



GRACE NEWS

A Grace Baptist Church
Quarterly Newsletter



*Worthy,
Not
Deserving*

Pastor Ian urges us to follow Paul in looking to the Philippian church for a fitting example of how we might live lives worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Not only was Philippi the first church planted in Europe, it was the only church that Paul specifically held up as an 'example' for other churches to follow. And yet, even this church needed encouragement to continually strive toward integrating belief, belonging and behaviour in ways that directed glory to God.

In Philippians 1:28-29, Paul writes, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that ... I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them... of your salvation, and that from God."

So how might we imitate this early church and display lives that demonstrate the value of the gospel?

- **We can resist isolation.** We know that God calls us to community. But more than just being something, He calls us to do something! What are we to do?

- **We can stand and strive for the gospel.** This means that in a world of clogged negative news cycles, we constantly make our stand and compete on behalf of the unchanging good news. And how are we to do this?

- **We can be unified.** Meaning, all that we do, we do all together: we stand firm together, we strive side by side, with one spirit and one mind, we demonstrate the worth of the gospel by living together as a community that invests our energies in a constant effort to exalt Christ in our world. Unity is not a result of our working with each other. It is evidence of God's working in us.

- **We can reject fear.** The word 'fear' comes from an old Saxon word, which today would be interpreted, 'ambush'. It was a word associated with those who lived without a sense of safety. The opposite of fear? Encouragement. Faith. Joy. Trust. Calm.

These are the words that describe a manner of life that is worthy of the gospel. They demonstrate not that we are deserving of salvation, but that we have been made objects of salvation! Ω

[This page] The watercolour painting by Lek Ser Chong shows a flock of Canada geese flying united in a 'V' formation. In the foreground are two geese who have left the flock in order to care for a sick friend, to nurse him back to health and help him rejoin the flock once he has regained his strength.

BELIEVE - BELONG - BEHAVE



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We welcome your feedback:

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BELIEVE



Tuesday Enquiry Group

God has been doing great things at the Tuesday Enquiry Group! Bibiana Yeo shares with us how these classes have borne much spiritual fruit among teachers and students alike. Read on and be encouraged!

“Isn’t the Bible a myth? Hasn’t science disproved Christianity?” “Who is God? What is He like as described in Genesis 1?” For 14 Tuesday evenings in February to May a small group met to discuss such questions. The Tuesday Enquiry Group started in February 2018 as a group that meets weekly to provide a space for both Christians and non-Christians to get some answers to questions that they might have about the faith.

Broadly speaking, the topics of each of these 14 sessions fall into three main groups. Firstly, six sessions were dedicated to apologetics. Each session started with a prayer, followed by a viewing of one episode of Timothy Keller’s “The Reason for God” DVD, which was then used to springboard our own discussions for the topic of the evening. These sessions dealt with common questions about the nature of God, the reality of heaven and hell in the Bible, and the exclusive truth claims of Christianity. There were also weeks where we addressed the truth of Scripture even in an

age of science, the issue of obedience and authority that Scripture demands, as well as the seeming hypocrisy and failure of the church in society.

Apart from these thought-provoking questions, four sessions were spent on running through the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a concise but careful manner, where we examined four different passages in the Bible to answer questions about who God is, what Man is, who Jesus is and how we are to respond to Jesus. Lastly, we spent another four sessions on scrutinising some fascinating instances of Jesus’ ministry for us to get to know His motivations and actions better. These sessions took us through four passages in the Gospel of John as we saw Jesus interact with four different groups of people – the truth-seeker, the party people, the ashamed, and those who are hurting. These groups represent most if not all of us at some point in our lives, and these sessions provided a wonderful opportunity to see how God in Christ met people where they were.

We thank God for most graciously and faithfully providing for each and every session. When we began, we wondered about who would come and were worried that no one would turn up. But God was faithful as He always is, and provided people every single week! A total of 18 new people joined us over the course of the 14 weeks. Some grew up in the church and had questions about the Christian faith. Others were non-Christians who wanted to find out more. There were also new Christians seeking to build their faith. God worked wonderfully to bring together familiar and unfamiliar faces to simply discuss the Christian worldview and to be perceptive listeners of the gospel. We were encouraged because some individuals have started attending GBC worship services and other events, while others have also indicated their interest to continue finding out more! Indeed, it is to the praise of His glory that both big and small fruits have been borne out of each session, and we pray that God may continue to use us for the spread of the gospel. Ω

We would appreciate your prayers for these sessions. Pray:

For the team organising them, that we may continue to rest on God’s provision and faithfully proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ.

That we may hold fast to the truth that the gospel alone is the power of God for salvation – not clever arguments, not eloquent speech, and not even pretty powerpoint presentations.

For those that will come, that God will prepare their hearts and also reveal Himself to them. Pray that more in GBC will also come alongside their friends to help share the gospel!

The second run of these weekly sessions started in August, but you can still join us for the following sessions:

23-Oct: What truth does Jesus Christ offer?

30-Oct: Is pleasure and happiness sinful?

06-Nov: How do Christians deal with shame and guilt?

13-Nov: Why don’t Christians fear death?

If you have questions or are interested to join us, please do not hesitate to contact Jonathan Tan at: jonathantan307@gmail.com

BELONG

PLUGGING INTO GBC

What helps new members feel a sense of belonging in GBC? What challenges do they face in integrating, and what makes them persevere to overcome setbacks? Two families who recently joined the church share their stories.



Seng Guan, Karen and Samantha

In Nov 2016, we left Malaysia and made our home in Singapore. Finding a suitable church was really important for us as the church is our family in Christ. After visiting several churches and prayerfully looking for a church with a strong emphasis on God's word where we can feel at home and serve, we decided to commit ourselves to Grace Baptist Church (GBC).

Since joining GBC, what have been the challenges (if any) you faced in joining the larger GBC family as new members? How did you overcome them?

We came to GBC in July 2017. We spoke with the elders and deacons to understand more about GBC. They were very helpful and introduced many members to us. We also visited care groups and joined various activities that the church organised. By end of 2017, with the encouragement of Pastor Ian and Sherri, we decided to become members of GBC to enable us to serve in the church ministries. It has been an exciting journey ever since we joined GBC. Our daughter Samantha looks forward to youth meetings every Friday, while the two of us have joined

the Evergreen Care Group led by brother Steven Ngiam. Our faith in God has been strengthened through the faithful preaching and teaching of God's word. Our conviction to serve was also rekindled through witnessing the selfless service of various church leaders and members, setting examples for us to learn from and emulate. We truly enjoy the sincere concern and warm fellowship in small group gatherings and the church at large.

What advice (concrete and practical steps) would you give to any new member who desires to be part of GBC and feel a sense of belonging?

Our advice is not to leave the church immediately after Sunday service. Dedicate some time to get to know the leaders and church members in fellowshiping at Level 3. Join a care group and participate in Bible studies available throughout the week. Be involved in the various ministries of the church. Understand that we need the church far more than the church needs us. It also pleases our Lord when we involve ourselves in a church (Eph 3:10-11). It is such a privilege to be part of God's family that for our part, no effort should be spared in getting ourselves involved and integrated in the church.

Eric and Bernie

My wife Bernie and I were stationed in Dubai for 12 years, where we attended a church similar to GBC, which influenced us to find a like-minded church in Singapore. We came to GBC in Mar 2018.

In your view, what does it mean to you to belong to a church?

To belong is to be a member of the church, fully immersed in the spiritual lives of brothers and sisters within, and involved in the various activities that support the work of the Lord; be it giving in the form of financial gifts, offering our spiritual gifts in areas of need, or participating in various ministry outreach programmes. Most of all, it is to be sensitive to the needs of GBC members, praying, encouraging and bearing burdens alongside whoever has need.

Since joining GBC, what have been the challenges (if any) you faced in joining the larger GBC family as new members? How did you overcome them?

In the beginning, we found it difficult to remember the many faces and names of members who warmly greeted us in the Fellow-

ship Hall after service. We feel it would be useful to equip every new member with a church member directory of some sort, to help newcomers remember names and faces. Similarly, a newcomer's class would also be helpful in fostering a better understanding of the church, her history and the various ministries that we could serve in.

What advice (concrete and practical steps) would you give to any new member who desires to be part of GBC and feel a sense of belonging?

Firstly, you need to know and understand the Statement of Faith of the church. Second, you have to agree with the Church Covenant, whereby all members of the church unite in declaring their core beliefs as believers and children of God. Growing as a Christian is not a solo affair. You need constant spiritual oversight from the elders and fellowship with other mature Christians. The best way to be plugged into the life of the church is to join a care group. The constant engagement of sharing lives through the care group helps to smoothen the rough edges that can occur in all relationships, and brings about a deeper spiritual relationship between all members of the church. Ω

The Little Things



That Count

*Those of us who have children know that one of the main concerns is teaching them how to 'behave'.
Mok Chuan Hao reminds us that there is more than this to Christian parenting, and encourages us to lean on God for daily grace to parent our children His way.*

Melisse and I have three children, Andrea (10), Timothy (7) and Emma (4). They have all been on the one hand a tremendous blessing, and on the other a continuous source of heartache, with their seemingly unrestrained and outgoing natures. Be it the overly enthusiastic answering of questions, or roaming about Junior Worship when all other children are seated nicely, or the never-ending reminders to greet people and not sprint away once the worship leader allows, we often wonder how come our kids are so different from their “乖” (guai = ‘well behaved’) parents, or so we would like to think.

It is difficult during the times that our children frustrate us to remind ourselves that they are God’s gifts and that we have our Heavenly Father as our example and His precepts to guide us. It is all too easy to roar like a tiger Dad/Mum to elicit immediate compliance, forgetting that it is the heart that we are concerned with. It would be much easier to ‘ban’ them from things of the world whose

standards are so different from God’s (eg pop music), than to take the time to explain to the child what is wrong with it. It is difficult to watch one’s tongue at home, when surrounded in the office and mass media by unsuitable language. Even the language and content of books being peddled for today’s youth can be shocking.

Fortunately, there are many examples and resources available. We have many Uncles and Aunties to look for when advice is needed. We look at how other ‘naughty’ children of Uncles and Aunties have turned out to be just fine and take heart that God is in control. We return to the Bible and its precepts when we face dilemmas and hard questions and listen to the advice of Dr James Dobson and Pastor Paul Tripp.

At the church that I worshipped at when I was studying in the US, parents were publicly admonished by the Senior Pastor if their boisterous children were not de-

posited at the nursery. The nursery was situated in another building, and either Melisse or I would have to stay with Andrea at the nursery, thereby missing out on the entire service. This went on for my entire stint overseas. I am heartened that at Grace, the cry rooms (meant only for nursing mothers) are conveniently located, and there is much tolerance for toddlers that remain in the sanctuary. That is a clear and definite commitment by the congregation to bear with, inevitably, the odd sounds that emerge at the most inconvenient moments from the left-hand side of the sanctuary. Indeed, each time there is an infant dedication, I am reminded of my commitment to nurture each of our newest members as if they were my own, just as many Uncles and Aunties continue to do for the children in church. I encourage all to continue to do so, for did not our Lord direct: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”? Ω

REFORMATION CONCERT

The Reformation Concert team updates us on what's been happening at rehearsals, and explains more about how 'grace that sings' is expressed in and through the words of the Psalms.

One Sunday in August, a member of the team got a text from a friend from another Baptist church. It read: "Hey, I heard GBC is doing a Reformation Concert this year? Can I publicise this in my church? When are tickets out???" So word was out early that we would be doing a third concert to mark the Protestant Reformation at the end of October.

Rehearsals began in late July, and our singers and musicians have been hard at work in rehearsal. One hundred singers and 22 musicians have committed to this year's concert. For many, it's their first time participating in any kind of musical performance. But here's what participants have shared:

"Thank you for choosing deeply meaningful songs. And rehearsals are so fun!"

"I'm so glad I joined in. Is it too late to ask others to participate?"

"This is beautiful music. Excited to see how it all comes together."

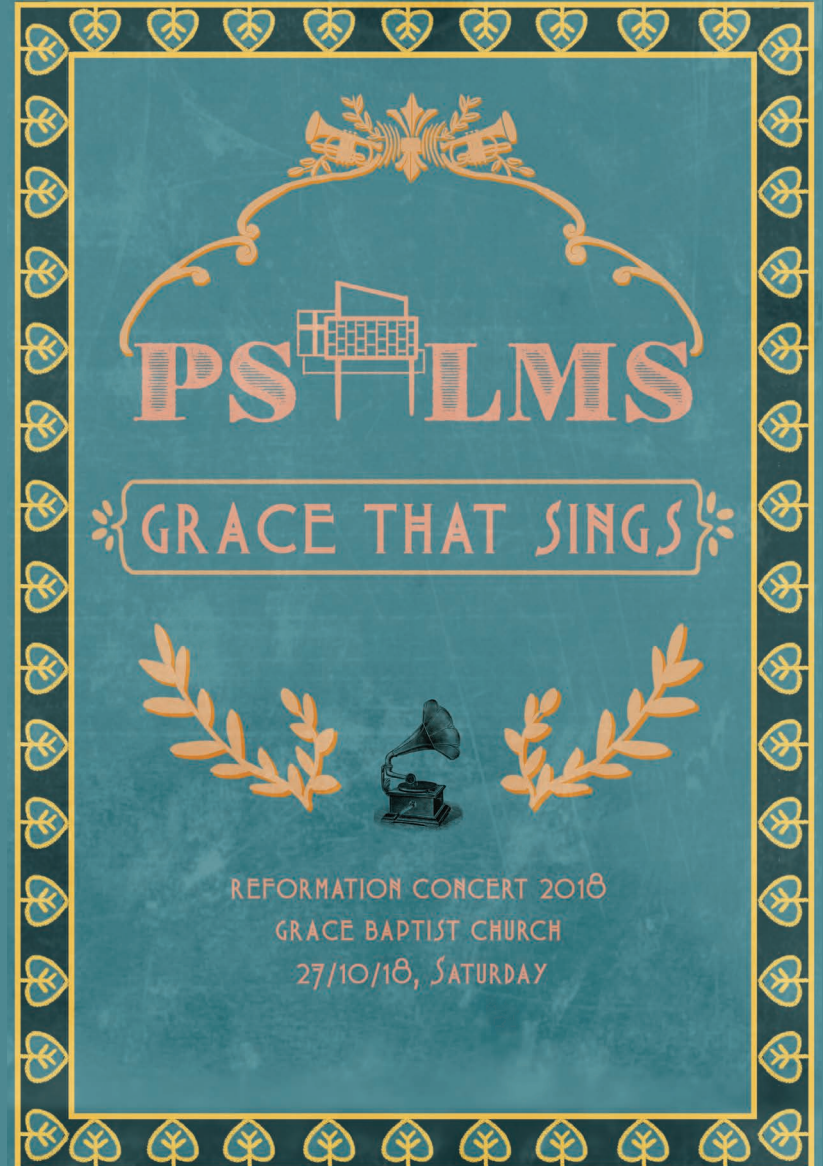
When God's Spirit prompts the church to do something together, God brings order out of chaos and makes the ordinary extraordinary. Isn't that what happened when that little boy offered Jesus his five loaves and two fish?



The team is especially excited to bring attention to the Psalms through song. In the Psalms, God has given us a holy expression for every situation in life. So whether we are rejoicing, sorrowing, mourning or waiting, God teaches us how to sing, by His grace.

It was also in the Reformation that the principle of *Sola Scriptura* called the church back to reading the Psalms devotionally and using them in worship, a practice which became known as 'Psalm singing'. Even though we don't practise 'Psalm singing' in its purest form, the centrality of the Psalms in worship, as exhorted by the New Testament, is what we hope to introduce to the church by singing Psalm-based hymns for our encouragement.

In rehearsals we've been looking at Psalm 72, a Messianic Psalm that talks about the great Davidic King God will send, and His kingdom based on justice, righteousness and peace. We have learnt a song based on Psalm 23, which is the great Psalm for God's sheep to sing – a prayer of rest and comfort in our Shepherd. Psalm 90 will also be in the concert and helps us worship the eternal, unchanging God. For those who are struggling, Psalm 91 provides comfort as we rest in the shadow of the Highest, and the refuge that God Himself provides. In singing these Psalms, we have been practising what James commands us to do in Jas 5:13: "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise."



As we gather to sing praise, God has been drawing us into His word, and into the beautiful lyrics of hymns, showing us what it means that God's grace sings in the Psalms. Surely this singing of God's word is what Paul meant when he said "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Col 3:15)

Keep us in prayer as we continue to rehearse – and join us to sing praise on 27 Oct! Ω



MISSIONS/EVENTS

Shigeyuki Mori has been serving with the Singapore Japanese Christian Fellowship (SJCF) since 1986. Here Shige shares with us the challenges and joys of reaching out to the Japanese community here in Singapore.



The Mori family: (L-R) Jonathan, Kiyoko, Shige, Kitty, Andrea and Toshi.

I have been involved with SJCF, a church for the Japanese community living in Singapore, for 33 years as a member, deacon, chairman, elder and missionary. One of the characteristics of an overseas Japanese church is that though the number of members increases every year by around 20 including those who are baptised, we also lose just as many or more as some return to Japan when their company assignments end. Therefore, the church has not been growing in size for many years. However, we believe that the most important thing is not the size of the church but rather how much we are united in Christ and used by the Lord for the salvation of souls.

Hence, the vision we have in our church is that when our members return to Japan, we are sending missionaries to Japan. In order for this purpose to be accomplished, it is important that while they are in Singapore they grow in Christ and truly become disciples of Jesus, so that they can learn how to share the gospel with others confidently and be used to encourage the churches in Japan.

During my recent mission trip to Japan in June, four old business friends for whom I have been praying and spending time seriously for the last 10 years came to a stage where they wanted to pray with me and confess their faith in Jesus. We do not know how to thank the Lord for this, all praise to His name.

Pray for SJCF that we can continue the work of the Lord of making disciples of Jesus through Bible studies and fellowship and that all of us will reach out to Japanese living in Singapore.

Pray for me that He will continue to guide me to the proper timing of all necessary actions to follow up with both pre-believers and believers and to share the gospel continually. Ω

CG Nite | 7 July 18 ▼

About 90 people came to hear how the CGs are doing. The night started off with three CG leaders: Jena Tang, Seah Kah Yin and See Kwang Yew, sharing about their respective CGs, followed by a discussion on topics such as how to nurture an environment that welcomes openness during CG meetings and how to promote a healthy turnover.



Newcomers Lunch | 8 July 18 ▼



We have been seeing a steady stream of newcomers worshipping with us and a lunch was organised so that we can get to know one another. It was such a joy to welcome so many newcomers into our midst!



EVENTS

GBC Craft Time | 4 Aug 18 ▼

The craft session turned out to be a really good way to interact with other members of the church, as this meeting cut across the usual boundaries and existing habitual groupings within the church body. It was also very interesting to see how different the terrariums turned out to be even though the participants all used the same materials, just as God has fashioned each one of us uniquely according to His purpose and pleasure.



Thanksgiving Service | 12 Aug 18 ▼

It's been a year since we returned to Mattar Road as a church family. We celebrated God's goodness to GBC over 59 years and reflected on God's holy name and the deep love of Jesus. We were also challenged by Ps Ian to aim at growing mature instead of simply growing old.



Baptisms and Transfers 26 Aug 18 & 23 Sep 18 ▼

On 26 August we welcomed eight new members into the GBC family via baptism (From top picture L-R: Janette Tan, Samuel Tan, Ng Jian Hui and Emily Chan) and transfer of membership (L-R: Frederick Chua, Grace Koh, Patrick Lee and Jason Chan). On 23 September, 9 new members joined us via transfer (Bottom picture L-R: Fellisia and Yanadi Soetanto, Hewlett Chew, Stanley Yin, Margaret Soh, Stephen Wong and Gek Noi, and Alicia and Aaron Ng). We are overjoyed! Pray that as a church family we will love and walk with them in His light. See Page 3 to read about two other families who joined GBC in July.



Children's Ministry Movie Under the Stars | 1 Sep 18 ▼

Wet weather prevented this event from taking place on the rooftop, but we thank God for providing the spacious Fellowship Hall! The night proved to be an encouraging time of fellowship, enabling children, parents and teachers to get to know each other better over a potluck dinner. While the kids were engrossed in watching the movie Up, the adults were engaged in conversation, building each other up in love. It was a night full of joy and laughter where we could all gather as a church family to have fun together!



CHILDREN'S CORNER

George Müller

Written by Rachel Wong, illustrated by Emily Seck

Do you remember the three Bs that we have been thinking about over the last three issues of Children's Corner? They are Believe, Belong and Behave, and together they make up our church theme for this year. For this last issue, let us see what these three Bs look like when they are put into practice in a person's life. Then we will more easily understand that the three Bs are not just nice ideas: they make up a way to live a true Christian life.

George Müller was born in 1805 in what is now part of Germany. As a young man he led a sinful lifestyle: he was a liar, a thief and a gambler. By the age of 10 he was stealing money from his father. While his mother lay dying he, at the age of 14, was out drinking and gambling. When he was 16 he spent five weeks in prison for not paying his hotel bills, and was only released when his father paid the bill for him. He went to university to study the Bible, not because he wanted to serve God but because he knew he would earn a good salary as a pastor. While at university he cheated his friends by charging them too much for a holiday he arranged, so that he wouldn't have to pay as much. He also forged a letter from his father so that he could obtain a passport.



This was the kind of person George was, when one day his friend took him to a Bible study, and he became a Christian! He Believed! He was totally changed, and from that day onwards he stopped all his sinful behaviour. He Behaved! He decided to become a missionary and went to England, where he became the pastor of a church. He Belonged – to his own church and to the fellowship of all Christians all over the world!

God used George in an amazing way by calling him to live by depending only on God Himself for his daily needs. For the rest of his life he refused to accept a salary and relied on prayer only, trusting that God would provide by prompting believers to give him money out of their own free will. He never asked any person for donations, he only ever made known his needs to God, and God never let him down. Even after George started an orphanage which grew to house 2000 orphans, he only ever relied on prayer to supply all the money to run such a large organisation, and God supplied the needs in miraculous ways. On one famous occasion, the orphans were all sitting down to eat breakfast and George gave thanks for the food, even though there was nothing to eat in the whole house. When he finished praying a baker knocked on the door with a gift of enough bread to feed everyone, and a milkman's cart broke down right outside and donated all the fresh milk to the orphans. That is just one example of George's amazing faith and how God miraculously answered prayer at just the right time.



**"Four hours of work after
1 hour of prayer will
accomplish more than
5 hours without prayer."**

George recorded in his journal over 50,000 specific answers to prayer, 30,000 of which he said were answered the same day or even the same hour he prayed them! And he encouraged his fellow Christians to pray by saying that four hours of work after one hour of prayer would accomplish more than five hours without prayer. That is a challenge to us, don't you think, when we sometimes struggle to pray even for five minutes?

George Müller was a man who truly lived in a way that showed he Believed, Belonged and Behaved. I hope that you feel inspired by his life to do the same, because our great God is the same yesterday, today and for ever, and He can help you do great things too. May all the glory go to God! Ω