

Notes & Letters

What a Blessing!

Your *Grace in Focus* letter has been a blessing to us. Please continue to send it to us if possible. I'm a retired (82 years old) minister, but we continue to have a Sunday service in our home. We believe your ministry is great and we will continue to pray for you.

R.G. - Los Angeles, CA

Looking Forward to the Newsletter!

I am a high school math teacher, who has served on the church board for several years. We have been without a pastor for the past 10 years or so, and I have taken over most of the preaching on Sunday mornings. I am looking forward to receiving your newsletter, in the hopes that it will help me with some of the many questions that arise as I study scripture.

B.T. - Kingfield, ME

A Major Difference in My Life

This [donation] isn't much, but I want to let you know your journal and website have made a major difference in my life. Knowing God's grace has been incredibly freeing!

T.M. - Hopkinsville, KY



Trent Muller, Rebecca Carriker, Jennifer Battarbee, and Sarah Goodding after service at Cypress Valley

God Has Used the Ministry of GES

I began my journey for truth shortly after reading *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. I had been seriously mixed up prior to that. God used the ministry of GES to help correct a lot of my thinking and push me on to another level of maturity. I have since purchased and read every book available through

GES. I can't tell you what a blessing your ministry has been.

M.H. - Stem, NC

PARTNERS

in Grace

Cypress Valley Bible Church

Marshall, Texas

January 24-25

While Pastor Bob Bryant was in Eastern Europe on a mission trip, I was privileged to speak to the High School group on Saturday night at a progressive dinner, and to the congregation on Sunday morning.

The High Schoolers really asked me lots of tough questions. In addition to "normal" questions about the Bema, the Tribulation, the eternal state, and the like, they also asked unusual questions such as: "Do clones have souls?" and "If Jesus married and had children, would His children be sinners?" The latter question was, I think, influenced by the heretical book *The DaVinci Code*.

On Sunday I preached on 1 Chronicles 13 and 15, the incident about David moving the Ark. I entitled the message, "Don't Touch the Ark: Follow God's Directions." David picked what he thought was a very God-honoring way to transport the Ark to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, he didn't read the directions God had already given for doing so. Hence when Uzzah touched the Ark at one point in an attempt to keep it from toppling over, he immediately died. I showed that if God has told us how to do something, then the way in which we do that thing, and not just the end

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Sunday morning at Cypress Valley

Emmanuel Baptist Church

Starkville, Mississippi

January 10-14

This historic Free Grace church was founded by pastor Nap Clark over thirty years ago. Current GES Board Chairman Greg Sapaugh was pastor of this church in the early nineties. Today Bob McDonald, a graduate of the University of Alabama (Roll Tide) and Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) serves as senior pastor. Kenny Hodges, a Florida Bible College and DTS grad, is the associate pastor, and may be a distant relative of Zane Hodges.

Starkville is a college town, being the home of Mississippi State University.

I spoke Sunday morning and then Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings as part of their Bible Conference. I walked through the Book of James with sessions on an Introduction to James, "Salvation" in James, James 2:14-26, 4:13-18, and 5:7-12. I also did one session at

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Pastor Bob and Peggy McDonald from EBC

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Financial Report

January Revenue	\$29,358
January Budget	\$25,919
Fiscal YTD Revenue	\$194,856
Fiscal YTD Budget	\$181,433



Highlights

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February 2004



Paul, Bob, Shawn, Mark, Chris, and Cord (from L to R)

Bob Vacendak Has Surgery January 26



Bob Vacendak, a former GES board member, was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor. He was hoping, through diet, that the tumor would shrink, but unfortunately that did not happen. So, he and his wife, Kelly, decided that surgery was the best option. What was thought to be a four and a half hour surgery actually took nine hours because the tumor was larger than the MRI showed and there were blood vessels running through it. Bob came out of surgery fine. Immediately he was talking, moving all his limbs, seeing, etc. The next day, however, some swelling occurred and he experienced some numbness on the left side of his face.

As of this time, the biopsy results aren't in. Please keep praying for Bob and Kelly and their girls Nicole and Lauren. **FG**

DTS Discipleship Group January 21 and 26

For a number of years now I've wanted to start a discipleship/mentoring group at my Alma Mater. Last semester a current first year student, Mark Schmahl, contacted me about coming to campus to meet with him from time to time. That was all the impetus I needed.

So on Wednesday January 21st a group of four current students met with me and Mike Makidon for a little over an hour. I told them that the aim of this group was to complement what they were learning in class. My own experience has proven that discussing what you are learning is every bit as important as the time in class.

At the first meeting we discussed total depravity. We decided to shift to a Monday meeting time, and the second meeting we discussed the issue of clarity in evangelism. That discussion was so profitable that the group asked us to continue it for a second week. I had asked everyone to skim three articles from our journal plus a paper I presented at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting in Atlanta last November. To my surprise, by our next meeting they had read all the papers.

These guys are solidly in the Free Grace camp and this is turning out to be a super time of encouragement and instruction for everyone. I'm sorry I didn't start this class ten years ago. This is, after all, what I did for four years on staff with Campus Crusade. My goal is that each of these guys will lead their own groups in a year or so and teach others what I taught them.

I would appreciate your prayers for Paul Gates, Cord Miller, Shawn Leach, Mark Schmahl, and Chris Herring and for their walks with the Lord. **FG**

Emmanuel Baptist continued from page 1

the Sunday morning worship service on How to Share the Gospel Clearly.

A Free Grace pastor who graduated with me at DTS, Butch Simmons, was able to come several times, and on the last night I was delighted to meet Nap Clark.

My thanks to Bob and his wonderful wife Peggy and to Kenny and the rest of the people at EBC for their warm Southern hospitality. **FG**

Winter Board Meeting January 19

Unlike a year ago when our finances were a major concern, this year we were encouraged to receive the report that halfway through this fiscal year we are on target to reach or modestly exceed our budget. This may allow us to put some money in reserve and possibly even to consider expanding our outreach in some exciting ways.

The board discussed the feasibility of converting our *Grace in Focus* Newsletter into a full-color magazine that would be produced quarterly. Currently we are looking into that. Preliminary bids would indicate this change will increase our printing costs \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year based on our current mailing list of 10,000. However, these improvements could very well spark an interest from our readership that could double or triple its current number.

It was great to have Dr. Doug Hill back at the meeting. He is now fully recovered from his surgery for prostate cancer.

Cathy's report on the commentary project was very encouraging. We now have completed first drafts of ten commentaries: John, Galatians, Philippians (undergoing revision), 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 1 Peter (undergoing revision), James, and 1-3 John (condensed).

Our thanks to Greg Sapaugh (Chairman), Doug Hill (Secretary/Treasurer), Troy Jensen, and Brad Duskocil for their diligent work before and during this board meeting. **FG**

Cypress Valley continued from page 1

result, is important. We must do God's work the way He said and not just do what is right in our own eyes.

I enjoyed lunch with associate pastor and long time friends John and Connie Claeys and a number of other people from CVBC. **FG**



Bob with Nap Clark after the service at EBC



The High School group at CVBC



CVBC members Amy & Scott Paige and Wanda & Jim Easley



Brad, Doug, Mike, Bob, Greg, and Troy



Grace on the Go

February

- 22 RidgePointe Fellowship, Dallas, TX
- 23-26 GES 9th Annual Conference, Irving, TX
- 28-29 Alvin, Texas Bible Church

March

- 9-13 Fellowship for Evangelising Britain's Villages, Sheffield, England