

## It's Hard To Drive

With Your Eyes Always Looking In  
The Rear View Mirror

Ps Arnold Wong

*"...but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14 (NASB)*

The sight of the car in my rear view mirror coming at me at full speed is not something that I will ever forget. There was nothing that I could do to avoid a collision. But I did learn to be more alert and a better driver. It is good to remember certain things and to forget others. But forgetting is easier said than done.

Here are some thoughts that might help us do what God wants us to do in the Book of Philippians:

1. Make a conscious decision to forget the unfruitful, unconstructive events of the past. Over the years, our large family has accumulated lots of "stuff". We have a hard time parting with them, because everything has some sentimental value attached to them. But as we all know, some memories are worth more and some less. Keep the really valuable experiences and lessons and let go of the rest.

2. Make a conscious effort to reach out to what is in front of you. This means attempting to fulfill some goal, dream, burden, or passion that the Lord places in your heart. Perhaps God has put in your heart a special concern and love for children, youth, young adults, adults, or even seniors. Prayerfully follow that passion and as the Lord opens doors of opportunity walk through them by faith. It really does not matter if you have never done it before, as long as God is calling you to do it. Ask God to help you find people who have done that kind of ministry before and from whom you can learn. Also, ask the Lord to help you find people who would like to do it with you – it can turn into a journey of faith you'll cherish forever.

3. Make a conscious effort to persevere and keep moving on to what the Lord has called you to do. In life, and especially in ministry, nothing comes easily. Anything worth doing will require you to persevere and endure. Like a runner in a race it is important to keep the finish line in sight and do all you can to reach it.

Once, I was intrigued with a certain successful person. What was the secret to his success? So I asked someone who knew that successful person very well. The answer was quite simple and poignant: "He doesn't spend a whole lot of time looking into the rear view mirror. He is always looking and moving forward." Does that sound familiar? Hint, look at the verse on top.

In 2010, spend less time looking back and spend more time looking and reaching forward.

# Grace News

A Quarterly Newsletter Of Grace Baptist Church Limited

January–March 2010

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### Editorial

## Joyful New Year

It's a new year and Grace News has a new look! We have also lined up more but shorter articles to make it more engaging. We hope you enjoy reading the new Grace News as much as we do!

This issue deals with the difficult topic of pain and grief – why does God allow suffering, how do we manage or help others cope with it, and what are the struggles faced in providing care and support. We are reminded that sometimes suffering is necessary to bring us closer to God and His people, just as our Lord has suffered and died for us. And it is in focusing on God that we will find joy – an important takeaway of the recent Youth Camp (see page 6).

Also in this issue look out for articles on:

- CG Leadership Training
- A young adult's faith journey
- A Biblical trip to the Holy Land

The editorial team is very excited for the year ahead! Wishing all a joyful new year as we join Ps Arnold to look and reach forward!

In His Name,

*The Editorial Team*

Members are welcome to send in articles to  
GraceNews Editorial via:

email: [gracenews.gbc@gmail.com](mailto:gracenews.gbc@gmail.com)

# Recent Events



Ladies Network Thanksgiving Gathering - 14 November



Dr R Richard Speaks At Evangelistic Dinner - 21 November

Ps Bobby's Ordination - 7 November



More photos at [www.gracebap.org.sg](http://www.gracebap.org.sg)

"Time For Giving" - A Community Project - 26 December



Christmas Service - 25 December



## Trained To Lead And Connect

A Report On 'The Art Of Leading A Care Group'

Fu Pei Xian

Ever felt discouraged? Tired? Stressed out? Well, look no further!

The product to address despair: CARE GROUPS (CG)! Out on the market, there is a confusing array of products. No fear...on offer - Grace Baptist Church's solution. Some 40 CG leaders attained the Certificate of Achievement in The Art of Leading a Care Group Basic Course on 28 November. Seek out these members. Trained in building a godly environment for others, you'll be in good hands!

Yap Kim Meng spoke on "Feeding Yourself". He stressed that it is essential to start with the Word of

God. Meditating on God's Word helps us become Christ-like and be equipped with the power to lead. Shirley Tan presented "Teaching Others". She introduced the Homiletics Technique which breaks down a passage of Scripture to aid in teaching. On "Caring for Others", William Lenn gave suggestions on building a CG that cares.

Participants' feedback was positive. One was inspired to think more about what he could do to build a CG that is Word-centred and loving God and everyone. Another recounted how the bond formed from praying and sharing amongst members - building lives upon lives - kept his CG going. He encouraged all to attend a CG. Issues for each group may differ but the love in each CG is palpable and heart-warming.

So what are you waiting for? Sign up now with a CG for a no obligation trial. Guaranteed to keep the blues at bay!

## Nine Believers Baptised

Li Shi Wei

On 11 October, the English congregation witnessed the baptism of nine fellow worshippers. Each of them, having embarked on various personal journeys, had arrived at this chapter, ready to reaffirm their relationship with God.

For Kevin Goh, a young adult who has attended Grace Baptist for over 15 years, it was a sudden bout of fever during the midst of his studies and CCAs in junior college, which gave him the break he needed to reconsider the commitment to his faith.

"Everything was moving very quickly," he recalled of the episode. "And suddenly, when you are hospitalised, you just lose all the momentum, your bearings."

"It was a turning point, because I would have continued to believe in my own strength. However, I felt that God spoke to me; it was his



way of teaching me that I couldn't depend on myself."

The episode would eventually pave the way for his decision to get baptised. This has led Kevin to understand the significance of displaying the qualities of being a Christian. "The most important thing," he said, "is talking to people about your faith, and to practise what you preach."

Now an undergraduate, Kevin takes on his current challenges more secure than ever in the knowledge of his relationship with God. "Sometimes when I feel very stressed, I think prayer really comforts me," he mused.

"At least you know that God is listening to you."

# Why Does A Loving God Allow Suffering?

Chaplain Rick Rood

*The first thing we must admit in addressing this question is that the very nature of our humanity requires us to acknowledge that we cannot possibly comprehend all of God's reasons in permitting evil and suffering.*

This is very likely the most frequently asked question about God, by believer and non-believer alike. For many non-believers, this question poses an obstacle to belief in a good and powerful God. And for those of us who do believe, the presence of evil and suffering at times casts a shadow over our faith.

The first thing we must admit in addressing this question is that the very nature of our humanity requires us to acknowledge that we cannot possibly comprehend all of God's reasons in permitting evil and suffering. No one has fully known the mind of the Lord, nor has anyone come near to understanding all His ways (Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-35). Nonetheless, God has revealed enough about His reasons for allowing suffering to enable us to trust Him.

For one, it is clear from scripture that evil and suffering find their ultimate source in the sin of His angelic and human creatures. Not that every instance of suffering is due to that individual's personal sin. But had the human race not fallen into sin, there would be no suffering (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12; 8:20-22). Furthermore, it's evident that some suffering is due to God's preserving the integrity of the laws of nature (such as gravity and motion) which allow for a predictable earthly existence.

But beyond these basic facts, we can also see that there are some things about God Himself that we could never experience or appreciate in any other world besides one like our own. In what other kind of world could we experience God's compassion on the suffering, or His grace toward sinners,



## Grief & Grace

Diana Seah

*We learned that people go through different emotional stages of grief. In the early stage, there is confusion...*

Many of us are at a loss or feel inadequate in helping our loved ones or friends through the grieving process. Sometimes we are confused and angry, asking why our loving God and Father allows such affliction and loss, which make us suffer.

We were indeed blessed to have Rick Rood to share with us the Ministry to the Suffering and his personal journey of grief and grace on 31 October 2009. Pastor Arnold had invited him to Singapore as he was on a recent tour of India, Myanmar and Taiwan to conduct theological training workshops under the auspices of Acts International. Rick has been serving as a chaplain in two hospitals in Texas for 13 years. He comes with a wealth of experience in pastoring, seminary teaching and pastoral care. Twenty years of caring for his late wife have shaped, prepared and equipped Rick in the Lord-led ministry of comforting and strengthening those

who are suffering from depression, terminal illness and loss of loved ones.

Rick addressed the Biblical perspective of sufferings and the problem of evil. God permits suffering in our lives to manifest His power, to remove a cause of boasting, to exercise genuine faith in Him, to express compassion and love of God to those in need, to promote sanctification, to prepare for ministry and to prepare for eternity. He suffered and died for us, the ultimate act of sacrifice and love. Therefore He is full of compassion and is able to identify with us in our sufferings and to comfort all who mourn.

We learned that people go through different emotional stages of grief. In the early stage, there is confusion, denial and withdrawal. This is followed by confronting the loss which is usually accompanied by feelings of anger, guilt, anxiety and sadness. Adjusting to the new phase of life without the loved ones is necessary for reconstruction and reconciliation. We gained an understanding of the psychological and physiological changes that a grieving person may undergo. These could manifest in various ways - in eating, drinking, sleeping, crying, loss of concentration, depression and loneliness - that vary with gender and the type of death.

or His ability to deliver when all hope is lost, or to sustain when all strength is gone, to comfort when we have suffered great loss, to provide when all resources are exhausted, or experience His justice in ultimately defeating evil?

*In what other kind of world could we experience God's compassion on the suffering, or His grace toward sinners, or His ability to deliver when all hope is lost, or to sustain when all strength is gone, to comfort when we have suffered great loss, to provide when all resources are exhausted, or experience His justice in ultimately defeating evil?*

It's also evident that God is giving opportunity for us to acquire qualities that could be formed in no other kind of world than the fallen one in which we live. Suffering has the potential of instilling in us qualities like humility, dependence, compassion on others who are suffering, grace toward those who have sinned against us, perseverance when we feel like giving up, gratitude for the blessings of God after a

season of deprivation, and joy inexpressible when God ultimately triumphs over His foes.

The most amazing thing, however, about the Christian revelation is that God has chosen to enter into our world through the incarnation... and to experience the pain and suffering we do! It's because of these sufferings that He is able not only to "sympathise with our sufferings," but also to provide "grace and help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16)!

One day, God will remove evil and suffering from His creation once for all (Romans 8:18-21; Revelation 21:3-4). But until then, we have more than enough reason to trust in God, even "in the dark."

Helping and supporting the grieving person to acknowledge, accept, let go, adjust and move forward, requires active listening, praying and spending time with the person. Excellent notes were handed out on how to be a good listener, and how to encourage the grieving person to think through and resolve their own problems and explore various options available. Rick provided a treasure of Bible verses that we could tap on to comfort others and ourselves.

Rick shared his reflections on the important lessons the Lord taught him in pastoral care. Before ministering to others, it is important to tend to our own spiritual well-being. Although we cannot do everything for everybody, we can do something for everyone God brings in our path. And whatever we need to say or do, we must do it now when the person is still around.



## The Call To Care

Maggie Ho & Sandra Fox

Where do I turn when my wife needs care? Is a nursing home an option when my parent is ill? Should I quit my job to look after mum?

When faced with her mum's stroke and immobility, **Eve Tan** had to decide between continuing with her comfortable job or caring for mum. When it dawned on her that mum's days were numbered, quitting no longer was an option, it was something she wanted to do.

**Kitty Mori** on the other hand mulled over the option of a nursing home. Both her parents had Alzheimer's disease, one after the other. When the disease set in affecting their mental faculties and caused changes in temperament, she had to learn to coax and persuade her parents to eat, clean or receive care. Eventually, the nursing home was a necessity when it became clear that professional help was needed.

*"We lacked nothing. God had prepared family, friends, and church members to provide all our needs."  
Kai Mun*

When **Kai Mun** and Carrie decided to share with the church "because we are family", the response was overwhelming. "We lacked nothing," he testified, "God had prepared our family, friends, and church members to provide all our needs." Sharing with the pastor, another male, gave relief. Also, their trust in God, grown through the years was crucial in helping them face Carrie's cancer.

Drawing answers from these caregivers about their personal feelings was quite futile – they are such selfless people. But when asked how they dealt with feelings of frustration or inundation (see main article), they all testified that, if not for God's strength, comfort and peace which they all became so aware of then, it would have been impossible to face each day.

# Takeaways Of Youth Camp

Kenneth Poon

The Pursuit of Happiness leads to no good end. In contrast, the Pursuit of Holiness, which is what God has specifically instructed us to undertake in all Scripture, directs the focus of our lives to God's sovereignty. And in so doing, we discover joy. This briefly captures the many lessons learned at youth camp this year.

This camp marks a decade of youth camps, a memorable milestone for our young adults to look back on. More importantly, this camp was enriched by the presence of many older ones who spoke honestly of their own life struggles, and

how Christ made a difference in each instance. Mutual trust and respect were established from this – a strong bedrock for friendships between the youth leaders (affectionately named lao laos by some campers) and the youths themselves.

What I regard as the most enriching aspect in this camp is the fact that God is sovereign, and that He is powerfully working through the lives of our youths here at GBC. I would like to thank God for the parents and families of our youths for their unwavering love and support of the Youth Ministry and its role.



# Tracing The Steps Of Jesus

Compiled by Koh Siang Kiang



Camel riding at Genesis Land



Lanes of Nazareth



The Garden Tomb

Reading the Bible will never be the same again because we "walked where Jesus walked" from 1-12 December 2009. Forty of us (19 GBC members) went on a Bible Study tour to the Holy Land led by Dr Koh Siang Kiang (her 10th trip), and co-taught by Dr E N Poulson (his 11th trip).

As we journeyed from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River; from Dan in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, we were moved to think of that stony terrain our Lord had travelled, on foot. We did it in comfort.

Names and places, both in the Old and New Testaments, came alive as we opened to passages where the events occurred. We climbed mountains in Judea, walked the lanes of Nazareth and Jerusalem, sailed the Sea of Galilee, meditated on Mt

Beatitudes, prayed in Gethsemane, worshipped at Golgotha, rejoiced at the Garden Tomb, and more.

Evening studies on the Feasts of Jehovah (Leviticus 23) became more significant being in the Land where these were practised. We even experienced a "Shabbat" (Sabbath) prayer by a rabbi.

In the midst of serious learning, we had fun. We rode camels, enjoyed Bedouin hospitality, floated on the Dead Sea, sang in Roman theatres and old Byzantine churches and explored tunnels under the Wailing Wall.

Many religious groups claim Jerusalem as a holy city, but the filth of idolatry there reveals how much they need God. Scripture reminds us that unless God's people turn back to Him (Leviticus 26) there will not be rain. Drought is evident

from the Jordan River to the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. We were moved to pray for the people and the Land. God is willing. We must pray for revival!

From the time of the Exodus to the present, there have been repeated efforts at genocide of Jews. Hitler attempted it by sending six million Jews to the gas chamber. But as a people they continue to multiply. We were reminded that God preserves His chosen people and keeps His promise to Abraham.

For us, our lives will never be the same. We were enriched and stimulated. We experienced God's Presence and were reminded of His love for us. What an appropriate time to think of God, Who became Man for us!

*Watch out for details of the next Holy Land trip later this year*



Engedi



The Sea of Galilee

# Where Is God When It Hurts?

A book review by Teoh Swee Hin

No one likes pain. Many treat pain as a curse. But yet we also know in many circumstances – “No Pain, No Gain”. Philip Yancey explores the topic and gives useful tips on how to understand pain from God’s perspective. He gives case examples from the people who survived the Holocaust to ordinary people who experienced terminal cancer. In Yancey’s own words: “because so many books on pain seem oddly irrelevant to suffering people. For them the problem of pain is not a theoretical problem, a theology game. It is a problem of relationship. Many suffering people want to love God, but cannot see past their tears. They feel hurt, and betrayed. Sadly, the church often responds with more confusion than comfort.”

The book has five parts. Part 1 deals with the question “Why is there such a thing as pain?” I wanted to skip this chapter initially but soon on scanning found that I have not understood the meaning and importance of pain. All of us need deliver-

ance from pain which is sure to continue all the way to hell. Part 2 deals with another common question “Is pain a message from God?” Yancey reminds the reader of two great errors - attributing all suffering to God and assuming that life with God will never include suffering. It was also revealing how he analysed the current “faith healers theology” being preached in a number of churches. I was delighted to know the history of pain, and case examples that were used to point the reader to the truth.

Find it out yourself. You will be amazed about how different religious groups responded to the terrible Black Death that hit England in the 17th century. This he dealt with in greater depth when he wrote Part 3 “How people respond to suffering”. I personally like Part 4 the most where he described “How can we cope with pain?” It is here I find so many tips on how I can prepare and what I should say to someone who is hurting. Finally, Yancey wraps up with Part 5 “How does faith help?”

*“Many suffering people want to love God, but cannot see past their tears. They feel hurt, and betrayed. Sadly, the church often responds with more confusion than comfort.”*

Philip Yancey

For care groups, there is also a discussion guide for each part. This is a must read book and a wonderful insight into PAIN.

