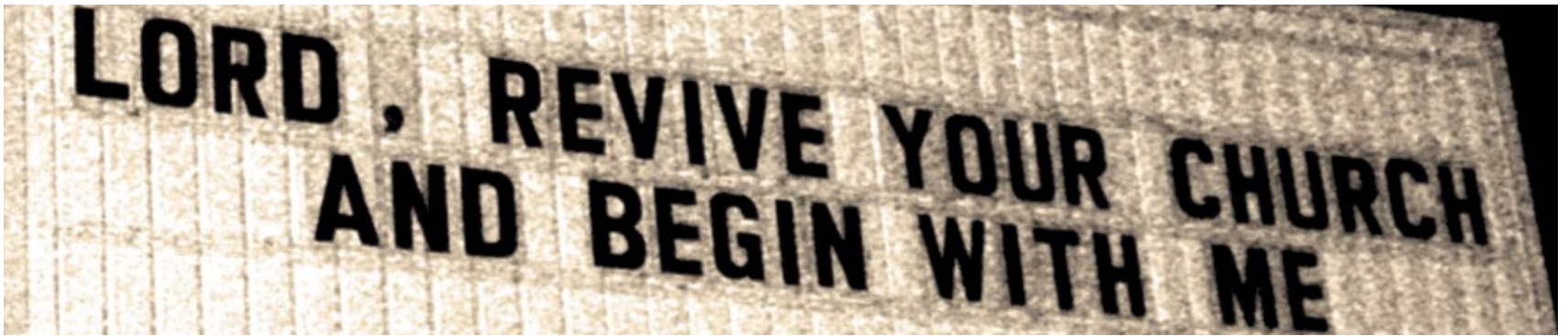

GRACE NEWS



Issue #1, 2014

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editorial

Last year, we focused on strengthening family ties, both in the individual family and the wider church family. Along with living out our relationships according to God's Word, it is also important that we participate in the spiritual growth of Grace Baptist Church as we strive together to fulfil our vision of becoming a 'disciple-making church'. **Throughout 2014, we will be exploring the church's spiritual growth.**

The start of a new year is perhaps a good time to review our own spiritual lives and reflect once again on what it means to follow Christ. This issue focuses on the theme of revival – both personally and as a Church. It is often through trials that our faith gets tested, which realigns our focus on God. On pages 2 and 3, Seah Yen Goon catches up with four members of our Church who share with us their personal spiritual revivals. Desmond brings us back to the past on page 4 as he flips through the history of the Church to understand what revival is about. Turn to page 5 to see how you can be involved with Pastor Bobby's outreach efforts within and beyond the MacPherson neighbourhood. Read about Pearl's church music ministry in Myanmar on page 7, and Rachel's review of a book that explores revival, *Brokenness: The Heart God Revives*, on page 8.

Wishing all our readers a blessed year ahead!

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Spiritual Revival

written by Pastor Arnold Wong
image by joshuaomme / flickr.com

How true spiritual revival is for Christians, and is necessary in many aspects of our journey on earth.

Whenever the topic of 'spiritual revival' comes up, there is a rush of different definitions and images that come to mind. But there is no disagreement that revival is a good thing and something that is sorely needed in our toxic world of spiritual apathy and ambiguity. Therefore, it would be good for us to understand what 'spiritual revival' is.

In its most basic form, 'spiritual revival' is simply a restoration of God's people to vigorous spiritual health. In their book, *Fresh Encounter*, Blackaby and King write, "Revival is a return to spiritual health after a period of decline into sin and broken fellowship with God ... Revival is for God's people when they need to be forgiven and restored to life, spiritual health, and vitality".

Notice that 'spiritual revival' is for God's people – people who already possess eternal life because they had previously accepted God's offer of salvation from the penalty of sin by putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9; Jn 3:16-17). While revival is often associated with people being converted to faith in Christ,

true spiritual revival is something that happens to people who have already come to faith in Christ.

At first, it might seem strange that God's people would even need to be revived. But, Derek Gentle describes the situation this way. God's people

need revival "when they have left their first love ... when they find themselves going through the motions ... when they are wallowing

in sin, perhaps regretting their sins, but unwilling to thoroughly repent of them...when they are neglecting their relationship with Christ...when we are low on zeal and have grown lukewarm". The need for revival among God's children is often very high – in fact, too high.

Can revival ever happen? From Scripture (Neh 8), revival comes when there is revelation and reproof from God's word, repentance and recommitment by God's people, and the restoration of a relationship with God and others.

Perhaps the questions that lie ahead are not 'Do we need revival?' or 'Is it possible to be revived?', but rather, 'Do we want it?' and 'Are we ready for it?'. **Ω**

Personal Revival Testimonies

compiled by Seah Yen Goon

Four church members share how their individual circumstances and events have led to spiritual revivals in their lives.

Like God's chosen people, Israel, many of us backslide when we take our eyes off our Lord Jesus Christ. Distractions, addictions, busyness and self-absorption erode our love for the Lord and reduce our worship to cold ritualism. To wake us up from this spiritual stupor, the Lord allows crises, suffering, various encounters in our lives and His Word of truth to speak to us. Quickened by the Holy Spirit, our spiritual health and fellowship can be restored when we repent and respond with undivided hearts to love, serve and follow Him. In Psalm 85, the psalmist prayed for revival and restoration for his people and nation. Likewise, Chuan-Xin, Nehemiah, Poh Leng, and Samuel share with us personal stories of how their lives have been touched and revived by the Lord.

Mok Chuan-Xin

Due to my parents' prompting, I started to serve in the Character First project in the Junior Church. It is like paying my dues of being a Christian. Revival happened when I was studying in the university. My perspective of service changed. It was no longer about obligations or feeling good, but about what God had called me to. God equipped me with skills to serve Him and even to persevere through difficult times. When I returned home, I was so caught up with my work, marriage and setting up a home, that serving God became a low priority. To draw my attention back to Him, God allowed me to face trying moments in my job. By His grace, I am back, joyfully serving Him in the children's ministry. I learnt that when I put God first, He blesses me in all that I do.



Chuan-Xin with Peixian and their daughter Yi Qian.



Nehemiah (standing) with his mother Miauw Suang and brother Jeremiah.

Nehemiah Chong

When I was in the army, I had time for reflection and it was then that the Lord wonderfully arranged for Caleb to reach out to me. This was significant because it changed my life, from living a life of indifference towards God, to a life of devotion to Him. The Bible study I did with Caleb helped me to see God in a totally different light. I was deeply touched by God's grace. Before, I was prideful and judgmental, and thought I knew everything and could do everything by myself. With my decision to walk in His light, my priority now is to submit, trust and glorify Him in whatever I do – be it my studies, relationships or activities.



Poh Leng with her husband Kong Wah.

Chan Poh Leng

Whenever I become self-sufficient and lose focus on our Lord Jesus, or stop having the joy of the Lord in my heart, I will meditate on 2 Chronicles 7:14. It reminds me to be humble, pray, seek God's face and repent. It is not always easy to hear God's voice, as I continue to struggle with my 'idols' from time to time. However, I am comforted by the fact that I can rely on God's faithfulness and promises to restore my faith when I confess and repent. My personal revivals have been closely connected with our church-led revivals – such as the choir outreach in Kuching, the crisis that split the church, the leaders' revival retreat and the Purpose-driven Life programme. At each event, I examined my life under the searchlight of God's Word.

With the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I developed a thirst for His Word, prayed and was passionate in serving Him in the Sunday School ministry. It was an enriching ministry that brought me lots of joy, in impacting young children for the Lord. I am reminded of the words of a great Christian thinker, A W Tozer, who said, "If we are alert enough to hear God's voice, we must not content ourselves with merely 'believing' it. Commands are to be obeyed and until we have obeyed them, we have done exactly nothing at all about them; to have heard and not obeyed them is infinitely worse than never to have heard them at all". Loving our Lord Jesus Christ means trusting and obeying Him.

Samuel Beh

It was a process that took me five years to understand what it means to be a follower of Christ. Before, it was all about the dos and don'ts and making sure I didn't fall on the wrong side of God's Law. I felt burnt out in my walk with God, as it was driven by fear, to keep doing what is right. The change came about when I fully comprehended that I am saved by God's grace alone through faith and not by works. My self-worth is based on what Christ has done for me and not on how well I perform in my job and ministry. My heart is now filled with love and the joy of the Lord, as I constantly remind myself that I belong to Him.



Samuel recently got happily married to Jessica.

There Can Be No Christianity Without Community

Desmond Soh revisits the story of Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church to remind us of what church revival is all about.



The Moravian Emblem
"Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur"

image by yumievrivan / flickr.com

As we contemplate rebuilding Grace Baptist Church, let us turn to our rich Church history to understand what revival is about. The story of Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church will hopefully remind us to return to the mission of God – *Missio Dei*.

Almost two centuries after the Reformation, the Protestant movement had lost momentum in Europe. The Roman Catholic Church's persecution of Czech Moravians and Bohemians forced many to take refuge in Lutheran-denominated Germany. One group fled to Herrnhut, Eastern Saxony, in 1722. Twenty-two-year-old Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was a landowner at that time.

Zinzendorf was humble and generous. He said, "I am destined to proclaim the message, unmindful of personal consequences to myself". This devotion led him to resign from his judicial counsellor position in Dresden. In 1727, Zinzendorf moved into Herrnhut with his family. His modest house made John Wesley remark, "The Count's house – a small, plain building like the rest; having a large garden behind it, well laid out, not for show, but for the use of the community".

Herrnhut, which by now had ballooned to more than 300 refugees, was far from the ideal Christian community Zinzendorf

had envisioned. Passion for world mission was drowned by internal strife, theological differences and cultural misunderstandings.

Zinzendorf and several brethren listened to conflicting parties patiently, searched through Scripture diligently, and prayed unceasingly. Revival came on 12 May 1727. Dissenters were ashamed of their quarrels, past hurts were healed, and everyone was in unity of heart and mind. On 27 August 1727, 24 men and 24 women covenanted to

"I am destined to proclaim the message, unmindful of personal consequences to myself." – Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf

pray one hour a day round the clock. This prayer vigil lasted 100 years!

Six months later, 26 Moravians stepped forward to go to the West Indies, Greenland, Turkey, Ethiopia and Finland. Hundreds more would follow in the years to come. William Carey, John Wesley and other great men of faith were all deeply influenced by the Moravian missionaries. They lived simply, proclaimed Christ boldly, and sang heartily. We have inherited thousands of hymns from our Moravian brothers!

What can we learn from Zinzendorf and the Moravians about revival? Ponder over the following:

- Collective agreement and good intentions do not mean that God is with us
- Disagreement and conflict may give rise to holy discontent and restoration
- Man is the human agency God has chosen to initiate His divine plan through, not programmes
- Prayer, a willingness to listen to God (and man) and personal piety soften the hard ground for Gospel penetration
- Spiritual growth and revival starts slowly, but once it starts, God alone decides the outcome
- Missions and revivals are inseparable

History is both a beautiful young bride and an old nagging wife. We rejoice with her success stories but sometimes refuse to listen to her warnings. May the story of Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church offer us precious lessons of faith as we move forward in our endeavours. **Ω**

For a more comprehensive understanding of the legacy of Zinzendorf and the Moravians, go to: www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/zinzendorf-and-the-moravians/

Reviving Outreach in MacPherson

Pastor Bobby Lee talks about the harvest field of MacPherson Estate, introducing two outreach efforts – the tuition ministry within MacPherson, and the Kovan Fellowship.

“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest’? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.” (Jn 4:35)

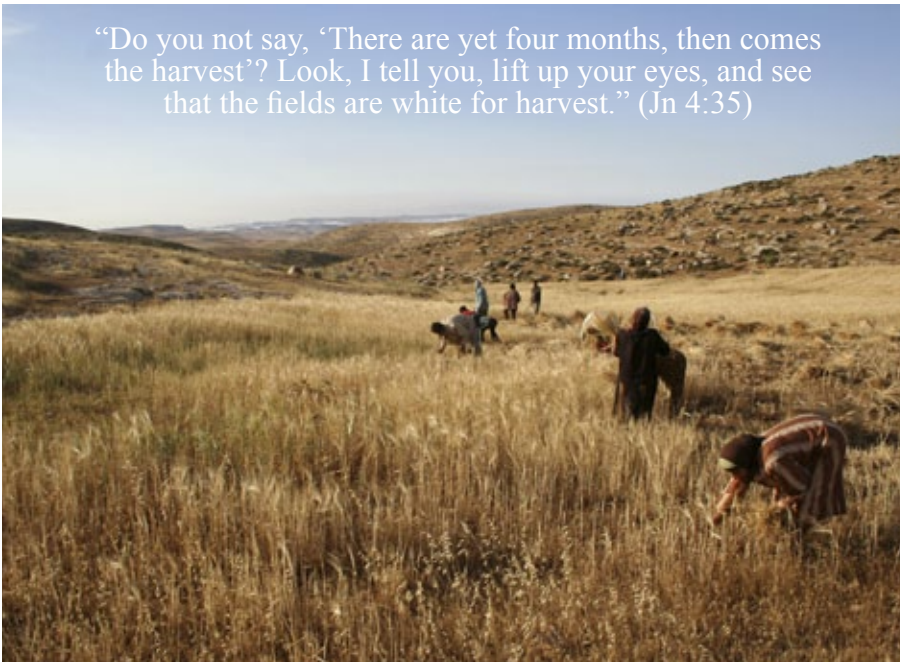


image by joshhough / flickr.com

Grace Baptist Church is situated within a great harvest field – the MacPherson Estate. We have a long history of community involvement. In the 80's, we did door-to-door visitation in the surrounding HDB blocks. Some of our young adults visited the nearby Community Centre to befriend other youths playing sports there. Our mode of outreach was simple: to befriend the people and let them know that we cared for them. When we won their trust and friendship, they would then become more receptive when we shared the Gospel.

Times have changed with technology. Now, the playground of youths is in computer games, where they interact with strangers over the Internet. Does this spell the end of GBC's foray into the neighbourhood to befriend the people, followed by sharing the Gospel?

I believe God has not forgotten this harvest field. When God situated us in the MacPherson heartlands, we were the only evangelical church. Today, there are two other churches that are also reaching out to the same community (Bethel Assembly and Trinity Christian Church). God knows that MacPherson is a growing estate, alongside the surrounding neighbourhoods of Aljunied and Serangoon.

Is God speaking to you to work in this harvest field? If the answer is yes, read on...

Within MacPherson, we operate a Tuition Ministry in church on Wednesday nights to help the neighbourhood children who are weak in their studies. We make an impact by introducing Bible characters to them, through the telling of Bible stories at the end of each session. With God's grace, we hope to bring them closer to an understanding of the Gospel. Over time as relationships are built, we then invite these children to our church events.

Beyond MacPherson, we recently started a Kovan Fellowship on Saturday afternoons in the Kovan area. God has blessed us through the Baptist Convention, who gave us free usage of the Baptist Centre, near the Kovan MRT station. This gives us a platform to do future outreach work in the northeast corridor spanning Kovan, Hougang, Sengkang, Buangkok and into Punggol.

In the Kovan Fellowship, we introduce the Bible via seminars, workshops and the screening of evangelistic movies. You can find us on Facebook by searching for 'Kovan Fellowship'.

The outreach efforts within MacPherson and beyond are a key component for GBC's vision of being a disciple-making church. I earnestly pray that God will fulfil His Great Commission through calling many of you in GBC to this great work! **Ω**

Those who are interested in the above outreach efforts can contact Pastor Bobby at bobbylee@gracebaptistchurch.sg

Children's Day

6 Oct



Children from the Children's Music Club and GBC tuition classes were invited to read verses from Matthew 14:14-21 as Pastor Bobby Lee preached on how God can meet needs through our faith.

Enjoy Ministry ~ Tiong Bahru Heritage Walk

19 Oct



Bruce briefing the participants on the history of Tiong Bahru at one of the 10 heritage markers. As we remember our heritage, pray that we will also remember the things God has done for us in the past and to learn from these experiences.

Christmas Service

25 Dec



Dr Rick Griffith encouraged us to remember how God brought us out of darkness through Jesus, Light of the world; and that we enter into God's family by first receiving this Light.



Through a story about a rabbit which likes Christmas candy, Lydia taught the children about who Jesus is.



Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Baptisms and Transfer

8 Dec



We praise the Lord for three new members: (front row) Lee Hau Bin and Ryan Tan Chee Wi via baptism; and (back row) Raju Joshua Nalli (Joey) via transfer of membership.

Youth Camp 2013

17-21 Dec



This year's camp saw a significant number of new campers and through fun and games, new friendships were forged and old ones were strengthened.



Pearl at the Mooler Mission Centre, a new building of KBTS.



The Solomon Cup was used to collect love donations from the congregation to build this new centre.

About Pearl

Pearl studied church music at Singapore Bible College (SBC) from 1998–2002 and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree. She then returned to Myanmar and has since been happily serving in the Church Music Department (CMD) of KBTS, Myanmar. She is currently working on a thesis – “100 Hymns for Karen Worship Leaders’ Handbook” – for her Masters in Church Music at SBC.

Singing Praises to the Lord: A Missionary Update

Pearl Peh Paleh Naw gives thanks for the establishment of music programmes at the Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (KBTS), Myanmar.

I praise God for giving me the privilege to study church music and using me as an instrument in His ministry.

When I returned to Myanmar in 2002, my KBTS colleagues and I formed the Church Music Department (CMD) to offer church music programmes in KBTS. We launched a one-year programme, the Certificate of Church Music (CCM) in 2003–2004; later in 2008–2009, we added a two-year programme, the Diploma in Church Music (DCM). Today we have more than 200 CMD alumnae serving in the whole of Myanmar as music teachers and church music directors in different seminaries, associations, churches, and even international schools. In December 2012, CMD held a thanksgiving service for its 10th anniversary.

This 2013–2014 academic year, KBTS has 999 students, out of which 18 are music students (12 CCM students and six DCM students). **KBTS is the only seminary that offers church music programmes in Myanmar.** We have a vision that KBTS will offer an Advanced Diploma and a Bachelor's in Church Music in the near future.

I believe that all these things have taken place under God's care and supervision, along with the help of GBC – especially in praying with me for a church music school to be established in Myanmar, and sponsoring my studies. God answered our prayers and my dream came true. God is good and faithful to his people!

The Karen Baptist Convention celebrated its 100th year convention jubilee from 27 Nov–1 Dec last year (2013). In addition, the Myanmar Baptist Convention also celebrated its bicentennial jubilee from 5–8 Dec 13. Both jubilee celebrations took place at Franc Hall in Yangon and more than 10000 people joined in. I was appointed to be president of the Celebration Music Committee and took charge of the choir and praise team for all worship services throughout the jubilee. I am thankful for the opportunities GBC has given me to serve as a song leader as well as a choir conductor while I was at GBC. These experiences have definitely equipped me to lead this team.

I thank God for all your prayers, help, encouragement and opportunities to serve while I was a stranger in a foreign land. **Ω**



The first in a series called *Revive Our Hearts*, this slim volume packs a punch that belies its size. The theme is revival, and the premise is simple: revival can only take place following an experience of brokenness and humility before God. This is what took place unexpectedly at a Campus Crusade for Christ staff conference in 1995 at which DeMoss was speaking, and the revival that resulted deeply moved her and ultimately constrained her to write this book.

DeMoss starts by giving examples of people who needed major heart surgery due to differing manifestations of pride caused by “our family history of [spiritual] ‘heart disease’”. One lady needed a complete ‘heart transplant’, while a man was suffering from ‘hardened arteries’ – clogged by pride, self and religious works. What is the remedy? DeMoss reminds us that God’s grace is always available to those who lay down their pride and offer the sacrifice of a broken, contrite heart (Ps 51:17). Brokenness is the shattering of self-will and self-reliance. If our lives resemble a house, then, for our hearts to be revived, the roof of our lives must come off (brokenness towards God) and the walls must come down (brokenness before others). True brokenness brings a release that produces a deep sense of joy and peace.

“proud, unbroken Christians have done far more damage to the church of Jesus Christ than any sinners outside the church could inflict”

Using examples from Scripture, DeMoss shows us pairs of individuals who illustrate the contrast between pride and brokenness (eg, Saul and David, the Pharisee and the tax-collector) and reaches a conclusion that some may baulk at: “Could it be that God is more offended by those of us who appear to be respectable and spiritual but who have proud, unteachable spirits, than He is by adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, abortionists and pornographers who make no pretense of being godly?” If we are offended by this, let us reflect on DeMoss’s further point that “proud, unbroken Christians have done far more damage to the church of Jesus Christ than any sinners outside the church could inflict” (p. 83).

Chapter 4 lists qualities that can be used as a guideline to determine whether we are a proud or a broken Christian. But why would anyone choose the path of brokenness? Chapter 5 shows us that brokenness brings blessings, namely, God’s close presence, new life, deeper love and worship, a greater ability to be used by God, and ultimately the rivers of revival that we long for.

Easy to read and hard-hitting, this is a book that has the potential to change lives by preparing and softening readers’ hearts to bring about true and lasting revival. **Ω**