesh (*my accomplishments*). If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation Israel, one of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is the law, found blameless" (Phil. 3:4-6). His own self-righteousness was the driving power behind Saul's enthusiasm to serve God. That is arrogance! It is the same power that propels the legalists, those that proffer lordship salvation, those who teach salvation by works, and the unprepared of every ilk. Saul was absolutely confident that his every action was godly; he was very positive, but positively wrong. The rapid spread of Christianity intensified his flame within to remove all Christians from Jerusalem and beyond.

Armed with an authorization from the high priest, he set out to purge the synagogues in Damascus. While en route, our Lord appeared and said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me...I am Jesus whom you are persecuting..." (Acts 9:4,5). It was an indictment—and a lesson—from the Supreme Court of Heaven. Saul wasn't just persecuting, abusing, and torturing the saints, he was actually doing these things to Jesus Christ. There on the road to

Damascus Saul received his lesson in church age doctrine; the Bible doctrine of positional truth-every believer is in union with Christ. This basic doctrine would become a prominent theme in all of Paul's letters; for example, "Therefore if anyone is **in** Christ, *he* is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5.17).

Let's take a quick inventory of Saul's status as a religious Jew. Arrogance skills (self-justification, self-deception, and self-absorption) distilled his self-righteousness into hatred. His hatred gave birth to rage, which manifested itself in persecution and torture. The persecution and torture targeted any who believed that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah). However, owing to positional truth, the attacks were effectively directed at our Lord Himself.

Let's take a quiz. If you had been alive in Saul's day, what do you think he might deserve for his behavior? Would you have been willing to help God with his discipline? Ok, let's move on to this century. How often has your mastery of your own arrogance skills propelled you into hatred, rage, gossip, and maligning? How many times have you judged others? Not a very pretty picture, is it? But as long as you are alive there is hope. Only God knows how to judge, because only God has all the facts! And listen, if God can take a Saul and use him as His apostle, he can use you too. How? Bible doctrine! That's all Saul needed. In Saul's thinking anyone who had hung upon a tree was not worthy of worship (cf. Galatians 3:13) and certainly could not be the Messiah. The resurrected Christ gave him the doctrinal evidence that the curse of the cross was necessary, and temporary. No, Christ will not appear to you; but he has provided a pastor-teacher to inculcate the doctrine you need for your very own spiritual advance. Bible doctrine will enable you to keep your nose out of other people's business, to resist the temptation to judge anyone but yourself. You will be content to let God use (and discipline) others as He sees fit.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Paul-a trophy of grace-wrote, "But by His doing (*God's doing, minus anyone's effort*) you are in Christ Jesus, . . . " (I Corinthians 1:30a); and, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works (*of any kind*), that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). God is perfect and His work is perfect. God the Son purchased you (I Peter 1:18, 19). God the Holy Spirit sealed you (II Corinthians 1:22). God the Father keeps you saved by His power (John 10:29). God provides salvation in grace. We have nothing to add. We are the objects and beneficiaries of His grace forever.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling (*i.e., losing your salvation*), and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless (*no accusation against you*) with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:24-25). Paul's conversion (grace meets Paul)—to be continued—(Volume 22-Lesson 8)

Progress Report

Our purpose is to inform and bring you up-to-date about what God is doing for and through

this ministry. Our hearts are filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for His indelible work. When you approach His throne in prayer, please remember Grace Evangelistic Ministries. Praise Him for His work through us; our work is nothing apart from His grace.

USA

God continues to glorify Himself through Grace Evangelistic Ministries. Demand for our publications has increased tremendously. Requests from prison inmates have tripled over last year. Some have responded to the gospel by faith alone in Christ alone. Others have been challenged to seek out accurate Bible teaching. We have referred many, who request doctrine on tapes or literature for their daily studies, to R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries. We cannot thank God enough for what He is doing.

NEW PUBLICATION



By the grace of God, we have published a new book: The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation. This publication presents the Biblical doctrine presented by Moses C. Onwubiko in "Grace News Today," volumes 1-14. We believe that this book will help everyone who wants to understand more about salvation. Very importantly, it will help thousands of pastors in Africa who have entered the ministry with little knowledge of the Word of God. Many of these pastors can hardly afford a good Bible translation, let alone Greek or Hebrew study tools.

OVERSEAS

Today, our mailing list includes addresses from Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, Scotland, Philippines, China, India, Egypt, Germany, Croatia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, and Nigeria-just to name a few. Many are pastors. The list grows as God takes His doctrinal truth to those who are positive. This underlines the justice, fairness, and matchless grace of God, who removes any linguistic, racial, cultural, and geographical barriers to make Himself known to anyone who desires to know and have relationship with Him. We are witnessing the grace of God as it unfolds. We consider it a great privilege to be an instrument through which God brings the gospel to unbelievers and Bible doctrine to those who have personally trusted in Christ

RECENT MISSIONARY TRIP TO NIGERIA—PART ONE

On April 7, 2001, Dr. Tom Northcott and Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko were en route to missionary work in Nigeria. Mrs. Debby Hagar joined them three days later. Their mission was concretely defined—to evangelize the unbelievers (including children) teach basic Bible doctrine to believers (including pastors) and to equip pastors with resources, such as Hebrew Greek Key Word Study Bibles, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words and others.

In reference to the outcome of the missionary endeavor, Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko said, "It is

not an exaggeration to say that the success of their mission trip surpasses previous ones." He further acknowledged that God was behind every step they took in Nigeria, and that He was the One who caused the success. We thank God that each conference we conduct creates more awareness and intensifies hunger in the soul of unbelievers, believers, and pastor-teachers. Rev. Onwubiko and his team acknowledged that it is very difficult to properly report what God is doing in Nigeria.

NIGERIA

With a population of over 125 million, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Located on the west coast of Africa, Nigeria was once one of the most desirable countries to tour in the world. At one time, the Naria (their currency) was valued at two U.S. Dollars. Divine establishment was highly esteemed. For instance, from the early 70's through the mid-80's, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ had the respect of those who were not believers. When a person identified himself as a believer, you felt at ease with him, even if he was a stranger. You could even trust him with your bank account, and he would not betray your trust. Believers had the desire to learn Bible doctrine and apply it to their life experiences to God's glory, and they did. The principle of "Righteousness (of spiritual integrity) EXALTS a nation . . . " (Prov. 14:34a) was clearly seen. God blessed the nation beyond measure. Countries in Nigeria's vicinity enjoyed prosperity and peace—peace from wolves—peace from armed robbers—peace from terrorists. What a small haven then!

What is wrong today? If you had lived there in those days and could see what is happening today among believers, you would inevitably shed tears—either outwardly or inwardly. What is going on in that country is similar to what happened to the Jews in captivity during Nehemiah's time—a situation that caused him great distress and to weep and pray before the Lord (Neh. 1-2). Today it takes 130 Naira to equal one U.S. Dollar—a huge plunge! Today there are about 1,000 times the local churches than earlier (70's and 80's). Even more churches weekly. Many in these churches remain unsaved because their ministers have not presented the gospel accurately to them. Salvation by works is still prominent. And those who are saved have no access to sound doctrine, and thus no spiritual growth; rather, they have retrogressed into degeneration. Many men have entered the ministry with one purpose in mind exploitation! Corruption in churches has reached all time high! Believers have contributed to the fueling of corruption in the Land. The church is no longer a place of communication of the infallible Word of God, but a place of exploitation. The preachers through deceit, and exploitation of the widows, rich and poor, are becoming richer, while the widows and the poor are becoming poorer. For two years in a row (1998-1999), an independent study printed in Wall Street Journal, Nigeria was awarded 1st place among the fifty most-corrupt nations! Why? Because there is very little integrity among believers. Generally, the concept that believers are the light in their world (cf. Matt. 5:14) is dysfunctional in Nigeria. Some pastors have been convicted as drug dealers; others have killed fellow-ministers over money. Believers are no longer effective in preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus in that the very thing they preach about has no bearing in their lives. Nowadays, an individual may be far better off doing business with an unbeliever than his counterpart. Disheartening, isn't it? No wonder the country is in ruin. Financial aid from the US and other countries has not made a dent. Spiritual darkness is the order of the day! The principles: "[A lifestyle of carnality] is a disgrace to any [nation]" (Prov. 14:34b) and Jesus Christ controls history are clearly reflected.

But God, the gracious One has once more redirected His spotlight of grace to Nigeria. He has opened doors to us in unimaginable ways. And the outcome of what HE ALONE is doing in Nigeria through Grace Evangelistic Ministries, R. B. Thieme Jr., Bible Ministries, Berea International Ministries, and a handful of others is inexpressible! The demand for doctrinal

materials has reached all time high. One million copies of *God's Plan After Salvation* can be depleted in just one month. You almost need to be there to actually feel the heat of the hungry unbelievers and believers in Nigeria! It is amazing! The personal testimonies and letters of appreciation from pastors, believers, and those who have responded to our gospel message—faith alone in Christ alone—are enough to fill a voluminous book. We pause to let those who have backed us through prayer and financial support know that you are privileged just as much as we are to partake in the blessings as a result of what God is doing in Nigeria. Your endeavors are yielding tangible fruits to His glory!

BRIEF REPORT—PART ONE

(Submitted by Darlington E. Elekwa—Africa chapter president)

Grace Evangelistic Ministries' entry into Lagos State, former commercial capital of Nigeria with the simple, uneclipsed, undiluted grace gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and sound Bible teaching was facilitated by an invitation extended by Dr. E. O Patrick to Col. R. B. Thieme Jr. Col. Thieme redirected the invitation to Rev. Onwubiko and his team. Lagos State is still bubbling as the commercial nerve center of the most populated country in Africa. Lagos' population is estimated to be 15 million comprising 250 ethnic groups from 36 states and Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. G. E. M's entry into Lagos is entirely God's doing because addressing a crowd in Lagos can be likened to addressing people from every ethnic group in Nigeria. The persistence of the teaming crowd of ministers who make up our audience, comments, and countless invitations combine as an evidence to show that many are indeed thirsty for the truth and are clearly positive to Bible doctrine. It is equally evident that many are fed up with what I call "spiritual junk food" dressed and garnished with psychological and physiological axioms (man's wisdom) and dished out every Sunday morning without essential spiritual vitamins, which contribute to spiritual growth and maturity. And as a result the pulpit and pew remain spiritual babes!

G. E. M's first annual Ministers' conference was tagged "Antioch Conference 2001" by Dr. Patrick. The theme was "the power of grace." Despite very tight schedules, the hustle and bustle of a fast growing modern city and the Easter holiday, a mammoth crowd of pastors / church workers gathered at the All Christians Church of Jesus Christ in the Festac area of Lagos every morning and night defying traffic jams to hear Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko handle such topics like the Essence of God, God's Plan after Salvation, Ministers and Money, Emotion, Doctrine of Reward among several others. All the messages are on both video and audiotape. In the course of the week-long program in Lagos, some pastors and church workers, for fear of traffic which could cause them to miss the evening program, decided not to go home. They had lunch at the venue, took a nap inside the church auditorium and waited for the evening session.

The overwhelming manner in which the simple grace gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is being embraced shows, that in no distant time, integrity shall certainly be restored from the pulpit down to the pew. Again, there is no doubt in our minds that a pivot is steadily being formed; many are going to reach spiritual maturity rapidly and break the maturity barrier. It is way beyond our wildest imagination the extent to which God in His matchless grace is taking us. But surely, with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word resident in our souls, we shall keep following as God leads.

Three days into the Antioch Conference, Mrs. Debby Hagar arrived in Lagos from the US with all doctrinal materials for Lagos, Owerri, and Jos (30 boxes in all, each weighing 70 pounds). The next day, she held Bible lessons with the children who gathered in a nearby church hall. Debby presented the gospel in a clear manner. They had a Question and Answer session and the children asked intelligent questions. Children's books from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible

Ministries were distributed to the children and their teachers. It was simply a wonderful time. (To be continued in the next volume).

FEEDBACK

(Prepared and submitted by Dr. Patrick)

The message is real, compact, and intact in many people's hearts. I felt fulfilled inwardly as I heard pastors express their joy and gladness. Some say:

- "It is a challenge, we shall amend and move forward . . . "
- "The Bible interpretation here is new and good . . . "
- "Knowledge is important; therefore, I must go back to learning . . . "
- "When they come next year, I will take them seriously because I should have improved before then . . . "
- "I love their simple message and humility . . . "

BRIEF REPORT

(By Debby Hagar [a fellow missionary])

Lagos, Lagos State 2001 Antioch Conference for Pastors and Church Workers (Organized by Dr. Eze Patrick)

Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko addressed a large group that grew daily. By the last day, the meeting hall was filled to overflowing with folks hanging in the doors and windows (2,000+ people with 900 being pastors). Moses challenged these pastors to go back to the Bible study and teach instead of preach. Dispensations by R. B. Thieme, Jr., as well as books by Moses Onwubiko were distributed to the eager crowd!

Debby Hagar taught children, focusing on the essence of God and confession of sins. Dr. Tom Northcott of the GEM Board filmed each session. Also present was Darlington E. Elekwa, Africa Chapter President GEM, on leave from his Ambassadorship to The Gambia.

Transportation from the hotel to the venue, twice daily, was the only missing link in the well-planned conference. God graciously provided the Alofokhai family to help. For five days, Ohi, Odie, and Lizzy made eight 45-minute trips per day and generally attended to our every need. Twenty years ago the oldest son received a Thieme tape; from there, doctrine spread to the father and the other four children. Lizzie had been praying that she would make it to Berachah for face-to-face, so the family was overwhelmed when a representative of Berachah came to them. At the end of the week, Lizzy cooked a Nigerian dinner for us. It was like a reunion between the GEM team and the Alofokhai family - only we had just met. How amazing is that?! Both sides graced out by the presence of the other. Definite blessing by association. They had been praying and hoping to start a tape group, but they needed tapes and instructions on how to proceed. Dr. Northcott just happened to bring the '61 basics— the tape class was born. On my return trip from Jos to Lagos, I attended the second session of their newly formed tape group!!!

Conference: Doctrine of Christian Marriage

Owerri, Imo State

(Organized by Rev. Tony Dike)

For two weeks, Rev. Onwubiko taught the Doctrine of Christian Marriage— a preview to his upcoming book. In conjunction with this, Moses and Debby were on "Family Forum" a popular radio program reaching seven states. Moses was featured on television where he had a teaching opportunity.

The entire GEM team visited the prison again this year. Moses gave a clear gospel message to all the men and women in attendance. "Comfort in Suffering" was distributed. Debby revisited the children she taught last year. They were ready to learn and full of questions.

Jos, Plateau State Pastors and Church Workers Conference/General Conference

Again, Moses addressed a crowd that eventually outgrew the venue. He challenged them to leave tradition behind, to study and teach, from the original languages. Those pastors in attendance every day were eligible to receive a Greek Key Bible or Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words. We awarded all we had—though not enough to go around. A copy of Dispensations was given to everyone. The response was extremely positive.

In the Q & A sessions, the questions were not the challenging "what about this verse and that verse" type questions, but rather the "Oh my, how do we ever make this transition—how do we change direction in mid-stream with our congregations" type questions. These men need prayer support for the courage to impart the newfound information they have acquired.

Debby taught at three schools: two visits to friends from last year and a new school. Several requests for future visits were made by schools in other cities. The Lord continues to open doors.

Excitement was in the air at the GEM office as volunteers counted books, assembled newsletters, and did anything and everything necessary to prepare for the pastor's conference. Mr. Nelson Ibeji threw himself into the work despite the very recent death of his wife. Pastors Tony Sani and Vincent Mmaduekwe worked diligently behind the scenes to assure the success of the conference.

One by one people expressed how encouraged and truly grateful they are because GEM cares about them and is helping them. One pastor said "you have given us the tools—our people are too poor to have Bibles so you can't say turn to such and such verse in your Bible—but you have given us doctrinal books and we teach from them—they can all turn to the place in their books."

Another said, "This ministry is a great blessing, we are encouraged—those you see are just a small portion of those affected by this ministry. Many never make it to the GEM office; those of us who do forward the information to family and friends. I will touch my wife and five children and they in turn will reach others."

One pastor said, "Thank God for the USA." When queried why, he said, "Everything good in my life has come from there . . . in 1978 I was saved as a result of a book by R. B. Thieme, Jr., and now you people are here to help us." The doctrine of client-nation was no longer a principle; it was brought to life right before my eyes.

Please pray for the pastors just challenged, for land for GEM so we can have our own office and a place to hold conferences, the Alofokhai family as they form a tape group, and assist us in

finding a good printer to republish books for GEM in Nigeria.

These are just the highlights! We are in awe at what our God is doing—so many incredible things—far too numerous to mention. As Debby looked at the stacks of Bibles and dictionaries and piles of doctrinal books and considered those eagerly awaiting them, she wondered, "Is this what a revival looks like??" This country is certainly poised for one—the gauntlet has been thrown down—the battle has begun—and it is the Lord's!

LAGOS GROUP

Currently doctrinal believers have formed a group and are studying the basics from R. B. Thieme, Jr. on audiotapes. They meet every Sunday at 5th Avenue, T Close, House No. 20, Festac Town, Lagos. If you are in Lagos area, you are encouraged to join.

REV. MOSES C. ONWUBIKO'S ITINERARY THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2001

June 1 - August 2: U.S.A.

July 14 -15: Grace Bible Church of Frankfort, Frankfort, IN

July 27 - 29: Albany Bible Church, Albany, GA

August 3 - 17: Zimbabwe

August 18 - September 14: U.S.A

August 25 - 28: Berachah Church, Houston, TX

September 15 - **21**: Switzerland (with George Mueller) **September 22** - **30**: Germany (with George Mueller)

October 1 - 30: U.S.A November 1 - 16: Nigeria November 17 - 25: Gambia

November 26 - December 17: Cameroon (with George Mueller)

December 18 - 31: U.S.A

God Will Provide

Genesis 22.8

"God will provide" is the attitude of Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We do not beg for money. We believe that if this ministry is honoring to God, He will provide EVERYTHING necessary for its continuation. "God will provide" was Abraham's reassurance to his confused son, Isaac (Genesis 22:8). When God gives an assignment to us as His servants, He is under obligation to provide for the job. When God does not provide, it could mean one of three things. One, God may not want the job accomplished at that particular time. Two, it could mean that those who are to carry out the mission are not prepared to do so yet. Lastly, it could be a sign that God does not want to have any part of the ministry; therefore, it is absolutely foolish and arrogant for us as believers to try to devise a way to accomplish a task in the name of God when He has

already rejected it. For example, when we use gimmicks to manipulate people to contribute money, we are not glorifying God. It is blasphemy on our part to think that God does not know how to provide for the work that He has assigned. Take a moment and think about the following question: When we work to accomplish a job that God has rejected, who will be glorified in the end? God? Or me?

A believer in the Lord once said, "God's work, done in God's way, will have God's provision."

Letters to Grace Evangelistic Ministries

We would like to share some of the letters that have been sent to us. As you read these letters, please join us in giving thanks to our gracious God who does all the work: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

Our purpose in sharing these letters with you is to show you that your partnership in financial and prayer support for this ministry is indeed producing dividends for the glory of our merciful God.

Rev. Moses.

We are grateful to God for the opportunities to meet you, Dr. Tom, and Debby, and to listen to you teach. Your coming has been a great encouragement to us to keep advancing in the plan of God, making Bible doctrine the number one priority in life and not to be distracted.

We are indeed thankful for being a part of the Lagos Conference and for the books, video and audiotapes, we received and for the access we have to Berachah Church and GEM. Only last week, I received a package of 20 tapes on Spiritual Dynamics. It is a good development for this country that GEM has a strong presence in Nigeria. For those who are positive, there is a ready access to sound Bible doctrine.

We thank God for the success of the Lagos, Owerri, and Jos conference and for journey mercies. We started our Bible group on May 1st and we meet every Sunday. We started on 1969 Basics. We already have lessons 1-8 and 26-32.

Extend our warmest regards to your wife, Debby, Dr. Tom, Nancy and other members of the team. And keep us informed on your program for the rest of the year as we pray for your ministry.

Regards,

Lagos, Nigeria

Dear Rev. Onwubiko,

Greetings to you and may the grace of our Lord and Savior continue to be your portion.

I sincerely express my appreciation for your devotion to the teaching of sound doctrine for the edification of the body of Christ, the Church. You are a wonderful painstaking teacher like your mentor and my mentor R. B. Thieme, Jr. I have really enjoyed every bit of your teaching and most importantly the Spirit behind your teaching. Your humility and honesty are

indelible, visible expressions of consistent intake and articulation of sound Bible doctrine. I must admit that I salute and respect your disposition.

I have your indulgence to present the following issues:

I need to bring this challenging program to Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. I could help make the necessary arrangements.

I need study material in Greek and Hebrew.

I need a complete set of all R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s books and tapes, and

I will like to identify actively with your ministry and give help where necessary.

I pray the Lord will continue to endure you with His power to fulfill your calling and ministry. Please extend my sincere and warm greetings to Rev. R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Your brother in our Lord's Vineyard, Pastor P.

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Dear Rev. Moses

We have received and read with delight your publications, and thank God for such books. I have shared them all with some of our church workers and my friends in the Bible school. In fact, this will not contain all their testimonies about those books they received. A friend of mine, Rev. H., told me he was using The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation to teach in his church and likewise Pastor T and others. Those books would have been written 200 years ago. We are thanking you with kind regards. I ordered some more books.

I am your brother in Christ, Pastor I-Owerri, **Imo State, Nigeria**

Dear Grace Evangelistic Ministries,

Our group (U. Methodist Church) has chosen your book "The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation" for our study this month. Enclosed is our donation. Keep up the good work!

In Christ's love,

USA

Dear Grace Evangelistic Ministries,

I would like to request (1) copy of the following books: The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation God's Plan After Salvation Eternal Security of the Believer Riding the Death Train Comfort in Suffering

I also want to thank Moses Onwubiko for this ministry. I understand the financial policy for the books. I would like to give a small amount of money to help ensure that this ministry can continue.

Thank you again for this ministry and thank you in advance for the books.

Bible Doctrine for Thought

Evaluation Seat (Greek: bema) of Christ King of kings, Lord of lords presiding.

Jesus Christ: "Apostle Paul. Well done good and faithful servant, receive a crown of glory for all eternity. You have all the privileges accorded to winner-believers."

Jesus Christ: "Apostle Peter. Well done good and faithful servant, receive a crown of glory for you faithfully utilized my grace provisions and have glorified me to the maximum."

Jesus Christ: ______ next?

In a split second our spiritual race will come to an end; perception and application of Bible doctrine on earth will come to a screeching halt; every believer in Christ will arrive in heaven! Carefully consider what the Bible says about the eternal state:

"If a man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss (of his labor-dead works); but he himself will be saved, yet so as through (snatched from) fire." (1 Corinthians 3:14-15)

Our Lord's warning: "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown" (Revelation 3:11). What does it mean to be "saved as through fire?" Does that concern you? Your spiritual life now determines your reward at the Evaluation Seat (bema) of Christ. Will you be a loser believer (without rewards) or a winner believer (with immeasurable rewards)? You may wish to pause and meditate on what losing a crown for all eternity means.

Here is the Truth

VIRTUE LOVE—A MOTIVATOR FOR SPIRITUAL GIVING

Keep in mind that we are examining one of the most distorted doctrines of Scripture-doctrine of giving. This doctrinal exposition will help answer many of the questions with which Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko is confronted as he preaches and teaches from the infallible Word of God wherever God opens a door.

A believer who is consistent in perception and application of Bible doctrine soon comes to a personal sense of destiny-a point, where he TRULY UNDERSTANDS HIS PURPOSE ON THE EARTH—the glorification of God. This understanding gears him up to develop personal love for God the Father! This love then becomes a motivator for his lifestyle of serving and worshiping God, which may include giving to a local church, missionary organization(s), to the needy, and other spiritual accepted giving as the believer purposes in his mind. We continue with 2 Corinthians 8:

For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have. For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality. . . . (v.12, 13)

As we previously noted, the "readiness" in verse 12 has to do with a mental attitude. God is more concerned about what is in your mind than what is in your hand. In other words, your mental attitude is the measure of your contributions to a church, a missionary or to the needy. Only perception of Bible doctrine and its consistent application can really shape your right lobe and protect you from becoming arrogant when you give anything.

The next verse (13) is the source of seriously incorrect applications of giving that have shattered Christian homes and created financial constraints. The all too common message that "the more you give, the more God will bless you" is totally fallacious. That's a refined and polished blasphemy. In essence, they teach that God can be bribed. The Scripture sets the record straight declaring that God cannot and will not be bribed (cf. 2 Chronicles 19:7).

I know of a case where an evangelist defrauded people in a crusade by lying to them. He promised his audience that if they would bring money, he would pray that God would bless them one hundredfold. Expecting a huge return on their investment, many bought the lie and withdrew from their bank accounts. One man emptied his account of thousands of dollars. The evangelist offered the same prayer that the prophets of the Baal offered. Of course, his prayer was not going anywhere. The wife of the man who emptied his account later divorced him citing financial hardship. Be careful about fake promises. The Lord blesses whomever He wants to bless, when He wants to bless them. God's blessing is His prerogative, and no one can invoke God's blessing on another. Like the Pharisees of Matthew 6, many erroneously assume that God materially blesses all whom He loves. Wrong attitudes about wealth prevail. You can never use material wealth as a measure of your spiritual status or anyone else's.

Verse 13 simply says: Do not do anything that will create financial constraints for yourself. This brings us to what we have previously discussed-wisdom. Wisdom is an accurate application of knowledge (i.e., Bible doctrine). James invites all believers to pray for the ability to accurately apply the doctrine in their souls: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). This wisdom is not inherited; it is a gift! It is a gift that requires the believer to use his volition to make daily positive decisions under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to learn and apply Bible doctrine. God, in His grace provides everything necessary for the believer to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is essential in handling everything in life, including stewardship of your money. We read, "By wisdom a house is built...And by [application of] knowledge the rooms are filled with [rare and beautiful treasures]" (Proverbs 24:3,4). A believer should know from his budget, how much he needs to live and how much he can afford in support of the Lord's work. Clearly, God does not expect anyone to be financially irresponsible.

"For this is not for the ease of others (i.e., others are in good shape because of your gift) and for your affliction (not having enough to live on), but by way of equality (they are fine because of your gift and you are fine too because you did not shortchange yourself)."

The Good News

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, He had you on His mind. All sins, including those you have not yet committed, were poured out on Jesus Christ, and He was judged for each and every one in your place (I Peter 2:24). The penalty has already been paid. He endured the judgment for all the sins of the world to pave the way for you to have eternal life through faith in Him. No matter how sinful you have been, you can be forgiven and your slate wiped clean by God. How? By telling God right now that you are believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. The moment you do this, you share God's eternal life forever. The Bible says, "But these are

written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Will you believe in Him today? Or will you reject Him? The decision is entirely yours.

Financial Policy

Grace Evangelistic Ministries does not solicit funds. We believe that God in His grace will continue to meet our financial needs as they arise.

We do not charge for books or audiotapes. No money is requested. Anyone desiring to receive our books, tapes, or other spiritual materials can receive them at absolutely no cost.

When gratitude for the Word of God and understanding of the need to reach the unsaved souls with the simple grace gospel and sound Bible teaching motivate you to contribute, you have the privilege of giving and sharing in the dissemination of the Word of God (II Corinthians 9:7). This is a grace ministry.

Would You Join Us in Prayer? GRACE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES' PRAYER GROUP

The importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized!

The God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, gave us a perfect example to follow. His life and earthly ministry was encapsulated in a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer occupied a place of singular importance in His own life and teaching. In time of decision and crisis He gave Himself to prayer. Thus our Lord prayed when He was baptized (Luke 3:21,22); when He chose the twelve disciples: "It was at this time that He [Jesus Christ] went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God [the Father]" (Luke 6:12,13); when He was transfigured (Luke 9:29); when He was engaging in sustained and exhausting service: "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place (for privacy), and was praying there." (Mark 1:35-39); when He called forth Lazarus from the grave (John 11:41); when He was burdened for Simon Peter (Luke 22:31-32); when He faced betrayal, execution, and divine abandonment, and thus the Scripture recorded: "And He withdrew from them [His disciples] about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and began to pray...And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:41,44). He prayed when He thought of His disciples and their future ministry (John 17) and before His physical death (Luke 23:46). Therefore, if you are a believer who finds it difficult to spend a time with our heavenly Father, sin no more. "Far be it from that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

If Jesus Christ, a perfect God and a perfect Man spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13), we the mortal believers should spend all year in Prayer! In light of the importance of prayer, would join us as we pray for:

- Thanksgiving for God's guidance and provision
- Pastor-teachers and other evangelists
- Our partners in this ministry, and their spiritual growth
- Spiritual advance within the indigenous churches we have established
- Our national, state, and local leaders
- The peace of Israel
- His provision for our August 2001 Zimbabwe Crusade
- His provision for our publication ministry
- Guiding us toward unbelievers with positive volition
- Guidance and awareness of open doors for our ministry

Our Grace Ministry Has No Limits

Therefore, if you would like to be on our mailing list to receive this bi-monthly issue, "Grace News Today", or other materials of spiritual value, please write to the following address:

Grace Evangelistic Ministries
P. O. Box 17246
Nashville, TN 37217-7246
or
call us at (615) 365-0015
or
you may visit our web site
on the Internet at:
http://www.gracemissions.org/

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