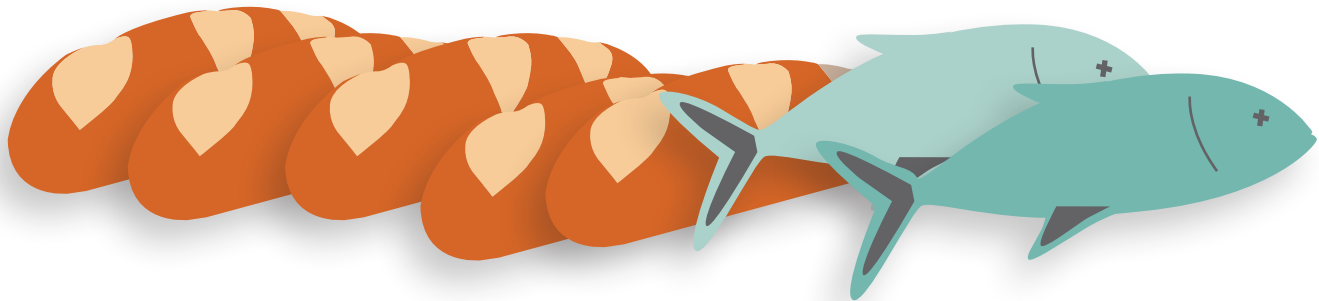


GRACE NEWS

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



Editorial

Suffering Alongside

The word 'compassion' comes from two Latin words: cum (with) and patior (suffer, endure). This beautifully sums up the character attribute we are focusing on in this issue – compassion is expressed when we feel another's pain as if we ourselves were going through the same experience. Turn to pages 2 and 3 to be inspired as you read about some of our own members who have made a habit of showing compassion over the years. Then on page 1 Pastor Arnold asks an interesting question: Is it possible to be too compassionate? If you have never thought about this before, turn to the Pastoral Column to find out more.

Our Ministry Focus for this issue is the Children's Ministry – turn to page 6 to discover the ethos of this important ministry and see what our children are up to in Junior Church and Sunday School. We also have a conversation with our newest elder, Wee Thiem Heng (page 7), and we find out from Pastor Oliver how our youth and young adults can benefit from Missions Exposure and Experience Trips (page 5).

This has been a busy quarter for GBC as you can see from our packed events pages (4 and 5). Last but not least, turn to page 8 for our regular Children's Corner and Book Review to cater to both young and not so young!

May you be blessed as you read.

The Editorial Team
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Compassion vs Indifference

Pastor Arnold Wong



The Bible is clear that God's people are to be compassionate towards others – to have mercy, to feel sympathy, and to have pity on those in need. In this way, we reflect the nature of our heavenly Father who is compassionate (Ps 86:15). Our Lord Jesus Christ is our example of what compassion in action looks like as He met the needs of the masses (Matt 14:14) and individuals (Mk 1:40-41), as He healed the sick and calmed the distressed (Matt 9:35-36). Being compassionate helps us see the need and may lead us to want to do something to help meet the need (1 Jn 3:17-18).

But as we know, being compassionate has its challenges. There are some formidable adversaries that we have to overcome, such as our own powerfully selfish sinful flesh (Gal 5:19-20, NLT). The Apostle Paul exhorts believers to seek the interests of others and not just our own (Phil 2:3-4). Besides our own natural disposition, selfishness is also the way promoted by the world, which is opposite to the way of God (Jas 3:13-18).

How can God's people be more compassionate? One way is to turn our hearts in obedience to the Lord and away from doing things for 'selfish gain' (Ps 119:36, ESV). Another way is to truly love others (Rom 12:10). When we love others, it is near impossible not to be compassionate in times of need.

One question that may arise is, "Can one be too compassionate – too giving?" "Is it possible to be so unselfish that it can lead to a person doing harm to themselves and to loved ones around them?" This is a difficult question to answer, but perhaps it would help for a person to examine themselves before acting on their compassion. First, "What is the motivation behind our compassionate act?" Second, "Are there other important needs ahead of this one that need attention?" Third, "Can others help share in meeting the need so that it is a shared effort and blessing?" And lastly "How is the Lord leading me to meet this need – what about others?" Ω

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Compassion

Only His Instruments

Among our midst are servants whose work lies outside popular understanding of Christian ministry. They tell Grace News how God has fuelled their compassion to explore areas usually unnoticed.

HAD SHE not ventured out of her secure holiday resort late one night on her own in search of her toddler's lost jacket, a young Pat Chan might not have stumbled upon three Filipina workers at a deserted playground, huddled together and in tears.

Back then they rebuffed her offers for help. But that moment – 30 years ago – opened Pat's eyes to the needs of a growing wave of Filipinas who left their country to be migrant workers. Her conviction grew and culminated, in 1986, in her helming a Sunday class ministering to domestic helpers – an involvement that continues to this day.

"Students here learn about Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and saviour. It's also a venue for social interaction, emotional support, even exchange of work skills. We want them to experience God in their daily living," Pat explains.

She adds that her students 'have very specific needs'. Given their constraints at work, and the myriad personal circumstances that led to their leaving home in the first place, it is not surprising to hear of

the many occasions where Pat has stood with her students in the face of personal hardship.

In the case of one whom, unbeknown to her employers, was beset with illness, Pat, aware too that the household was then welcoming a newborn infant, delivered a heartbreaking resolution: she urged the maid to return home.

"I promised her a cookie jar of funds that would tide her over while she adjusted to life back home," Pat remembers. "I said: 'If you do what is right, God will not hold back from you anything you need.'"

Such episodes have forged Pat a closer walk with God and spur her on in her ministry. She defers to Proverbs – that '**those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed**' – as a source of direction, and a rallying call for her class. "I tell my girls to 'believe that God made you for better things, and to seek His guidance in any decision.'"





Leong Kuan Yui might not yet have known what he was made for when growing up as a child in 1950s Singapore. One day at a Kampong Silat playground he was invited by a stranger to a nearby shophouse. It was there the foundations of GBC were soon laid: he would become one of its first members.

Today KY acknowledges that a difficult childhood, not untypical of a post-war generation, factored strongly in a future decision to minister to prison inmates that stretched into a decade-long commitment.

He saw a common denominator in his charges. "Whether they're drug addicts or robbers, you'll notice many of them were denied a proper upbringing as children." KY used **the gospel as basis for his outreach, specifically Matthew 25:36 and Isaiah 42:3**, applying them to his charges' unspoken concerns. "They fear rejection, whether from their own family, or by society. Some even prefer returning to jail."

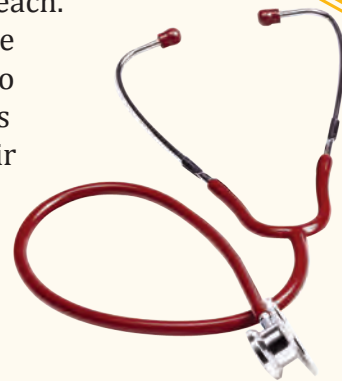
Now retired, KY retains ties with many ex-inmates, and is confident of today's corps of counsellors in the prison service, noting that half of them are from Christian groups.

The efforts of Pat and Kuan Yui provide a form of intangible support towards areas of society whose needs cannot be addressed solely through official funding or infrastructure. Ditto Esther Cher, who has, for over 30 years, offered a listening ear and a helping hand to nursing home residents. She attributes her persistence to her focus on God, and a desire to glorify Him. "If these people reject Christ, they'll perish eternally," she explains.

There is a serenity in Esther's demeanour which belies the countless rejections she has faced throughout the years. When she now parallels the challenges God permitted her early on in her ministry, and in raising a young family, it is a testament of how one's ministry permeates their personal conduct and vice versa.

Years ago, a friend had been transferred to another (non-Christian) home: Esther's initial exasperation became a realisation that this was part of God's plan to

spread her outreach. Around the same time too, her two young daughters were taking their first, tentative steps in learning the English language.



Over devotion one morning, Esther read of '**calling of faithful servants, not successful ones**'. Right then she made a commitment: "From now on I will serve God regardless of whether I see results or not, as long as He wants me to."

"We are only His instruments," she says.

That same afternoon Esther arrived home to her daughters' learning activities. "We sat around the table. My older girl showed me a piece of paper. It was her name, spelt correctly for the first time. I just sat there and wept." Ω

EVENTS

Missions Seminar: The Ultimate Quest – A Discipleship Revolution – 13-15 July 2012



(Left) Steve Smith encouraged us to be fruitful disciples and fulfill God's mission to be fishers of men. (Right) Steve Smith explained why there is a need for us as disciples to multiply and expand the kingdom of God.



Family Day – 28 July 2012



Volunteers gathered early to pray and commit the Family Day to the Lord.



Praise God for the overwhelming attendance for the screening of the film Matthew and Friends in the Sanctuary and Annexe.



Mdm Rostinah, Principal and Mrs Constance Chia, HOD Pupil Development from MacPherson Primary School, with some of their pupils at the Family Day.



MP Tin Pei Ling has her portrait drawn by our very own Benjamin Khan.



Health screening and eye tests were available for visitors.

Young Adults Retreat – 3-4 August 2012



Our young adults had a fruitful time bonding and growing in their relationship with God.

Baby Dedication – 30 September 2012



Dedicating (front row L-R) Elizabeth, Toby and Kieran Wong with parents Benjamin and Li Szu; Rebecca Liow with brother Lucas and parents Elvira and John; (back row L-R) Emily Ng with parents Han Yeou and Patricia; and Raphael Loquinarío with parents Jocelyn and Romuel.

GBC 53rd Anniversary – 12 August 2012



Praise God for His steadfast love!



Ps Bobby and Ps Arnold with students of MacPherson Primary School and their Vice Principal Mr Chong Chin Hong (second left), HOD Mrs Constance Chia and Admin Manager Mr Raymond Liu.



Mr Chong Chin Hong, Vice Principal of MacPherson Primary School, receiving the GBC annual love gift to needy students from our Church Director, Mr Ong Boon Hwee.



(right) The annual lunch is a great time for catching up and fellowship!

Youth and Young Adults (YYA) Missions Exposure & Experience Trip (MEET) to Pua, Thailand (June 2012)

Pastor Oliver Chia

Pastor and author David Platt writes in the chapter 'The Great Why of God' from his book *Radical: Taking Back your Faith from the American Dream*, that God's purpose from the beginning till today is the proclamation of His Gospel to the world. With this in mind, a small team of Youth and Young Adults made a trip in June to work with the Sanglirs, our missionary contacts in Pua, Thailand.

The team (Stacey Wee, Benjamin Wee, Tan Ting Xuan and myself) taught English to Grade 6-9 at Ban Phan School. We built relationships with both students and staff to

pave the way for the missionaries to proclaim the Gospel. We also conducted a Bible Camp where the Gospel of Mark was taught, led a worship session for the children boarding at Kathy's Home, and played games with them.

On Sunday we visited a Hmong church in the hills where we presented a violin solo, a song item and preached a message from Philippians 1:21. Finally, we participated in a staff Bible study on Mark 10:32-45 and spent precious time in prayer with Mak Sanglir and his staff.

In addition to these interactions,

daily devotions, prayer and discussions of experiences also helped the team grow as disciples.

The trip reinforced that Gospel edification (the building up of the local church) and Gospel proclamation (missions and evangelism) are inseparable. Building each other up in the Gospel should lead to the goal of proclaiming the Gospel to all; and Gospel proclamation for the glory of God should motivate our teaching in church. The team returned persuaded that MEETs are essential in the church life of a GBC youth or young adult. **Ω**



One of the Bible Camp crafts done by the children at Kathy's Home.



Soccer: an international game that builds bridges.



Worship at Kathy's Home.

If you are interested in the ministry of Kathy's Home, email Beh Soo Hee at behsh@starhub.net.sg.

Children's Ministry

The Children's Ministry consists of a dedicated team of teachers and support workers whose desire is to help families with children from birth to age 12 get the most out of their time in church every Sunday. The team comprises more than 50 church members serving either as caregivers in the Nursery, teachers in the Junior Church and Sunday School, or workers in administration and classroom support.



Kindergarten 1 Sunday School class with their teachers Yat Tuang and Ellen.



Primary 4 Sunday School class with their teachers Wai Ching and Charles.



Primary 3 Sunday School class with their teachers Soon Leong and Siew Hong.



Primary 1 Sunday School class with their teacher Ellen.

The ethos of the Children's Ministry is to promote worship.

The Nursery enables parents with babies to worship in the Sanctuary freely. The Junior Church offers age-appropriate expression of worship through songs, the message, offerings, craft, role-playing, videos etc, in order to encourage enjoyment of God and the corporate worship of Him. Similarly, the Sunday School serves to promote worship of God by teaching the Bible, and making its doctrines clearer in different age-appropriate classes, so that worship is centred on Christ and empowered by His redeeming, regenerating and sanctifying work. We use *Scripture Press* materials for Junior Church and *Children Desiring God* for Sunday School.

With the aid of these curricula and many creative inputs of the teachers, the Children's Ministry hopes to fulfill its role in partnering with parents in teaching and nurturing our children, so that their faith may be expressed through worship in church and through their lives at home and in school.

Christian service being the overflow of our worship of God, the Children's Ministry provides many opportunities for such service. We encourage members with different gifts to serve in our ministry, such as teaching, playing musical accompaniment, classroom support and periodic relief teaching, just to name a few. Do contact Kok Pui (kpkuan@gracebaptistchurch.sg), Khee Peng (tkp1518@hotmail.com) or Poh Gee (pgeekoh@gmail.com) to express your interest to serve.

The timing of the different areas of Children's Ministry is as follows:

- Nursery (birth – age 2) during both English services
- 1st Junior Church (age 2 – Primary 6) during the 1st English Service
- 2nd Junior Church (age 2 – Primary 6) after the 2nd English Service
- Sunday School (age 2 – Primary 6) during the 2nd English Service



The 2nd Junior Church with some of their teachers, from left Janice (seated), Yue Ching, Xiu Hui, Hong Gek, Nan Yoong, Khee Peng, Lan Soi and Kim Hoong.

Conversation with Wee Thiem Heng

Seah Yen Goon



Our new Elder, Thiem Heng, has been a cornerstone of the church choir for many years. I remember his strong bass voice anchoring the choir week after week in worship. This same level of dedication and teamwork is now channelled to his new calling. His responses speak of a man who is thoughtful and clear of his mission in God's kingdom.

1. What led you to respond to the call of serving as an Elder?

I served in the music ministry since 1986 first as choir member, then as chairman. After stepping down from the choir in 2005, I returned a few years later to serve but in a less active capacity. Meanwhile I asked the Lord to lead me into another area of ministry. However, serving as Elder was far from what I had in mind! I had many questions - me? really? why? how? After much prayer and speaking to several people in church, I was repeatedly reminded that it is not about what I can do for God, but rather what God can do through me – whoever God calls, He will enable. I decided to avail myself to His calling, and allow Him to use me for His service.

2. How do you see your role as an Elder in GBC? Which areas would you like to focus on?

I will be working alongside the team of Elders and Pastors in:

- i. Caring, as a shepherd cares for the flock by helping to meet the various practical needs of the members, encouraging and praying for them.
- ii. Teaching in Adult Bible Class.
- iii. Managing the affairs of the church – the Elders and Pastors meet regularly to deliberate on both spiritual and practical matters.

An area of focus is spiritual growth and discipleship. During the recent missions seminar, Steve Smith reminded us that we are to MAKE DISCIPLES, NOT CHURCH MEMBERS. The elders are conducting Growing In Christ classes for new believers as well as Design for Discipleship for 'older' members.

3. Last year you and your family travelled with Kim Cheng's mission team to Project Khmer Hope Centre in Cambodia. How did these experiences impact you?

It was a privilege for the whole family to show compassion to the less fortunate. Benjamin, Elizabeth and I provided free dental treatment to students and children from the nearby orphanage. Belinda taught accessories-making and vocal training. We are also thankful for Anna Lenn who accompanied us to look after Isaac.

It is a joy to be able to extend a helping hand to those in need. Each time we seek to give we learn that we cannot out-give God – we come back with baskets full of blessings and joy. Ω



Elizabeth Isaac Belinda Benjamin Thiem Heng

♪...it is not about what I can do for God, but rather what God can do through me – whoever God calls, He will enable. ♪

Helping Heart Helping Hands

Children's

Rachel Wong

Corner

Compassion' sounds like it must be a hard word to understand, but actually it is just a posh way to describe how you feel when you are sorry for someone and want to help them. Wouldn't you feel upset if you saw someone bullying your friend, or if you came upon an injured animal lying on the road? You would want to do something to help. Sometimes when there are disasters like earthquakes we feel sorry for the suffering people we see on TV and send money to help them. All these are examples of compassion in our daily lives.

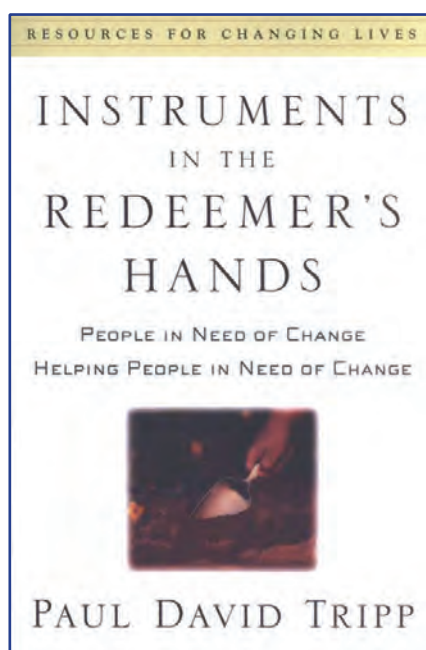
We can feel compassion because God made us to be like Him, and He is a compassionate God. We know this because He provides for our needs and fills our hearts with joy, but most of all He sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. There are many examples in the Bible of compassionate people – Jesus always felt sorry for the crowds around him who were lost. Remember the stories of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son's father who felt sorry for people who were in trouble?

You can show compassion too! You can do this by being quick to forgive people and by helping your friends and family when they are having problems. But even if you think there is nothing you can do to help, you can still share about Jesus and pray for the person. That is the best way to show compassion – to help them receive eternal life! Ω

BOOK REVIEW

review by Fu Peixian

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands by Paul David Tripp



“Many of us would be relieved if God had placed our sanctification in the hands of trained and paid professionals, but that simply is not the Biblical model.” God calls each of His children to be more than consumers of God’s grace; He calls us to be participants in His plan for the whole body to grow to full maturity in Christ. To this end, Paul Tripp begins to teach how we can minister daily to those around us in a Biblical manner.

Faced with suffering and need, we often feel ill-equipped and ill at ease, hoping we remember the appropriate Scripture reference. We may inject trite Christian

phrases into our conversations and promise to pray. Tripp suggests that we need to delve deeper to achieve real change: we should seek to understand people’s hearts and build long-term relationships that enable us to speak the truth in love. He exhorts us to balance God’s grace, which brings comfort, with our obligation to respond in obedience to achieve a change of heart. Tripp also highlights areas that we must guard ourselves against and advises how to provide for continued, life-long change.

This book encourages and equips us who are in need of change to help others also in need of change. Ω