

Editors' Welcome

By Tricia Kao and Stephanie Tan

It's been a cold winter season, but get ready for more cool times ahead! We're excited to bring you a special themed issue, as we count down the days to NLCC's very own production of *Imagine Christmas* in September. Confused? Curious? Find out more about it on pages 6 and 7.

In April, NLCC held a missions trip to China. If you're wondering what the

team got up to, flip to page 8. We've also included an introduction to Chinese Protestant churches, and hope you find both these articles as interesting and informative as we did!

We've also focused on the area of worship this issue. If you haven't already heard about the fantastic things that are happening in NLCC's Worship Ministry, turn to page 4! In addition, 25 NLCC members attended this year's Hillsong Conference in

Sydney. What a joy it is to see God working in our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ!

Finally, as we move into our third year of bringing you *NLCC Epistles*, it's once again time to vote for your Epistles Award winners for issues 5 to 8! We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributes articles, and we hope to encourage more people to share what's on their hearts. ■

Thoughts and Feelings after Hillsong Conference '08

By Kelly Seow

God reminded me at Hillsong Conference '08 that worship used to be the air that I breathed and the Word of God was my daily bread. However, since graduating from university, worship and the Word of God became merely the titbits or 'supplements' that I consumed from time to time.

At the conference, God challenged me, and I counted the cost of being a true disciple of Christ. I made the decision that I would seek God's kingdom above all things.

Since coming back from the conference, I've read God's Word and worshipped Him twice a day – not out of religious obligation, but out of an eagerness and hunger to spend time with God. Meditating upon the beautiful Psalms of David can be so satisfying.



When we commit to following God, it doesn't mean that we follow him only 90% of the time, and do whatever we like with the remaining 10%. Following God requires us to change our lifestyle. When Jesus called Simon Peter, James and John to follow him, they gave up their vocations and lifestyles to live a Spirit-filled, God-led life.

My main observation at Hillsong was their skillful use of mass media and stage effects. They literally bombarded us with images, lights and sound to 'sell' the idea of a worship lifestyle focused on bringing us closer to God. It dawned on me that what we input into our consciousness is vital in our relationship with God. The amount of time we spend on it is also paramount. There is nothing wrong with watching TV or listening to a lot of secular music, but if we spend too much time bombarding ourselves with the things of this world, that takes us just that little bit further from God.

We need to make a conscious effort to feed our souls and spirit with God's Word, be it in the form of recorded sermons, worship CDs or DVDs, or reading the Bible. We therefore have to ask God to bring us back to the heart of worship and not be distracted by what else the world has to offer. ■



Outside the Acer Arena in Sydney's Olympic Park

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What I Took Away From Hillsong

By Michelle Tang

During the week at the Hillsong Conference I learned many things about myself, others, life and church.

Personally, I learned about God's majesty and love for us. I experienced his joy and peace for my life... He has helped me and will continue to help me through life's ups and downs. Life is always changing, but the key is to have peace and joy throughout trying times; if that's what makes God happy, I will do it!

I left Hillsong inspired by the huge passion displayed by all the speakers, and everyone else who attended the conference. I was blessed just to bask in God's presence; not being distracted by things around me, but focusing my eyes on God alone.

As a church, we need to shine Christ's light through us to the community around us! We must show them the same love, grace and support that we have all experienced from God. Although I don't yet know what action we can take to be outward-looking, I pray for ready hearts – mine included – to be used by God to do His good work.

Let us, as a church, join hands and provide full support to extending God's kingdom! ■



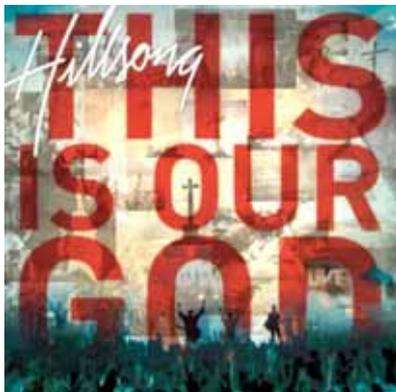
NLCC's Hillsong Conference delegates

Back (L to R): Joseph Ng, Michelle Tang, Celena Tan, Kristin Eu, Amanda Tan, Rena Teoh, Pastor Yat Wan Eu, Patrick Yeoh.
Middle (L to R): Alex Chen, Jian Yang Chong, Kenneth Tan, Cheryl Kee, Sally Tan, Sarah Seow, Dee May Yeoh, Pastor Angelina Eu, Shamus Seow, Kelly Seow.
Front (L to R): Erwin Chan, Josiah Peh, Dorothy Eu, Sarah Yeap, Bernard Kho.
Absent: John Lam, Tricia Kao, Elaine Tseu

This Is Our God – CD Review

By Amanda Tan

A Snapshot



The heart: Authenticity and the freedom to be...

The character: Lots of vocal choruses break the monotony of the band-ish feel and bring a real sense of togetherness when God's family sings as one.

Must listen: "Desert Song" (track 3) – a powerful victory declaration that's very different to the typical worship song. It is classic 'Brooke Fraser-fashion' – tastefully crafted lyrics that echo the heart's cry, plus fantastic layering of instruments.

CD or DVD? Definitely get the CD/DVD twin pack – despite having the same set of songs, the DVD has a more powerful feel to it. The DVD also has a bunch of extra stuff like testimonies and behind-the-scenes footage.

The Longer Version

Live albums do tend to have a certain appeal... a 'raw essence' if you like. *This is Our God* retains the familiar Hillsong flavour – relatively easy-to-learn lyrics that sit above a full-sounding music track. The songs collectively resound with the central theme of authenticity – the freedom to be real people – acknowledging our human limits but embracing the power and strength we have because He is "MY" GOD. Chains will be broken and lives healed because "the same power that conquered the grave lives in me"... wow! Sometimes we forget that He is stronger than our sins, stronger than our secrets, stronger than our fears and much, much, much bigger than our imaginations.

It's interesting, yet quite apt, that the second last track is "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus". Who would have thought that Hillsong would end up playing hymns! Singing the songs from this album at the Hillsong conference brought me to a place where I'd connected with the heart of God, and (for the millionth time) acknowledged that He is Lord – so obvious yet so easily taken for granted. The biggest thing I took away from the conference is that the only way to experience His power and make a felt impact in your world is by embracing the freedom to be you...

For the Music Guru

The Hillsong worship team has once again stepped up on their musicality – it amazes me how they continually make songs sound better by making them simpler. It's all about the layering of instruments and giving each one 'space'. This is the first album where the keyboard can consistently be heard during the full-volume parts – why? It fills the gaps in the higher registers instead of getting lost in the middle register where the acoustic and electric guitars usually sit. The keyboard is also used to create variety by using sound effects beyond the typical grand piano sound. Listen out for the electronic riff in the introduction, chorus and bridge of "Your Name High" (track 1). The same riff is repeated in various parts of the song but using a slightly different sound module – it really adds to the overall dynamic.

In most of the tracks, the drums hold a steady 'backbone' beat while the bass carries a strong secondary tune using varied but uncomplicated riffs with emphases on off-beat notes. I reckon the bass on its own would make good listening! There is lots to learn from the way the Hillsong team builds the dynamic of a song. This is especially evident in "The Same Power" (track 9), where the drum and bass rhythm changes and variations in the chord progressions really ramp up to an explosion of high praise.

There's obviously heaps more that could be said, but it won't beat actually listening to the album and being blessed by the anointed Hillsong worship team. ■

A Fresh Conviction

By Shamus Seow

Hillsong '08 was a real eye-opener for me. It was the first time I'd been to a Christian meeting on such a massive scale. I thoroughly enjoyed what most of the invited speakers and musicians had to teach us from their life experiences, and above all, their love of God and their hunger and desire to serve Him.

What struck me the most was how these anointed preachers and musicians are just normal people who, before choosing to serve God full time, had their own problems and issues. They've somehow struggled through them and trusted the Lord to help them overcome the obstacles along the way, always looking forward and soldiering on for Christ. I was also reminded that God uses broken, imperfect people in the most wonderful ways, and turns them into brilliant, spectacular and talented communicators of His endless wonders and mysteries.

I have always struggled with self-esteem, thinking that I'm not good enough, smart enough, or holy enough to be used by God to touch the lives of those around me. I have been praying that I can overcome this hurdle of self-reproach and realise the true potential of my life as a disciple of Christ. One of the reasons that I don't really feel prepared is that I haven't equipped myself well enough. I have now committed to God my time and effort in getting to know Him better by immersing myself in His Word, whether it's reading the Bible, listening to recorded sermons, or watching Christian and worship DVDs.



Erwin, Shamus and Kelly having fun at the Hillsong Conference

One of the things that God convicted in my heart, as well my wife Kelly, is that we should take up playing an instrument – the guitar for myself, and keyboard for Kelly. I had tried learning the guitar before, but there were too many distractions. I had problems changing chords because of my short fingers, which became too painful and sore from over-stretching and pressing on the guitar strings too long. I also had trouble memorising chords.

I now realise that when I was not yet the born-again disciple of Christ that I am today, I was guilty of

depending only on my own strength, and not drawing any from God. As for Kelly, she used to play the piano when she was younger but fell out of the practice due to study commitments and distractions of this world.

We both enjoy music a lot and singing is our favourite form of worshipping God. However, this new-found conviction to play musical instruments started when we attended the first vocal workshop at the conference, conducted by American brothers Leeland and Jack Mooring (from the band *Leeland*).



Leeland, at a lunchtime interview session

The topic was meant to be "the worship vocalist", but they ended up focusing more on songwriting, and how anyone can write songs for God, as long as you have the hunger and desire for it. As an example, they told us about an ex-BBC photographer who always desired to be a songwriter, and did not write his first song until he was in his mid-40s. That was because one day, at a church meeting where the preacher prayed for the gift of songwriting to those who wanted it, he took hold of God's anointing, and claimed it as his own anointing.

Leeland and Jack also prayed at the end of the session for those of us that had that same fire in our hearts to be able to write songs for God. That brought up an old prophecy for Kelly that she would one day write songs for people to worship God, and also stirred in me a new desire to one day be able to play a musical instrument well and write my own love songs to God.

We took this as confirmation from God that He will anoint us with the skills needed and the calling to minister to people through music.

If God can use all those broken people for His purpose, I will also take hold of that promise and believe for God to anoint me to be more than just a church-goer who attends a cell group and occasionally leads worship in cell, or sings in the worship team in church services. I want to be able to cultivate a worship lifestyle, place seeking God's Kingdom as the main priority in my life, and to make an impact in bringing myself and people around me closer to God. Amen. ■



We learned a lot – both spiritually and musically – from guest artists Michael Gungor, Israel Houghton and New Breed at the Vocalist Workshops



Ministry Focus: Worship (Music)

By Genevieve Ong and Patrick Yeoh

Depending on who you are, your perceptions of the meaning of the word “worship” will be different. To the non-believer, it is likely to be “insanity displayed”. But to a worshipper, it is a wonderful time of surrender and obedience to God, our Heavenly Father, Creator, Redeemer, Saviour and Friend!

Worship ministry is the most restful, yet the most consuming ministry we know, because that is the nature of the presence of God in your life!

When you are in His glorious presence and you see God for who He really is – how loving and how beautiful He is – your soul is at complete rest and perfect surrender to His will for you. This often involves letting go of yourself to allow God to determine everything: including who you are and what you’ll do, for His glory.



Here to serve you: Some of the NLCC Worship Team members

What the Bible Says About Worship

Worship is not just a religious action. God rejects the mere appearance of honouring Him, without true obedience to His will (Isaiah 58). Worship is also not merely in song, or dance, or the raising of hands. For “the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Paul says in Romans 12:1, “*In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.*”

We know that worship is more than our half-an-hour offering of song every Sunday. But the power of these special times is not to be underestimated. That’s why we worship together! In our lives, times of worship have been at the centre of many life-giving, attitude-adjusting, faith-lifting ‘God-encounters’.



Celebrating Jesus at the Worship Experience on Sunday 4 May

Sunday Worship

Worship is not always easy. Sometimes it is a struggle! Yet, as a church bent on following God, welcoming the presence of God into our church and lives through heartfelt worship is absolutely essential.

Something powerful happens when we all unite in agreement to declare the love and power of God in an atmosphere of faith and worship. In this time, we strengthen our collective resolve to keep our lives aligned in

obedience to God, and we make room for God to move in our lives.

Purpose of the Worship Team

The most obvious and important function of the team is to lead the congregation into worship, by being the ‘first worshippers’. In order to minister, members of the team strive to:

- 1) Live authentic (though not necessarily perfect) lives that express their faith; and
- 2) Come prepared to minister. That is, both in heart – through time spent at the feet of Jesus, and in the technical abilities – through the practising of their instruments.

Furthermore, we aim to provide an atmosphere which is conducive for:

- Worshippers to connect with God in wholehearted praise and worship; and
- The Holy Spirit to minister in His manifest presence.

As the worship team in NLCC has grown in numbers (we now consist of close to 30 members), the leadership has made an effort to ensure that it also grows in maturity, both spiritually and technically, through weekly practices and retreats that support the goal of authentic personal and team growth.

Weekly Practices

We now engage in the discipline of hearing the Word of God through a short devotional, before a single note is played. We learn, we share and we pray in an effort to ‘get real’ – not only with God, but with one another as we seek to deepen our vertical and horizontal relationships. Then, of course, we get to our instruments to practise flowing together, in submission to the Spirit of God, and in line with the leaders’ direction.

Seminars and Retreats

Various seminars and retreats have been organised for the building up of the team, and they have been precious times of impartation of gifts, as well as of bonding between the members, from the youngest (at 15) to the oldest (confidential!). During the first semester, we have even had the privilege of having guest worship leaders and musicians from other churches to come share their skills and knowledge at our workshops.



All smiles at the 2007 Worship Retreat

Let’s worship our awesome God together – there is such a huge JOY that is in His presence, and it is such a huge pleasure in serving you! Let us, as Psalm 100:1-5 says:

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Sound system, multimedia projection and van-driving also fall under the umbrella of the Worship Ministry. Watch this space next issue to find out more about them! ■

For more information regarding the Worship Ministry, please send an email to Patrick Yeoh (patrick.yeoh@nlcc.org.au).

MasterLife Testimonials

God's In-Flight Reminder

By Teck Boon

As I boarded my flight from Singapore to China while on a business trip, I was feeling really down. Recent events in my life had been particularly discouraging and it seemed like I was hitting brick walls whichever way I turned. No matter how I prayed and begged God for help, nothing changed. At times, I had seriously considered the question of whether there is a God.

As I approached my seat, I found that it was occupied. I had originally asked for a seat along the emergency exit as I wanted the extra legroom. But just as I was walking towards the man – with the full intention of getting back my allocated seat – I noticed the empty row in front. Out of tiredness and laziness, I decided to sit on one of the empty seats and forget about the matter. It was, after all, an emergency exit row as well. As it turned out, this was the only three-seat row that was empty on the entire flight! "This is the only good thing that has happened to me for quite some time," I thought to myself, as I lay across the three seats after take-off.

Knowing that this was a 'budget flight' without in-flight entertainment, I brought along my Bible. I figured that if anything was going to lift my spirits, this would be it.

It might be the altitude, but my emotions always seem to multiply when I am thousands of feet above the ground. This time was no different. Unable to sleep, I opened my Bible to Romans 5 and started reading. I found myself stuck on verse 10 for a long time: "*For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!*" I read it repeatedly but somehow I could not understand the message.

Then, in a flash, my eyes were opened and my spirit awakened. I was reminded that in the distant past, even when we humans were defiant, making ourselves God's enemy through our sinful acts and thoughts, God still loved us enough to send his beloved Son to die for us.

To die for someone I love, though difficult, is comprehensible. To die for my enemy is something beyond me. But to send my son to die for my loved ones *and* my enemies is a concept far beyond my wildest imagination.

This act of love that God demonstrated became so real to me there and then. I realised that if He can love us so much and save us – even when we were sinners – how much more will He save me now that I

Thanks!

By Srimi, Amy, Shanti, Shamini and Asha Priya

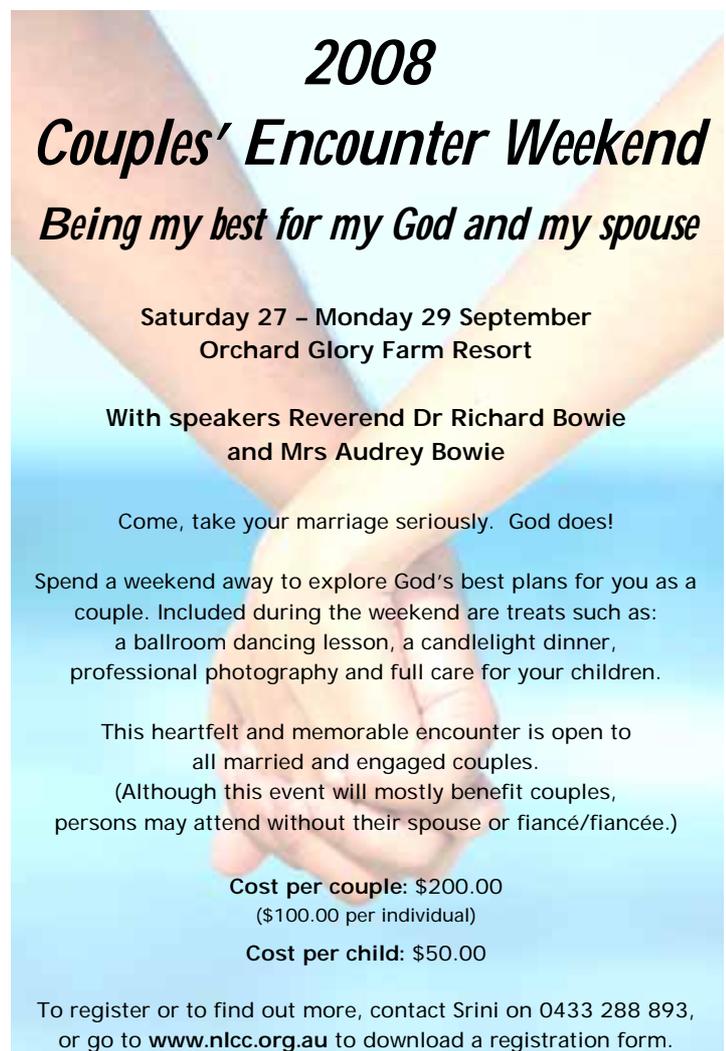
We want to give thanks to God for the warmth and help that we have received since arriving in Perth in January. Pastors Yat Wan and Angelina and the church members have been so forthcoming in their efforts to make us feel welcome and to make each of us feel like part of the church.

Especial thanks to those who have shown us understanding and encouraged us as we faced practical concerns. We have felt so much goodness, and this fellowship has made our transition so much smoother and more enjoyable. ■

am reconciled with Him through Christ. How much more grace, how much more love and how much more blessings will He shower upon me! A warm, fuzzy feeling came over me and I could not hold back my tears... tears of joy and relief!

God always goes one extra step for us. His consolation did not stop there, as He then gave me something tangible to remind me of His love. While tears were still welling up in my eyes, I sheepishly kept wiping them away as I felt a little awkward and self-conscious. I even checked around me to make sure no one was watching. But it was then that my attention was caught by a small, round, bronze-coloured plate on the floor. At first, I thought it was the top of a bolt or screw but somehow, I could not keep my teary eyes off it. I sat up, reached for it and picked it up. It turned out to be a brand new American one cent coin. As I held the coin, a wave of joy swept over me, for on the coin were four engraved words: **In God We Trust**.

As I stepped out of the flight with a renewed sense of joy, I knew that even though my personal situation had not changed, I have a God who is above it all. I have a God who loves me enough to send His Son to die for me, even before I knew Him. I have a God that loves me in ways that I will never be able to comprehend this side of heaven. And **In Him I Trust**. ■



2008
Couples' Encounter Weekend
Being my best for my God and my spouse

Saturday 27 – Monday 29 September
Orchard Glory Farm Resort

With speakers Reverend Dr Richard Bowie
and Mrs Audrey Bowie

Come, take your marriage seriously. God does!

Spend a weekend away to explore God's best plans for you as a couple. Included during the weekend are treats such as:
a ballroom dancing lesson, a candlelight dinner,
professional photography and full care for your children.

This heartfelt and memorable encounter is open to
all married and engaged couples.
(Although this event will mostly benefit couples,
persons may attend without their spouse or fiancé/fiancée.)

Cost per couple: \$200.00
(\$100.00 per individual)

Cost per child: \$50.00

To register or to find out more, contact Srimi on 0433 288 893,
or go to www.nlcc.org.au to download a registration form.



Imagine

CHRISTMAS

somewhere between your memory and your imagination

**COME CELEBRATE THE WONDER OF
CHRISTMAS THIS SEPTEMBER!**

Saturday 13 September

7.30 pm

(Gates open at 7.00 pm)

Octagon Theatre, UWA
35 Stirling Highway, Crawley

(Nearest car park is next to the
UWA Recreation Centre)

Admission is FREE



About Imagine CHRISTMAS

By Jason Tan

“Imagine CHRISTMAS tells the story of Christ’s birth in a uniquely visual way. The biblically-sound narrative ties fast-paced scenes with fresh arrangements of traditional Christmas music and the telling of the story invokes child-like wonder, awe and amazement.

Laugh as you see two angels wondering why they’ve been left out of the choir that announces Jesus’ arrival, and marvel at the simple portrayal of Jesus’ arrival through the hope He brings to all people. All these are presented in a modern contemporary style that will be relevant to our generation.”

(Willow Creek Community Church)

NLCC’s production of Imagine CHRISTMAS presents a cast of approximately 35 actors, dancers and singers (from children to adults). The music will be a combination of recorded tracks and a live band, featuring solo performances on the saxophone, flute and harmonica!

The reason for having Imagine CHRISTMAS in September is that it should not be just in December that we remember the birth of our Saviour. The joy of giving and the spirit of celebration should be in

our hearts every day, knowing that we have a God who loves us and came from heaven to earth to bring salvation to the world.

We also want to stop and reflect about the true meaning of Christmas, before the commercial hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations in November and December threaten to overshadow the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

This is a great opportunity for us to invite our friends and family and introduce them to Christmas as it should be, with the main focus not on turkey, chestnuts or the presents under the tree, but the Son of God – made man and born to be crucified for our sins.

Think you’ve got it all figured out? Perhaps you’re thinking, “Oh no, not another nativity scene...” or, “Been there, done that!”

Well, guess again, because there is no manger scene, no three wise men – this is Christmas like you’ve never imagined it before.

So what are you waiting for? Start inviting your friends to Imagine CHRISTMAS! ■

To find out more about the production, visit www.nlcc.org.au/ics08.

“Ooops... This Looks Greek To Me!”

By Chew Por Chan

This is a common reaction when we come across unfamiliar words or face difficult examination questions.

Having retired from my radiology practice, I found I now had some time on my hands. What started as a short detour into New Testament Greek study seems more like a journey in retrospect. (It had never been in my mind to attend a theological college, much less to study a language.)

Following a year of basic Greek in 2007 I proceeded, with some trepidation, to do exegesis on the book of Romans in the Greek text over the last six months.

New Testament (Koine) Greek

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek and, thank God, translations are made in the many languages we have today.

“Koine” comes from the word “κοινός”, meaning “common”.

The Koine (330 BC to 330 AD) was born out of the conquests of Alexander the Great. His troops, drawn from Athens and other surrounding regions, had to speak to one another. Consequentially, the conquered colonies learned Greek as a second language.

This produced a melting-pot Greek which softened the rough edges of some dialects. Koine soon became the *lingua franca* of the whole Mediterranean region and beyond.

God who created us also speaks to us in human words!

Until recently, it was thought that about 10% of the New Testament vocabulary had no secular parallels. Some medieval scholars thought that these holy words in the Holy Book must have been invented by the Holy Spirit.

However in 1895, Adolf Deissmann published an innocently titled work called *Bible Studies* and demonstrated that the bulk of New Testament vocabulary was to be found in the ancient papyri.¹

This means that the New Testament words were spoken by the common people of that era!

God not only reveals Himself in human words but also:

Κάι ὁ λόγος σαρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκηνώσεν ἐν ἡμῖν
And The Word flesh became and dwelt among us
(John 1:14)

The Word (in reference to Christ) took human flesh and pitched His ‘tent’ among us!

No one has ever seen God; but God, the One and Only, who is at the bosom of the Father, has made Him known. (John 1:18)

The Greek used above for “known” connotes “to lead through an explanation”. The Word leads people through a detailed explanation of God the Father.² This is amazing and is wonderful to believe! ■

¹ Comfort PW, 2000, *Essential Guide to Bible Versions*, Tyndale House, Wheaton, pp.18, 21.
² Wallace DB, 2000, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax, An Intermediate Greek Grammar*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p. 233.



Missions to China

By NLCC's 2008 China Missions Team

A group of 10 members from NLCC embarked on an 11-day China missions trip to better understand the needs of the church in China.

We began in Guangzhou and proceeded to Kunming where we met with local church leaders and missionaries. We were able to visit and minister in an international church, and we also met leaders of training institutions, community-based agencies and church-planting networks. Indeed, we need to pray for these leaders who risk their lives on a daily basis to empower the Chinese church.

The team visited three rural villages within three days, travelling a total of more than 20 hours (of which four hours was on a mountain dirt track). We enjoyed a local feast (village food featuring barbecued goat meat) with a village chief and were treated to a two-hour song and dance programme that portrayed the culture of the village and tribe.

We were not without our fair share of troubles – our van broke down three times! We thank the Lord that the timing of every breakdown was located in a vicinity where help could be obtained and alternative transport (although not as safe nor desirable) was available. Thank God, too, for His hand of protection over the entire team as we had minimal food problems.



Village dancers



Our van broke down on the highway



Treating a patient



Two boys who live in their school

We visited a poor, rural village primary school of 200 students. 30 to 40 children actually live in the school classrooms, sleeping on broken tables and wooden benches during the school week because their parents cannot afford daily transport. These children cook their own meals (rice being their only staple) in an open fire using whatever pots, stones and sticks they can find in the woods. There are no toilets or bathing facilities in the premise – their only water source is a single tap. Perhaps, as a church community, we can help raise some funds to improve the sanitary and living conditions in this school.

The second phase of the mission trip brought us to the tourist island of Hainan (often referred to as "The Hawaii of China"). To our surprise, we were treated like royalty! Despite this, we worked extra hard – every team member seized many opportunities to pray with the locals in the five house churches we visited.

The worship and prayer in every service was intense; no one doubted the Chinese Christians' passion, energy and love! What struck us the most was the youthfulness and professionalism in

the house church movement. Indeed, the Church in China has changed somewhat in its demographics, and the rise of the urban church is evident! God has raised up a solid church that can only get stronger and grow in maturity.

There is still much to be done in China, but it warms our hearts to see local leaders being empowered with the vision and abilities to impact a new China with the gospel message of Christ's love and sacrifice. ■

From the team members

Read about aspects of the trip that left a lasting impact!

Do we have a heart for the lost?

(During a visit to the International Compassion Ministry) "During the devotion, it really opened my eyes to see how God's people – from different parts of the world – are obedient to His calling to join their hearts together to bless China... Their hearts are full of compassion for the lost."

God's protection

"As I reflected on all the incidents today (vehicle breakdowns), I learned a lesson: we need to go deeper into the Word of God, so that we can experience more of His power and protection and even know His heartbeat for the world. It's time to step out in faith to fulfill God's destiny for us and others."

Mindsets in the village

"We could see pigs, buffalos and chickens co-habiting with the Ye Chu village families in the small mud huts. Through basic health and hygiene education, 5 of the 72 families have put their animals in a barricaded compound. The others, however, are not willing to do this as they fear their animals will be stolen."

Our driver Peter (Siow Hai)

"We christened our driver 'Peter'. For 15 years, he had been a heavy smoker, but after accepting Christ, he stopped the addiction and hasn't smoked since. His health has improved dramatically, to the point where he doesn't allow passengers to smoke in his van! Initially, he lost some customers, but God is now giving Peter more business than before! Hallelujah!"

Unscrupulous taxi driver

"We were tricked by the taxi driver into paying too much for our fares. The locals are so quick to benefit from the weaknesses or vulnerability of others. This touched me as it made me see that people here need the Lord to change their hearts!"

Reach your city

"Pastor's last session on intercession was so timely. The house church had been praying and interceding for their city, but without the felt and expressed compassion and love that Jesus exemplified as he wept for Jerusalem. Upon hearing the message, the church has now risen to new heights to see a grace awakening. The light of Jesus shall shine through the love of God's people and the cities will be reached!"



Distributing goodies to village children

A Short Introduction to the Chinese Protestant Church

By Peter Tan

It is pleasing to hear that on the recent NLCC missions trip to China, the team experienced the fervent spirit of the Chinese worshipping the Lord and saw how the Chinese churches operate. The team is now more aware of the Chinese needs.

I currently live in China and regularly attend a registered church. I thoroughly enjoy worshipping in the Chinese church: I love their earnest prayers, joyful singing, Bible readings, the touching messages, and the spirit-filled atmosphere. They are preaching the Word.

In China, the Protestant Church – such as the one I attend – is established under the Government's three-self regulating church (also known as the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)¹) to ensure peaceful Christian activities in the political context. This movement works closely with the China Christian Council of the Church and both are governed by committed Christians and theologians.

China – through her past history and experience – has realised the need to self-regulate the churches. Officially, there are now over 20 million Christians in China, with some unofficial reports stating there are more than 70 million. I am by no means against groups that do Bible study or have Christian fellowship with one another at home and at work (home churches). The Chinese Christians are vibrant and are working on evangelising their motherland. Praise God!

We should encourage the Chinese Christians to remain loyal to their country's law and regulations. Let us encourage each other to take this in a positive manner and to support them in obeying the Great Commission and spreading the Gospel in a united, harmonious and Christ-like manner. As foreign Christians, we can support them through good works and other forms in accordance with their needs, to help them to help themselves in their evangelism. A couple of examples are to financially support their seminaries and their respective churches, or to help the victims of the recent Sichuan

earthquakes. Let's be cheerful givers without any strings attached! Faith and good works must go together.

Some Christians have been persecuted but in recent years I believe it has been more controlled, especially if one is from an official church. Persecution happens everywhere because the devil is a roaring lion looking for the opportunity to devour us. So, Christians, be constantly vigilant and careful in your spiritual walk *anywhere*. Always pray for His blood to cover and to protect us.

Let us learn from the Chinese in honouring, dedicating and consecrating our time to the Lord in our Sunday worship services and every moment of our lives. Live for Him.

Thank God that we can freely share our Christian faith in Australia. May we all take advantage of it and learn the truth from each other – because it will set us free from Satan's grip on our lives... ■

Peter and his wife Priscilla are members of NLCC. Peter works as a lecturer at a Chinese university and worships the Lord in registered churches. Priscilla visits him whenever possible.



Peter and Priscilla in Chaozhou

Want to know more?

There are many frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the operation of Chinese churches, and you can find these at: www.amitynewsservice.org/page.php?=1150. As we have only included a very small selection to supplement this article, we encourage you to find out more by viewing the website. (Note: These FAQ are an informal introduction to the Protestant Church in China and are not officially endorsed by the China Christian Council.)

¹What is the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)?

The term "three-self" refers to self-support, self-government and self-propagation. The TSPM is a movement within the Protestant Church in China to promote these principles. It began in the 1950s in order to promote the idea that the Chinese Church is not dependent on or controlled by foreign mission bodies and that it is possible to be both a Christian and a good patriotic citizen.

How many Christians are there in China, and how many belong to the registered and unregistered churches?

Because many congregations do not have membership lists, it is difficult to know the exact number of Christians in China or the comparative number belonging to registered and unregistered churches. There are at least eighteen million Protestant Christians and probably more.

What is the difference between a registered and an unregistered church?

A registered congregation has chosen to comply with the government regulations for registration of places of worship and has met six general requirements. (Refer to the website to view these requirements.)

Is the church growing?

Yes. Though the percentage of new believers varies quite a bit from one area to another, growth is occurring and in some areas the rate is very high. In addition, new churches are constantly being organised and built.

Where does the church's money come from? Does it come from the government?

For registration, a church must have its own legal income. In most cases, monies come from offerings which members and others who come to worship put in offering boxes at entrances to the church building.

What are "house churches"?

This term is unclear because both "home meeting points" and "meeting points" are often described as "house churches". They usually do not have their own ordained pastor and rely on lay leadership for most of their activities. A "meeting point" has its own building, while a "home meeting point" meets in a private home. (Many of these are registered.)

Who does evangelism? What form does it take and where does it happen?

Chinese Christians are encouraged to demonstrate Christ's love in the way they live, and most evangelism happens in one-to-one contacts. Evangelism also occurs when non-believers come to churches, either invited by friends or relatives or drawn by a special service or religious event.

epistles FUN

To celebrate the NLCC's upcoming musical production, *Imagine* CHRISTMAS, we have put together some Christmas games for you. (Solutions next issue.)

Christmas Trivia

How well do you know the story of Jesus' birth?

1. Which of Jacob's 12 sons is in Jesus' direct lineage?
2. What was remarkable about Jesus' birth?
3. What was the name of the king of Judea when Jesus was born?
4. Name the town where Jesus was born.
5. What important event led to Jesus being born in this town?
6. Who were the first people to see baby Jesus, other than Mary and Joseph?
7. Name the two signs by which they knew it was Jesus.
8. What gifts did the three Magi bring for Jesus?
9. How did the Magi find Jesus?
10. On how many occasions does the Book of Matthew record an angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph, and what was the reason for each occasion?

Christmas Song Anagrams

Unscramble these phrases to get the title of popular Christmas songs! To help you out, the number of words in each song title has been given.

Example: REMATCH WITH SIS (2) → White Christmas

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| A MACHO LEFT FUEL OILY | (5) |
| OWL HOOT, DRY JET | (4) |
| LOFTS THEREIN | (3) |
| MAN WEARY AGAIN | (4) |
| GOD'S KNOWN LEGACIES | (3) |
| BILL'S LEVERS | (2) |
| SWEET GHERKIN | (3) |
| HYDRA SYMBOLIC | (3) |
| LOONY THIGH | (3) |
| COSY CITY AND A RED VIOLIN | (5) |
| LINEN TIGHTS | (2) |

Solutions to Last Issue's Crossword

Across: 1. Branches. 6. Heirs. 7. Daily. 9. Fruit. 11. Do. 12. Vine. 14. Tempted. 15. Us. 16. Any. 18. Believe. 19. Gospel.

Down: 1. Body. 2. Amid. 3. Effective. 4. Let. 5. Praise. 6. Him. 8. Love. 10. Refuge. 13. Sing. 14. Them. 17. You.

Epistles Awards

Issues 5 to 8



As a token of our appreciation, *Epistles Awards* are given out every four issues to authors who have contributed outstanding articles.

We would like to encourage all NLCC members to keep up with their contributions, as it is through *your* writing that our church community – as well as their family and friends – are kept informed of the exciting events and spiritual transformations taking place at NLCC.

There are five categories, and the nominations are listed below. Vote for your favourite articles at:

www.nlcc.org.au/nlcc_epistles

If you've forgotten what the articles were about, you can also download copies of the newsletters! To help you out, issue numbers have been provided in the left column.

Best Article

- 5 Christian Education Classes - Jessie Low
- 5 J-Life: REACH and REVIVE - Jason Tan
- 6 Ministry Focus: Communion - Lilian Wong
- 7 Cambodia Missions: Would You Come Back? - Fionna Gan
- 7 So Why Should I Become a Church Member? - James Seow

Most Encouraging Article

- 5 Farewell Perth - Jason Lim
- 7 The Two Sides to Missions - Joseph Luo
- 7 My Cambodia Testimony - Julie Ng
- 7 Impact Sabah 2008 - Keith Ong
- 8 MasterLife: The Disciple's Cross - Danny Voon

Funniest Article

- 6 J-Life Captain Ball - Justin Chin
- 6 Camera, Action! - Jason Tan
- 6 OverDrive at DarkZone - Jasmine Yap
- 6 Hairspray & 'Wassup-B'? - Estella Yeap
- 7 The Two Sides to Missions - Joseph Luo

Best Event Review

- 5 Twelve Stones' "Foist" Quiz Night - Jason Lim
- 6 NLCC Golf Day 2007 - Alex Chen
- 6 J-Life Road Trip - Evan Wong
- 6 Hairspray & 'Wassup-B'? - Estella Yeap
- 7 Cambodia Missions: Would You Come Back? - Fionna Gan

Most Informative Article

- 5 Do You Hear What I Hear? - Erwin Chan
- 5 Ministry Focus: Missions - Missions Committee
- 7 So Why Should I Become a Church Member? - James Seow
- 7 Are Missions Really For Everyone? - Patrick Yeoh
- 8 Visit to the USA - Pastor Yat Wan Eu

What is New Life City Church?

By James Seow

What is your church like?

On a recent Sunday evening, my wife Sarah and I were blessed to be invited for dinner at Caleb, Jen and Thomas Brownhill's home. In the course of the dinner, a neighbour of theirs dropped in for a chat, and in the ensuing lively discussion, this friend asked us, "What is your church like?"

After some attempts to explain it in vague terms like 'evangelical', 'non-cessationist' and 'contemporary', Caleb gallantly came to my rescue. He elaborated on the services, the leadership, the people, the worship, the youth and other aspects of NLCC. By the end of his enthusiastic description, I was left thinking: "Wow! I'd LOVE to attend THAT church!"

What does NLCC mean to you?

It may seem odd to you, but describing what a church is like is a harder feat than it seems. How can you encapsulate a living, breathing, multifaceted institution comprised of a diversity of people – in fact, the representative bride of Christ – into a few words? In preparation for this year's Elders and Leaders Retreat, we upped the ante even more by asking the attendees to do just that in a survey – not in a few words, but in just ONE!

What makes NLCC NLCC?

When you think of Hillsong Church, what word comes to your mind? I'll take a punt and say it's "worship". When you consider Willow Creek Community Church, you may think "contemporary"; or with Saddleback Church, "40 Days of Purpose". "Huge" is how many would describe Texas' Lakewood Church or Seoul's Yoido Full Gospel Church, with their memberships estimated at 40,000 and 830,000 respectively. Even more may associate Yoido with the word "prayer".

Each of these churches has become renowned for aspects that they excel in, or more accurately, that God has blessed and gifted them in. These thoughts were in the forefront after coming back from Hillsong Conference '08, as I reflected on the almost overpowering nature of the five days I spent there. How easy would it be to get taken with the sheer size and overwhelming feel of it all – from the crowds of thousands, to the world-class speakers, to the perfectly polished music, lighting, sounds and other paraphernalia? How easy would it then be to come back to our home church in Perth and wrestle with thoughts that the chasm between the two churches couldn't seem any wider or deeper?

The truth is – none of those concerns really bothered me. Why? Simply, because NLCC is meant to be NLCC. Whilst we can go to conferences or visit churches and take home certain aspects of how each one operates, we must remember that NLCC is not called to be another Hillsong, Riverview, Lakewood or Willow Creek. Our vision, our mission, and most importantly our calling from God is not to be a poor imitation of any other church, but to take the qualities we have and use them for His glory. Just as each of us has something to offer as unique creations in His image, I wholeheartedly believe that NLCC is in a position that no other church is in. We have strengths, characteristics, giftings and even weaknesses that God has intentionally revealed and expressed in us, so that in this very position he has placed us, we can shine for Him and be the best we can be with what we have.

Similarly, as individuals, we need to remind ourselves that we may not be a Joyce Meyer or an Israel Houghton, but we can submit to God and allow Him to make us the <insert your name> He wants us to be!



Sarah and I often meet up with friends who are leaders and members of a variety of churches in Perth – Baptist, Charismatic, Church of Christ, and others members of the Australian Asian Church Network. As we hear stories of the programmes, the events, the victories and the ever-present trials they're going through, I'm very much reminded that NLCC has a unique place in the church of Perth – that we stand in a ground where no-one else does, and no-one else should!

What one word describes NLCC to you?

So, what were the results of the survey? The clear winning concept was this: Family. Throughout the survey, the words that came up time and again were "family", "close", "loving" and "home". These are the words that our church leaders thought NLCC represented to them the most, and I must admit I can't agree more! Regardless of your age group or the ministry you're involved in, we hope that NLCC is a place where you feel loved, accepted and part of – where you feel like you can contribute, grow in your gifts and make a difference, being part of the vision He has called for us.

What is that vision?

A united people with passion and purpose
Loving God – Making Disciples

These are the words that can be our answer to "What is NLCC?"!

What is the future for NLCC?

More plans will unfold later this year, but the following was briefly discussed at the Elders and Leaders Retreat:

- i. Making Disciples - Knowledge of the Word and Biblical Focus (via sermons, Christian Education classes, cell groups)
- ii. Loving God - Prayer, Worship, Altar and Chairing Ministries
- iii. Making Disciples - Welcome Ministry, Community Impact and Outreach
- iv. Making Disciples - Membership, Leadership Training and Pastoral Care ■

Calendar of Upcoming Events

For more information about any of our events, please contact Pastor Yat Wan (0411 144 959). You can also download the official NLCC 2008 Calendar at publications.nlcc.org.au.



AUGUST

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 Speaker: Ps Jason Tan					1	2
3 J-Life led Worship Service Speaker: Ps Angelina Eu	4	5	6	7	8	9 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Church Picnic Noon, Matilda Bay
10 No service (UWA Expo)	11	12	13	14	15	16 Twelve Stones Go-Karting and Board Games Night
17 Speaker: Ps Kar Meng (from Joy City Church)	18	19 Morning Prayer Meeting 9.30 am, Church Office	20	21	22 J-Life Rocky V 7.30 pm, Law Lecture Room 1	23
24 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	25	26	27	28	29	30

Worship Services are conducted at:
Social Science Lecture Theatre
The University of Western Australia
Crawley WA 6009

Church Office:
Suite 27, Level 3, 88 Broadway
Nedlands WA 6009

Sunday Schedule

Worship Service
10.00 am to 11.30 am

Children's Ministry
10.45 am to 11.30 am

Prayer Meeting (2nd Sunday of each month)
11.30 am to 12 noon



SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Father's Day Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Prayer Meeting 11.30 am, SSLT	8	9	10	11	12	13 Imagine CHRISTMAS 7.30 pm, Octagon Theatre, UWA
14 No service	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Speaker: Ps Angelina Eu	22	23	24 J-Life Combined Prayer Meeting with OCF & CU 7.30 pm	25	26	27 Couples' Encounter Weekend Orchard Glory Farm Resort (until 29 Sep)
28 J-Life led service Speaker: Ps Jason Tan	29 Queen's Birthday public holiday	30				



OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Prayer Meeting 11.30 am, SSLT	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 NLCC Missions Convention Guest Speaker	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 J-Life led service: "Back in the Day" Speaker: Ps Jason Tan NLCC's 10th Anniversary Dinner	27	28	29	30	31 Elders' Planning Retreat (until 2 November)	

Spring Submissions

If you have any:

- Articles
- Comments
- Event reviews
- Jokes
- Questions you want answered or
- Testimonies



please email them to the Editors at:

epistles@nlcc.org.au

All submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Deadline: Sunday, 5 October 2008