



GRACE News

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Editorial

FAMILY BLESSINGS

Continuing our theme of strengthening family ties, in this issue of Grace News we are looking at the wider role of the family, beginning with an overview by Pastor Arnold of the importance God places on families and on their preservation. We then consider the special role of grandparents in the lives of both their grandchildren and their adult children who are now parents themselves. Turn to pages 2 and 3 to read what some grandparents in GBC consider to be their unique responsibilities as grandparents, and in particular, how they hope to leave a spiritual legacy of faith for the generations to come. Spiritual blessings can flow both ways: turn to page 4 to read Neo Yi Ling's account of how she communicated the gospel to her beloved grandpa.

Moving on to the Children's Corner (page 8), we highlight another important part of the family – siblings. We challenge children of all ages to be 'super siblings', to be thankful for the families God has given them, and not to accept sibling rivalry as normal. Let's help our children dare to be different by showing love to their siblings instead of fighting with them.

Lastly, don't miss Belinda Wee's sharing on page 5 about the activities of the Ladies Fellowship, and the write-up on page 7 about some of the overseas mission projects our members are engaged in and which you yourself might be inspired to join.

May you be blessed as you read,

The Editorial Team
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Family – from the Mind and Heart of God

Pastor Arnold Wong

Where did the idea of 'family' come from? It comes right from the mind and heart of God. We can see this as God unfolds His plans and purposes for the family through the Bible. **From the very beginning God meant the family to be the foundation for human society and He preserves it.**

The genesis of the family unit starts at creation, when God created Adam and Eve and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:26-28). God's intent was for a man and woman to come together in a 'one-flesh' union through marriage (Gen. 2:24) and Lord willing, bear children. The family unit would become the foundation upon which all humanity would be built.

As the history of mankind is unveiled in God's word, the idea of the family can be seen more clearly in the Old and New Testaments.

In the Bible, God deals with individuals and families. When God saved Noah from the flood, He saved not only Noah, but also his wife, sons, and daughters-in-law as well (Gen. 6:18). Also, when God called Abraham to leave his

home and go to the promised land, it included his whole family (Gen. 12:4-5). **As part of God's plans and purposes, God not only sees individuals as important, but families as well.**

In the Ten Commandments there are two of them that have an impact on families (Ex. 20:12, 14). In the fifth commandment, parents are to be honoured – establishing parental authority. The seventh commandment prohibits adultery – protecting the sanctity of marriage and family. The protection and preservation of the family is very important to God.

In the New Testament, we can see God preserving and saving families. We see this through the limitations on divorce (Matt. 19), the various exhortations for husbands and wives (Eph. 5:33), and for children and parents (Eph. 6:1-4). **Through the experience of the Philippian jailer, we can see God's desire to see individuals and families come to faith in Christ (Acts 16:25-34).**

The idea of the family comes from God and is VERY important to Him. Ω

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GRANDPARENTING

A LOVING LEGACY

by
Seah
Yen
Goon

“GRANDPARENTS are gifts from God”, says Christine Seah. Together with Kah Yin, they are happy grandparents of three adorable grandchildren. Likewise, Fock Siew Wah and Bee Lian, as well as Bruce and Doris Mok, are doting grandparents who shower loads of affection and sprinkle stardust over the lives of their grandchildren.

They express love and joy in interacting with their grandchildren and desire close bonding with their grandchildren. As Christine says, “I would like to be remembered by my grandchildren for the time we spent together – playing, eating, reading and praying”.

While they are willing to support in caring for their grandchildren, they also strongly believe that the grandchildren are the responsibility

of their married sons and daughters. When asked if they wish to be full-time grandparents, none of them wanted to, or thought

“...living out the fruit of the spirit in [our] lives before them [the grandchildren] is the best way to impart Godly values”

that they should, except when necessary. Not only are they older and have less energy, grandparents have their own lives to lead as well.

Bruce and Kah Yin think that the role of being a grandparent starts when they begin to be parents, by training their own children to become Godly parents through their own examples. Siew Wah says that his role now is to be a mentor to his children, providing advice when asked, and empowering them in this direction.

Daughters-in-law themselves, Bee Lian, Doris and Christine can understand and respect their daughters-in-law’s ways of raising their own children. When helping to take care of the grandchildren, they try to accommodate

the wishes of the parents, such as limiting the amount of TV time, sleeping at certain hours, using positive words to guide the kids, and so on. Being wiser having gone through years of parenting, they are, as someone has said, “a little bit of a parent, a little bit of a teacher and a little bit of a friend”.

How can they contribute significantly to the lives of their grandchildren, both emotionally and spiritually?

Siew Wah and Bee Lian do so by “being there, making ourselves available, approachable and accessible, as and when they need us”. Their granddaughters, Min Ann and Li Ann, call and sleep over with them regularly. Bee Lian reads Bible stories with them and looks for opportunities to help them apply Biblical principles in their lives, for example, in exercising self-control. She has the joy of having led Min Ann to Christ. Siew Wah feels that living out the fruit of the Spirit in his life before them is the best way to impart Godly values, such as being forgiving, honest and humble. He adds that as grandparents, they are pivotal in bringing family members close together. One way they do this is by travelling overseas together once a year.

Bruce and Doris call themselves “standby babysitters”, rendering their help when

asked. They share the grandparenting role with their daughters-in-law’s parents. They use whatever time they have with their grandchildren – Andrea, Timothy and Yi Qian – to play with them and make use of activities to reinforce teachings from their parents and Sunday School, such as thanking God before eating. Bruce wants his grandchildren to relax and enjoy themselves when they are with him. He believes in providing them relief

“Daughters-in-law themselves, Bee Lian, Doris and Christine can understand and respect their daughters-in-law’s ways of raising their own children.”





Peixian, Chuan-Xin, Timothy & Melisse, Bruce, Doris and Andrea & Chuan-Hao



Siew Wah and Bee Lian with granddaughters



Li Ann (left) and Min Ann (right)

"A grandparent is a little bit of a parent, a little bit of a teacher and a little bit of a friend."

Bruce and Doris with their



granddaughter Yi Qian



Ellen, Wei Ming, Wen Le, Kai Ling and Ke Le.

L-R: Christine, Tian Le, Kah Yin, Wei Cheng,

from the stress of strict boundaries set by their parents and having to do homework. While his sons must take ownership of their children's well-being, he sees himself as providing a "check and balance" to ensure that his grandchildren receive spiritual nourishment.

Kah Yin and Christine pray unceasingly for their grandchildren – Tian Le, Wen Le and Ke Le. Christine calls them regularly to offer help and enquire about their well-being. She always has time for her grandchildren, putting aside any scheduled activities she might have, whenever they need her. They have even prepared two special rooms in their home for their grandchildren to play and rest in. Bonding with the grandchildren is important to them and they look forward to having them over with their parents for home-cooked dinner every weekend. They believe that "more is caught than taught", and try to affirm Biblical principles of God's love, grace and forgiveness through their daily interactions with the grandchildren. Referring to James 1:5, Kah Yin says that he continues to seek God's wisdom and rely on Him to take care of his family and grandchildren.

Most grandparents want to be to their loved ones a store of laughter and a treasure trove of stories, caring deeds, cherished memories and loads of patience and love.

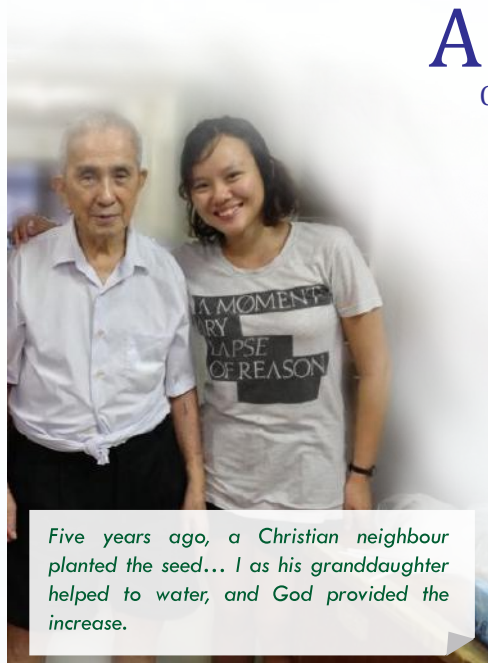
Paul the apostle, in his letters to Timothy, his co-labourer and pastor, paid a tribute to Lois, Timothy's grandmother. In 2 Timothy 1:5 – *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* – he attributed Timothy's sincere faith in God to Lois' living faith. Within each grandparent's heart, there is a hope to leave behind a loving legacy – like that of Lois – the greatest of which is the Godly lives of their grandchildren. **Ω**

Do you know...?
that about
a tenth of
our church
members are
grandparents?



Sharing the Gospel with my Grandpa

By Neo Yi Ling



A few years ago, I realised the nearing possibility of my beloved, now 88-year-old, grandpa going to hell if he did not accept Christ while on this earth. Previously, I often prayed for 'someone' or 'something' to happen for my grandpa to accept Christ, without actively doing anything myself. I was daunted by my poor Mandarin, and also felt that I had little influence over my grandpa's beliefs compared to my mostly staunch Buddhist aunts and uncles. It seemed impossible to change his deeply entrenched beliefs, and I was wary of possible family conflict that might arise if I was found preaching the gospel to my grandpa. However, Christ showed me that all things were possible through Him, and that nothing is more important than knowing Him. I came to realise that unless I took the initiative, there might be no one else who would share the gospel with him.

In faith, I tried a myriad of approaches with my grandpa who had been a Taoist for most of his life. I talked to him pointedly about Christ, downloaded Hokkien Christian music and gospel MP3s from Faith Comes By Hearing into my iPod for him to listen, prayed with him, and explained the gospel to him. Many times I had to clarify the differences between Christianity and ancestral worship practices. I also started introducing Christ's teachings into our conversations. Sometimes I would try to share what I learnt from the sermon on Sundays with him; though I was never really sure if he understood what I was saying, I was certain that God was working in my grandpa to bring him to Himself.

"...though I was never really sure if he understood what I was saying, I was certain that God was working in my grandpa to bring him to Himself."

As I learnt about the worries of an elderly person through my time spent with him, particularly pertaining to death, I encouraged him to share his worries with Christ and rely on Him to bring him through. He has since been praying daily, nightly, and each time he feels fearful about something. He has also stopped worshipping the altar statues. Recently, I asked him if he believed in Christ – and he said yes. ☺ That being so, I remain uncertain of whether he truly understands what it means to believe in Christ; nevertheless I trust that God will continue to work in his life. Ω

Some learning points:

- ▶ Never underestimate the influence you have as a grandchild.
- ▶ Sharing the gospel with the elderly requires patience, lots of repetition, and talking to them in their heart language in a manner consistent with their understanding (eg not too formally, using simple words and concepts, and with examples relevant to their life experiences).



Ministry Focus: Ladies Fellowship

By Belinda Wee

Our Lord Jesus has commanded us to love one another and to be united in His love. It is in this spirit that we, the Ladies Fellowship, are continuing the labour of love started by the ladies of the previous committee known as the Ladies Ministry. We have been truly encouraged by their support and love towards us when we took on the new challenge to lead this ministry.

The Ladies Fellowship provides opportunities for the ladies of our church to interact more and to reach out to one another, possibly building meaningful and lasting friendships. We also hope to see inter-generational bonding among them. We hope to accomplish these goals through our Bible study groups and social events.

Currently, there are two Bible study groups for the ladies: one on Thursday mornings (10 am to 12 noon), led by Chong Miauw Suang and Effie Wong, and the other on Saturday afternoons (4 pm to 5:30 pm), led by Chan Yoke Meng and Esther Cher. (In the box below, read about Liz's sharing during the first Ladies Fellowship event on how the Bible study group has nourished her.)

Earlier this year in March, the Ladies Fellowship held its first social event. It was a very encouraging one as we saw both teens and adults serving together to put together the event – what the two of us could not have done on our own. God was really faithful and He provided lovely girls and ladies to help us.

"We have been truly blessed with inspiring and dedicated teachers like Yoke Meng and Esther. During our lessons we are given ample opportunities to share our insights, life experiences and discuss our homework... I am not alone when I say I lead a very busy life; so do many of you. However, at a day's end, I look forward to working on the daily lesson (from the classes). It is my private time with God where I learn about God's plan in history, His sovereignty, His providence, His love, His nature and His plans for each of us... His word is a source of constant strength, providing direction, hope, peace and understanding to me." - Liz Ng strongly encourages our ladies to attend the Ladies Bible study classes. The Saturday afternoon classes currently use the Precepts Ministry Bible Study series.

We invite ladies to serve with us on a project basis. It is also a good opportunity for ourselves to get to know better more of the ladies in church. We are looking forward to an outing and a craft session later this year.

The Ladies Fellowship is led by Lus Augustina and myself. I believe the Lord has lessons of faith in store for us as we continue to trust Him and let Him work through us in this ministry. We are taking one step at a time, leaning on Him. If you would like to know more about this ministry or get involved, please do not hesitate to contact Lus Augustina at Lusalvin@yahoo.com or Belinda Wee at belwee@edensmile.com. Ω



Belinda and Lus invite ladies to serve with them on a project basis.



EVENTS

Family Ministry – 25 May



As an ice-breaker, participants were asked to draw what marriage meant to them.



Four married couples with marriages ranging from 2.5 to 41 years generously and candidly shared on what they appreciated most about their spouses and marriages, what is important in a marriage, as well as its challenges, and what the church can do to grow and sustain healthy marriages and families. All were unanimous about the necessity for a marriage to be centred on Christ and the gospel.

Baptisms & Transfers – 26 May



We welcome six new members to our church (L-R): K Douglas Erdmann, Joyce Ann Erdmann, Martin Chan and Wendy Tan via transfer of membership; and John Cheah and Nehemiah Chong via baptism.



Enjoy Ministry: First Midweek Exercise – 8 May



In May, the Enjoy Ministry launched a regular midweek exercise programme which is conducted on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 7 am to 8:30 am.

In photo: Bruce Mok leading the participants in some stretching and breathing exercises.



Youth Bible Conference – What is Church? – 8 Jun



Through workshops, discussions and games, our youth explored how God sees His church and how we should live together as a church.



Breaking into small groups, the participants learn how to evangelise to strangers via role-playing games (in photo, Anita and Priscilla playing the role of two strangers to be approached).



Pastor Oliver leading the discussion and sharing a message on 'What is Church?'

Visit to Roslin Orphanage – 12–14 April 2013

Roslin Orphanage is located in West Timor and was founded in 2000 (officially opened in 2002) by Budi and Peggy Soehardi with the objective of breaking the cycle of poverty in the region through proper education. The orphanage currently houses around 70 children and is continually expanding. You can find out more about Roslin Orphanage and how you can volunteer or help at <http://www.roslinorphanage.org>. See more photos of the trip at <http://www.roslinorphanage.org/special-visit-uncle-anthony-tan-and-friends>.



(L-R) Anthony Tan, Teoh Swee Hin, Lenn Yah Wu, Shirley Tan (back row) and William Lenn with the children at Roslin Orphanage.



A child who's studying at an agriculture university asking William a question on Chemistry. The children are hungry for knowledge!



Yah Wu singing with the children!

Be a Blessing to Your Neighbour: How You can Serve God in Cambodia

By Tan Kim Cheng

Since 2010, GBC has been fielding a team every six months to Project Khmer H.O.P.E. (PKH) at Kampong Speu in Cambodia. PKH was set up by St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, in 2000 to share God's love with poor and needy Cambodians by meeting their social and economic needs through:

1. Vocational training in hospitality and industrial skills;
2. Childcare for orphans, street children and poor village children;
3. Healthcare for the very poor in remote villages; and
4. Community help such as welfare aid and medicine for various villages in the province.

GBC has conducted dental work, English classes, as well as vocational training, in previous trips. Here are some areas that you can serve in:

A. Dental services

If you are a dentist, we welcome you to provide dental services. We also need assistants to work on rotating shifts (two-hour shifts) to help the dentist in areas such as cleaning and sterilising dental instruments, passing dental instruments to the dentist, attending to the needs of patients, recording their particulars, cleaning the counter, etc.



Wee Thiem Heng provides dental services for the students and villagers as Benjamin Wee assists him.



PKH students waiting for their turn for a dental check-up.

B. Vocational training in hospitality and industrial skills

We need help in conducting English classes (for hospitality skills) as well as trainers in vocational skills – thus far, GBC has conducted business workshops, hands-on training in mechanical work, and jewellery workshops, etc.



Students learning mechanical work from Tan Kim Cheng.

C. Community help

During our last trip, we also brought some goodies such as biscuits, chocolates and wafers for a primary school in the rural Aoral district.



GBC team distributing the goodies.

Our next trip will be in October 2013 and we hope that more will join us to serve Him in Cambodia.

super sibling award!

By Rachel Wong

Who thinks they can win the Super Sibling award? The first test is this: have you ever realised there are other people living in your house?! You are an important part of your family, but you are exactly that: a part. Problems come when we think and act as if we are more important than anyone else. Look at this verse from 1 John 4:20:

“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”

The verse is saying that God wants us to love our brothers and sisters as a way of showing that we love God Himself. Some of you may be thinking “Good thing I have no brothers or sisters so this doesn’t apply to me!” But you are not off the hook! In fact, all our fellow Christians are our brothers and sisters in the family of God, not just the brothers and sisters who live in the same house as us! So this verse is for everyone.

Why do you think we tend to fight more with our actual brothers and sisters than with our friends? Could it be because we do not have to live with our friends? If you are honest you may realise that if you had to share a room with your best friend for a year you might not be best friends for very long! Most friendships would run into problems even faster than siblings would.

Some people say it is normal to fight with our siblings. Certainly there are many examples in the Bible of people not getting on well with their brothers and sisters. Think about Cain and Abel (Cain was jealous and killed Abel); Jacob and Esau (Jacob stole Esau’s blessing); Joseph and his brothers (the brothers sold Joseph into slavery) – and there are more examples. But the Bible does not approve of such behaviour and neither should we. Heb 13: 1 says **“Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.”** Try not to think like everyone around you that sibling rivalry is normal, but instead dare to be different – do something to show you are a Christian and honour God by loving your brothers and sisters. Then you will be a Super Sibling!

Remember: God has put you in the exact perfect family that is right for you. That means that you have the parents and siblings that God wants you to have to make you a better person. God never makes mistakes; you are supposed to be in the family that you are in and your siblings have been specially chosen for you, so thank God for them right now!

What kind of brother or sister are you? Do you deserve the Super Sibling Award?

