



# Grace News

A Quarterly Newsletter of Grace Baptist Church Limited  
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Pastor Arnold Wong

**In** this “I want it cheap, hot, good, and I want it now” day and age, character virtues like perseverance, or patience, are fast becoming endangered species.

It is pretty hard to convince people to be patient and take their time, when they can have a meal in minutes and send text messages in seconds.

But qualities like perseverance do matter, especially in the Christian life. It is listed as a key quality that believers should strive for in 2 Peter 1:5-7. In the New Living Translation, perseverance is translated ‘patient endurance’.

The Apostle Peter tells us the positives of having it and the negatives of not having it. “The more you grow like this, the more you will become productive and useful in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop these virtues are blind or, at least, very shortsighted. They have already forgotten that God has cleansed them from their old life of sin.” (2 Peter 1:8-9, NLT)

In other words, “If you want to know the Lord, you have got to be patient.” God can’t be known quickly. I was privileged to be able to devote four years of my life to study theology. Do I know everything there is to know about God? No way! The studies gave me more ways to learn about Him and serve Him. If I am patient, I’ll learn more about God each day.

Failing to develop perseverance brings on blindness and shortsightedness. When we are in a rush we can miss things. We can sacrifice long-term blessings and settle for just short-term gains. We can forget what God has done for us. We can revert to our same old sinful way of life instead of living the new life we have in Christ.

Perseverance does not come easily – it comes through trials and tribulations. “...we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope...” (Romans 5:3-4, NASB) The prizes for persevering are priceless – proven character and hope.

Perseverance, don’t live without it! **Ω**

## Editorial

### We have a lot in store in this issue!

Persevere through the pages for these gems! The Pastoral Care Team tells us how they practise the virtue of perseverance on **Page 2**. Teoh Lee Peng tells of how God strengthened her to persevere in praying for her mother’s salvation, and Sandra Fox writes about Wipaporn’s experience in an unbelieving family on **Page 3**.

On **Page 4**, Bryan Tan reflects on the lessons learned from persevering through examinations. New to this newsletter is a special missionary segment on **Page 5**, which includes a short write-up on our recent missionary conference. See what has been happening in church on **Pages 6 and 7**.

Finally, as a reward to you the reader for persevering through the newsletter, turn to **Page 8** for Seck Wai Kwong’s book review of John Piper’s *Don’t Waste Your Life* and a section just for children.

May you be blessed as you read.

The Editorial Team



# VISITATION MINISTRY

*Kuan Kok Pui*

**Telephone:** ring, ring

**Recipient:** Hello?

**Caller:** I am looking for Mr or Mrs .....

**Recipient:** Speaking.

**Caller:** I am calling on behalf of the Pastoral Care Team. We would like to visit you. When would be a convenient time?

**Recipient:** Why? I attend church and Bible study regularly. Why do you want to visit me?

**Caller:** Please do not misunderstand. It is not because you have problems that we are visiting you .....

After finding out more, the person accepts the visit of the Pastoral Care Team.

**The** Pastoral Care Team (PCT) started in 2006 with a few members who were burdened that some of our church members and regular worshippers did not feel a sense of belonging to Grace Baptist Church. After worship service on Sundays some of these visitors or members could be found wandering around lost in the crowd. The PCT aims to extend a hand of fellowship to these people by visiting them at home. Besides getting to know the person and their family, we also hope to obtain feedback from them as to how the church could serve them better.

The PCT was formally designated a ministry in 2009 and is currently led by Kuan Kok Pui.

The PCT focuses mainly on members, regular worshippers and their family members who are sick, experiencing the loss of a loved one, or in some kind of crisis. This includes visiting all members that we are aware of who are hospitalised, hosting wakes and funerals, and/or undergoing personal or family crises. As we share God's blessing during the visitation, we ourselves are very much blessed in return by the fellowship we experience. Besides getting to know the visited members better, we have been very much encouraged by their testimonies of God's love, grace, mercy, faithfulness, protection, provision and answered prayers. Each sharing shows that our God is real and true.



The Pastoral Care Team

**Top:** Standing (L-R) Kuan Kok Pui, Leong Kuan Yui, Lee Chung Cheong, Chan Poh Leng, Kathleen Lee, Jimmy Chan, Chan Kong Wah, Pastor Arnold Wong; Seated (L-R) Carol Leong, Effie Wong, Josephine Chan, Pat Chan. **Left:** Tan Cheng See and Tan Chong Tien.

The PCT does not restrict the visitation to the member's home. If the member's home is not convenient to receive visitors, we are open to meet them elsewhere, for example over lunch, tea or coffee at the member's favourite restaurant. We feel it is important that the visitation should not inconvenience anyone, so we take great joy in being able to share in fellowship and pray together at any place or time.

Sometimes we discover that the member concerned has left the church or is worshipping elsewhere for valid reasons, but we still value the opportunity to visit so that we can receive feedback and extend encouragement, prayer support and fellowship. The Team treasures all comments and takes feedback seriously, in the hope that in so doing the church can serve the congregation better.

The PCT does not know everyone in the church, so you can help the ministry by contacting any member of the team and asking for a visitation to be done. We hope to share God's love and our love with you if you would give us the opportunity. So next time when your telephone rings and it is someone from the PCT, reply by saying, "Welcome!" **Ω**



# Persevering Amidst the Tears

Sandra Fox

*The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. (Isaiah 32:17)*

In Bhan Pah Nee village in Thailand, a pig is slaughtered during thanksgiving celebrations – a common practice amongst Hmong families steeped in the belief of spirits and the supernatural.

Wipaporn Deer, 18, from Kathy's Home, was recently my guest for over two weeks. We talked many evenings, and we cried. I cried for things like impoverished villagers forced to choose between a meal and medical treatment, and for the Lord's timely provision to her of THB200 (S\$10) for an educational need. She had no bitterness – it is the way they live. Instead, she cried for her family. They will celebrate her homecoming Hmong style, yet she so badly wants them to know that it is her God who keeps her safe, not their spirits. That it is

her God alone who can save them from their sin and hell.

Deer's tears told me why she perseveres. Her exhausting routine of school and chores and the complexities of being the sole Christian in a spirit-worshipping family do not discourage her because her sympathy is extended outward to those around her. And God not only strengthens and enables, but also faithfully supplies her needs each day. Her countenance bears no sign of strife from persevering – just the joy of her God – the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Wipaporn is a resident of Kathy's Home in Pua, Thailand, where school children are provided with housing and immersion into Christian culture.) Ω



**Right:** Wipaporn Deer at the Botanic Gardens enjoying some respite from Singapore's concrete jungle and feeling more at home.



**Left:** Wipaporn Deer at a class during one of our English Camps last year.

# PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER

Teoh Lee Peng

My mum was almost 90 years old when she prayed to receive the Lord Jesus on 8 April 2011. She grew up during the Japanese occupation and had a hard life making ends meet. She would always tell me that her gods had helped her raise her family of five kids under very difficult conditions. I had been praying for my mum's salvation for more than 30 years. But each time I spoke with her about God's salvation plan, she would either laugh at me and say I had been brainwashed by Western culture, or get irritated and scold me, or just tell me that I could worship my God and she would worship hers.

Church friends had been praying faithfully for my mum all these long years. They had also visited mum, befriended her and shared their lives with her, but nothing happened. Each time mum was admitted to hospital I feared that I would lose her. I pleaded with God not to take her yet as she was still not saved. Once, I shared with a sister in Christ that I had given up hope for my mum. With a tender expression, she encouraged me to persevere in praying. I thank God for sending this sister to minister to me in my darkest hour of despair.

That day in the hospital was no different from other days when we sent mum for treatment. Why did she respond on that day? I don't know. It was all God's timing. God had been preparing her heart all this while through the many years of prayers offered by so many people. Mum was baptised on 28 April 2011 in my sister's home. God cannot be rushed, and we are called to pray faithfully for our loved ones as long as they have breath in them. He has made everything beautiful in His time. Alleluia, all Praise and Glory to God. Amen. Ω



# NO UNDERDOG WHEN UNDER GOD

Bryan Tan



**While** studying for my A level examinations last September, my anxiety over my state of unpreparedness and my worries about my future got me so stressed that I was unable to study for a good few days. However, God chose that time to graciously reveal Himself to me.

God impressed upon me that I was falling into the trap of getting so consumed with personal achievements and worries, that nothing else mattered to me – not even God. I was not trusting God completely, having forgotten two critical things:

1. Whatever difficulty I go through, God will 'never leave [me] nor forsake [me]' (Deuteronomy 31:6).
2. I should be living like Christ is really in my life, so that I am distinguished from those people without Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24).

God further reminded me of three key lessons:

**Lesson #1 :** God gives each individual a unique set of gifts to accomplish specific tasks He has assigned to him (Romans 12:4-8). At the same time, everyone is equally valued by God. My job is to do my best, using whatever God-given talents I have to glorify God, NOT to glorify myself, nor to compare with others.

**Lesson #2 :** Everything on Earth is temporary and will eventually become naught (Matthew 6:19-20). Earthly achievements count for nothing in eternity, unless

they come under, or fall in line with, God's purposes. If I am convinced about this, I will need to rethink my goals. Are my goals self-directed? Do I make my own plans and use God only to facilitate their execution? Or are my goals God-directed, aiming to ultimately fulfill God's purposes for me on Earth?

**Lesson #3 :** God allows bad things to happen for various reasons:

1. To make me stronger as I learn to depend more on the Almighty God to help me through.
2. To accomplish God's higher purposes (John 9:2-3). Just as the man was born blind so that 'the power of God can be seen through him', so God can prove His power through my 'bad' experience.
3. To discipline me when I sin or fall away from Him (Hebrews 12:5-10). This may be harsh, but God does it only for my own good and because He loves me.

Whatever trial I go through, if I choose to see God's hand in everything, then I will truly know that everything is in God's hand.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says:

"Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." (New Living Translation)

This verse never fails to inspire me. Indeed, God is in control of everything. And in His perfect timing, God has also revealed His principles to me and granted me peace to study better for my A levels.

I know now that I am no underdog when I am under God. **Ω**





## MISSIONS IN THE BACKGROUND

*Cheong Hee Kiat*

GBC supports our 24 missionaries/workers who are in active ministry through the Missions Committee (MC). The MC is involved in engaging the church in the support of our missionaries, not only financially, but also physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The MC also supports projects that bring the message of salvation to those who have not heard, including projects that meet physical needs (see right), whereby the love of God may be demonstrated. Thank you to all who have the church mission in your hearts. Do support the MC with your prayers and encouragement. Ω

## Reaching out to the Dalits – Borewells in India

*Alicia Ng*

In March, GBC financially supported Operation Mobilisation (OM) India in a project that involved the building of three freshwater borewells at Gaya in Bihar, Faridkot in Punjab, and Kotba in Chattisgarh. All three wells were built within Dalit schools to provide safe drinking water to students and nearby villagers. As the Dalit villagers are poor and marginalised, they are thrilled to be able to send their children to school to receive an education in the English medium.

These wells have not only been a physical blessing to the people, but have also opened doors to allow the OM India team to share freely about the Gospel and their personal testimonies. For Jesus said in John 4:13-14: "People



Borewell in Kotba, India

soon become thirsty again after drinking this water. But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them giving them eternal life." Having contributed as a church to these wells with the material blessings God has given us, let us continue to keep these people in prayer – that they will place their faith in Jesus alone, for He is the living water who gives eternal life. Ω

## Missions Conference

### Brave Enough to Follow

"Created, Fallen, Redeemed, Glorified – a simple but powerful message to 'send' to the world of what God has done for each of us. The conference has encouraged me to be a missionary at work, at home, and in every relationship that I find myself in."

– **Joey Raju**

"Missions does not necessarily mean a total disruption of life, family and lifestyles. If we claim to be followers of Jesus, who was very much a mission-minded Saviour, we should look to the Lord for strength and wisdom to make missions an integral part of our lives for His glory."

– **Tan Yee Kiat**

"Instead of 'only a few are called, the rest are Christians', Stuart Briscoe has impressed on me that all believers including myself are called to be missionaries."

– **Lim Kwang Hua**

"Dr Tan has a down-to-earth approach to missions – not preaching, but showing love by befriending and organising picnics for children and by serving in the community through medical and health interventions."

– **Daniel Ng**

Audio recordings of Dr Stuart Briscoe's messages during the Missions Conference are available on our website [www.gracebaptistchurch.sg](http://www.gracebaptistchurch.sg)



Stuart Briscoe used Simon Peter as an example to invite those who attended the conference to "keep following Jesus".



Dr Tan Lai Yong's plenary session inspired his audience so much that one commented, "If we could all show love like that, wouldn't Christians have a better reputation?"



Several workshops were conducted by NTM's missionaries to share with the attendees the work of a field missionary and to explain how we can be involved in missions.



# WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

Pastors' Installation - 24 April 2011



**Clockwise from top left:** Pastor Oliver Chia and his mother Juliana; Pastor Eugene Low with his wife Claire and son Zachary; the new pastors are installed with prayerful laying on of hands by Pastors, elders and directors of the church.

Realignment of Sunday Worship Services - 22 May 2011



"I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought." (1 Cor 9:10)



Town hall meetings were conducted for both the Chinese and English congregations to address any concerns about the realignment of Sunday worship services with effect from 3 July 2011.

Easter Service



**Left:** Members of the Children's Music Club worship God with their musical offering to celebrate Easter Day.  
**Right:** Meditating on the mystery of the resurrection.

24 April 2011



# Ladies Ministry Macaron Magic - 15 May 2011



**Clockwise from top:** Lee Huang sharing with the ladies; ladies listening intently; enjoying a delicious tea; ladies with Chef Mike.

## Business Connect - 30 April 2011

**Right:** Mr Liew Heng San, retired CEO of the CPF board, advising guests on how to maximise their CPF, and sharing that storing up treasure in heaven is his focus in life.

**Far Right:** Cheong Hee Kiat and Ai Tho with their guests from SIM university.



## Baptism - 19 June 2011



**Clockwise from top:** Pastor Arnold baptising Tang Yuen Khiong; Iskandar Rashid giving his testimony; Leow Wen Pin; Su Xinyi; Tan Yee Kiat; Claire Low.



# BOOK REVIEW

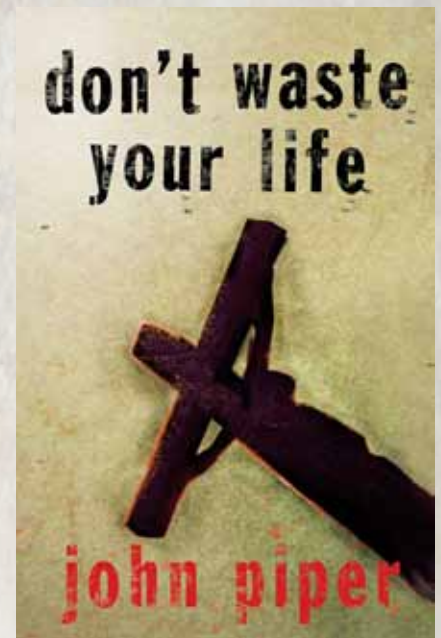
Seck Wai Kwong

*Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper

**Early** in his youth, the author's father, also a pastor, told him the story of an old man who sobbed uncontrollably when he came forward to accept Christ. Crying through his tears, the man kept saying, "I've wasted it! I've wasted it!" *Don't Waste Your Life* reflects Piper's heart cry and resolve from a young age as chronicled in the first two chapters of this book.

Piper then drives home his plea in the third chapter: "I will tell you what a tragedy is. I will show you how to waste your life. Consider this story from the February 1998 *Reader's Digest*: A couple 'took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast five years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. Now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball and collect shells. . . .' Picture them before Christ at the great Day of Judgment: "Look, Lord. See my shells." That is a tragedy."

Piper points out that avoiding such a tragedy takes more than just clean living and church attendance. We need to make the glory of God our singular passion. For that we must begin at the Cross: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Gal 2:20). Piper spends the bulk of his book expounding on the everyday application of this verse, covering both its meaning for our inner life and its implications for our outer life. Piper devotes a chapter to our use of money. In another chapter, he discusses at length our attitude towards work and how we can glorify God in the marketplace. In particular I liked his story of how a Christian served Christ through his stock-broking job! The penultimate chapter touches on missions, beginning with a dramatic story of how God caught Adornam Judson for Burma. But whether we are sender or sent, Piper stresses that our aim is to make nations glad in Him.



*Don't Waste Your Life* is a very readable, thought-provoking book that I recommend highly to all of us whose heart-felt desire is to live a life of meaning and purpose, a life that counts for God. Ω

You can download this book free from [http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/books\\_dwyl/dwyl\\_full.pdf](http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/books_dwyl/dwyl_full.pdf)

## CHILDREN'S CORNER

Rachel Wong

### TRY, TRY AGAIN

Robert the Bruce fought for the independence of Scotland hundreds of years ago. One day when he was in trouble he had to hide in a cave. While in the cave he considered giving up his fight, but as he was thinking about this he noticed a spider trying to build a web. The web kept on breaking, but the spider just kept on starting again, and in the end succeeded. This led Robert the Bruce to say, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Trying again and not giving up is what 'perseverance' means. Scientists

sometimes have to persevere in their experiments for years without any results. Think what life would be like if Alexander Fleming had given up his experiments the week before he discovered penicillin! You may not feel like putting in the hard work necessary to improve at something you find difficult, but don't give up – you never know, you may be successful the very next time you try!

How does perseverance help to strengthen our faith? In our lives as Christians there will be times when

we have to go through difficulties and when we may even wonder whether God is listening. The Apostle Paul suffered greatly for his faith: he was misunderstood, shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, jailed, ill, betrayed and eventually beheaded. But through it all he kept his eyes on Jesus and near the end of his life was able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim 4:7) He didn't give up believing in Jesus despite great persecution. Ω

See if you can crack this code to read a Bible verse about perseverance!

Gzo pn ijo wzxjhz rzvmf di yjdib bjyy, ajm vo ocz kmjkmz odhz rz rdgg mzvK v cvmqzno da rz yj ijo bdqz pk.

(PS Don't give up!)