Pastor and Mrs. Harry J. Bain, who had spent one term in Africa as missionaries, and who because of the physical condition of their youngest child, Gregory, being unable to return to that field, prayed for the Lord’s guidance as to where He would now lead them. At first they thought it was Hong Kong, but the Lord closed the door, then they were ready to go to Puerto Rico with trunks in Miami waiting to be shipped when the Lord closed that door. Pastor Bain made a trip to the West Indies and thought that the Lord might be leading him to Trinidad, but after coming to Barbados and being told by the Government that he would be able to stay here, knew that this was the place where the Lord was leading him to serve. A few weeks later Mrs. Bain and the children joined him. This was June 9, 1964.

On first coming to the island, Pastor Bain, working under Gospel Fellowship Missions, had no intentions of starting another church. One of the first things I (Iva Dean Clark) heard about Barbados was that there was a church on every corner and sometimes two and three in between. He started Bible Clubs for children and teenagers and also had meetings in his home on Sunday nights, with no intentions then of starting a church. These Sunday night meetings were moved to homes of different families, where they would be held for a month then moved to another home. On Sunday mornings Pastor Bain and his family would drive to the country, pass out literature, and talk with the people about the Lord. People were being saved, but there was a problem, no place to put them where they would be taught as Pastor Bain knew they should.

February 8, 1966 I (Iva Dean Clark) came to help the Bains in the work on the island. A few months after I arrived, Pastor Bain was asked to be chaplain of the U.S. Naval Facility in St. Lucy. Church services plus Sunday School and a Monday night Bible Class were included. There was still the problem of a church when a national American Church. We began to talk about and to seek the leading of the Lord as to whether or not He would have us start a church on the island. In the month of July, Pastor Bain went for a week to St. Lucia where a doctor and a group of nurses from Bob Jones University were working for the summer, and while there he discussed the problem of a church with Dr. Driesbach. The Lord used Dr. Driesbach, who later preached in Grace Bible Church, to give Pastor Bain the final push in starting another church in Barbados, but from the beginning, Grace Bible Church was not to be just another church.

We began praying for the Lord’s leading in the right place to start this church. We watched the papers for houses for rent—then one day we found the house "Bensonhurst" in Hastings. We felt the rent was too high, but we prayed about it and decided that we would offer a smaller sum and if it was accepted then we would take it with the understanding that I would live in the back of the house with the church in front. Our offer was accepted and we put on our working clothes and with the help of a dentist from Dr. Driesbach’s team, and also some help from Patrick Ganes (Patrick was then attending Top Rock Bible Club), we painted "Bensonhurst" throughout.

The first service was held at "Bensonhurst," Halls Gap, Hastings; Christ Church, on September 4, 1966. Those present were Rev. and Mrs. Bain and family, Dr. John Batakoff, Angela Brooks, Eugene Pilgrim, Mrs. Daisy Nairn, Miss Dahlia Nairn, Elwin Nairn, McCurley Taylor, and Iva Dean Clark—15 in number. Church services were started in the morning and Sunday School was in the afternoon at 3 p.m. The Palm Beach Bible Club was moved to the church to begin our Friday night young people’s meeting. People
were being saved, and how we praised the Lord. The devil was also busy at work. And at almost every turn there was a battle with him. On September 29, 1966, there came, as it were, the climax to the whole fight—the death of Gregory Bain, the youngest of Pastor Bain's children. I shall never forget the evening before they were to take Greg back to the States for treatment. Pastor Bain, walking the floor of the hospital room, told me that if Gregory lived he would return to Barbados only to sell their belongings, that it would be impossible for them to remain on the island. Grace Bible Church had been started less than a month and now its future looked so uncertain. Gregory passed away in Puerto Rico on the way to the States. Pastor and Mrs. Bain returned with the little white coffin to Barbados—the Lord had sent them back.

On July 2, 1967 Grace Bible Church was organized with twelve charter members: Joyce Stout, Harry Naitram, Trevor Stout, Roy Williams, Maria Williams, Jonathan Williams, Dahlia Naitram, Daisy Naitram, Patrick Garnes, McCurley Taylor, Elvin Naitram, and Kenneth Stout. A board of two deacons was elected—Kenneth Stout and Elvin Naitram. February 14, 1968 Patrick Garnes was elected to the deacon board. To the date of March 5, 1969 there were 31 members of Grace Bible Church, on Nov. 30 there were 50.

The summer of 1967 we had our first young people's camps, with the help of Kenneth Davis and Nevil Chin, a summer team from Bob Jones University, and also members of Project Compassion (the team of nurses working in St. Lucia for the summer). We again received help from Project Compassion for camp in 1968, but most of the counselling for the boys was done by our own young men. In 1969 we had our largest camp and this time we did not need any outside help.

In June 1968, with the help of Bob Jones University, we were able to have our first session of the Summer Institute of Bible with Rev. Jessie Boyd, graduate professor at B.J.U. teaching. We borrowed the First Baptist Church for that first session. Rev. Boyd returned for the second session in 1969, when we were able to use our own building at Faddick.

The summer of 1967 we were offered a little church at Wellhouse, St. Philip which we accepted. A few months later the building burned. We then moved to the small building next door. On July 28, 1968 Pastor Bain baptized three young people (Gloria Forde, Keelen Alleyne, Nigel Alleyne), who had given their hearts to the Lord at Grace Bible Church at Wellhouse. Patrick Garnes is now the pastor there. On November 30, 1969, 4 young people from Wellhouse became members of Grace Bible Church. They are Gloria Forde, Keelen Alleyne, Nigel Alleyne, and Elrita Browne.

Grace Bible Church also has 14 Bible Clubs scattered over the island, two of these being in Children's Homes. There are at least 16 nationals working with these clubs. For the past two years, just before Christmas, we have gotten all the clubs together for a Bible Club Rally.

On August 1, 1968 Pastor Bain and family left Barbados for a year of furlough in the States, leaving the young church in the hands of the three deacons who did a marvelous job of carrying on the work of Grace Bible Church until August 30 when Pastor and Mrs. Stanley Branch of Kingstown, St. Vincent came to take over the work. They stayed with us until November 4, 1968 at which time they returned to St. Vincent, returning again to us on December 14, 1968. Pastor Branch started a class for the men interested in preaching and also one for our Sunday School teachers. He and Mrs. Branch returned to St. Vincent after our camp season in August 1969. The Lord greatly used his teaching ministry in our midst.
For almost two years we had been watching the papers for a piece of land or building which we thought would be suited for our church, but with no success. Then about the middle of January 1969, I received a telephone call very early one morning from a man who told me that he was the new owner of "Bensonhurst." As I hung up the phone I said out loud, "Praise the Lord," because I knew that now Grace Bible Church would soon own its own place of worship.

We have seen with our own eyes how the devil has meant so much for our hurt and then as we have watched and waited on the Lord, we have seen Him take that very thing and turn it into a blessing for us. We of Grace Bible Church can certainly testify to the fact that the Lord still answers prayer as He said He would do in Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."

On March 5, 1969 the Grace Bible Church moved into its own property on Paddock Road, St. Michael. A praise service was held at which time several of the members took part in the service. Pastor Branch told the people (a full church it was) how the Lord had so wondrously worked on our behalf in finding and buying this property, then gave a short message from the Word of God and concluded with a dedication service.

On April 8, 1969, Miss Beverly Simpson, another missionary under Gospel Fellowship Missions, came to Barbados to work with Grace Bible Church.

Pastor Bain and family were to return to Barbados for a second term on the first of August 1969, but a few weeks before that they received word that the Barbados government had refused permission for them to return. Again Grace Bible Church was driven to her knees. Letters were written and visits made to government officials by our church board and this permission was given until the end of 1969. Pastor Bain, who had returned to the island alone for the month of August, then returned to the States for his family. On September 30, 1969, Pastor Bain and his family returned to Barbados to find that that same day they had been granted permission by the government to stay two years. Again the Lord had worked on our behalf. The same day the Bains returned to the island the church received a letter from the government granting the two year stay.

The weeks, months, and then almost four years have come and gone and now it is time for me to leave the sunny little island which has been home to me and to say goodbye to the people I have grown to love so dearly. Sure, there is a pain in my heart, but it is also filled with praise at the marvelous way the Lord has worked in bringing ones to Himself and for the growth in their lives. Missionaries will come and go and if the Lord permits them to remain or if He calls them to other parts, the Grace Bible Church, Barbados, West Indies, will continue to go forward with the help of the Lord, because she is learning that truly: "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

Iva Dean Clark

December 1969.