



MICA (P)100/11/2008

January — March 2009

Ministry Focus	
Matthew & Friends	2
Junior Worship	3
Contemporary Issues	
How Then Should We Worship?	4
Worship – In Our Own Words	5
Church Family	
Photographs	6
Youth Voice	
Love & Labels – Youth Camp 2008	7
Testimony	
God's Sure Hand In Difficult Times	8

Worthy of Worship

In this issue we take a good look at worship – what it is, its history, and how we practise it in private and as a congregation. Rick Warren places worship first in his list of five purposes and says that worship is our first responsibility to God, but many of us still struggle over the quantity and quality of our worship. This is a good time to remind ourselves that worship can be many things other than music, and that any expression of love to God can be a form of worship, even milking cows, as Martin Luther pointed out! Most of us will not be called upon to milk cows for the glory of God, but we all have opportunities to worship God in our various situations by obeying, trusting and thanking Him in whatever we do.

Praising God in difficult circumstances is the deepest level of worship. We are privileged to be able to learn from Choon Kwang as he testifies to God's faithfulness in times of trial (see page 8).

Also in this issue there are articles on:

- The Matthew & Friends outreach programme
- The recent Youth Camp
- Worshipping God in Junior Church

May you be blessed as you read.

The Editorial Team

Members are welcome to send in articles to Grace News Editorial via:

email: gracenews.gbc@gmail.com

Pastor's Message

Worship— God does not share His glory with another

'...idolatry is not only a matter of worshipping false gods; it is also a matter of worshipping the true God falsely.'

Pastor Bobby Lee

John Calvin rightly called the human heart 'a factory of idolatry', meaning that faithful worship does not come naturally to fallen human beings. Sinners become idolaters because God has so deeply planted the need for himself in human beings that when we do not know the true God, we invent false gods, false religion and false worship. God warns against such idolatrous worship in the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The idolatrous worship of false gods is condemned throughout the Bible.

But the worship of false gods is not the only kind of idolatry condemned in the Bible. The second commandment teaches us that idolatry is not only a matter of worshipping false gods; it is also a matter of worshipping the true God falsely. The second commandment says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6)

The story of the golden calf reminds us that God's own people can fall into idolatry in their worship of God (Exodus 32:5-6). We may want to be creative and inventive in worship, but that creativity can lead to idolatry. Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, and his heirs were consistently criticised as idolaters

because of images and false temples and services dedicated to the Lord. The people of God were rebuked in these instances not for worshipping false gods, but for worshipping the true God falsely by substituting an image for the true God.

Jesus warned against allowing traditions to dominate and subvert the Word of God. "Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matt 15:6). He was saying that our service to God, whether in life generally or in corporate worship, must not be determined by tradition but must follow the teachings of God in the Bible.

What does the Bible say about worshipping God?

It begins way back in Genesis: God is the Creator and all other beings are the created ones. The foundational principle is that no other being can share the same place of worship that rightly belongs to Elohim God (plural form - Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Have we followed this injunction or has our understanding been eroded by ignorance or indifference, with the result that we begin to replace God with our own ideas and preferences to determine how we worship God?

As GBC celebrates our 50th Anniversary this year, it is my prayer that every member, visitor and friend of GBC will hearken to this basic theology of who God is, and that our view of God will never be less than our view (and acceptance) of another person, object or circumstance. ♦



Matthew & Friends

My Hope Singapore 2008

Lim Sor Kim

The initial sign-up was slow, but in time the Lord moved the hearts of members to respond in faith and with much prayer.

Billy Graham is in Singapore again after 30 years – this time not in person but through a DVD proclaiming the Gospel message in thousands of homes across the country. The last time Billy Graham came in person to Singapore was in 1978 during the Billy Graham Crusade in the National Stadium, when thousands of people heard the Gospel. On that occasion I sang in the 4000-strong choir and served as a counsellor. I witnessed the great harvest of souls that the Lord brought through the Crusade as many came to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

This time round the Lord has again given me the privilege and opportunity to participate in a Billy Graham evangelistic outreach programme. The Lord led me to offer my help as a coordinator for the Matthew and Friends Project facilitated by the BGEA (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) where Pastor Bobby and Elder Kim Meng were trained as Master Trainers for Grace Baptist Church. My Hope Singapore involved more than 20,000 homes representing over 250 churches in Singapore where the local Christians, called 'Matthews' after the disciple who invited friends to his home to meet Jesus, invited their neighbours, friends and relatives to their homes to watch one of a number of moving and culturally-appropriate programmes on DVD. After the viewing of the video, the 'Matthews' shared their personal testimonies and gave their guests the opportunity to accept or rededicate their lives to Jesus Christ.

At Grace Baptist Church we started our training in October after receiving the MAF (Matthew and Friends) packs from BGEA. I was really encouraged by the



staff of BGEA for their support and commitment to us throughout the whole project. Praise and thank God for the 'Matthews' who responded and attended the two training sessions by Pastor Bobby and Elder Kim Meng. The initial sign-up was slow, but in time the Lord moved the hearts of members to respond in faith and with much prayer. Pastor Bobby, Elder Kim Meng and I went to St Andrew's Cathedral to view the first screening of the DVD in English and were greatly impressed by the superb quality of the shows and by the power of the testimonies and messages shared. Truly our God is a God who has the power to change lives. After viewing the DVD many church members were motivated to open their homes and invite their neighbours, friends, colleagues and relatives to view the screening of the shows. The Lord has indeed blessed many of the 'Matthews' who opened their homes or got permission to screen the DVD in their workplace. To date there have been a few decisions of acceptance, and the Lord is still using the DVDs to touch many lives not only in Singapore but also in Kuala Lumpur and the USA. God will accomplish what He has planned irrespective of man's response or lack of response. It is only when we act in faith and join Him that we will be able to see His mighty works in our midst. Praise the Lord for My Hope Singapore! ♦

Of such is the kingdom of heaven...

Junior Worship

Beh Kit Wan

Have you ever wondered what the children do when they leave the church sanctuary on Sundays to have their own Junior Worship?

Children aged two to twelve years are privileged to have their own worship sessions, known as Junior Worship, which come under the purview of the Children's Ministry.

In the FEC we have Junior Worship for children of the various age groups, namely, two years to K2; Pri 1 to Pri 3 and Pri 4 to Pri 6.

The SEC has a larger group of younger children so they are split into two separate

classes comprising two to four years, and K1 and K2. Though the FEC worship may take on a slightly different format from that of the SEC, both services follow the same curriculum.

We are blessed to have a great team of teachers who lead Junior Worship every Sunday. Each class has two teachers, one of whom leads the order of worship while the other shares God's message. There are two teams of teachers, with one team serving during odd months and the other serving during even months. In this way our teachers have the opportunity to receive the message from the pulpit for the month they are not serving.

When the children go to Junior Worship they continue to worship God through the offering, Scripture reading, message, memory verse and prayer, thus ensuring that all the main components of the main worship service are included. For the younger children our teachers also include art and craft and even snack time after worship. The older children have the opportunity to serve by helping to

take the offering and by playing the piano for the offertory and doxology during their worship session.

It is an awesome responsibility and we count it all joy and blessing from God as we serve each Sunday. Besides ministering to the children, we also have fellowship with our co-teacher as we prepare the worship session. We are able to learn from each other's different teaching styles to better engage the children in God's message, all the while upholding each other in prayer.

All of us teachers are ordinary members trusting God to help us to minister to the children. As DL Moody wrote, "God can use any Christian to accomplish His work. If we possess the right heart and the right attitude we become the right kind of person for God to use. Our great God can do very extraordinary works through very ordinary people. All Christians have a place of service to the Lord." ♦



Children continue to worship God through the offering

Confessions of an ungifted teacher

Rachel Wong

Teaching the younger children in the SEC is definitely not a walk in the park for me. I am willing, but I often ask myself, am I able? In the first place I do not consider teaching to be one of my natural gifts, but God has called me to do it and I am beginning to realise that maybe that is the point – I cannot do it in my own strength so I have to rely on the Holy Spirit to give me wisdom and inspiration. Secondly, given that I have been called to teach, I would prefer to teach adults or older children, but now I find myself serving one of the youngest age groups in the church! So it is not easy, but it has been a lot of fun and I am really enjoying getting to know the children and listening to their thoughts and ideas.

In the SEC we decided to have the two-year-olds to K2s together for the songs, offering and prayer time, before splitting into two groups for story time and craft. Our reasoning was that we hoped the older children would

encourage the younger ones to sing and participate, but in practice sometimes the younger ones are more uninhibited and enthusiastic, while the K2s think some of the songs too babyish and don't like to do the actions. I find the song time the most challenging because of this difference in age: a two-year-old is very different developmentally from a six-year-old, but we aim to reach them all and help them understand the meaning of the words they are singing and the difference between just singing a song and singing to worship God. This is where a teacher (me) has to be creative and not mind making a fool of herself. Leaping about the room, check; pretending to be an octopus, check; doing an Elvis impression, check; you name it to get their attention, check!

Sometimes we use props such as toy instruments, Mr Potato-Head and hand puppets, or sometimes we write out the words of songs and draw pictures for those who can't read, in order to add variety and appeal to different learning styles. But what we always do is pray to welcome Jesus into our midst and explain that we are singing and

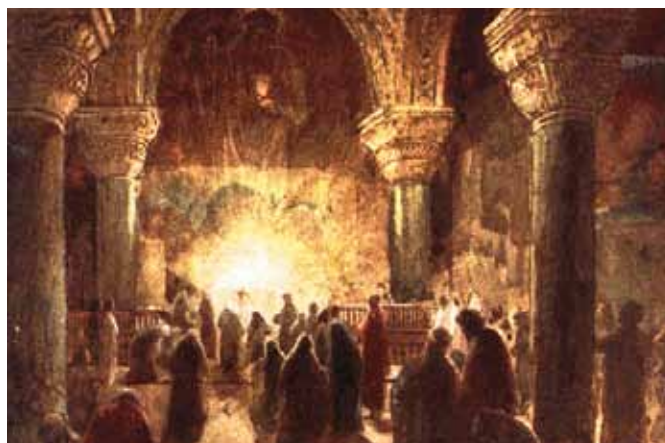
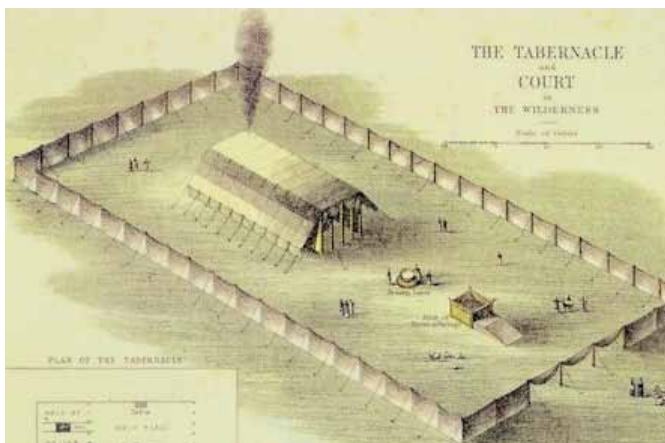
talking to God, and that the money we give belongs to God and is used to do His work. Our prayer is that constant simple reminders will help the children understand why we worship Jesus, and that a happy comfortable atmosphere in the class will cause them to be eager to attend and will plant the seeds of faith in their hearts. And the truth is that I need those constant simple reminders just as much myself, and the children's responsiveness to God's love teaches me more about worship than I am teaching them.

It is truly a privilege to serve God in Junior Church. Ungifted though I may be in teaching, I am receiving many other precious gifts through the children that I will always treasure. ♦

How then should we worship?

Church Worship through the ages....

Tony Chan, Elder and Bryan Chan



By now you will have realised that the theme of this issue of Grace News is worship. But what exactly is worship? We all have our interpretations of what worship is or should be. Many people think it is a matter of personal preference, and some even end up perpetually church-hopping. However, if we are to truly understand what the place of worship is in the church, we should begin by examining what the Bible says about worship, or ‘worth-ship’ – ascribing worth to our God.

First, it is important to note that we are talking about corporate worship. We can pray and sing praises on our own, but the Biblical examples of worship usually refer to the whole body of believers worshipping as one. This is essential to a proper understanding of worship.

The very first Biblical source on the practice of worship is Leviticus, which lays out in great detail how the Israelites were to conduct themselves in the worship of God. This focused on the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple in Jerusalem. There was an important role for the priesthood as intermediaries between God and man, interceding for our sins through the blood of sacrifice, which gave rise to the understanding that “without shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sins.”

By the time of Jesus, the Jews scattered all over the Roman Empire had much of their religious needs met by the local synagogues, and only travelled to the Temple on special occasions such as the Passover. In Acts, there was no longer a need for the Temple sacrifices, as Jewish believers came to understand what Jesus taught in John 4:23 about worshipping God in Spirit and in truth. Instead they gathered in private facilities, because they were driven out of the synagogues, just as Paul was in many of the cities he went to.

Left, from top

- A model of the Tabernacle as detailed in the book of Leviticus
- An artist's impression of early Christian worship just after Pentecost
- Church worship today

Thus we see that it is the community of believers, and not the Temple or synagogue, which has become the model of Christian worship. Instead of rituals and Law, we have prayer, praise and preaching as our primary forms of worship, as well as tithes and Scripture reading. It is only when we understand the true character of God, as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures (ie, Spirit and truth), that we can offer genuine worship.

Ever since Christianity became the national religion of Rome in the 4th Century, the Church has struggled with the nature of true worship. The Reformation,

Evangelicalism, the Charismatic movement, the Emergent Church – these are just some of the many movements in church history that have tried to define or redefine worship.

Where does that lead us? As we meet together to worship God in the Sunday service, Care Groups, or even with a group of Christian colleagues, we must remember that how we worship is important. Because unless we worship in Spirit and in Scriptural truth, we are subjecting ourselves to the ways of the Law, rituals, political correctness, and many other paths that lead us away from the Gospel of Grace. ♦

Worship – in our own words

We are all familiar with the corporate worship that we participate in during church services. But what about the rest of the week – what do members of GBC understand worship to be, and how do they practise it in private on a daily basis? Let us learn from each other...

Worship to me is when my mind, spirit and emotions are drawn toward the beauty of Christ. The very thought of His love makes me want to thank God for all His provisions; His love so freely given out constrains my very being, thoughts and actions. *Michael Wee*

Worship is having a relationship with God through constant prayer so that I know I am in God's will and living a life pleasing to Him. Living a life pleasing to God is the way I worship Him. I do not look for a 'high' when worshipping God as I believe worship has nothing to do with feelings but everything to do with faith. Sometimes I do not feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, but in faith I still worship God as I know He is always worthy of praise. *Member of GBC*

I remember Jill Briscoe said that worship is at its best when one is serving God. I find this very meaningful as for me worship is service: it is when I am serving God that I feel closest to Him. That's when I need to connect with Him for strength, dependence and grace. When I worship in private I tend to use Bible verses to pray and meditate, and I also sing worship songs as this helps me focus on God. *Lydia Lee*

My best experiences of personal worship are usually times when I start and end the day with qualitative moments before the Lord. I find that an excellent opportunity for an extended time of prayer and enjoying His presence is when I am jogging or walking outdoors. In fact, because of who He is, I can literally choose any moment of the day to cease from striving and to worship Him. Each time I choose to obey and honour Him, especially when the realities of my faith are tested through the daily grind, I feel that I am worshipping (and loving) Him by obeying His commandments. *Phua Cheow Loon*

Worship is praising God. *Georgina Chen*

Worship is offering my body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is my spiritual act of worship. *Lim Sor Kim*

Worship is all about God, focusing in humble adoration on who He is – Creator, Jehovah Jireh, Sovereign Lord, the Almighty, Saviour and Redeemer. *Seah Yen Goon*

Worship is a lifestyle – a lifestyle of responding in gratitude to what God has revealed and done for us. *Oliver Chia*

For me personal worship has two aspects. The first is to set aside time for personal devotion, and the second is to worship God continually by thanking Him, singing praises, recognising Him in the midst of daily life, and being conscious of Him throughout the day. *Member of GBC*

Worship is the morning coffee time that I spend with Him – praying to Him, thanking Him, reading the Bible, admiring and acknowledging His glorious works, and every moment that I hold Him in reverence, adoration, awe, and gratefulness. *Tan Sze Gar*



- Clockwise, from left
- Drama by the Youth
 - Welcoming many first-time visitors
 - Ps Bobby Lee delivering the gospel message

20 & 21 December 2008
My Hero

Next Ladies Network Activity:

The Ladies Ministry is organising a trip to **Malacca** for 2 days and 1 night from 9 – 10 March 2009.

Places are very limited, so register early.

The Ladies Ministry's Christmas celebration: 'THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS' 15 Nov 2008

- Right, from top
- A quiz for the ladies to encourage interaction
 - Participants receiving pot-pourri door gifts



Love & Labels

Youth Camp 2008

Hannah Yeo

Past youth camps have always been fun, and this year was no exception. Our theme was 'Love and Labels', and the aim was to teach us how to love the right things.

When we first arrived most newcomers were shy and not keen to participate in the games, but after a few icebreakers everyone took part enthusiastically. One game involved blowing candles out from a distance, which resulted in quite a few unglamorous photos! Many laughs were shared, new friends were made and everyone was included.

The secret encourager system was introduced, where we each became a secret encourager to someone else. I thought this was a really great idea and many of us took the opportunity to write notes to tell people how much we appreciated them.

Most messages at camp were content-heavy but all of them were meaningful. We learnt about love, that it comes from God and that God commands us to love one another. "If people say, "I love God," but hate their brothers or sisters, they are liars. Those who do not love their brothers and sisters, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have never seen." 1 John 4:20 (NCV)

We also examined the danger of listening to false teachings and Uncle Tom Chandler told us how to guard ourselves against these false teachings. After every message, we would break into our small groups to discuss what we had heard, which made it easier to understand and apply it to our lives.



Clockwise, from top

- Playing 'The Amazing Race' at the Chinese Gardens
- Hannah Yeo
- Games time at the camp site
- Message time
- Worship
- Talent Night held in a church nearby



I thought one of the best activities was Night Games. In our groups we had to meet with characters such as an emo kid, a drug addict, a workaholic, a new-age post-modern believer, a backslidden Christian, an atheist scientist, and a terminally ill cancer patient. First we needed to guess their identity and then convince them to believe in Christ. It was actually really hard to convince some of them because they just would not change their way of thinking and sometimes we just didn't know what to say. Even though it was challenging, it was very real and we learnt so much about how to evangelise and speak to different people because different characters needed to hear different things.

The final night was Talent Night held in a church nearby. Many parents came to watch the entertaining skits put up by the groups. The spontaneity of the youths was obvious when some of them were called forward to do stand-up comedy, which left the audience in peals of laughter.

Overall this year's youth camp has been very enjoyable and I'm sure it has left us all with bright memories. We'll remember Deborah Yap and her various 'moments', how we were able to overcome obstacles and have the first indoor candlefight, and all the awesome messages that taught us so much. The camp committee and everyone involved deserve a huge thank you for making the camp such a brilliant success! ♦

I would like to give thanks and praise to Almighty God for the many ways He has guided and upheld me through my recent liver transplant in Tianjin, China. The Lord showed me clearly that He is in control and that I need not worry, despite the ordeal of undergoing major surgery in a foreign country far from the support and comfort of family and friends. God has worked in my life in so many amazing ways and I want to take this opportunity to praise Him and testify to His goodness.

I am grateful to God first of all for giving me very clear direction to go for the transplant. I was initially very reluctant to consider this option. However, **all the other alternatives I had tried, such as chemotherapy and TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) had not been effective, and with a rising cancer marker I had to follow God's leading and trust Him in this.**

Praise God that contact with the hospital in China was made very quickly within the space of a week, and that the doctors asked me to fly over at my convenience. The Lord provided friends conversant in Mandarin who willingly volunteered to establish contact and even accompany me on the trip. It is no coincidence that my friend and neighbour went to Tianjin for a similar operation four years ago: he was able to provide me with much-needed advice and encouragement.

When we were in Tianjin talking to the team of doctors that had been allocated to us, a local doctor contact called us during the meeting and advised us to discontinue as that was not the best team there, so we politely told the team that we were tired and would revert to them the next day. The local contact put us in touch with the best team of surgeons, whose chief had already performed more than 1000 operations and was senior enough to be able to influence the allocation of the liver. After the operation, the full-time nurse we engaged asked us how I got that team of surgeons, which is the best in the hospital. She was curious because usually only locals have this knowledge while foreign patients go to my initial contact. She revealed that my initial contact has a bad reputation but does not receive any complaints as foreign patients usually do not pursue any grievances after they leave. Through this incident I could

really see the Lord's protection, which gave me added confidence that the decision to go to Tianjin was the right one.

By the grace of God, though **I was given just one hour's notice before the transplant,** I was able to remain calm and was even happy to get it over and done with. Despite all the commotion in the room with nurses and doctors rushing in and out, I felt detached and calm as I read some passages from the Bible. I had confidence that the Lord would be watching over me and that I would survive the operation. For each of the three procedures that I have gone through this year I have relied on Psalm 91:14-16 as my source of strength.

God's sure hand in difficult times

Lee Choon Kwang

From left
Vera, Angela,
Choon Kwang and Vicky



Praise God that the operation went very well! Initial fears that the tumour may have spread to my stomach were unfounded, so my stomach was left intact. It was not necessary to take a vein from my leg to graft with the donor's left portal vein and I did not have to walk around with a bag attached to my right side as the liver size matched well. The only hitch was that I was hoping the tumour in the portal vein was not cancerous, but unfortunately it was. **Still, three out of four concerns dismissed was a better result than I had dared hope for.**

Thanks to God too for my quick recovery. I was in the ICU only one and a half days, was able to eat porridge on the third day, all tubes were out by the sixth day, and I could walk for half an hour by the end of the week. Most of the other patients were surprised by my recovery, which could only have been due to all your prayers and support. Of course there were teething problems initially like sleepless nights and poor appetite, but these were to be expected and not unbearable.

Most of all I thank and praise God for the pastors, elders, members, friends and colleagues who rallied around me during this period. I had not expected the huge turnout at the airport – it looked like a mini riot and there was a risk that we would be arrested for holding an unlicensed gathering! But Angela and I were really touched by your love. **When we were down we received cards that helped lift our spirits, and all your kind words and prayers really assured us that we were not alone in this fight.** Even in Tianjin we received visitors we did not know personally who were friends of people in Singapore. We received gifts of Christmas cookies and goodies from people we had never

met before. We especially treasure those who made the effort to visit us in Tianjin, incurring extra expense and giving up their time to cook for me and encourage us.

It has been a bewildering nine months and it's not over yet. Praise the Lord for guiding me over one hurdle after another. The fight will continue, but I know that I can only take it one day at a time and continue to have faith and confidence that the Lord will continue to be with me as I walk on with Him. I don't know how it will turn out but I do know that the Lord has His best plan for me and I can't ask for anything more.

Going forward, I will have to undergo chemo as a preventive measure and am waiting for clearance from the transplant doctor to go ahead with the procedure. I am also concerned about the possibility of the new liver being rejected. Please continue to uphold me in your prayers, especially that God will give me wisdom to decide on the various treatment options available.

May God be praised.◆