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GRACE NEWS

A QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

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Grace Baptist Church is a
disciple-making church that
transforms lives with the gos-
pel and love of Jesus Christ.



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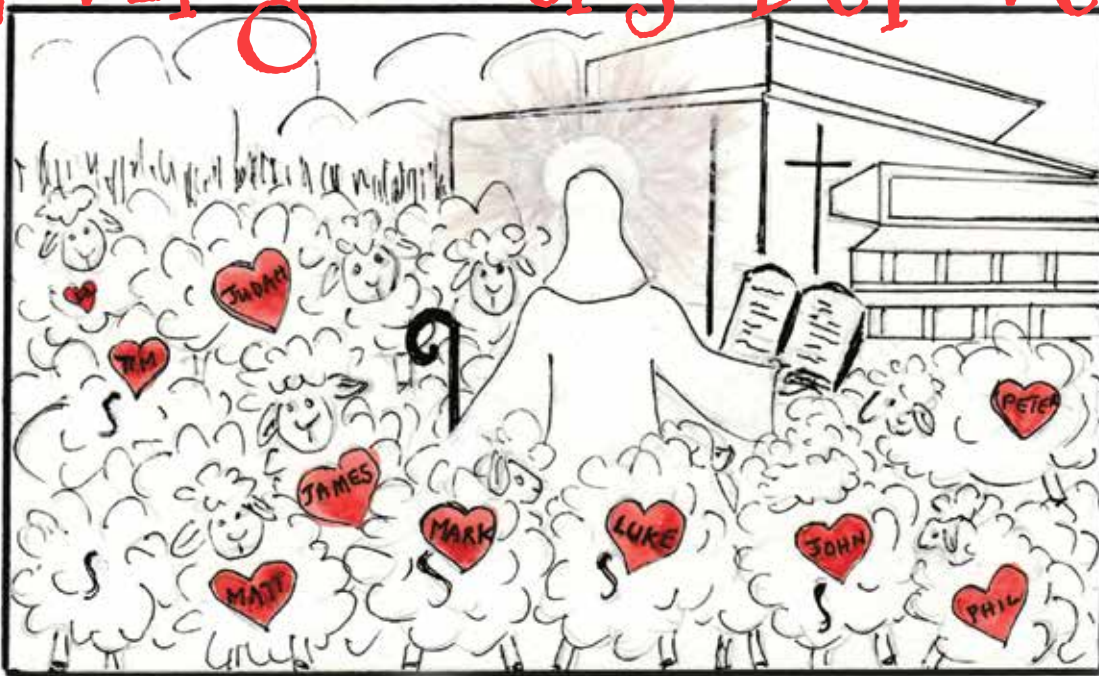
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Loving God's Beloved



Pastor Eugene shares with us how as fellow members of the church we are stewards of one another's lives,
and that God entrusts us to one another for our mutual upbuilding and His glory.

God cares about the church. This truth bears repeating, because when we realise how much the church matters to God, we will be encouraged to glorify God together as His people.

Jesus' words in John 10 convey the deep affection that God has for the church. Jesus is the good shepherd who "lays down his life for the sheep" (v 11). The Lord is personally invested in the eternal wellbeing of His flock. He knows every single one of us by name: "I know my own and my own know me" (v 14).

Because the church is so central to God's purpose and affections, it should matter to us too. Biblical Christianity is not merely about our individual salvation; it is about Jesus saving the church – a people – to be His beloved bride. How can we better love the church?

1) Learn what God says about the church from His word. We should be committed

to hear and understand what Scripture says about who we are and how we should live and organise ourselves as God's people. Let God's word direct all that we do as a church, even if it makes us uncomfortable.

2) Praise and thank God for His love for the church. Knowing that God cherishes the church should fill our hearts with humble gratitude and worship. This, in turn, will move us to be thankful for our fellow brothers and sisters, who have been bought with the precious blood of Christ.

3) Serve God's people. We cannot love God without loving those who are created in His image, especially those who have been created anew in the image of His Son. When Jesus asked Peter about his love, he told Peter that such love would be expressed by serving Jesus' followers.

We serve God's people in order to encourage

We cannot love God without loving those who are created in His image, especially those who have been created anew in the image of His Son.

one another towards greater Christ-like maturity. We serve best in the context of loving relationships, when we commit to knowing and being known by one another. Seek to build deeper relationships with the rest of the church by regularly attending a CG or meeting up with someone during the week. Practise hospitality by inviting others into your lives.

The church is God's beloved. May He help us to love one another, as those who belong to Him! Ω

NOT ASHAMED

Labourers By Faith

Wrapping up our series of "Not Ashamed of the Gospel" interviews, Neo Yi Ling and Chan Kim Hoong speak to **Melissa Fam** and **Helen Chee**, two of our many unsung heroes who worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the church rebuilding project. In these interviews, Melissa and Helen share the encouragement they have received from their involvement in the rebuilding project, and how it has challenged them to be not ashamed of the gospel.



Melissa, Joshua & Kong

What was your role in the church rebuilding project?

I first got involved in the rebuilding project in mid-2013, before the decision to rebuild was put before the church. I was part of a small EC-CC task force formed to help the congregational leadership gather information for their decision-making process. I was tasked to survey the needs of the church for ministry and fellowship, to help formulate space requirements for the preliminary design of the new building.

After the vote, I was roped into the Fundraising Committee. We met regularly to pray for those who had made faith pledges, and coordinated fundraising efforts. I was also part of the Communications Sub-Committee, and helped to update the rebuilding webpage monthly.

What was one challenge that arose, which redefined your perspective of the rebuilding project?

The most challenging aspect of this journey was at the beginning: praying for the conviction and clear rationale for the need to rebuild. I found it difficult to discern whether this was what God wanted for our church. I suspect other members had similar struggles. Even on the day of the vote, I couldn't sense if we were going to get the project off the ground. Ultimately, while there were many practical reasons for the rebuilding, God gave me the conviction that this project was a journey of faith. I

didn't have the answers to all my questions before the vote; I wasn't able to predict how these changes were going to affect our community at that time or in the future when the building was ready. I simply had to trust in His timing and follow His lead.

How has the experience of working on the rebuilding project encouraged you?

I have been very encouraged by how many members of the church rallied together to help with the fundraising efforts in the last 22 months: individuals such as Auntie Yoke Meng who faithfully fed us kueh every week; youths and young adults who organised bake sales; cooks who prepared the fellowship dinners; individuals who rendered services like art classes and cleaning services; members who produced the second Reformation Concert and the Singing God's Love album. It wasn't about how much money they were able to raise, but about bringing people in the community together and blessing them with the talents that God has gifted them.

“Seeing how God had started the project and seen it through to its completion in spite of the challenges gives me confidence that the same powerful God is also at work in my life.”

How has the rebuilding project challenged you personally to be unashamed of the gospel?

Seeing how God had started the project and seen it through to its completion in spite of the challenges gives me confidence that the same powerful God is also at work in my life. I am humbled by and thankful for what God can do through us – with our quirks and flaws. So many have given sacrificially, in faith and out of gratitude for what God has done. This is the fruit of the gospel – a transformation of our lives through the gospel with the love of Jesus Christ.

What is your hope for GBC now that we moved back to a new building on Mattar Road?

For families (with an active toddler) such as mine, it can be a struggle fellowshiping with other members on a Sunday afternoon. I was really encouraged by brothers and sisters in Christ who, with great understanding of these constraints, made extra effort to meet us at home or invite us over for a meal, to see how we were doing and keep us accountable. It is my prayer and hope that with the additional 'convenience' of having our own building, we will not stop these intentional efforts to meet up, minister to one another, and share the gospel with those who have yet to hear it. Ω

NOT ASHAMED



Helen & Michael

How long have you been with GBC, and what brought you here?

My early Christian experience was shaped solely within the confines of a church where my maternal grandfather preached. He espoused the beliefs that the wrath of God rained fire and brimstone on the unsaved, and that speaking in tongues was proof of the Holy Spirit's presence in believers. It took me years of self-searching and much courage to finally break away and reject such sub-setting of God's word. It was Mike, my husband, who brought me to GBC, where I was baptised and we were married, all those 30 odd years ago. GBC has been our home since then.

How has your involvement in the church rebuilding encouraged you in your walk with God, particularly in your faith in God's promises?

It was bittersweet when the idea of rebuilding was mooted. There goes another icon of my past, I thought, the way of many old buildings and neighbourhoods in Singapore. The sound-

dead sanctuary, the cacophonous fellowship area, hammering on the caretaker's door to be let in, music theory lessons in the Annex where the choir prepared for the Grade 3 ABRSM exam (all passed, by God's grace), the August Forster grand piano (now sadly looking for a new home), the weddings ("what, no central aisle?" and "where is the cross?"), the concerts (remember "Reach out MacPherson"?)... the list of memories goes on.

When the invitation to participate in the rebuilding programme as secretary to the Steering Committee (SC) and Building Sub-Committee (BSC) came, it was a no-brainer to accept. I was retired, and there's nothing hard about writing minutes, coordinating meetings and chasing open items, I thought. Even if I knew nothing about the subject matter, I could learn. Through this two-year period, learn I certainly did, about construction technicalities (thanks to the content-expert co-labourers and Google), developing warm working relationships with the SC and BSC members, and considerations that were necessary within the larger context of our two congregations.

“It was a humbling experience, and one which repeatedly demonstrated God's goodness and Lordship.”

Most of all, I saw how God blessed the project in ways that would boggle even the most cynical of minds. It was and continues to be a true demonstration of John 16:24 where Jesus told His disciples prior to His crucifixion, “Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” Today, we see the new GBC building, our lovely new home, but not the myriad details and decisions, both large and small, that the working committees had brought before the Lord and earnestly sought His guidance. Also hidden, was the constant challenge of asserting our rights and opinions while showing good Christian testimony in our interactions with co-workers, neighbours and project partners. It was a humbling experience, and one which repeatedly demonstrated God's goodness and Lordship. In retrospect, this could only have been possible if it was totally in accordance to God's will, besought in Jesus' name. And it was.

As the church settles into our new building, what are your hopes for GBC?

For the years to come, it is my prayer that the building God has provided will become a nucleus of active, working faith, anchored solidly in His word and bearing much fruit for His glory. It is my prayer too, that each of us will be available when God calls us to serve in whatever capacity He chooses, in GBC or elsewhere. I believe that this will multiply the joy we receive from not being ashamed of the gospel.

What does it mean to you to be not ashamed of the gospel?

My walk with God is a daily experience filled with the challenge of needing to be 'religiously correct' and acquiescing to pat answers to real world issues. Difficulties are explained away with “this is God's will” and “have faith”. How does this solve problems? God's word in Matthew 13:31-32 reminds us that faith is like a mustard seed. This tiny seed, when nurtured, watered and protected, will grow into a huge tree, with spreading branches that provide shelter and sustenance to others. It follows that our Christian walk is a journey. Every step we take along the narrow way adds richness to our experience and grows our faith in God. That is why I lean my imperfect life and imperfect faith on the gospel, of which I am not ashamed. “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last...” (Romans 1:16,17). Ω

SPECIAL FEATURE



Samuel, Josiah & Jessica

Samuel Beh began serving as ministry support staff from 14 August 2017, under the Pastor Development Initiative. He serves primarily with the youth and children ministries. Bibiana Yeo interviews him and his wife Jessica (affectionately known to some as 'Sam and Jess') to find out more about them and how we can support and encourage them as a community!

Hi Sam and Jess! Can you tell us more about yourself and your family?

We met in secondary school, started dating a few years after, and have been married for four years. We're parents of two boys!

What led you both to this decision of joining GBC as a full-time ministry support staff for at least a year?

Full-time is something we'd been thinking about for a while, but we did not take the step previously as we did not think we were ready, and so decided to continue serving in our capacity as laymen. Looking back now, we're glad we took this time to wait and earnestly wrestle with the decision, as God was using our time in the secular world and involvement in church ministry as laymen to prepare our hearts for the time ahead.

The decision to go into full-time was based on three things: **Desire, Affirmation, and Opportunity.**

Desire – Matthew 9:35-38 and Philippians 3:7-11 have been instrumental verses in shaping our thoughts on this; in teaching us that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in building God's kingdom; and in reminding us that our lives need to be focused entirely on living out the gospel and all its glorious implications. However, our response to His call comes from a place of knowing (probably not in full) how inadequate we are, and that we are fully dependent on Him to refine our family as we pursue His will for our lives in His kingdom.

Affirmation – We're very grateful for the support and guidance we received from many close mentors and friends, who helped us discern God's call for us to full-time ministry. We would not have made the decision if we did not have the unanimous affirmation of God's call for us from all of them.

Opportunity – In addition to the fact that GBC is (still) really short-staffed and is actively recruiting pastors, the pastoral staff have also been very clear in their vision to use the Pastor Development Initiative to help identify and grow new pastors at GBC.

Feel free to approach us for the unabridged version of this journey too!

That sounds exciting! What are some things that you are excited about? What are you worried about?

We're really excited about having the opportunity to have more time to serve together with GBC in order to build up the body. We're also looking forward to the chance to get to know other members in this body better.

The main concerns for us now are to do with uncertainty and coping with the multiple transitions our family is experiencing simultaneously. Not only do we have to transit to this new role as church ministry staff, we also welcomed an addition to our family in September!

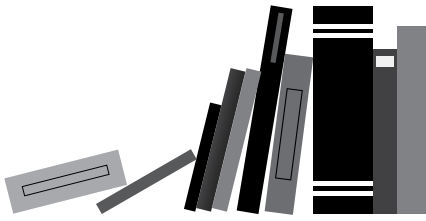
How can the church keep you in prayer? Are there ways we can help practically too?

Our three main requests are that:

1. We will continue to see our family as our primary ministry, and that our family's spiritual life will flourish in love for Christ and passion for His word.
2. We will receive God's wisdom and energy as we negotiate a series of changes this year (welcoming our second baby, moving house, this new job).
3. We will continue to build relationships and integrate ourselves into the family of GBC.

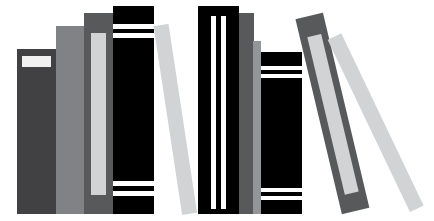
As for helping us in practical ways, we will really appreciate grace and patience as we learn and adjust to our new roles, especially as we learn to juggle handling the boys during service! Ω

MINISTRY FOCUS



CHRONICLES

- For The Church -



We in GBC are uniquely blessed in being able to benefit from the teaching ministry of DS (Discipleship Seminars). Taught in a refreshing and engaging way by many of our younger members, it is an invaluable resource for us – not primarily for the acquisition of more knowledge, but more importantly as an inspiration for spiritual maturity and transformed behaviour. **Tan Yee Kiat** summarises for us the lessons from the study of Chronicles for Christians today.

Teaching a book like Chronicles is tremendously challenging, and thus to help us see its relevance it is helpful to begin by using our imaginations.

Imagine for a moment that you are an exiled Israelite.

Having grown up in the Babylonian Empire, and subsequently Persia, what would you do if King Cyrus suddenly gave you the chance to return to Israel?

You have never set foot in the Jewish temple (which by the way has been destroyed). You have never tasted the unleavened bread of Passover, nor have you ever celebrated one. These rituals and festivals are so alien to you that you might as well be a Gentile.

These are the challenges that confronted the Chronicler. How would the writer inspire the post-exiles to return to the land to rebuild the temple?

Most people who read Chronicles struggle with the need to read this book (“I have just finished reading 1 & 2 Kings, why do I need to read stuff that sounds so similar ... again?”).

Well, God gave us different books and these differences matter. A few things become obvious to us when we pay attention. For one, the Chronicler was writing from the vantage point of an exile returning to the land.

Two, the Chronicler, seeing the immediate heaviness of the task of rebuilding the temple, wrote to inspire the post-exiles to begin to do this great work. The Chronicler spent A LOT of time talking about the temple. Eight chapters about David preparing materials for his son



Solomon to build the temple were written at the end of 1 Chronicles – details you do not see in the Samuel and Kings accounts.

Three, the purpose of all these was to get the Israelites to reinstitute their corporate worship of God. The Chronicler longed to see the return of the sacrifices, the priesthoods, the festal celebrations and so on. For the Chronicler, the worship of Canaanite gods, the spiritual adultery of the kings and the failure to seek God led to the nation's exile. The Chronicler wanted a return of right worship.

“We too are commissioned by King Jesus to build the living temple, and perhaps we need to share the Chronicler's passion.”

Interestingly, Chronicles is also the last book of the Jewish Bible (which is arranged uniquely). This arrangement is meant to inspire hope. Just as the Jewish Bible's first book, Genesis, ends with Joseph's faith that they will not stay in Egypt but will return when God visits them, the last book ends with the hope of Cyrus allowing them to return to the land and rebuild the temple.

For Christians today, the commission to return to build the temple is not too different from the one God gives us. The New Testament is full of

‘building’ language, though we just understand the temple differently. For instance, 1 Peter 2:5 reminds us that we are “living stones” being “built up as a spiritual house”. Ephesians 4:12 reminds us that we the saints are to be equipped to “build up the body of Christ”.

We too are commissioned by King Jesus to build the living temple, and perhaps we need to share the Chronicler's passion.

As Christians, we too can be inspired by God's faithfulness and place our hope in God. How amazing to see that 2 Chronicles starts with a Jewish King named Solomon building the temple and ends with a Gentile King named Cyrus commissioning its rebuilding. All this, despite the turbulence of sin and idolatry going on in between. Will we trust in God's promises and place our hope in them?

Finally, we can be inspired by the Chronicler's passion for right worship. Israel's idolatry wasn't always a pure idolatry. They were worshipping God, but they were also worshipping other things besides God. Will you yourself return to a right worship of God?

In penning these reflections, we in the DS ministry are tremendously grateful to God for allowing us to teach His word. I am firmly convicted that all of God's word is worth teaching, including difficult passages like Chronicles. As individuals, we have also learned a lot from teaching this book and are grateful to those who have journeyed with us. It is fitting that we give God all the glory and praise due to Him in sustaining us through this endeavour. Ω

MISSIONS/EVENTS

Missionary Apprentice



*Now in her final semester at the Singapore Bible College, **Fedora Teong** updates us on her potential overseas mission plans in Thailand with OMF after graduation. We pray for her as she prepares to move out of her comfort zone, to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.*

For the past two years I have been studying at Singapore Bible College to be better equipped in missions. I am now in my final semester. Although I am excited to graduate later this year, I know that I will miss the learning opportunities and the close friendships I have developed with my schoolmates. Please pray that I will finish well, and continue to study God's word and how to effectively bring the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ to others even after my formal studies.

In March 2018, I hope to head to Thailand with OMF. I currently have two more clearances to obtain (there are four in total for OMF): medical and financial. Please pray that I will continue to trust God in His provision. My three-year term with OMF will start in Lopburi (a few hours' journey

from Bangkok) where I will study Thai language and culture for a few months.

At the present moment, my exact ministry and location are up in the air. I will go on vision trips as I study in Lopburi. There are various ministries in Thailand: I may teach English, do campus ministry or engage in church planting. I may be in any part of Thailand. For those who know me, such uncertainty is unsettling for a planner like me. Please pray that I will trust in God's guidance and not my own plans.

As the time to leave for an overseas mission field draws near, there is definitely a sense of anxiety. I know that I will miss my family and friends back in Singapore, as well as being in Singapore itself. Please pray that I will keep my eyes on Jesus and have the unshakeable faith that He will be with me every step of the way. I am also worried about a few non-Christian friends who have indicated interest to know more about God – please pray for other Christian brothers and sisters to come alongside and walk with them in their faith journey. Ω

Thanksgiving & Dedication Service 17 Sep

This year's thanksgiving service was particularly memorable for being the first combined English and Chinese service held in our new building. Many guests joined us for this sweet time of worship and fellowship – they included Ps Arnold and Effie, and those who were instrumental to the construction of the building. Dr Poulson preached from Romans 8:28-29, reminding us that “what God begins, He will complete.” We thank and praise God for His faithfulness!



First Service Back @ Mattar Road 20 Aug

We had a beautiful time of worship on our first Sunday back at Mattar Road. Special thanks to our rebuilding committee, ushers, choir and worship team who worked hard to get the building ready for us!



EVENTS

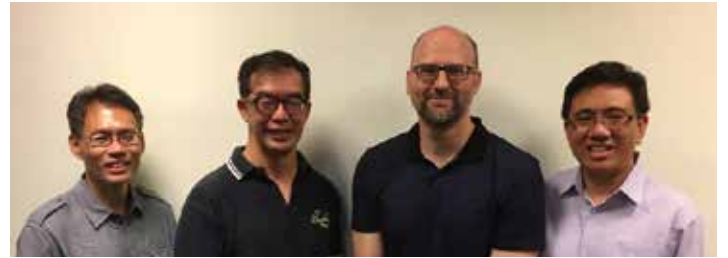
Flyer Distribution 6 Aug

About 80 GBC members from the EC and CC went about distributing flyers throughout the neighbourhood, making friends, inviting our neighbours to visit us, and thanking them for putting up with our mess! We praise God for a wonderful turnout and the many warm, friendly faces! ▼



“What is a Healthy Church?” Conference 17 Jul

Many GBC members attended the conference with Dr Jonathan Leeman from 9Marks, a ministry designed to promote healthy churches. We thank God for the organisers of the conference, seen here posing with Jonathan Leeman: (L-R) Ps Eugene Low, Ps Andrew Goh of Kay Poh Road Baptist Church and Ps Wei Enyi of Shalom Church. We pray for more of such gospel partnerships! Visit our website for the conference recordings. ▼



Rebuilding – Familiarisation Visits 12 Aug

We were very excited to visit the new building during the familiarisation visits. It was a great time of fellowship! ▼



Last Service at CHS 13 Aug

▼ We thank God for these 22 months at CHS, and we are grateful to CHS for their gracious hospitality to us.

▼ The children enjoyed their last snack break by the stairwell of CHS.



Fundraising – Singing God’s Love in God’s Word 13 Aug

The Children Ministry put together a music album of 16 Bible verses set to original music and arrangements! This is a great way to share the gospel with friends, or help the children with Scripture memory. Catch the trailer at <https://youtu.be/Rwt-Egm99D0>. ▼



CHILDREN'S CORNER

WALKING the TALK

by Rachel Wong

This is the last Children's Corner about being not ashamed of the gospel. The first one was about how the Holy Spirit gives us courage and strength to take a stand for God. In the second we looked at our speech: being bold to tell others about the gospel. And finally, in this last one we will see how important it is to do what we say. Now we're ready for action!



Illustration by Tham Yoke Peng

Have you heard the expression 'walk the talk'? It is often used when we want to remind ourselves that we should do what we say, instead of saying something and then doing the opposite. An example of this is when someone claims to like reading, whereas in fact they spend all their free time watching YouTube. Or when a person says they think it's important to be healthy but they never do any sport and avoid eating vegetables. We can tell what someone really thinks is important by looking at their actions. As another expression reminds us, 'actions speak louder than words'. We should not let our actions contradict what we say with our words.

This is especially important to us as Christians. How can we make God happy and help other people believe in Him if we tell lies, shout, and are rude and unkind? If people know we are Christians and see us behaving badly, they will not want to become Christians themselves.

James 2: 17 says, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead", which means that if people can't see from your actions that you are a Christian, then maybe your faith is not actually real faith.

Even if people make fun of you or attack you for doing the right thing, you still need to obey God in the things you do. Joseph was thrown in jail because his master's wife was angry that he refused to go to bed with her, but he kept on trusting God all the same. David's wife Michal made fun of David for worshipping God by dancing joyfully. When Job went through a lot of suffering his wife asked him to curse God, but he refused. We too can choose not to allow other people's opinions to influence us and have the courage to do what we know is right.

The best way to find out if you are 'walking the talk' is to approach someone who knows you well – a family member or friend – and ask them what they see in you. Ask them if you need to change anything so that what you do better lines up with what you say, and then ask God to help you make that change. People will surely notice a difference, and you will not need to worry any more if your actions speak louder than your words! Ω