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GRACE NEWS

A QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

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Grace Baptist Church is a
disciple-making church that
transforms lives with the gos-
pel and love of Jesus Christ.



f @gracebaptistsg

To what extent are we insecure about change? Are we sometimes unsure which elements of our faith are non-negotiable and which are merely cultural and can safely be jettisoned? These are hard questions, but **Pastor Ian** unflinchingly asks us to consider what is more important – church culture, or submission to the cause of Christ.



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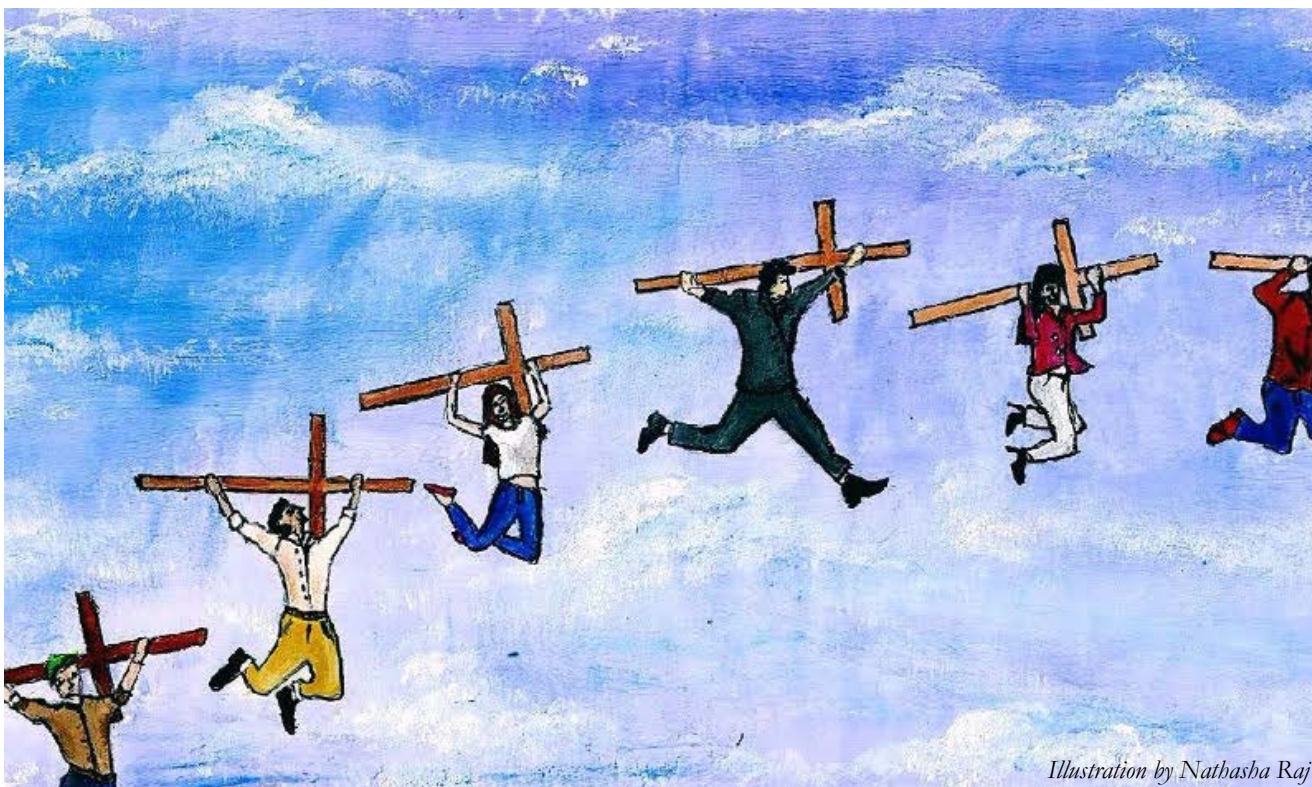


Illustration by Nathasha Raj

TRANSITIONS

If you have served the Lord for many years at Grace, you may be sensing that we are a church that is in transition. And as with every transition, you are very likely looking to the future with a mixture of anticipation and anxiety. There is anticipation because increasingly there is the joyful awareness that we will soon be back in our own building. Additionally, there is hope that in and through this building, God is going to use Grace for His glory.

But there is also anxiety: anxiety that comes from loss of influence, loss of control, and from a loss of familiar faces who had earned our trust through their ministry.

Some of us may even be wondering,

“What kind of church are we becoming?!” and ask, “Is our church culture changing?” Absolutely!

Every one of us, by the grace given to us by God, **must be willing to sacrifice the culture of our heritage, education and tradition for the transformational culture of Christ!** Only in submission to His work in us will we achieve our ambition to discover His pleasure, and so begin to live and serve Him with divine power and purpose. Only as we allow the gospel to do its daily, sanctifying work in us, can men and women throw their crowns at the feet of the One who died and then rose again!

These are defining days for those of us

who feel called to the faith family of Grace Baptist Church. In the words of the famous Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, “We have come to a turning point in the road. If we turn to the right maybe our children and our children’s children will go that way; but if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and to His Word.”

I pray that in these days we will be determined to choose to turn to the right and give daily evidence of an absolute allegiance to His word and that the generations that follow—both children and grandchildren—will gratefully follow the path of faith that draws our nation and indeed, all nations to the resurrected Christ! Ω

NOT ASHAMED

Living Hope

Long-time GBC member **Esther Cher**, also known as Yoke Lin, shares her testimony of being not ashamed of the gospel with Grace News writer **Heng Wen Xiu**. The mother-of-two talks about the living hope she has in the gospel, and the power of the Holy Spirit working in her.

How were you led to Christ?

I was born and brought up in a Taoist family. I first heard about the Lord Jesus Christ from my older sister, Josephine Chan. When I was about 9 or 10 years old, she brought me to GBC at Kampong Silat to attend an evangelistic meeting. That very night I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. A neighbour who had also attended the meeting saw me go up to the front of the church for the altar call. The following Sunday afternoon, she came by my house to bring me to Sunday school at GBC. She said that because I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, I had to attend Sunday school. I thought that was the procedure, so I followed her. I have been attending GBC ever since then. It was so amazing that God used my neighbour, who was a member of Fairfield Methodist Church, to bring me to GBC.



(L-R) Esther's husband Richard, Esther, their daughter Pauline and Esther's sister Josephine Chan.

How has the gospel moved you?

The gospel is good news – the good news that I don't have to die for my sins because Jesus Christ loves me and has died for me. He took away my sins and bore them upon Himself. He died and was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead. He is alive today and forevermore. One day He is coming back for me. This is the living hope I have. I thank God for this gift of saving faith that enables me to believe and to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

How have you seen the power of the gospel at work in your life?

The moment I welcomed Jesus Christ into my life, His Holy Spirit began dwelling in me. **The Holy Spirit gives me courage and strength to live out my new life in Christ, and empowers me to be an effective witness for Jesus.** I had the joy of seeing both my parents and my mother-in-law receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour before they passed on.

What does it mean to you to be not ashamed of the gospel?

To me, to be not ashamed of the gospel means to share the gospel truth to whomever the Lord brings into my life, regardless of their responses. In other words, whether they receive or reject the gospel, or whether they believe or ridicule me, I should continue to share the gospel until the Lord takes me home or until the ones to whom I am witnessing pass on. It is God who draws people to Himself, so it doesn't depend on me. I am just an instrument the Lord chooses to use.

How do you hope GBC would advance the gospel and make disciples, especially in light of the impending move back to Mattar Road?

I hope to see GBC united and focused on the Lord. When we move back to Mattar Road, I hope that ministry leaders would not fight for space for their own ministry, but look at GBC as a whole and be willing to give up their space to other ministries that need the space more – all for the glory of God and never for the glory of the ministry they lead. Our unity and love for one another would be a great testimony of our belonging to Jesus. My prayer for GBC is that GBC would continue to shine for the Lord in the Macpherson Estate and beyond, and to shine brightly and not grow dim. Ω

NOT ASHAMED

CROSSING CULTURES FOR JESUS

Esther Yap serves with Wycliffe Singapore and is currently based in Southeast Asia on a two-year assignment. She's doing a practical attachment with a faith-based partner organisation that collaborates with local partners in increasing access to and use of Scripture and related materials.



How has the good news of Jesus affected you?

I accepted Christ when I was 12. For many years after that, I recall having many doubts and insecurity in my own salvation. I struggled with ‘not-enough-ism’. My faith was not genuine enough. My testimony was not good enough. Eventually, I discovered and have come to love Hebrews 10, for it shows me the fallacy behind such thinking. The good news of Jesus is not about what I can do to attain it. Rather, it’s about receiving and humbly accepting it. I can now live a life in ‘full assurance of faith’, knowing that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for me was a gift given, not a reward earned nor an honour deserved.

How did the gospel lead you to decide on cross-cultural missions work?

What convicted me of the importance of cross-cultural missions was Romans 10:14-17. Each of us was led to Christ because we heard of Him, read of Him, and experienced Him. With the far-reaching convenience of technology, not having access to the gospel nowadays seems unthinkable. The fact is, not everyone has equal access. John Piper once said, “missions exist because worship doesn’t”. We worship many gods but how many of us worship the one true God? I couldn’t rest contented knowing that there are people unaware of the gospel, when we are called to share the gospel.

How does your present work in your current location challenge you to be unashamed of the gospel of Christ?

In the country where I am, only 9.2% of the population is Christian, but 32% of the Christian population is in my region. Living out the gospel of Christ unashamedly should be easier. Yet, I find myself becoming complacent. I assume we all think alike on doctrinal issues. I shy away from discussing difficult topics among friends. I neglect talking about the gospel because I assume everyone knows it. The pressure to not go against the grain is still there. As I partner with friends and colleagues in the course of my work, I feel challenged to not stop proclaiming the gospel of Christ, even among fellow believers.

What is your hope for GBC as a disciple-making church?

I think GBC as a community is in an advantageous position to teach and train disciples who are not afraid to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). We are sometimes cautious of maintaining a different opinion from the expected norm. No one likes being labelled ‘intolerant’ or ‘judgmental’. As we interact among family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances and strangers, even, I hope that we feel confident to share or defend the gospel in a way that speaks to them. As disciples ourselves, hoping to make other disciples, may we be suitably prepared so that we can speak with wisdom when the occasion calls for it (Colossians 4:5–6). Ω



Participants at a recent Oral Bible Storytelling workshop.

“

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”

SPECIAL FEATURE

BUILDING LESSONS FROM LEGO

What can the popular construction toy Lego teach us about building up the church of Christ? Pastor Eugene sees several parallels, and here uses those colourful little bricks to illustrate some important principles for us as we seek to establish the church on a strong foundation.



Pastor Eugene, with wife Claire and their sons Zachary (left) and Iain

My sons, Zachary and Iain, love playing with Lego. In April, we embarked on an ambitious project to rebuild all our Lego sets (around 35 of them), which had been deconstructed and disassembled.

The first step was to separate all the bricks by colour. After quite a bit of sorting, we had filled several containers with red, blue, green, yellow, orange, grey, black and white bricks. Step two: we found all the instructions for the various Lego sets.

Then we began to rebuild—brick by brick, part by part, set by set. It took us almost two weeks, but eventually the mess of variegated bricks was transformed into an impressive fleet of cars, trucks, boats and aircraft. We even had a yellow submarine. I thanked God for my two boys.

I share this vignette to provide a little window into our family life, and also because it is a homely metaphor for how I see our life together as a church.

As I put my hands to the plough with you, I would like to encourage us with three

“ The charge to make disciples is a call for each of us to invest our lives in others, to tell them about Jesus and help them grow to maturity in Him. ”

observations, gleaned from my family’s Lego exploits.

1. We Build Together

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph 4:15-16)

Like my family’s Lego building project, the task of making disciples is something that we do together. As followers of Jesus, we have all received the same commission from our Lord. We don’t all have to be doing the same thing, but we should be working towards the same goal: to make disciples of the nations.

We are not meant to go it alone. Neither does spiritual growth happen merely individually. We need one another in order to grow together. God has saved and gathered us into His people. Together, we are an embassy of God’s kingdom. Through our words and our life together as God’s family, we bear witness, unashamed, to the gospel’s saving power, and together we make Jesus known.

2. We Build with the Same Instructions

“...the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim 3:15b)

My family needed the right instructions to build our Lego sets. Instead of building whatever took our fancy and fighting over Lego pieces, we followed the same instructions and worked together. Jesus, the builder of God’s house, has spoken clearly and definitively. Our unity is founded upon the word of Christ and His gospel.

When we believe and live according to the same truth, we “attain to the unity of the faith” (Eph 4:13). God’s word must direct what we believe (our theology) and what we do (our life and ministry). As we listen to Scripture together, we will humbly submit our ideas, opinions, preferences, routines and traditions to the test of God’s word. The more we listen to God, the more our church will look like Him, and the less it will look like us. This strengthens our unity.

3. We Build with Joy

“...we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.” (2 Cor 1:24b)

If building toy models can be enjoyable, then how much more joy-giving is the awesome task of building the people of God! The charge to make disciples is a call for each of us to invest our lives in others, to tell them about Jesus and help them grow to maturity in Him. As we build others up in Christ, their joy in our Saviour becomes ours as well.

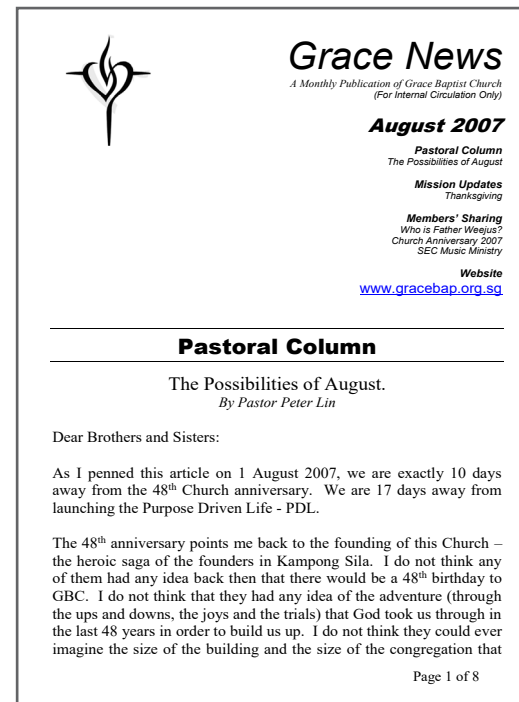
Claire and I are grateful for the opportunity to serve with you all again, for we hold you affectionately in our hearts. Our desire is for GBC to continue to grow as a community on mission, displaying the glory and beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ through our words and life together.

Let’s build together with joy, according to God’s truth! May God help us to strive side by side for the faith of the gospel! Ω

MINISTRY FOCUS

Grace News

Have you ever wondered how the copy of Grace News that you are now holding in your hands came to be there? How and why is it produced, and who is involved? In his exclusive exposé **Chan Kim Hoong** lifts the curtain on this shadowy organisation, and reveals why its members are passionate about communication within the church.



(Left) Grace News Team. (Right) An early iteration of Grace News from 2007.

The history of Grace News spans more than 15 years. In the early days it was simply a few photocopied black and white sheets of paper, folded together and inserted as part of the church bulletin. Someone has recalled that it then comprised mainly personal sharing and encouraging testimonies.

Over the years, as a result of using the services of commercial printing companies, we have been able to add photos, colours, graphics and illustrations. Content has also been given a facelift in terms of theme and coverage. All this was done with a single purpose in mind: to keep the church community at GBC informed of what's going on in church and to encourage one another by telling how the word of God can be lived out in community. This was what Paul did in his ministry, when for example he wrote to believers in Thessalonica or Colossae to update them on his well-being, encouraging and admonishing them because he cared for them (1 Thess 2:8).

Today, we are excited that we will be moving into a new phase as we work with the Comms team to bring Grace News digitally to GBC and beyond. All our newsletters and articles have been available on the GBC website since

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the launch of the revamped website in 2013, and we are now using the church's online newsletter – Grace eNews – to bring our articles and event updates to you in a more timely and regular manner. In the long term, there is a plan to phase out the hardcopy newsletter entirely, as most readers will eventually be on board the Grace eNews platform. So if you have not signed up for Grace eNews yet, sign up now at tinyurl.com/gbcenews!

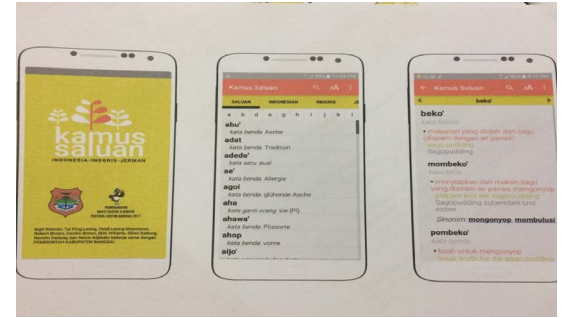
Despite the change, our hope for the newsletter remains the same: that the sharing and updates will continue to encourage and edify the church community and that when you read them, you will be encouraged and inspired to share your stories too. Good news refreshes the bones (Prov 15:30b). It is also

our hope that when non-Christians read the newsletter they will see God's many blessings and be excited to find out more.

Who makes up the current Grace News Team? We are just ordinary people worshipping in GBC serving either as writers, layout artists, editors or coordinators. We have one thing in common: we see the need to bring to all in GBC what God has been doing in our midst. But we could not have done this without valuable guidance from our church leaders and the unwavering support of many church members, who though they are not part of the Grace News Team, have contributed much to the content and the overall finished work. We thank them for helping out in taking photos, providing illustrations, contributing articles and being interviewed. We extend our thanks to you too, our readers, for taking the trouble to read and give feedback. If you would like to be part of the team, please approach any of us or email us at gracenews.gbc@gmail.com. We would be more than delighted to welcome you on board.

As you pick up the latest Grace News today, may you discover a wealth of blessings within. But don't just read it – get involved and be part of it too. Ω

MISSIONS



Left: The Saluan Dictionary Team (Ping & Heidi in the middle) meeting with the Department of Culture and Education.

Above: Screenshots of the dictionary app.

The Saluan Dictionary Project

Tzi Ping and Heidi Leong, our missionaries in Luwuk, update us on the Saluan dictionary project. We are so encouraged by how God is opening doors for them to bless the Saluan community, and we are very excited about the launch of the Saluan dictionary app – *Kamus Saluan*.

It has been three years since we arrived in Luwuk, and on the first day of this year we were invited to meet the governor. As part of the government's drive to promote reading and to reintroduce the Saluan language in schools, he was keen to support our dictionary project.

The Saluan dictionary project started as part of the Saluan Bible translation project, but the Lord has opened many doors for it to be a blessing to the region. While Luwuk is a relatively remote area, smartphones have

become more affordable and powerful, and many people are increasingly connected. Therefore, instead of a printed dictionary, we decided to develop an Android Saluan dictionary application to promote and teach the Saluan language in families, schools and offices.

Making a satisfactory and complete dictionary, especially for an unwritten language, is a difficult process that can take up to 20 years. In May, after months of preparation, Heidi and I, along with our local team, presented the

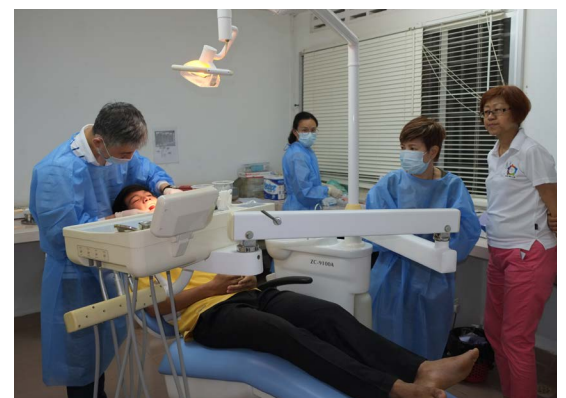
dictionary app before the Regional Governor, his ministers and about a hundred attendees (mostly school teachers). Much of the app has already been developed but there is more to be done before the requested launch date of 8 July, the region's national day.

We press on, knowing that some of us in the team will plant and others will water, and trusting that God in His time will glorify Himself. Ω



Luwuk, Indonesia Mission Trip 31 Mar-5 Apr

A group of five GBC members visited Tzi Ping and family in Luwuk to better understand and appreciate their work among the Saluan people. The group also visited two villages that Ping and Heidi frequently visit and assist, and saw first-hand the love they have for the people there.



Cambodia Mission Trip 12-17 Jun

A team of 10 provided dental treatment to 91 students and taught English and participated in daycare for up to 200 children. There were many gospel opportunities and much mutual encouragement in the faith as the team interacted with the Cambodian students and village children.



EVENTS

Good Friday 14 Apr



In his sermon, Wen Pin challenged us to align our lives to God's word, and reminded us that if we are not willing to suffer for Jesus (the way to life), we will end up taking the easy way (the way to death).

Baptisms on Resurrection Sunday 16 Apr



We welcomed six young adults to the GBC family: Nathaniel Tan (via transfer of membership), plus Christopher Kho, Jonathan Tan, Kagen Lim, Alvin Chio and Samantha Ngo (via baptism); each invited a brother or sister in Christ to stand alongside in the baptismal pool, modelling to the church that a Christian's journey of faith is never in isolation.

Installation of Elder 14 May



We thank God for leading Song Huat and his wife Eng Khin to the ministry of pastoring. We pray that God will keep them pure to hear His heart and humble to know His ways, so that they may speak confidence and comfort to the broken-hearted.

Young Adults Retreat 23-26 Jun



Our YAs went for their annual retreat entitled 'Holy, Resolved'. They had an enjoyable time learning about God's holiness and its implications for His people, and ended the retreat with a challenge to make their own resolutions for holy living.

Church Rebuilding Final Update @ Jul



We will be moving back to our new building soon! We are very grateful to God for guiding and sustaining us through this journey of faith, and we pray that the relocation of the office and Sunday worship services in August will be smooth. We thank God for the Building Committee and its sub-committees for the tireless work that they have been putting in.



CHILDREN'S CORNER

Not ashamed: Talking about Jesus

by Rachel Wong

Every day in school you sing Singapore's National Anthem and recite the Pledge, to show that you are proud to be a Singaporean. But how easy is it to say that you are proud to be a Christian? Are you happy and comfortable to say to your friends that you believe in Jesus and go to church every Sunday? It is more difficult isn't it, which is puzzling really because being a Christian is much more important than being a Singaporean.

In the Bible we read of a young man who was not ashamed to stand up for the gospel. Timothy accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey, and later helped the church in Ephesus while Paul was in prison. Paul wrote to Timothy to encourage him to stay true to God's word and to preach it boldly, even when people rejected it.

In 2 Tim 1:8 Paul told Timothy, "do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord" and in 2 Tim 4:8 he said, "Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient." (Common English Bible) What about you? Are you ready at any time to tell people about Jesus?

Perhaps we have forgotten how important this is. Imagine you have been given a wonderful gift, not because you did anything to deserve it, but just because somebody loves you and wants you to be happy.

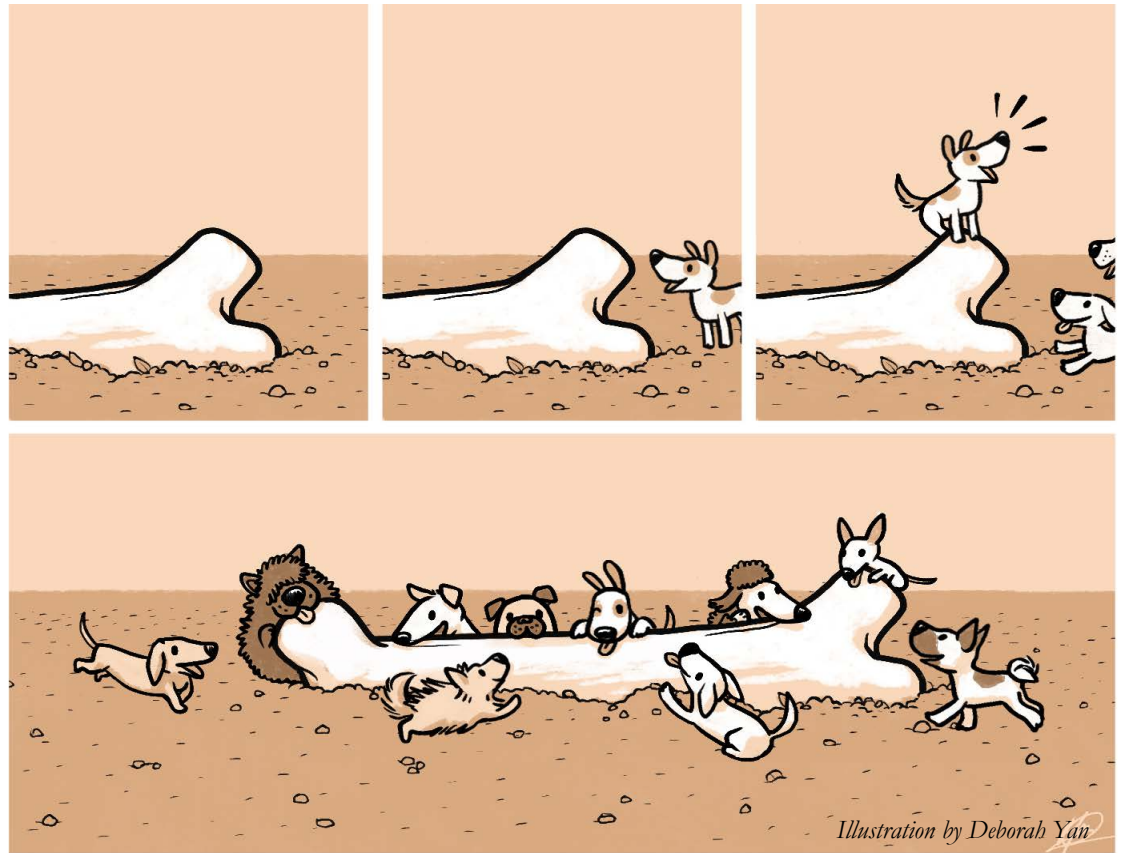


Illustration by Deborah Yan

Would you feel good about keeping it all to yourself instead of sharing it with your friends and family? In fact you might enjoy the gift even more if you share! Well, we do have a wonderful gift, and that is the gift of eternal life, which God gave us freely in Jesus. When we share this gift by talking about it, God can use what we say to give others eternal life too. Isn't that amazing: **all we have to do is talk about Jesus, and God does the rest!**

You don't have to speak well or use big words, all you have to do is talk, because talking about

Jesus is powerful and **God is the One who persuades people that what you say is true.**

If you believe in Jesus, God has called you to tell others about Him and not to worry about what people think of you. People may make fun of you or criticise you, but that is not important compared to obeying God. So ask God for courage to talk about Jesus whether it's convenient or not, just like Timothy. And don't be ashamed to say, "I am proud to be a Christian!" Ω