

# May 2008 Goracke Newsletter

## Singapore International Bible Institute

Dear Family & Friends,

Greetings to all of you from Singapore! It has now been two weeks since our arrival to the nation of Singapore. A lot has happened in this time just in making preparations to live and serve here. Please forgive me for being a bit late on this report. We have had limited access to the Internet as we have been busy settling into our home... where we still don't have our Internet hooked up. Without delay, I'll get started!

As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we spent the last three weeks of our time in the States in the west Texas and eastern New Mexico areas visiting with three churches who have committed to share in this Asian ministry. In between those visits we packed and weighed our luggage to make sure we did not exceed our flight weight limit. We also tried to finish up with all necessary business. We were blessed to be able to spend our final stateside Sunday worshiping and fellowshiping with our overseeing congregation in Seagraves, TX.

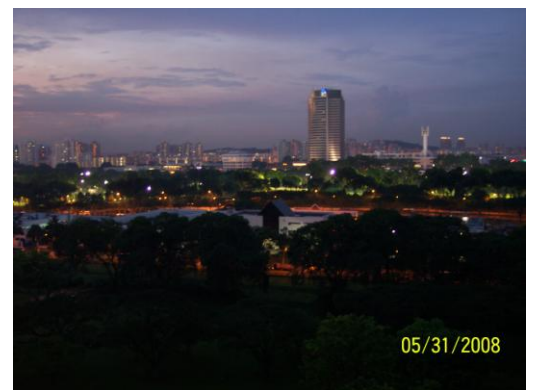
We left the States starting from Lubbock International Airport at about 7:00 am on Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. After connecting flights in Dallas, TX and Tokyo, Japan, we were greeted at the Singapore airport at 1:00am on Thursday May 22nd by Winston Chong, a deacon for the Pasir Panjang church (PP church) and his wife, Hong Ngee and by my co-worker, Charles Cook, the administrator for SIBI Singapore. I forewarned Winston that we would be packing 8 bags of luggage as well as our carry-on luggage...400 pounds plus... the maximum limit for a family of four. Winston was prepared with two vehicles to do the work of transporting everything, including the Goracke family.



Winston Chong & Family

Winston, Hong Ngee and their family have graciously hosted us in their home since our arrival. After an attempt to get some sleep, we traveled about later that same morning with Hong Ngee to open our Singapore bank account with her help. After four business days our first wire transfer of needed funds arrived in our Singapore account. We are still trying to determine the most economical way to transfer our funds without getting charged outrageous fees.

Prior to our arrival in Singapore, we were blessed to have Winston and Charles mediate apartment arrangements for our soon to be home! Since arriving we have met with the housing parties to discuss and sign our housing contract. We finalized the apartment details this past Friday (May 30<sup>th</sup>) and were able to move into our apartment on Saturday, May 31st! This move will really set the course for finally settling in and getting started with the work we came here to do. Our apartment is fully furnished, but we will need to set up house with our personal needs which will take some time. Our apartment is on the 17<sup>th</sup> floor on a corner so it allows us three beautiful views overlooking a section of Singapore's 4.5 million people.



North view of Singapore from our apartment at sunset

In other preparations for settling in, I have finished all of the required forms for me and my family to acquire legal residence. Now, it is a matter of waiting for those official documents to come through.... probably less than two weeks... we hope! Now that we are moved into our apartment, we will be addressing additional needs of window security (to keep the kids from crawling out... that first step is a doozy!) and several utility needs. We secured our temporary cell phone service for needed communication over here, but we are still researching what our needs will be for international phone communication. Until we iron out those details, email will probably be the best form of communication to reach us by and that might be limited at times until we work out our new utility services. That's enough of the settling in activities for now. They will be ongoing for some time yet.



General Epistles class - A study of the letters of James, and 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter

The last week of May found SIBI Singapore completing yet another course of studies. Charles Cook finished teaching the course called, The General Epistles (James, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter). Nineteen students completed the course. To date, four courses have been offered and taught (Revelation, Ephesians, Acts of the Apostles, and The General Epistles). Although the month of June is set aside for the Pasir Panjang church of Christ's annual "church camp," Charles will be conducting two seminars, the first being, "Servant Leadership" and the second being conducted during the camp, "Devotion, Discipline & Disciple." This church camp includes not only Singaporean Christians, but also Christians from China, India, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The latest

report is that approximately 350 are registered to attend the camp. As a family, we have been invited to participate with the PP church in this year's camp session. This will be a perfect opportunity to get to know a large majority of the PP church. SIBI Singapore courses will resume in July with Gerald Paden teaching the courses of Sacrificial System and the letter of Hebrews. With these series of studies getting underway, I will begin part of my responsibilities of getting the word out to area Singaporean churches as well as churches in nearby Malaysia that SIBI Singapore is now offering fulltime courses.

### *Nancy's Family News & Notes*

Ups and downs, ups and downs—the month of May has been that way. The ups: spending time with family and friends. The downs: having to say so many good-byes to family and friends. Jaydon and Shayla would probably describe our first week in Singapore as having many ups and downs also. This would be an accurate description. Although it's true that adjusting and settling in has its ups and downs, Jaydon and Shayla are speaking literally. Singapore has an abundance of escalators and elevators in the transportation hubs, shopping centers, high rise apartment complexes and office buildings. The kiddos relish all the escalators and elevators we've encountered and employed. "Can we do it again!"--is their common refrain and they still argue over who gets to push the buttons on the elevators. Coming from a small town in Nebraska, where an elevator experience might be Dad lifting them up in a tree or throwing them up in the air and then catching them and an escalator has usually been someone carrying them up or down the stairs, the novelty of mechanical automatic stairs and lifts fascinates them. Although I'd never considered elevators and escalators as major modes of mass transit, Jaydon and Shayla would definitely list them as their favorite and most important mode of mass transit. Travelators would also be on their lists.

With all this talk about moving, let's move right along...to other news--Shayla would probably want to report that she has "grad-gee-ated". She no longer sleeps in a "baby bed". Besides getting a gold fish for a pet once we got settled into our new apartment in Singapore, Shayla was told that she would finally get her own big girl bed to sleep in and she thought that sounded...SWEET as her big brother likes to say. Graduating from her portable baby playpen was bitter sweet for mom. We have yet to get our pet fish, but Shayla has named a small gecko that usually crawls around in our apartment in the evenings. Right now the geckos are also a novelty for Jaydon and Shayla. When they appear on the walls or ceilings they like to watch them. They both think they qualify as a family pet and would really like to catch and pet one if they could, but we explained to them that geckos are similar to fish in that they don't like to be petted, just watched.

Another highlight in May for our family was Jaydon's long awaited fifth birthday. Now that he's officially a "handful," Jaydon believes he has been transformed into a big boy. I hear him tell his sister so in quite a few words. "Shayla you're not five yet, so you better not try this" or "Since I'm five I can handle this, but you can't." Apparently being five has its privileges. I asked him how old he thought I was and he said I was probably about 10—is that a compliment? I guess in his eyes I have double the privileges of a five year old. Although being overseas during birthdays is tough, Jaydon did find one perk about the situation. He found that he



Jaydon's 5<sup>th</sup> year birthday

could extend his birthday for an extra day---thanks to the International date line. I explained to him that family in the States would be celebrating his birthday the following day since we are a day ahead. I heard him calling himself the birthday boy the next day and telling Shayla that he should go first and she should be nice to him because he was still the birthday boy. All in all he had a pretty good couple of days. His birthday was on a Wednesday and the church family here helped him celebrate too. Auntee Dorothy brought a cake and presents for both Jaydon and Shayla and other Aunts and Uncles brought presents for the birthday boy too and helped to sing Happy Birthday to our big boy. Now Jaydon and Shayla are already asking, "Whose birthday can we celebrate next?"

Although there's plenty to tell, time and space won't allow for it this time so I'll close for now. We'll report in again next month or sooner once we get hooked up to the internet and have reliable and convenient access at our apartment. Know of our love for you and may God make your "ups and downs" as fascinating as Jaydon and Shayla have found theirs recently and may He extend your celebrations whether they "be" birthdays, graduations, thanksgivings or otherwise. Rejoice in the Lord. He will lift you up when you're down. He's the best elevator!

In closing and in summary, I would say our move and transitioning is progressing along well. It will take some time to fully get settled, but everything is moving along and we have been blessed to have the help of so many from the PP church family to make this transitional time much easier. We are blessed to have the help and service of many... this includes you! Thank you for your continued support in every way. Please continue to remember us in prayer just as we remember you always. I will include pictures on the final page of this newsletter so you can get a glimpse and beginning sense of what it is to live in and experience Singapore. In the near future I hope to communicate with you by the means of two website blogs that are being created. This should enable a more effective means of communication on a more consistent basis. Know of our continued love for you and for the lost we seek to serve through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your fellow servants... *Tom & Nancy (Jaydon & Shayla)*



Efficient public transportation... the MRT “Mass Rapid Transportation” (both above & underground)



Charles Cook & Tom in front of our office facilities within the PP church building



A little ice cream treat to beat the humidity and heat



Apartment ground floor courtyard and shopping areas

**Overseeing church:**

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Living room view of our apartment... perfect size for small group Bible studies!