

# GRACE NEWS



Image by Emily Seck

## Issue #2, 2014

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## editorial

As most of us will be aware, in 2013 God revealed to Grace Baptist Church a new vision to be “a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the gospel and love of Jesus Christ”. Have you caught this vision yet? In this issue of Grace News we examine more closely what it means to ‘make disciples’, which is at the heart of our church vision. What is a disciple, and how can we be one, and how can we make disciples of others? What are we doing as a corporate body and individually to live out this vision in practical ways in our everyday lives?

On this page Pastor Arnold shares some exciting plans for discipleship training at GBC in the years to come: you heard it here first! Then on pages 2 and 3 we hear from four church members who are involved in disciple-making, being disciplined, or both (because very often the two are inseparable), while on page 4 we ask The Miauw Suang about her extensive experience of disciple-making and what motivates her to reach out to others. To round off, don’t miss Pastor Oliver’s review on page 8 of a recommended book on discipleship: *Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life*.

On page 5 Neo Yi Ling goes behind-the-scenes to expose the secret life of our sound technicians and projectionists. Finally, on page 7 we have some updates (and a lovely photo!) from our missionaries Tzi Ping and Heidi in Indonesia.

Are you ready to catch the vision?

Blessings,

The Editorial Team  
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## The Wonder of Discipling

written by Pastor Arnold Wong

*Jesus was a masterful disciple-maker.  
How did He do it, and how can we follow His example at GBC?*

Like so many of you, when I read the accounts of Jesus discipling the 12 Apostles, and they in turn discipling others, I am amazed and awed by what He accomplished. Christ chose 12 relatively ordinary men, taught them, and lived before them for about 18 months. Then He unleashed them on a world that desperately needed to be transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible describes the disciples as, “These men who have turned the world upside down...” (Acts 17:6, ESV). All this was done at a time when there were none of the modern modes of communication or transportation.

How did Jesus do it? Is there some principle that we can draw to help us fulfill our commission to ‘make disciples of all nations’ (Matt 28:19) in our world, today? Volumes have been written about how Jesus made disciples. We can only mention one – intentionality. Jesus was very deliberate as He took the disciples through a deliberate process.

Here in GBC we see Jesus’ deliberate approach appearing as a process where individuals are:

**Evangelised** – people are given the chance to hear the Gospel and to receive Christ as their personal Saviour;

**Edified** – learn the basic fundamental truths and disciplines of their faith in Christ;

**Equipped** – prepared, strengthened and resourced to use their spiritual gifts to spread the Gospel and minister to others;

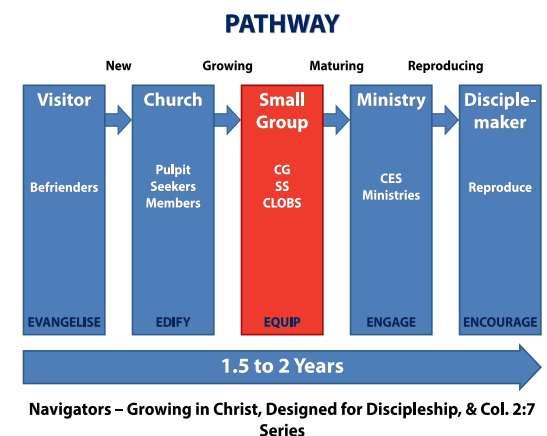
**Engaged** – they are deployed in a multitude of ministries to serve God in the church and around the world;

**Encouraged** – they are strengthened in their daily personal walk with God and their work for God.

“Volumes have been written about how Jesus made disciples. We can only mention one – intentionality.”

GBC wants to be intentional about making disciples and there is a plan to make this happen. Over the next couple of years we will be launching this plan to make disciples at GBC. In future articles and sessions we hope to explain and create a relational environment at GBC to produce devoted followers of Christ, especially through small group interactions and relationships. The goal is to make disciple-making an integral part of the spiritual DNA of GBC.

In diagram form it can look like this:



# Discipling disciples

compiled by Rachel Wong

*Many of us would be hard-pressed to furnish a definition of 'discipleship'. We know it is important, but cannot quite identify its essential parts. Furthermore, although we are pleased to be counted among Jesus' disciples, we may not feel so comfortable to be called upon to disciple others. Yet the two are inextricably linked. When we ourselves are well nourished we are not only equipped but also motivated to feed others. Below are four testimonies that illustrate how dependent we are when discipling others on the discipleship we ourselves have received from God.*



Joyce makes it a priority to reach out to women and disciple them through Bible study and by spending time with them informally.

## Joyce Erdmann

I love the Navigators motto: "To know Christ, to make Him known and to help others do the same." The more I get to know Christ as I grow in my relationship with Him, I see how important people are to Him and how important they should be to me too. **Helping people come to faith and grow in their faith is one of the most important things I can do.**

When I meet with women, I try to see where the women are spiritually and help them to grow in their faith from that point. We do a variety of things, such as Bible study, praying and talking about different issues, and all the while I am trying to love them right where they are in their walk with Christ. Often this is done over a meal or cup of coffee. Spending some 'fun' time together is also helpful. Of course, prayer for those I am helping is vital.

I think it's so true that the teacher learns more than the student! In trying to help others, I see where I need to grow and change to become more like Christ. Discipling others also helps me to become more 'other'-focused, rather than 'self'-focused. Also, when I am preparing to lead a Bible study I want to be well-prepared, so I take extra time to prepare and learn the study well. I'm sure I learn more than anyone in the group. In finding an answer to a spiritual question, I learn the answer and also grow from that.

Anyone can help another in his or her faith. You just need to be one little step ahead and have a heart to help others. You don't have to be a 'spiritual giant'. There are many good resources to help with discipleship, including Bible studies and books.

## Kenneth Poon

Presenting the Gospel in the Seekers' Class has forced me to reflect on the goodness and kindness that Jesus demonstrates in my life. The true value of studying and teaching the Gospel does not lie in how it develops a teacher's ability per se, but in the delight and joy that spring from the privilege of witnessing kingdom growth in the most unlikely of circumstances: Jesus Christ really transforms unworthy and unloving individuals such as myself to be useful for God's redemptive work. And so the focus of the teaching – how the Gospel has the power to restore and strengthen one's relationship with God – becomes a most joyous outflow of the process itself.

Preparing for lessons has required me to spend countless hours working on how I present ideas

in the Gospel in the clearest way possible. For example, Christians often use the word 'faith', but non-Christians might find it difficult to understand what that word means in the context of Christianity. Furthermore, I may use jargon ('Christian-ese') that

I don't actually understand. I am growing to learn the importance of managing the delicate balance between enriching one's grasp of 'Bible-speak' and conveying the meanings of the ideas in the Gospel in simplified terms.

"Presenting the Gospel in the Seekers' Class has forced me to reflect on the goodness and kindness that Jesus demonstrates in my life."



Kenneth and Clara preparing to lead the Seekers' Class. Leading the Seekers' Class has contributed to Kenneth's own spiritual growth and discipleship among God's people.



## Stephen Chan

My family visited GBC for the first time around mid-May in 2013 and were warmly welcomed and taken care of as newcomers by the church pastors and members. As I had been a believer for only about a year, Pastor Bobby introduced me to the Foundation Programme for new Christians for discipleship in a small group. As there was no other newcomer who was a new Christian at the time, it became a 1-on-1 discipleship with Pastor Bobby.



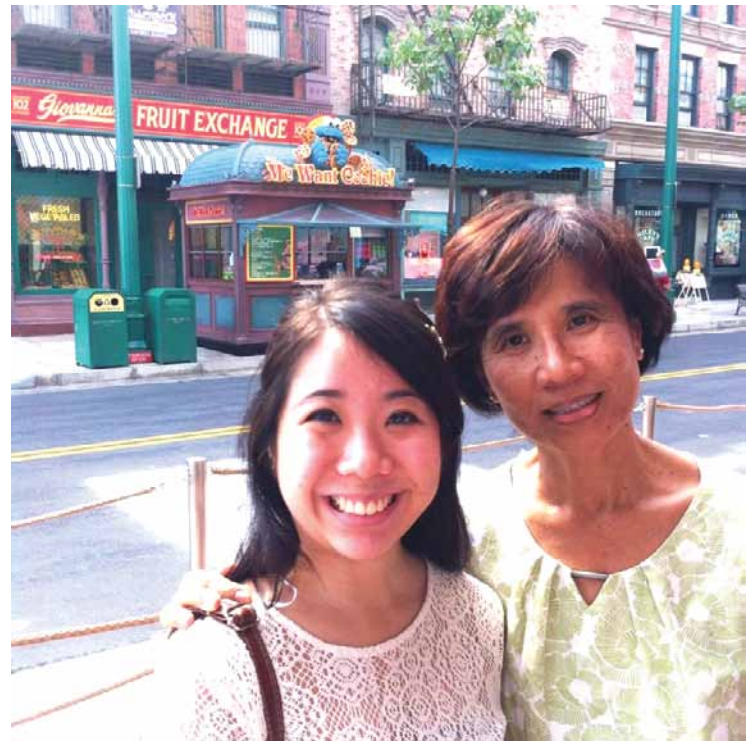
As a relatively new believer, Stephen (left) has grown greatly in his faith after attending discipleship classes with Ps Bobby.

The format of the class is that we follow two books. We have finished the first book *Lessons on Assurance for New Christians* and are now doing the second book *Lessons on Christian Living for Growing Christians*.

I have benefited from this discipleship in countless ways! The following are just a few:

- Understanding comes more quickly and easily: all I have to do is to put in some time each Sunday, but the returns are priceless as I come to know God, Jesus and the Bible better and can apply the lessons in my life.
- It is easier to raise questions without embarrassment as Pastor Bobby is patient and knowledgeable to provide explanations and examples.
- I have assurance in my faith and a stronger relationship with God.

“...all I have to do is to put in some time each Sunday, but the returns are priceless as I come to know God, Jesus and the Bible better and can apply the lessons in my life.”



Kit Wan (right, seen here with her daughter Sarah) regularly attends the SDS classes and has benefited greatly from the teachings on discipleship.

## Kit Wan Chan

When I first read in the Sunday bulletin that our church vision was to be a disciple-making church, I was not sure what it meant. I also wondered how this vision would be passed on to the congregation in practical ways.

“Attending the classes has enriched my knowledge as I read and learn about the Bible by opening my eyes to new perspectives.”

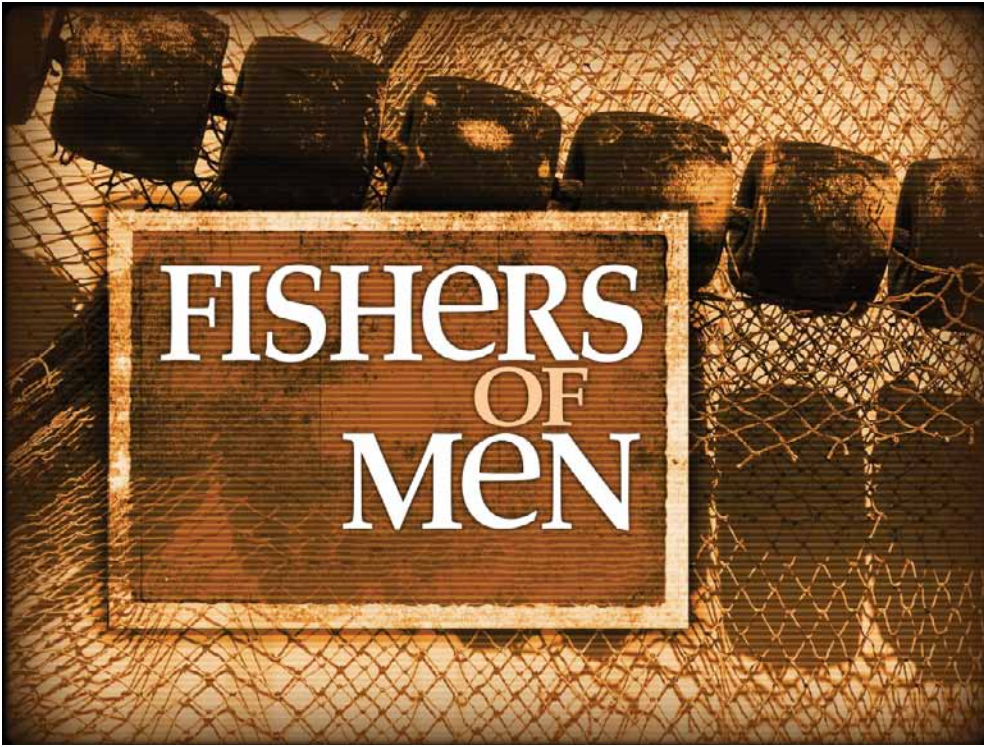
Since then, amongst other programmes, the church has been running SDS (Sunday Discipleship Seminar) classes. Attending the classes has enriched my knowledge as I read and learn about the Bible by opening my

eyes to new perspectives. I thank God for the teachers and the lessons they have prepared for the classes that have helped me understand discipleship and put it into practice.

Here are a few takeaways that I found impactful:

- If we believe that the Bible is God speaking to us, then we must aim to understand the meaning of the text and not read our own meaning into it.
- We must come to Scripture on our knees:
  - a) Listen;
  - b) Be humble before the eternal word of God;
  - c) Be honest with God and ourselves.
- Reading the Bible is an ‘inside-out’ communicative process: God, through author → text → original audience, then us.

A verse that I pray for our church in the area of disciple-making is, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn 13:35, NIV)



## Making Disciples – A Conversation with Miauw Suang

*Seah Yen Goon interviews The Miauw Suang, a member of GBC, as she shares her experiences and deals with some of the fears that we may face as we seek to make disciples.*

**M**ost of us learn to swim with the help of a teacher to direct, encourage, and support us when we start to sink. It takes time and patience. Disciple-making is similar: it involves holding a new believer's hand until he is ready to stand on his own and help another.

*Disciple-making is not a request; it is a command from the Lord (Matt 28:19).*

*Every Christian is called to make disciples, but many struggle and fall short.*

*Miauw Suang encourages us with her sharing on the hows and whys of disciple-making.*

### **Why are you passionate about disciple-making?**

When I was a young Christian convert, I was very grateful to have a concerned Christian follow me up. She grounded me in God's word, teaching me to pray and have a quiet time with the Lord daily, and helping me to apply God's word in my life. Later, she challenged me to do the same for others. I have benefited much from the follow-up and desire to shepherd young believers to grow towards spiritual maturity and multiplication.

### **What are some of the reasons Christians give for not embracing disciple-making? How do you encourage them?**

“My motivation comes from pleasing the Lord and the joy and satisfaction of seeing young believers established in God's word and reproducing themselves.”

Many people are busy and disciple-making requires you to set aside time to follow-up on a regular basis. For me, investing my time in new believers is important so I prioritise and fit it into my weekly schedule. It is not always easy because it is time-consuming and involves sacrifice. My motivation comes from pleasing the Lord and the joy and satisfaction of seeing young believers established in God's word and reproducing themselves.

Many feel inadequate in mentoring someone. They think they need to be spiritually mature for fear of teaching wrong Biblical principles. I found that I can lead, as long as I am ahead of others. This pace-setting helps me to disciple another while I myself am being discipled. While it is good to be fully equipped, disciple-making does not need talent. It is not so much about the how but the heart in reaching out to people.

Disciple-making involves sharing the Lord's teaching and working in my life, as well as the trials and blessings I experience as I seek to obey Him. My testimonies help to encourage others in their faith journey. Many feel that they are inadequate because of sin in their lives. Confessing, repenting and overcoming sin is integral in Christian living. My task is not to impress but to impart, relying on God's strength and wisdom.

“While it is good to be fully equipped, disciple-making does not need talent. It is not so much about the how but the heart in reaching out to people.”

### **What keeps you going when the going gets tough?**

I see disciple-making as God's work and not our work. Otherwise the burden on us will be very heavy. There are no KPIs (key performance indicators), just faithfulness. We water, He makes it grow. God ultimately takes ownership of the results. This is wonderful because it takes away a lot of stress. I look forward to the day when I hear the Lord, saying to me “Well done, good and faithful servant!” Ω



# Ministry Focus: Sound & Projection Ministries

**Neo Yi Ling** reminds us of the importance of the sound and projection teams for the smooth running of worship services.

In preparation for each Sunday's worship services, a group of members meets on Saturday nights, and on Sunday mornings before the first service, to practise leading the congregation in worship songs and to check that all the audio-visual equipment is functioning well. This group consists of worship leaders, musicians, the sound technician and the projection technician.

Background ministries like the Sound Ministry and the Projection Ministry are usually forgotten – until something disruptive crops up during a service, such as the microphone not working, or the projection on the screen going awry, whereupon people promptly turn around to look at the sound or projection technician anxiously trying to rectify matters!

Bryan Tan, who joined the Sound Ministry at the age of 16 in 2008, put it this way, "The wonderful thing about the Sound Ministry is that we are seldom appreciated, but often criticised. Over time, this helped me to discover what the heart of a true servant of the Lord looks like. He should be constantly thinking others better than himself and putting their interests and needs before his own."


The Sound Ministry helps to operate and maintain the sound system of the church. Each week the sound technician is on his or her toes throughout the service, fine-tuning the output to best bring out each individual's unique voice and each instrument's unique sound. From the sound box, they also enjoy an edifying, big-picture view of the entire congregation singing with one voice to praise the Lord each Sunday.



Joel Ng, a member of the projection team, sits in the projection room going through the PowerPoint slides before a Sunday service. (Other members of the team: Chow Kai Mun, Jan Lai, Ryan Tan, Samuel Ngo and Tham Weng Fai.)

The Projection Ministry helps to prepare the PowerPoint slides containing worship lyrics and practises alongside the worship team and sound technician to get the timing of the slide changes right. The smooth flow of congregational singing or sermon preaching depends on the projectionist.

Ultimately it is God who works through a diverse worship team to bring about wonderful praise and worship, for His glory, each Sunday morning. Being a part of God's work each Sunday is a joyful honour!

You don't need prior experience in working with sound or projection to join these ministries. You simply need a humble servant heart with a desire to serve the Lord. If you are interested in joining these ministries, you can contact Eugene Low for the Sound Ministry at: [eugene.low.wa@gmail.com](mailto:eugene.low.wa@gmail.com), or Carrie Chow for the Projection Ministry at: [carechow@singnet.com.sg](mailto:carechow@singnet.com.sg). 



An enthusiastic sound team eager to serve the Lord. Only part of the team is in this picture – from left to right: Reuben Soh, Joshua Yap, Eugene Low, Wang Kang Ping, Neo Yi Ling and Kevin Ng. (Missing: Agnes Ng, Bryan Tan, Ian Tan, Lim Rui Wen, Gloria Yeo and Eddie Tan.)

"Ultimately it is God who works through a diverse worship team to bring about wonderful praise and worship, for His glory..."



## Baptism of Kong, Joan & Miriam

19 Jan & 30 Mar

*"Baptism dramatically portrays what happened spiritually when you received Christ: Your old self of unbelief and rebellion and idolatry died, and a new you of faith and submission and treasuring Christ came into being. That's what you confess to the world and to heaven when you are baptized."* **John Piper**



Kong Chuan Wei (left) and Joan Chan (right) shared in their baptism testimonies how they made a conscious decision to turn away from their old lives to a new life in Christ.



From 'why' to 'why not?', Miriam Yeo chose to lay down her pride and trust God to be the captain of her life. Hallelujah!

## Youth Ministry Talk – Technology Overload

15 Mar



The 'Generations of Virtue' team from the USA shared and interacted with our youths and parents on how to pursue godliness in our use of technology.

## Couples Night Out

1 Mar



(Left): Chong and Lilian were among the 20 married couples who enjoyed a memorable dinner date during which the couples recalled their many 'firsts' and gave thanks to God for their spouses. (Right): GBC's very own Chef Percy!



Thoughtful and loving effort was contributed by the Family Ministry and their team of GBC volunteers who not only cooked, served and sang, but also decorated the venue with plants and candles so that the couples would have a special evening. The couples certainly felt loved and special!

## GBC Picnic

22 Mar

The young adults helped to organise games and activities where both young and younger pitted their athletic skills against each other in good fun.



In groups of 2-3, the picnic-goers started the morning with a 30-minute devotion and prayer time on Colossians 1:18-19. They were also blessed by the written testimony of Lily Pang on the role and importance of prayer in her life and ministry.

There was an abundance of food and opportunities for fellowship. All the picnic-goers got to know at least one other church member better!





## Update from Tzi Ping & Heidi



***Tzi Ping and Heidi, with their sons Benaja and Esra, returned to the mission field in Indonesia in November 2013. They are currently serving under Wycliffe Singapore among the Coastal Saluan community in Luwuk, a village in Sulawesi, working on Bible translation into the Saluan language. They praise the Lord for teaching them to live dependently on Him as He opens doors for them and brings different people into their lives. Do remember them in your prayers.***

***Below are some excerpts from their updates:***

**“T**he church here is a huge encouragement to us and we have developed close relationships with some of the families. It is a small house church with about 40 members and it is inspiring to see how deeply committed they are to the Lord... They have been a tremendous help with many practical things as well as helping us to adjust to the local culture. Please pray with us that we can build good relationships with not only the church but also the

neighbourhood and whoever crosses our path. It is our desire that we can be a testimony to them and that our relationships with the people and with each other glorify the Lord.”

“One old man from the Balantak tribe showed us his fairly new NT, a children’s Bible and a songbook in his own language, and he was so proud of it. It made our eyes tear to see their joy and we praise the Lord that God’s Word is already available for the Balantak. The Balantak language is closely related to the Saluan language and there are a lot of similar grammatical features. We had the privilege of meeting with the missionary who used to serve among the Balantak and from him we received a grammar write-up for the Balantak language. That will be a great help when we continue to study the Saluan language as it will enable us to understand certain grammatical structures better.” Ω

**Read their latest update at:**

<http://english.gracebaptistchurch.sg/blog/post/missionary-letter-from-tzi-ping--heidi--benaja-and-esra>





# Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life

book by Jimmy Davis  
image taken from book cover

***Pastor Oliver Chia recommends a book on discipleship that usefully combines theology with practical applications.***

**T**he vision of Grace Baptist Church is to be ‘a disciple-making church that transforms lives with the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ’. How then can we as a church both be disciples and make disciples? There have been a number of books written on this theme: most tend to be practical and focus on the methodologies; while a few look at the theology of discipleship. There are not many books that are both deeply theological and relevantly practical, connecting a studied reflection on Scripture with an intentional living out in real life.

This is where a little book by Jimmy Davis, *Cruciform: Living the Cross-Shaped Life*, ably bridges the gap.

Davis writes at the start of the book that what we need are “living communities of disciples being shaped by the cross into the shape of the cross for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors, the nations, and the next generation” (p 8). This, he believes, is the end-goal of disciple-making – to form a community, ie a church that is shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ. Davis gives the theological foundation in Chapters 1 and 2 where he covers creation, fall and redemption, and contends that we are created to look away from ourselves to God, other people and creation with a ‘you-first’ heart. When the fall occurred, we traded that for a self-centred ‘me-first’ heart. But **the good news is that we have been redeemed by Christ into the new covenant reality and given a new purity, a new passion, a new power and a new partnership** (pp 29-31) (cf Jer 31:31-34, Eze 36:25-28).

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“all of God’s people are called to full-time ministry, the ministry of displaying the glory of Christ as cruciform [cross-shaped] cathedrals in the midst of a world that needs him”

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We can now live the ‘you-first’ cross-shaped life empowered by the cross.

Davis continues in chapters 3 to 6 that a cross-shaped disciple lives as a **son** and a **servant**. By wholly believing the message of the cross, we become beloved sons of God (Jn 1:12, Rom 8:14-17, Gal 4:4-7). This is our new identity in Christ. We are also servants of God called to love and serve God and others. In chapter 7, Davis writes how we can daily take in the cross by practising the spiritual disciplines (or means of grace) of Bible intake, prayer, fasting and corporate worship. He writes that these spiritual disciplines do not earn the presence and power of God but rather make space in us for God to speak. Finally, he ends with a chapter giving his real-life example of living out the cross-shaped life in the midst of personal tragedy and suffering.

I heartily commend this book for the reading of church members who want to grow as disciples and learn to make disciples. This simple little book (113 pages) would be a great primer to get you started – giving you concrete applications connected to Biblical understanding. May you take, read and heed the call of being a disciple and making disciples, so that we as a church would understand that “all of God’s people are called to full-time ministry, the ministry of displaying the glory of Christ as cruciform [cross-shaped] cathedrals in the midst of a world that needs him” (p 106) and to live this out in our own lives. **Ω**