



Editors' Welcome

By Tricia Kao and Stephanie Tan

As always, summer in New Life City Church has seen its members travelling all around the world. Many took advantage of the holiday season to attend mission trips, while others travelled back to their home countries to spend quality time with their family and friends.

The less fortunate ones (like both of us!) remained in Perth, but church events were still aplenty with the Twelve Stones Christmas Dinner and annual Watch Night service.

At the end of 2007, Dr Keat Wong finally took his well-deserved sabbatical after nearly 10 years of service to the church as an elder. You can read his thoughts on pages 6 and 7, where Pastor Yat Wan and good friend Elder Richard Tai have also contributed words of thanks.

The bulk of this issue is centred on the recent 'Missions Impact' trips to Cambodia and Sabah, Malaysia, with the newsletter design incorporating a selection of the beautiful photographs captured by Calvin Yong during his time in Cambodia.

This issue, we have also introduced the yearly "Epistles Awards" as a token of thanks to our diligent article writers, and as an encouragement to all of you to contribute more articles. (Turn to page 9 to see who received an award!) Remember, it is through your contributions that NLCC and our friends are kept informed of what God is doing in our midst.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and we look forward to keeping you updated with the latest events this year. ■

Cambodia Missions – Would You Come Back?

By Fionna Gan

"Would you come back?" asked Sol Phal. I smiled at him and said yes. He was not satisfied and asked again, "Are you sure?" I told him that when I said yes, I meant it, and asked him why he was not sure. He looked at me seriously and said, "Because I can't see your eyes!" I exploded in laughter, took off my sunglasses and looked at him intently and exclaimed, "YES!!" He was relieved after that but it set me thinking about his question.

We arrived in Cambodia on 11 December 2007. Excited about not knowing what to expect, we embarked in Phnom Penh. I found this to be a dull city with lots of people and horrendous traffic. I gave up all hope of driving in Cambodia as the bravery needed to even attempt to drive in those conditions was more than I had!



SK and Fionna Gan with their new friend, Sol Phal

We enthusiastically started our first clinic in Pastor Nora's seminary school, headed by our two dentists and one doctor. The rest of us were dental assistants, instrument handlers, pharmacists or part of the prayer team. I was amazed at the proficiency of the dental support crew who were only given one morning's training at SK's surgery before leaving for Cambodia and how they all came together and (mostly) knew what to do! Some even memorised the different types of dental forceps that seemed to look alike!

The people in Cambodia are very simple: beautiful and friendly. Wherever we went for clinics, be it in the rural villages or floating schools, we were always greeted with smiles. We used interpreters as the Khmer language was not easy to learn. Sol Phal was one of our most hardworking interpreters who was also our van driver. We found that the interpreters played a huge part in our missions as without them, no one in Cambodia would have known why we were there and why we loved them.



Cambodian girls at the floating village in Siem Reap

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A few days later, joined by two more dentists, we all travelled to Takeo, a remote little town. The villages there were even poorer, with some kids running around with literally no clothes on. Those who wore clothes were filthy with lice-infested heads, while the men and women looked thin and undernourished – many with broken teeth and bad health. It's hard not to feel for them, knowing the luxury that we live in. Even the chickens, dogs and cows were scrawny!



Takeo villagers

What struck me most, however, was the emptiness in their faces, which told me that they need the hope and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Missions are not complete without sharing about Jesus and many had not even heard of the name. Those who had heard Jesus' name had only heard it over the radio but had no understanding of who He is.

We felt tremendous joy in being able to pray with people and

to share the Gospel with them. Here our interpreters played the most crucial part, as they had to convey the message of Jesus so clearly. I remembered sharing the Gospel with ease one day and seeing so many salvations but the very next day in another village, the interpreter and I were perplexed that hardly any salvations were occurring. I asked the Lord why and how and I felt Him telling me to share my life with them. What a difference it made when I started to share about what He has done. They would look at us with a smile and the love of Jesus just flowed out to them. That was my greatest joy!

The journey from Takeo to Siem Reap was very long. That was when the conversation took place between Sol Phal and me. When I thought carefully about his question, I knew he was curious about my thoughts. The Cambodians have a place in my heart and I will return to share more with them.

We arrived at Siem Reap with happy anticipation as our kids, who arrived the day before, were awaiting us. Siem Reap is a livelier city and we were able to relax more, usually with massages or shopping. Here, we met Pastor Dareth and his beautiful family and we went into the floating school with them. The journey was fascinating; we travelled by boat and saw many man-made, tiny floating homes, as well as other boats that were selling fruit, vegetables and fish.

At the floating school, it was amazing to see the little kids arriving in their small boats and how easily they hopped around other boats to get to their school. They were so happy and excited to see us. We set up a clinic there for the villagers and the school, and it was truly rewarding.

Shopping in Siem Reap was fun and their Khmer massage was painful! But overall, it has been most worthwhile and exciting for all of us. The unity the whole team displayed was awesome and how we blended with each other was fantastic. We all felt that we had the best team as we worked hard together, yet enjoyed ourselves immensely! ■

Are Missions Really For Everyone?

By Patrick Yeoh

To be perfectly honest, I have never considered missions my "calling". It is praise and worship that excites and inspires me (considering I serve in the worship ministry, that's not surprising). I once read, however, that "missions exist because worship doesn't". That simple yet profound statement helped me link the practice of worship to missions. I cannot, as a worshipper – and even more so as a worship leader – not have a heart for missions, for the lost, and for the injustice in this world.

It is also written in Amos 5:21-24:

"I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

I put it simply to myself: God doesn't care for our worship services. He's not interested in the worship team rehearsing their music so well that they are in perfect harmony. He takes no

joy even if everyone has their hands lifted up with eyes closed when they worship. But this is only *if* we have a hypocritical attitude towards justice and righteousness.

This helped me to consider my mission trip to Cambodia as an act of worship, and I pray that it has pleased God.

Now on to the trip itself! I wasn't really sure what to expect before arriving apart from it sounding like it was going to be a lot of work! I was assigned as a dental instrument handler, and mainly cleaned and sterilised the instruments for the dentists.

As you would expect, there were many highlights during this trip. I was particularly encouraged by how well everyone worked and gelled as a team. The team comprised of people from diverse backgrounds, from age to profession. Everyone played their part, serving each other in humility and always preferring each other. I was sick on one of the days and the team gathered around me to pray. As they prayed over me, I just felt a sense of God's love for me through his people. It is a true blessing to be in such a family of Christians.



Cambodian children

I also had the opportunity to witness and share with the Cambodians on one of the last days of ministry. Indeed, it was a refreshing experience to see such openness to the Gospel. As far as I can recall, everyone who I prayed with and for wanted to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Hallelujah!

It was a memorable trip for sure; it gave me a chance to broaden my expression of worship and to get to know everyone a little bit better. I would like to conclude with an invitation to you to join any of NLCC's future mission trips. You may think that missions aren't for you but we are all called to worship. See missions as worship and you may change your mind. ■

The Two Sides To Missions

By Joseph Luo

In the past, for me there has always been a certain novelty about missions. Missions were incredibly new, and seemed exciting and unpredictable. In many ways they still are. But having been on a few trips, similarities start to appear and the novelty starts to wear off (although, this trip, there was the novelty of helping patients with our very own Dr Jason Lim for the first time).



Toul Sleng Prison: Leg shackles used during the Pol Pot regime

But soon I found myself up to my 100th patient after a few hours of intense work, the weather was hot, I was starting to get hungry, the line of patients didn't seem to shrink and I started wondering when it was lunch time. At this stage, the excitement of doing new things (even helping people!) began to fade. I didn't feel like being in the clinic, because I wanted a good shower and lunch in an air-conditioned restaurant! And the patients were all suffering from the same things – back pain, dehydration, short/long-sightedness, cataracts, headaches and dizziness.

When everything has a fairly standard course of treatment, after five or so clinics, seeing patients loses its appeal and can be quite boring. That left me waking up at 6.00 am most days to go to a clinic that was not always the most exciting of experiences. After all, I am a uni student! We sleep at 1.00 am and wake up ... later.

Maybe I am getting older; maybe I am getting softer; maybe I am getting used to my lifestyle. But things have definitely changed. In the past, sleeping on a village floor with mosquitoes, random bugs and in one place, a giant lizard, would be actually quite fun! While troublesome and uncomfortable, it is a great adventure which leaves us with stories to tell and of course, bragging rights. While we didn't 'rough it out' on this Cambodia trip, to be honest, the cold showers, mosquitoes and the few cockroaches in our Takeo guest house were uncomfortable enough, and a real pain.

I never realised this fully but when you go on missions, you make sacrifices. Your bed, toilets, money, holidays, spending time with friends and family, sleeping in, internet – the list goes on. This was the first mission trip where I have *really* missed home. What was I doing?



Joseph with some of the youth from the Siem Reap student centre

A Life-Changing Experience

By Michelle Sin

After hearing about the 2006 Cambodia missions trip I felt led to join, drawn by the intriguing and devastating history of this war-torn country, as well as the angle in which the team was going: holding medical and dental clinics. Due to conflicting schedules I was unable to sign up for that trip, making me even more determined to join the 2007 Cambodia team.

And so on 11 December 2007, I, along with approximately half of the full team, flew into Cambodia on separate flights from Malaysia and Singapore. Upon landing, we were met by Calvin and Joe, who had flown in a week earlier. The remainder of the team was set to fly in and join us later on in the trip.



Michelle with some children at one of the village clinics

What followed an easy first day of settling in and 'team bonding' in the Russian markets was a week and a half of seemingly endless clinics, hard-to-breathe weather and a tough language barrier which made things rather difficult for us at times. However, despite these and other troubles, we remained unrelenting in our reason for being there – to do the work of God.

Throughout the whole trip we could see lives being changed and we knew that God's presence was there, in even the most remote of villages. This trip – though tiring and a lot of hard work – has been, for me, an extremely humbling and eye-opening experience. ■

That was where I was brought back to the heart of missions: "I am there to serve! The novelty will wear off. There will be discomforts. I will miss people. But one thing doesn't change: I am still in Cambodia to serve!" And that is what I learned to do ... simply serve.

Please don't get me wrong. *I did enjoy the trip thoroughly!* There were plenty of wonderful memories: motorbiking in the bushes, squeezing three people onto a motorbike for two half-hour rides everyday for a week, racing dragonboats in the floating village, cheap shopping, cheap food, late nights and sauna chats, dancing on top of a boat, preaching, SEEING SALVATIONS, SEEING GOD MOVE, SEEING GOD USE US. It was really quite amazing and I believe I am still reaping the benefits of this Cambodia trip in many ways.

Ultimately, I have learned that service costs us something. It is our responsibility and privilege to pay the price of service. God is good and He blesses us so much as we serve Him. So I would like to encourage everyone to go on a mission trip. You will be blessed greatly as you go out of your way to bless others! ■



My Cambodia Testimony

By Julie Ng

Cambodia Missions! I started attending NLCC in July 2007 and when this trip was announced, I was so excited. It has always been in my heart, mind and soul to serve in the mission field, but there were many circumstances preventing it from previously happening. Looking back, I believe it did not happen earlier because I would probably had gone for all the wrong reasons.

Prior to leaving for Cambodia, I was full of worries. Who was going to look after my children? Would I be able to stay in "shabby" accommodations, or share rooms with people I was not familiar with? I spent many days and nights praying and asking God for peace, joy and love in my heart, and that I would be ready spiritually and physically to do His work.

We arrived in Cambodia with no preconceived notions and were ferried to our hotel. The next day, I just couldn't bring myself to dine at the coffee shop next door. Instead, I ate some biscuits I brought with me. Guess what? That day, I paid a very heavy price for skipping breakfast!

I was excited on our first clinic day, despite feeling some pain in my head. As the day progressed, the pain worsened. My head hurt so badly that my whole body felt like caving in. I could not stand on my feet any longer. My husband, Roy, humorously said I was "the first casualty of the trip".

Our resident team doctor, Jason Lim, treated my migraine and prayed a very beautiful prayer for me. I even received a head massage from a Cambodian office staff member. I was so touched by all this – it was the first time I had received such assistance.

I believe God allowed it to happen because He was speaking to



Puok village market



The nightlife on a main street in Siem Reap

me. He was assuring me that I didn't need to worry about anything during this mission trip because He has planned the whole thing. He has placed everyone around in the area of work that He has chosen for them. He also taught me to be humble and to accept help when I need it. In all things, He is in control. After that hiccup, I was back up and running and performed my duty as a dental assistant without any glitches.

During the 10 days that we gave our dental, medical and child services to the Cambodian people in Phnom Penh, Takeo and Siem Reap, I truly experienced the power of prayer.

Mim Min, one of our dentists, could not extract a molar from a patient suffering from very bad decay, even after trying for over 10 minutes and using all the skills and strength she had. SK (our dentist in charge) also tried, but it was still a problem. The patient had received three injections, and while I was standing there shining the torch in his mouth, I almost felt more worried than him and the dentists! I started to pray silently and asked God to guide SK so that the tooth would come out. Fiona, also assisting, had been observing, and prayed too.



Mim Min and SK hard at work at the village clinic

Within a minute, SK pulled out the tooth! I started clapping my hands, and everyone else clapped with me. I couldn't contain my happiness! But what I was really clapping for was not that the tooth finally came out, but that our never-failing God answered all our prayers when we urgently needed His help.

The whole mission trip was a total spiritual renewal for me. Not only could we see our prayers being answered, we also saw so many come to know the Lord. In one village, there were over 40 salvations in one day. Praise the Lord, and glory to His Name!

The best part for me was that I brought this experience with me to the Sabah missions two weeks later. This summer, I experienced the love of God and the Holy Spirit at work in my life which I have always longed for. My relationship with Him has gone to the next level, and it is indescribable.

Glory to God. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. ■



Cambodia 2007 Missions Impact – Team Members

Shaun Ang, Cindy Chan, Pastor Angelina Eu, Dorothy Eu, Kristin Eu, Timothy Eu, Pastor Yat Wan Eu, Erwin Chan, Fiona Gan, Gerard Gan, Joshua Gan, Joseph Gan, Mariah Gan, Mun Eng Gan, Seng Kian Gan, Shauna Gan, Sophia Gan, Derrick Lee, Jason Lim, Joseph Luo, Julie Ng, Roy Ng, Michelle Sin, Mim Min Tay, Rena Teoh, Nicole Tran, Viet-Ma Tran, Tami Yap, Patrick Yeoh, Dee May Yeoh, Calvin Yong

Twelve Stones Christmas Dinner and Thanksgiving

By Stephanie Tan

Twelve Stones held its third annual Christmas dinner at 'the elder Seow's' residence on Saturday, 1 December 2007. It was a night filled with great food, music and fellowship, as we made the most of this opportunity to hang out with people outside our cell groups (and sometimes, outside of our comfort zone!), while eating the delicious food that was organised by Sarah, Bernard and Rena.

This year's gathering was more reflective in nature, as we focussed on giving thanks to God for His blessings throughout 2007. It was echoed in the creative combination of worship songs and carols led by Shamus, Kelly, Rena, Pat, Elaine and Erwin, and in the thanksgiving portion of the night.



Erwin and Sarah helping with the food preparation



Presents for everyone!



The Twelve Stones young adults gather for some festive fellowship

All members came prepared to share on what God had done for them during the year. While some gave thanks for their respective marriages, others thanked God for His guidance in their workplaces or His presence during difficult times. As incentive, each person was *only* allowed to choose a gift from the Christmas tree after they had finished sharing!

To set the ball rolling for 2008, Dee May spoke briefly about *MasterLife*, the discipleship series that NLCC is going through this year, while James spoke about the Twelve Stones envisioning weekend (held over 18 to 20 January 2008 in Medora Bay). This weekend was open to all members who:

- are committed to attending church and a cell group,
- are aligned with the Twelve Stones and NLCC vision, and
- have a passion for God evident through their personal disciplines of prayer, Word and worship.

Thank you to everyone who came along and helped to make this yet another memorable night! Especial thanks to Bernard, our wonderful organiser, who ensured that it all went according to plan. ■

Watch Night 2007

By Yi Chiun Lee and Jasmin Heng

Once again another year drew to a close and NLCC members who were in Perth gathered for the annual Watch Night Service to usher in the New Year. As with last year's service, it was again hosted by Elder Richard and Aunty Susan at their beautiful riverside home in Dalkeith.

The evening began with a pot bless dinner, with dishes ranging from the ever popular roast pork to curry chicken, pastas, ribs, veggies – the whole works! And finally, the sumptuous dinner was topped off with desserts of agar-agar, jelly, tau fu fah, and much more.

After everyone had their bellies filled, the evening continued with a worship session led by Uncle Fred, followed by a welcome message by Elder Richard. Next up on stage was Elder Keat, who delivered his entertaining sermon on the different seasons in life and serving God. He strongly encouraged the younger generation to seek the counsel and wisdom of those who have gone through many seasons in life with God and to learn from their experiences and knowledge.

The end of the sermon gave way to a time of sharing and testimonies of God's work the past year. First invited was Uncle Ho Lee, who shared on how God has carried him through his life and on God's perfect timing with his recent retirement plans.

Following that, Uncle Victor and Aunty Christina shared their powerful testimony of how God delivered Christina and their children from a flood in New South Wales. The last testimony came from NLCC's youngest elder, James, who shared on how challenging, yet rewarding it has been to serve God as an elder. He also touched on the Twelve Stones ministry and its plans for 2008.

Finally, the moment many had been waiting for arrived. No, not the countdown to the New Year just yet, but ice kacang time! Elder Richard's ice kacang machine saw good use as many went for second and even third servings.

All in all, it was a great time of feasting, fellowship, and sharing. The presence of Pastor Yat Wan and his family was sorely missed this year, but we look forward to spending future NLCC Watch Nights together. ■



Excuses, Excuses, Excuses

By Keat Wong

I was on the verge of cooking up another excuse. To start off with, the 2007 Christmas and New Year period had not been what I had planned! Pastor Yat Wan had needed to defer his flight back to Perth by four weeks so Elder Richard Tai had asked me to prepare the Sunday sermon in just four days. To my surprise, I relished the challenge. And to my even greater surprise, I actually enjoyed the sermon preparation!

On New Year's Eve I received another phone call from Richard, letting me know that I was down for a 'sermonette' for that night's gathering. I have often spoken on the importance of setting boundaries and not taking too much things on board. "What's happening here?" I asked myself.

Looking back on events, I think God just has a great sense of humour. A week before Christmas, I had sat down and decided that my top three priorities over the break were to relax, relax and simply relax. To just take things easy! But He had other plans for me.

Over the decades, He has consistently been a good God to me and my family. I have grown to accept His wonderful sense of humour and surprises – even right now, when I'm ready to put my feet up and start relishing the next stage of my life, after 10 years of serving as an elder in NLCC and over 35 years of practising medicine.

On the first working day of 2008, when I checked my email I received a further surprise. The editors of *NLCC Epistles* had asked me to write an article about my time as an elder.

My first reaction as I read this was, "I'll try", but deep down what I really meant was, "Hey, don't bother me. I'm busy and don't you know I have lots of things to sort out? I can't even find the time to breathe, let alone to write this article..."

Excuses, excuses, and yet more excuses. Right at the beginning of a new year! All of us are good at making excuses. I'm the first to admit that I'm great at making them. So why do we make excuses?

I think it often boils down to three things:

1. We make excuses because we simply don't care.

I paused and asked myself, "Do I really care for the editors as they try their best to get articles for the newsletter? And if I do not care, why not?" I feel we often hide behind mundane reasons like "I'm time-poor", "I can't write", or "I'm simply too busy". But deep down I believe we often turn things down because we simply don't care.

Remember: He knows. You and I cannot outsmart Him.

2. We are afraid of doing it because we do not think we have the capacity to do it.

When God instructed Abraham to pack up his belongings and leave Ur, do you think that Abraham felt he had the gifting to trek along and go where God asked him to go? I know for one that he was not provided with a GPS. He had no road map. He had nothing to help him navigate except his faith and trust in the living God.

And if we are really afraid, why not ask someone to show us how to do it? Or even better still, ask God Himself! You'll surprise yourself and experience how real He is when you see Him use you to do something that is out of your comfort zone.

3. Our priorities are out of whack.

Often we place Him second in priority. I believe God knows what is in our minds and hearts. One thing I feel that can help smoothen the journey He puts us through is to stop making excuses and do what He has placed before us.

As I take my departure from the Board and close the portion of my life that was devoted to medicine, I know He has bigger plans for me, beyond the four walls of NLCC and the confines of my rooms.

I look forward to the next stage in my life. ■



Keat and his wife, Lilian

A Noble Task - Keat and Lilian

By Pastor Yat Wan Eu

This year, New Life City Church celebrates its 10th anniversary since it began as Genesis Fellowship in 1998. Dr Keat Wong was among the first pioneers of our church – he was its first elder and has served as Chairman of the Board for nine years, only relinquishing this position to Elder Richard Tai at the end of 2006. While he served as an elder throughout 2007, he has now volunteered to take a sabbatical, to uphold Clause 6.3.1 of the NLCC Constitution which provides that at the end of two consecutive terms, an Elder will take a sabbatical of one year before he is eligible for another new term.

The apostle Paul viewed the role of being an elder or overseer as extremely significant; anyone with a desire to serve in this way pursues a valuable, upright and responsible ministry. Paul made it unmistakably clear, however, that a man who serves in this position should demonstrate character traits that reflect Christian maturity, as listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Paul began this list with the overarching quality: "the overseer must be above reproach". In essence, a spiritual leader must have a good reputation among believers as well as unbelievers.

Keat is an exemplary leader who has graciously opened his home and his life to many members of the church and community. Despite

Genesis Fellowship, New Life City Church and Keat Wong

By Richard Tai

Genesis Fellowship started in May 1996 as a Bible study group of 12 people studying the book of Genesis, led by David Heng. About three months later, David had to go back to Singapore so Keat took over. Christians from different churches gave up their Saturday afternoons and came together to study the Word of God. The demand was so great and people were so hungry for the Word that a second group was born, also led by Keat.

In early 1998, Full Gospel Assembly decided to move out of the Social Science Lecture Theatre (SSLT) in UWA. Chew Por Chan challenged us one afternoon in June 1998 over coffee at the Blue Duck Café to start a church in the SSLT – to stand in the gap left by Full Gospel Assembly; that is, to continue to witness to the university students. Keat was initially unwilling. Not because he was afraid of the challenge but because he was already leading two Bible study groups. To take on the task of running a church would be just too much for him. However, after God gave him a dream and he was assured that Philip Cheong and Tah Chew Tan would be leading the church, he relented.

We had our inaugural Sunday worship service in the SSLT on 19 July 1998, with 57 members attending. The early days were most enjoyable as we were all excited and eager to serve. While we made lots of mistakes, there was also a lot of forgiveness. Unfortunately, the honeymoon was short-lived. Although the elders were bound together with one purpose – to love and serve the Lord – we all had different personalities, and we soon found that working together in one accord required more than passion. So when the inaugural Chairman, Philip Cheong, stepped down, Keat rose up to fill the position despite his busy schedule. He did not have any formal training, nor the experience to run a church, but he had a good teacher... the Holy Spirit. He had the anointing and he held the leadership and the church together.

We went through a period of uncertainty in 2000 when our experienced leaders, Philip and Tah Chew left the church. God sent Pastor Benny Ho along, however, and Keat grabbed him. He became our part-time pastor for a couple of years, and under his spiritual leadership, the church changed its name to New Life City Church! The people were happy with Pastor Benny, but they wanted a residential pastor. Again, Keat responded to their needs. When he found out that Pastor Yat Wan Eu from Trinity Church in Singapore was available, he flew there to see him, and by September 2002 Pastor Yat Wan was appointed as our first full-time pastor.

Keat is a reliable friend and a great encourager and he is always there when I need him. Keat never runs; he either walks or flies. When he believes in something, he will fly with it and take everyone with him. While he makes mistakes, like everyone, these mistakes are not many.

They say that behind every successful man, there is a woman. This is very true for Keat. His wife Lilian is not only a great help-meet to him but she is a great pillar of support for him to lean on. Their hospitality and Lilian's culinary prowess are well known. (Those who have been to their home will testify to it!) They have opened their home to countless church activities and functions in the last decade and we thank them for their generosity and hospitality.

Keat is fully committed to NLCC. Until the AGM on 11 November 2007, he was the only founding elder still on the Board. He held the position of Chairman for almost nine years; taking us through the 'valley' and 'mountaintop' experiences.

Although Keat has stepped down as the Chairman, he is not stepping out. He remains the Chairman of the Building and Facility Committee and he still has a lot to offer to NLCC. We wish him well and pray that when he returns from his sabbatical, God will have renewed, refreshed and rejuvenated him with more vigour and passion for NLCC. As they say, the best is yet to come. ■



Elder Richard, Dr Keat and Pastor Yat Wan

his strong commitment to his profession, he has always availed himself to meet with and mentor younger leaders and peers in the church. As such, he has established himself in the community as a well-respected physician and teacher of the Word.

Both Keat and his wife Lilian have made tremendous sacrifices in the church ministries, from mentoring younger leaders to establishing a strong biblical foundation in the church. They are certainly deserving of double honours for their faithful serving in church leadership.

We salute you both! Thank you for sharing your lives with us and for your complete support to the pastoral team, and the calling, vision and ministry of New Life City Church. I still treasure the early morning 6.30 am breakfast prayer meetings at Nedlands – they were a source of inspiration and we learned so much from each other. Keat's sabbatical is not a passive passage of time, but a new season of active waiting and hearing God's voice in the new challenges ahead.

We are grateful that we will still be able to draw on Keat and Lilian's knowledge and experience in the years ahead. ■



So Why Should I Become a Church Member?

By James Seow

Since NLCC formalised its constitution and opened its church register to receive members, more than a hundred people in our congregation have taken this step toward membership. For many, this has been a natural and expected progression. But for others, the concept of church membership may seem a little foreign.

People may well ask (and have often done so): what is the purpose of church membership? Is it essential, is it critical, and most importantly – is it doctrinal? With these questions in view, this article has been written to help explain some of the reasons why NLCC believes membership is important, both for the church and for the individual.

To start off with, many of us realise that there isn't anything in Scripture that says we must sign up for membership for an individual church. In the early New Testament times, there weren't individual churches as we know them at all. When Paul wrote, he wrote to the church of the city: the church of Ephesus, the church of Thessalonica, the church of Corinth and so on. No one joined an individual church, because none existed!

Despite this, in modern times, we see that almost all churches do have membership, or as many other contemporary churches call it – 'partnership'.

So the question remains – why?

The reasons that I can think of can be divided into two categories: practical and ideological.

Practical Considerations

- i. The most basic, and least spiritual reason why we have church membership is that as a church registered as a non-profit organisation, we have a responsibility to the governing bodies of our state and country (as do all churches) to have a public constitution and to have formal membership, whereby members are allowed to input into the decisions made by the church through an annual general meeting (AGM) and other extra-ordinary meetings. Simply put, Australian regulations require us to do so.
- ii. Membership also has direct benefits for the church body organisation as well. It helps the church plan for future budgets, by allowing the leaders to estimate how many are committed people to the church, in contrast to the number of visitors. While smaller churches such as ours can estimate this reasonably well without having formal membership, in larger churches it becomes critically important to know who the regulars are (or at least how many), so that the church does not undercommit or overcommit its resources in upcoming years.



Ideological Considerations

If forced to make a choice, I would hope that the following would be the reasons why people have become members, rather than for purely the logistic rationales already mentioned.

- i. Church membership comes with a sense of formalising your commitment to the church. So are people who don't choose to become members then inherently 'uncommitted'? Of course not. But while it is true that you can essentially do all the things that a church member can do, yet *not* officially be a member, the concept is like marriage. From a worldly point of view it is possible for a couple to live in a de facto relationship, have all the experiences of marriage, and after a while, acquire the legal ramifications of marriage. But the truth is, they still are not officially married. Membership – like marriage – is formalising a commitment even if you already had elements of that commitment before. To become a member is to acknowledge and celebrate your relationship with your brothers and sisters in Christ in your local church; your involvement by your active choice and decision.
- ii. What advantages are there in being a member? From a purely functional point of view, just about the only specific benefit is that members are able to vote in AGMs or similar meetings (some may not even consider this a benefit anyway!). Analogy-wise, it is similar to the concept of Australian citizenship versus permanent residency. Some people say that the only benefit of citizenship over permanent residency is that you can vote (again, with the current state of politics, voting in elections may not appeal to many people either!) However, the reason why I'm a citizen (apart from the fact I was born one), is that, voting notwithstanding, I'm actually proud to be an Australian citizen: I'm proud to affiliate myself with this country and what it stands for. In the same way, joining in membership is saying that not only do you attend NLCC, but you are proud of what it stands for, where it is heading, what God has purposed for it and to be part of it, too.

So why does NLCC promote church membership?

At our most basic level, we do so because by law we are required to do so, and because it assists with church planning. But on a more sentimental note, we join in membership because we want to formalise and celebrate our commitment to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and because we want to identify ourselves as people who believe in and are part of God's vision for our church, New Life City Church. ■

If you would like to join in membership of NLCC, please feel free to contact your cell leader or one of the church pastors (Pastor Yat Wan Eu or Pastor Jason Tan) or elders (Richard Tai, Seng Kian Gan and James Seow).



epistles FUN

Word Search

The leftover characters spell out a Bible verse. Be the first person to email epistles@nlcc.org.au with the correct verse and reference to win a prize!

A U N H O P I N G D N O W R T
 H E N S E T H N R E E C U S T
 R G E C S M I S E C I O J E R
 M R A I O R N T D F B M A L U
 I E T H U N H I O H O M P F T
 E A R D L A D R G N D A L L H
 O T N C B E L I E V I N G E V
 E E T B Y G E P T U T D N S T
 Y S N M I N D S O I H M I S E
 G T E V O L R Y L E O E L P A
 T D I S C I P L E S E N I H S
 T N T R A E H O R U O T A I F
 G I A G A P E H A S T H F L E
 S K P E I H H O N E S T N O S
 E L B M U H C L T J O V U S E

Agape Kind
 Believing Love
 Charity Mercy
 Commandment Mind
 Disciples Neighbour
 Enduring Patient
 Giving Philos
 God Rejoices
 Greatest Selfless
 Heart Soul
 Holy Spirit Tolerant
 Honest Truth
 Hoping Unconditional
 Humble Unfailing
 Jesus



Epistles Awards

NLCC congratulates the following people who have won awards for their excellent contributions:

Best Article:	Yvonne Chen "Impact Cambodia" Issue 3, Page 4
Most Informative:	Sandy Widjaja "Character Above All" Issue 2, Page 4
Most Encouraging:	Jason Lim "The Fire in China" Issue 1, Pages 6 and 7
Best Event Reviews:	Dee May Yeoh "Global Leadership Summit 2006" Issue 2, Page 2 Olivia Chin "J-Life Fresher Week Events" Issue 4, Page 6
Funniest Article:	Nickolas Sin "J-Life Paintballing" Issue 3, Page 10



Impact Sabah 2008

By Keith Ong

There are so many things I've taken back from this mission trip.

It was my first time so I was new to almost everything and I didn't know what to expect. All I knew was that God was going to do great works through us for the people in Sabah ... and He definitely did.

We held a kids' camp for the children in Sabah. The children were a handful to work with; they were so full of energy we couldn't keep up. The kids' "break time" was more like a time for us to catch our breath so that we wouldn't fall flat on the ground. It was also during the kids' camp that I injured my leg while chasing one of them!

The Youth Camp was another memorable experience; we held a 'Powerhouse' session with only one acoustic guitar! We conducted a few services with them, all on the topic 'In the Army of God', with Tim, Joe and Pastor Jason giving the sermons. God really worked His way with the youths; they were jumping and singing and it was really encouraging to see them step out of their comfort zone to praise and worship God. We had feedback from the resident pastor that during that week's Sunday service, even the more reserved of youths were opening their mouths to sing.

We visited the youths staying in the hostels in Kudat and the moment we saw them, they welcomed us with open arms and gave us great big handshakes and hugs. They are such a warm bunch of people – we felt so welcomed by them.



Some of the D-Gap kids at the Youth Camp



Sunday service at AGAPE Christian Fellowship



Playing floorball with the D-Gap kids



Traditional worship at Matungong

During the worship service I was so surprised by their fire and passion for God. They were going all-out to praise and worship Him; it was just so amazing to see them worship God. I was really touched by how much these people go through, with all the oppression they receive, yet they are still so passionate for God. I think they gave us more than we actually gave them. Just being with them has made me more appreciative of what I have and how blessed God has been to me.

We then went to the village in Matungong to minister to the people. There, we held four services in a day, and it was rather tiring. The people there were not as responsive as I expected; however, the pastor told us that it was the first time the village had experienced the Holy Spirit. That was very encouraging to us and I felt much more energised after hearing that.

We also held a service in candlelight. It was the first time I'd attended an electricity-free service, so it was certainly interesting, to say the least.

On our rest and recreation days we went white-water rafting, which was really fun despite the long train trip we had to take in order to get to the starting point. The train was so old, the seats were falling apart and it was really crowded, but nonetheless it was another memory I took away with me.

The 2008 Sabah Mission Trip was an unforgettable and great experience and it certainly won't be my last. ■



The Sabah Missions Team at the tip of Borneo

Don't Think – Just Go!

By Justin Chin

It has been several weeks since we got back from Sabah but the memories and lessons learnt are still fresh in my mind.

After my initial hesitation about going, I have to say that I'm really glad that I went! Moving around the different areas, meeting different people and witnessing their passion for God – some in very difficult circumstances – has been such an eye-opener and a wake-up call for me.

The one place I was most blessed at was Kudat. The kids there were amazing; so totally devoted to God. Some of them had next to nothing and were persecuted in schools, yet they praised and worshipped like there was no tomorrow! Also, being thrust into the deep end, out of my comfort zone, has helped me grow in my Christian walk.

Another source of inspiration was seeing the way everyone who came on the trip had changed in one way or another! The fellowship with other NLCC members was also great. I got to know some people better and see a whole different side of them. (You guys know who you are!) Also, the food on this trip was pretty good, which was a bonus.

I just want to thank God for pushing me into going on this trip. For all those thinking about going for a mission trip, don't think too much – just go! ■



Tim, Justin and Rachael at Amar's Beach



Praying with the kids at AGAPE Christian Fellowship



Children's Camp

Are You Willing To Avail Yourself?

By Yvonne Tang

What can I say about Sabah? It was awesome! I went there expecting to reach out, help and teach God's Word to the people in Sabah, but in the end, I think I reaped much more than I sowed.

I usually don't feel like suddenly starting to pray for people during altar calls, or even during cell. I'm always really conscious when I pray for others because I feel I need a really obvious signal from God about what He wants me to pray about before I actually go and pray for them. In this mission trip though, God gave me a spirit of courage and humility to simply speak what He has in mind for the people. I found that if I'm willing to avail myself, God is actually the one working in the hearts of the people and I don't have to do any real thinking. God will just put the words in my mouth.

It really is amazing to see God work in so many wonderful ways – ways that we would never have expected. Often, after our services, we were disappointed by the response of the people. Feedback from the various pastors later revealed, however, that they saw different breakthroughs in their congregations. Just knowing that we managed to do something for God's kingdom really encouraged all of us.

I also enjoyed getting to know the people in the team better; many of them I would not have spoken to in a normal church setting. We had fun and happy times together doing the wackiest of things, as well as spurring each other on when we were exhausted or struck with coughs and runny noses.

Going on missions is a really fantastic experience. I think it brings you into a closer relationship with God, while stirring up your passion for Him and all the people out there. Truly I have received so much on this trip, and one thing I will gladly take away with me is a verse from one of our morning devotions:

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9 ■

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.



February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Twelve Stones Combined Cell 8.00 pm, Nedlands	2
3 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	4 Start of school year	5	6	7 Chinese New Year	8	9
10 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Prayer Meeting 11.30 am, SSLT	11	12	13	14	15 Adult and Family cell groups resume	16 NLCC Leaders' Forum 2.00 pm, Nedlands
17 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Board Meeting 8.00 am, Nedlands	18 Murdoch University semester 1 begins	19	20	21 Twelve Stones Prayer Meeting 8.00 pm, Church Office	22	23
24 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	25 Curtin University and ECU semester 1 begins	26	27	28	29 UWA Orientation Day 10.00 am, James Oval, UWA	

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

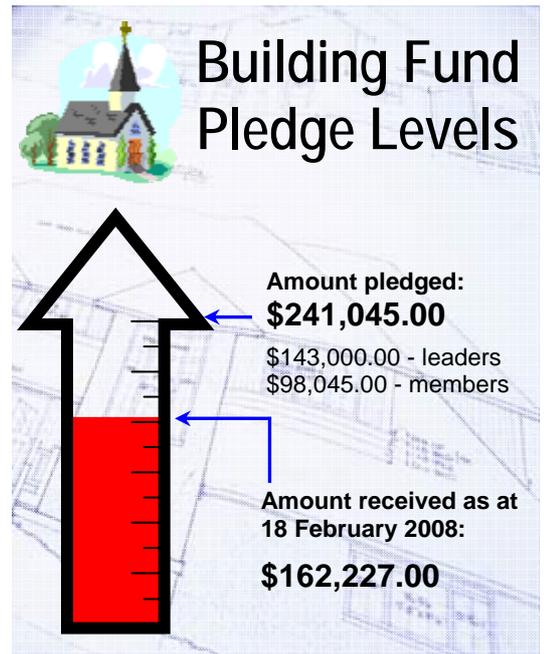
Children's Ministry
10.45 am to 11.30 am

Prayer Meeting (2nd Sunday of each month)
11.30 am to 12.00 noon



march

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	31					1 J-Life Games by the River 2.00 pm, Nedlands TS Retreat Bindoon
2 Speaker: Ps Jason Tan TS Retreat	3 Labour Day UWA semester 1 begins TS Retreat	4	5 J-Life BBQ 12 noon, Matilda Bay foreshore	6	7	8
9 Guest Speaker: Rev Ashley Crane Prayer Meeting 11.30 am, SSLT	10	11	12	13	14	15 NLCC Leaders' Meeting 9.00 am, Church Office
16 Series Launch: MasterLife Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu	17	18	19	20	21 Good Friday J-Life Camp Bindoon	22 J-Life Camp
23 Guest Speaker: Ps Chris Hope J-Life Camp	24 Easter Monday J-Life Camp	25	26	27	28 Twelve Stones Prayer Meeting 8.00 pm, Nedlands	29 J-Life City Race 4.00 pm, City of Perth



April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Board Meeting 3.00 pm, Nedlands	7	8	9	10	11 School term 1 ends	12 J-Life Rocky III 5.00 pm Law Lecture Room 1, UWA
13 Speaker: Ps Yat Wan Eu Prayer Meeting 11.30 am, SSLT	14	15	16 Missions Impact trip to China (Until 28 April)	17	18	19
20 J-Life led Service Speaker: Ps Jason Tan	21	22	23	24	25 Anzac Day	26
27 Speaker: Ps Angelina Eu	28	29 School term 2 begins	30			

Autumn Articles

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, 6 April 2008