

Date	am	pm	Date	am	pm
Oct 5	AI B		Dec 7	SA	
	12 Suz/Karen			14 Suz	TBC
	19 SA			21 Karen	AI H carol service
	26 AI H	AI H		28 SA	
Nov 2	AI B		Jan 4	AI B	
	9 SA	AI H baptism		11 AI H	
	16 Suz/Karen			18 Suz/Karen	
	23 SA	AI B		25 SA	AI B
	30 AI H				

At present there is not really any more information about what is being taught and who is doing the teaching. Gilbert will forward more details to the band leaders as it becomes available.

### 'Hello Love' by Chris Tomlin

Being as technologically challenged and lacking in dexterity as me can lead you to some interesting places on your iPod. I recently found myself accidentally in the "genres" menu (again) and noticed that those right-on types at Apple have recently changed how they describe worship music from "gospel / religious" to "inspirational".



Which isn't as bad as it first sounds. One thing worship music should certainly do is inspire us - "to seek God's face" as Louie Giglio, Chris Tomlin's long-time mentor and friend puts it. Inspirational is exactly how I would describe Tomlin's ability to combine accessible, God-centred lyrics with immediately engaging music. I am not alone in this view; he has won multiple awards and is the American church's most sung writer, yet he remains grounded in his mission to see God glorified. Against this backdrop, his new album "Hello Love" is one of the most eagerly anticipated worship albums of recent years.

From the off, it's clear that the consensus in the Tomlin camp is, "it isn't broken, we'll therefore not fix it", so we get the usual mixture of up-tempo, guitar-driven pop-rock and more reflective ballads. And when I say the usual, I mean even the track sequencing is uncannily similar to 2006's "See the Morning". In spite of this, there is something quite obviously different from the first listen - this is a much less consistently engaging album, both musically and lyrically. Put simply, the writing is not as complete and the melodies are not as strong. Attempts have been made to paper over these cracks with Disney-slick production, strings and choirs, but to little effect. Lyrically, there is a tendency to push accessibility towards triteness; for example, verse 1 of "Sing, Sing, Sing" opens with, "What's not to love about [Jesus]?" True, of course, but does it really inspire us, engage us at a heart, soul and mind level?

There are a few highpoints amongst the disappointment. Ironically, these are the tracks with less gloss such as "I Will Rise", "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me" and a cover of Bluetree's excellent "God of This City".

A cynic might say that the ubiquity of Chris Tomlin's songs meant that saturation was inevitable, but I disagree. I've recently been listening again to his back catalogue, and it continues to inspire and point unambiguously to the wonder of God's nature and works. "Hello Love" does so too, but less convincingly and much less consistently.

Reviewed by David Currie

# transformation

worship that shapes and sends

October 2008

## The weight of glory & the face of Christ

Last time in *Transformation*, we began to unpack the phrase 'to paint a compelling picture of the glory of God in Christ'. We discovered that the essence of our task is to point fallen worshippers to the only object of true worship - God himself. This time we consider why we've used the phrase 'the glory of God in Christ'. Plus Dave Currie is back with his thoughts on Christ Tomlin's new album, *Hello Love*.

I love skimming stones with my girls. I enjoy searching for that perfectly shaped pebble and seeing just how many bounces I can tease out of it before it slips below the surface. But after a while, cheered on by my little audience, I inevitably go hunting for the biggest stone I can lift. With all the energy I can muster, I hurl it as far as I can, revelling in that deeply resonant 'ker-splash' as it crashes dramatically into the water. Take that, pesky skimmers!

The biblical word for glory comes originally from the word for *weight*. It carries with it the sense, therefore, of

significance, of substance, or - to use a more old fashioned word - a sense of gravitas. In comparison to the lesser glories of the 'skimmers', God's glory comes crashing in, and no one can miss it.

Paul shows the incomparable value of God's glory in the book of Romans. At the end of 11 chapters of arguably the most profound theology anywhere in the bible, he breaks into a spontaneous song in praise of God's supreme value and glory. 'For from him and through him and to him are all things...' Paul proclaims, declaring God to be the source, the means and



to paint a compelling picture of the glory of God in Christ

# the glory of God in the face of Christ

the goal of everything that is. Pretty comprehensive, really. *'To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen!'* To him be the significance, the weight, the supreme value. For ever. As far as Paul was concerned, God was *the* defining value in the universe. Everything else derived its being, its meaning and its purpose from the glorious Creator.

But, as we discovered in the last Transformission, we don't by default acknowledge God's pre-eminence. We all have 'mini-glories', values that that define our lives, that occupy the place of significance and pre-eminence. But these are but the merest skimmers in comparison to the weight of God's glory.

Picture the closing scenes in the movie *Deep Impact* (not the Bruce Willis/Aerosmith cheesefest that came out that same year – the other cheesefest, with a pre-*Lord of*

*the Rings* Elijah Woods). Remember as the asteroid soared through the atmosphere, leaving a blazing trail of glowing cloud behind it? Remember as Tea Leone's character stood hugging her father on the beach as the impact of the asteroid caused a huge tsunami to crash onto the beach? Compare that to your best attempt at skimming a pebble. And then ponder the unsurpassed glory of the God of the universe. This is the God we're pointing people to; this is the glory we're called to live for.

We're not seeking merely to paint a picture of God in a vague and undefined sense. If the picture we're painting is to be compelling, then it must be of the *glory* of God, of the weight and significance of who he is. It must be a picture that crashes past the complacency of our little skimmers, one that amazes us, that unsettles us, and that compels us to respond.

## In the face of Christ

Where do we see God's glory displayed? Of course, partly through his creation. As Psalm 19 tells us *'The heavens declare the glory of God.'*

But the bible is a book of progressive revelation, and what we see dimly in the Old Testament we see most fully in the New Testament – especially as revealed in Jesus Christ. In a passage discussing how we see God, Paul draws the following conclusion: *'For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'* (2 Cor 4:6) It's as we look at God's final Word that we see his glory most clearly.

One of the main implications of this for worship leaders is that we should sing often of Jesus – especially of his work for us on the cross. The gospel is not just something to be preached to non-believers; Christians need to live deeply in it everyday.

I need the cross to save me from the tyranny of legalism, of trying to add my obedience to Christ's work to try to earn acceptance with God. The cross cries, *'It is finished'* and allows me to throw myself completely on what Christ has done on my behalf and to be set free from the fear of condemnation. I need the cross to save me from the bondage of false liberty, of my tendency to exploit grace to serve my own selfish desires. The cross cries out *'He himself bore our sin in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.'* (1 Pet 2:24) and calls me to a sacrificial life of radical obedience to God.

*'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,'* said John, *'and we have seen his glory ... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side has made him known.'* (John 1) And we would do well as worship leaders to follow this pattern and point people to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. May we see Christ for who he is, and adore him as we ought. May we be captivated by his glory.

Alistair Hamill

## news...

### Music Ministry 08/09

Now that Al Hamill finished his year on staff, check out the *About Us* section on the music website for an update on our ministry structure.

### Online song database

The song database is now fully functioning on our website. It already has over 70 of our most common songs, with more added all the time. Of particular note is the *search function*. You can search by song theme, not just title. Simply type in your key word and a list of potential songs will appear. Invaluable for all worship leaders. If there are songs you'd like added, please let Al Hamill know.

### Music website blog

To help with the ongoing training of our worship leaders, the music blog regularly features ideas and thoughts on preparing for and leading worship. The current blog series, for instance, will allow us to explore the thoughts raised in this edition of Transformission in further detail, exploring some of the practicalities emerging from the principles outlined here. There is a comment facility, so why not take and look at share your thoughts with others in the music ministry?

### Songwriters' circle

We're planning on having a songwriters' forum starting soon. The website has more details.

### Surgi steps back from leading

Due to various commitments, Surgi has decided to step down from leading for a while. We want to thank him for all his dedication for serving God through worship leading for the past 4 years. We pray that God will refresh him, Philippa and his girls as he takes a break from up front ministry.