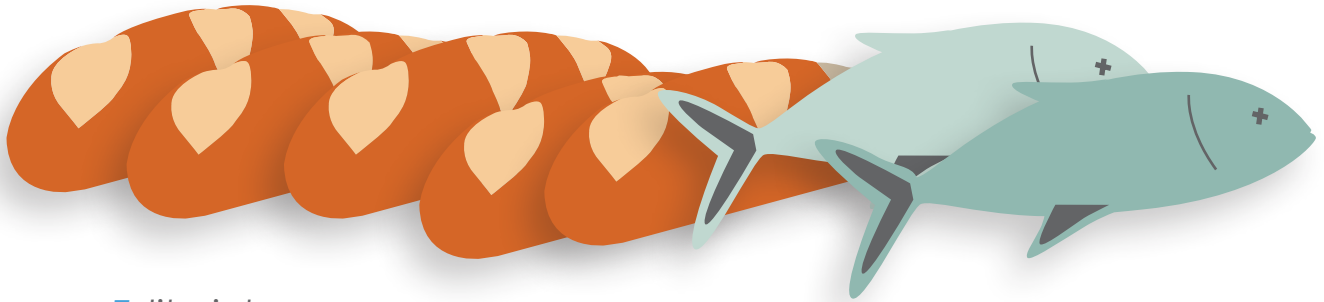


GRACE NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter of Grace Baptist Church Limited MICA(P) 027/04/2012 JULY-SEPT 2012



Editorial

Be Blessed and Bless Others

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be generous:

“You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” 2 Cor 9:11

As Pastor Arnold points out in the Pastoral Column, Generosity is closely tied to Hospitality. It is fitting that we have featured the Hospitality Ministry on Pg 2. Read about how the simple act of greeting can make newcomers feel welcome.

Away from church, our members also demonstrate Christian hospitality by opening their homes to visitors and care groups (Pg 3).

The highlight of the previous quarter must be the biennial church camp. Turn to Pg 4 & 5 to catch up on the camp and read an interview with Colin Soh for a glimpse of our veteran Camp Committee Chairman.

We welcome new GBC members through baptism and transfer during this Easter service (Pg 6) and the newcomers who enjoyed a Welcome Luncheon (Pg 7).

The children are not forgotten as Helen Yeo shows them how they can learn to be generous (Pg 8).

See how God is blessing GBC as you read through the pages. Be blessed and bless others!

The Editorial Team
gracenews.gbc@gmail.com

Generosity & Hospitality – a Match Made in Heaven

Pastor Arnold Wong

In both the Old and New Testaments God commands His people to be generous – especially to those in need. For example, in Deuteronomy 15:7-8 the Lord tells us, *“If there is a poor man with you...you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks.”* And in 1 Timothy 6:18, God instructs those who are rich *“to be generous and ready to share.”*

This should not surprise us for God is a generous God. In James 1:5 we read, *“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach...”* As God’s children, we should be committed to being like our heavenly Father.

God’s Word tells us there are blessings in store for those who are generous. In Proverbs 22:9, *“He who is generous will be blessed...”*

While it is clear that God’s people ought to be generous, the question of “How?” arises. Part of the problem is that generosity is often associated only with

the giving of money, but it goes beyond just generously giving away money. The dictionary defines generosity as “being willing to give unsparingly”. For example, we can be generous with our time and/or talent and not be limited to just giving treasure.

This is where hospitality comes into the picture. The Bible instructs God’s people to be hospitable to one another, 1 Peter 4:9, *“Be hospitable to one another...”* and even to strangers, Hebrews 13:2. In Biblical times, people did not have much, and for them to share what they had with one another and strangers was a challenge – it was an act of selflessness. Such efforts could make a deep and lasting impression on the one recipient of a generous act.

In this month’s edition of the Grace News you will hear how different individuals hope to exercise generosity and use hospitality to do it. I hope you will join them in the effort to be generous, or practise it in your own quiet way. **Ω**

A Thirsty Traveller

Consider this: if we were to walk into a church for the first time and no one comes to greet us. At the end of the service we would probably want to leave. Or, if we were to visit someone in their home without being offered a drink, we will feel quite unwelcome. The importance of hospitality cannot be overstated. We are all familiar with passages like the Samaritan woman (John 4) and Martha and Mary serving our Lord's needs. There is a place at GBC where we show warmth and generosity to our visitors and to others – the Welcome Booth.

At this Booth in the Canteen (outside Numbers Room) different Care Groups (CG) and individuals do just that – the practice of hospitality. It all started more than six years ago with a dedicated couple who had a heart to minister to new people visiting GBC. Sunday after Sunday, they gave visitors not just a drink, but smiles and conversation to make them feel welcome. They were doing this on their own for over three years. Thank God that more CGs now take their turn each month to host our visitors.



Care groups take turns to host the welcome booth. In the picture, a Young Career Adults care group with Peter Ho Lick, the Hospitality Ministry leader (third from right).



Drinks, snacks, smiles and friendly conversation available outside Numbers Room.

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."

Hebrews 13:2 (NIV)

This Booth is not just for new visitors but also a platform for our newer members to interact with older church members. We are excited that there is a great team of Young Career Adults serving now to facilitate this. This ministry is still evolving and changing.

Come and join us in this important ministry! We need a lot of help. Your sacrifice will be some of your time after service for two months a year. If you are willing, just show up at this humble corner. There is a thirsty traveller passing by, you could be serving Christ that cup of tea!

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est (Where charity and love are, God is there). Ω

If you know a visitor, do bring them to the Welcome Booth after service!

Acts of Generosity - Being Hospitable

Seah Yen Goon

I confess that I was reluctant when asked by a church member to host a missionary couple on their way to Indonesia. Having my normal routine disrupted and sharing my private space with strangers was not a comfortable prospect.

In my quiet moments with the Lord, I was reminded of Matthew 25 on inviting strangers into our home: “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matt 25:40 NIV)

The Lord is challenging us to do more than just give money to missions and charities. Indeed, we are commanded “to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share”. (1 Tim 6:18 NIV)

Seck Wai Kwong and Lye Kean shared that it was the example of two ladies who motivated them to be hospitable. The two ladies and their husbands invited foreign students to their homes to share a meal after Sunday services. It was their hospitality, combined with evangelism, which brought many students to Christ.

*It was their
hospitality, combined
with evangelism,
which brought many
students to Christ.*

*We are commanded
“to do good, to be
rich in good deeds
and to be generous
and willing to share”.*

Lye Kean shares that, “The example of the Pellings and Ellisons challenged us, so that when we had our own home, we wanted to use it to minister to others. They made us feel at home in a foreign land and we felt led to open our home to overseas visitors, particularly missionaries and their families. We’ve been richly blessed by our guests and received much more than we’ve given.”

There are many church members who regularly open their home for care group meetings. Beh Soo Hee and Kit Wan said they are thankful that God has given them a home to share with others. “Knowing that our home is a place where youth can feel comfortable fellowshiping with lots of fun and laughter is a joy!” Kit Wan exclaimed.

Others I spoke to are also happy to welcome guests into their home. To them, the “joys of hosting are no different from living daily in the presence of the Lord”.

A generous man is a blessed man. Our acts of love bring gladness, gratitude and goodness to the hearts of both the giver and the receiver. Ω

GBC Church Camp – 4-7 June 2012, Port Dickson

Unity in Action



"... for My power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor 12:9



"I learned that God blesses us with things for His name sake and not for our sake." – **See Kwang Yew** (front row, 3rd from right, worshipping our Redeemer.)



"I am reminded of the importance of unity. When one is right with God, most conflicts can be resolved amicably." – **Doris Mok** (right, having an afternoon chat with the ladies.)



"The retreat provides a relaxed environment for me to spend time with God and to reflect on my life. It also gives me the opportunity to see all my old friends and make new friends at one swoop." – **Lim Song Huat** (in black, catching up with Dr Ian Buntain.)



84-year old **Joyce Piper** (left) is a first time camper! She enjoyed the warmth, love and care many members showed to her during the camp.



"The church is a body of people with different background, personalities and needs. Only if we focus on Christ can we be united. Jesus is the 'cosmic glue' that binds us together." – **Chong Miao Suang**



"Glad to come home as 'cracked pots' - embracing our weaknesses so that God's power and glory may shine through." – **Wee Thiem Heng** (left, presenting their group's sketch)



GBC campers put their best foot forward for Talent Night!



"What I enjoyed most from the camp was getting to know the uncles and aunties better. It was really encouraging to see them faithful in loving and serving the Lord all these years, which spurs us on to do the same." – **Eunie Yap** (4th in line, all ready for tug of war!)



"What I liked most about the camp was the people: their honest, personal sharing that gave encouragement; and genuine, friendly interest that made even the most reticent of people feel welcomed." – **Esther Yap** (left)



"I've learned not to look at my cracked pot but on the treasures within and to trust God for his strength to use these treasures for His glory." – **Esther Cher** (3rd from left, enjoying breakfast and fellowship.)

Behind the Scenes with Colin Soh

For the 224 participants of this year's church camp, the end of camp concluded four days of workshops, fellowship and devotion time. It was also the culmination of the tireless efforts of the camp's organising committee. Only for them, their journey began much earlier.

Just ask Colin Soh. As head of a team which includes a treasurer, logistician, and programme coordinators, Colin conducted site surveys of various venues for the event: a task which, he assures, is far removed from the idyllic driving trips up the coastal resorts of Malaysia.

"Apart from location and available dates, we also made sure all amenities were in working order," he explains, recalling memories of a water disruption during a previous camp. "Once the venue was decided, we negotiated with its management to secure the best rates."

This year's camp is the sixth instalment of the biennial gathering which Colin has chaired. It will also be his last in this capacity, a decision he keenly attributes to the addition of new blood, such as Mark Chan and Melissa Fam. They have joined the team to help organise this year's church camp, working together with the experienced camp committee to provide fresh perspective and new energy.

"Having enjoyed and been blessed through past camps, I felt prompted to step up, to pay it forward."

Perhaps the attitudes and commitment they have displayed were reminiscent of his own motivations behind taking over the helm all those years ago; a period, he recalls, when a question mark hung over the event's very existence. "Around 2002, many people, including the senior pastor, were unsure whether there would even be a camp at all," he says.

Li Shi Wei



Colin Soh (left) at this year's church camp with Eddie Tan, another long-standing member of the organising committee.

"Having enjoyed and been blessed through past camps, I felt prompted to step up, to pay it forward." Thanks to Colin and a small band of helpers who rallied together and gave generously of their time and efforts, GBC church camp has continued.

Colin's service in GBC will continue in other capacities: through regular maintenance of its small library, as well as overseeing ushers for Sunday service. Ω

EVENTS

Baptism and New Members 8 Apr 2012

Baptised

New Members via transfer



<L-R> Anita Set, Jolene Ong, See Kwang Yew and Neo Yao Sheng



<L-R> Naw Thanda Myint Oo <Stephanie>, Joy Cheong, Lisa Mok, Veronica Lee



Philip and Doreen Yeoh

Good Friday 6 Apr and Easter Service 8 Apr 2012



A string ensemble accompanied the Good Friday worship service.



A riveting message from Dr Ian Buntain on the significance and power of the cross.



With one heart and one voice, the GBC family rejoiced on Easter Sunday that "Our God is all in all".



Wipaporn Deer, Sasitorn and Papasorn Que, all graduates of Kathy's Home in Pua, Thailand, sang a Himong hymn about living for Christ.



30 ladies attended the insightful workshop conducted by Ms Ruth Chua, Principal Therapist at the Counselling and Care Centre.



Participants practised the principles taught through small group discussions and role play.

**Graduates from
Kathy's Home 22
Apr 2012**

**Ladies Ministry: The Fundamentals of Healing
Conversation 12 May 2012**

Two New Field Projects Extend GBC's Mission Outreach

Cheong Hee Kiat

The Mission Committee sets aside funds to support field projects proposed by selected Mission Organisations. Two such projects will 'go live' soon, and there will be opportunities for our members to learn more, pray for the work and even see the project in action.



GBC, in partnership with Wycliffe Singapore, will help a local city church in East Asia share the Gospel to over **140,000** people from two people groups, **Su** and **Du** (both pseudonyms), living in the nearby mountainous region. The groups have only 200 known believers today. GBC is sharing resources to assist in the **translation of 24 Bible stories** into the Su and Du mother tongue in written and oral forms. The project will run from **Jan 2012 - Dec 2014**. Our prayer is that through study of the translated Scripture, many will come to know the Lord and be built up spiritually. Please pray for Pastor Oliver as he visits the project in July to bring our greetings and encouragement. Ω



GBC embarks on Proclaimer® Programme

At the beginning of this year, the Mission Committee purchased 15 units of the **Proclaimer®** - a digital player dedicated to broadcasting God's Word in the **local heart language**. Light and battery-powered, the player is loud enough for a gathering of people within hearing range, ideal for a village or small town. If batteries are unavailable, it can be manually cranked to generate power. After hearing the Word, the people then discuss it with the help of native Christians present. The Proclaimers are given to GBC mission projects as part of the outreach effort to proclaim God's Word. The Proclaimer® Programme is part of the Bible study programme in **Pua** and **Lampang**, Thailand; **Kampong Speu** and **Phnom Penh**, Cambodia. Ω

other events



Prise God for all the newcomers.

Inaugural Welcome Luncheon 27 May 2012



Newcomers had a great opportunity to get to know members and other newcomers.



The Church leadership pray over our new elder - Wee Thiem Heng, and his wife Belinda.

New Elder's Installation 17 Jun 2012

Generosity is like a packet of corn flakes

Helen Yeo

Children's Corner

Have you ever received a mysteriously exciting and HUGE gift-wrapped present - only to discover when you open it up, most of it was packaging and air! How disappointing! 😞

But when God gives, He does not pad his gifts with packaging and air. When God gives, He packs in as much goodness as he can! 😊 It's like trying to fit a packet of cornflakes into a big glass container that's just not quite big enough.

But if you shake the cornflakes you've got in the jar a bit, that cornflakes settles down and makes room for more to go in. Shake again and more goes in, two more shakes and the whole packet is in! Try it for yourself - and see what Jesus taught us about the way God gives to His children:

"Give, and you will receive. You will be given much. Pressed down, shaken together, and running over...The way you give to others is the way God will give to you." (Luke 6:38 NCV)

So let's learn from God's unselfish generosity when we give to Him and to the people around us - not just sharing our stationery in class and our food and games at recess, or our money in the offering, but also giving our help and encouragement, our friendship and forgiveness, our time and our talents. Our Father God loves it when we imitate Him in giving generously!

"What I am is God's gift to me - What I become is my gift to God." Ω

BOOK REVIEW

Ps Eugene Low

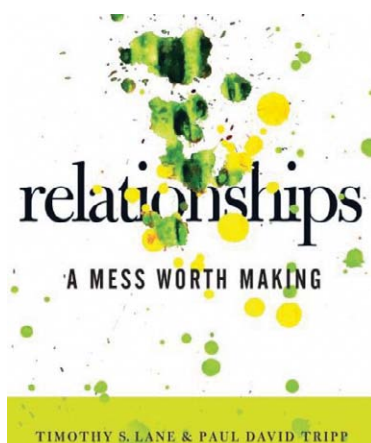
Relationships: A Mess Worth Making

By Timothy S Lane and Paul David Tripp

The title of this gem of a book is one that we can all relate to. We all have relationships, whether it is with a spouse, child, parent, friend, neighbour, classmate or colleague. And we are well aware of the joy as well as pain that they bring.

Lane and Tripp begin by laying out the Biblical foundations for relationships. We were created for relationships because we bear the image of a social God who lives in community within the Trinity as Father, Son, and Spirit. But our relationships have been affected by sin. Our relationships are messy because they reveal our struggle with sin!

What this means, Lane and Tripp note, is that "Christ is the only real hope for relationships." We need more



than just techniques to improve our relationships. We need Christ himself to transform us and those around us through the power of His gospel. We often approach relationships with a self-centred goal: our personal happiness. But God's agenda for our relationships is far greater than that! God's purpose is nothing short of conforming us to the image of Christ, and our relationships are God's tools to grow us in Christ-likeness. Understanding this enables us to apply Scripture to areas such as communication, forgiveness, and bearing one another's burdens.

Our relationships say a lot about whether we are living out of a sense of who we are in Christ, and whether we are worshiping God by loving those made in His image. I highly recommend Relationships. This book will convict and challenge you towards Christ-centred relationships that glorify God. Ω