

APR-JUL 2020

# TRUMPET

VIEWS AND NEWS FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

MCI (P) 093/03/2020



## Christian Witness in Uncertain Times

*By Rev Dr Leonard Wee*

**Y**ear 2020 would probably be remembered as the year of the coronavirus. Singapore reported its first case of COVID-19 on 23 Jan 2020, two days before Chinese New Year. While the situation in Singapore is under control, the crisis is far from over—infections are still escalating elsewhere. I would like to share my reflections on two incidents thus far.

### **Witnessing in Love**

The first incident was the crucial week from 7 to 14 February 2020, when many churches in Singapore took unprecedented measures to deal with the developing crisis. DORSCON was set to Orange on 7 Feb signifying the possibility of a community spread. Reports of a second church cluster came shortly after. In just two days (12 and 13 Feb), seven confirmed cases were linked to that church. This prompted other churches to consider suspending worship services. Information travelled quickly via social media; leaders heard about what other churches were doing even as they discussed their own responses.

Consequently, some churches decided to suspend worship services, something not done on such a scale since World War II. Others decided to broadcast them through the Internet for members. Within three days, members of churches were already briefed about health measures and their impact upon gathered assemblies. This kind of response to an issue was hitherto unseen among churches in Singapore. If discussions within

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my denomination were any indication, then one could say that the churches wanted to play their part to contain the virus. Given that the available information concerning COVID-19 was developing, churches were vulnerable and yet worshipping God as his gathered people is a divine injunction. Decision making was thus not easy and the crisis weighed heavily on the leaders. Each church differed in terms of demographics, possible contact with known clusters and availability of resources. Nevertheless, they were seeking to support the nation's effort to deal with the crisis and took unprecedented decisions on short notice.

This episode exemplifies a core teaching of the Christian faith: To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and to love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:30-31). To love God is to love our neighbour also. The varied responses of churches are but expressions of obedience to these commands.

#### Witnessing in Truth

The second incident has to do with the young doctor in Wuhan who sounded the alarm on the new coronavirus. Dr Li Wen-liang sent out a message to warn his friends, but he was called up by the authorities for disturbing public order. However, he was later named a hero by netizens. Unfortunately, Dr Li himself was infected by the virus. Soon after, the social media reported that this doctor was in fact a committed Christian — hence the courage to do the right thing. However, he succumbed to the virus and passed away on 7 Feb. Quite immediately, there was an outpouring of grief, not least within the Christian community. A poem by Dr Li appeared, supposedly ending with a quote: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7). The popular narrative was that Dr Li, an exemplary Christian doctor, died after alerting the world to the virus. He was a martyr, and a Christian one, no less.

Reading the poem closely, the reports about his faith do raise some questions. Apart from quoting 2 Tim 4:7 (which could have been added in), the poem evinced very little of the Christian content that might be expected from such a message. True enough, it later emerged that even the Christians in China were questioning whether Dr Li was a Christian. They checked his WeChat messages, which had no indication of a Christian faith. They asked for his church to identify itself, but none came forward. His name was not listed in any church prayer requests. This led the Chinese Christians to conclude that Dr Li was probably not a Christian. Yan Yi-le, a medical student at Yale University, reported it in *China Christian*

*Daily* (12 Feb), and later in *Christianity Today* (18 Feb). *Asia News* (18 Feb) reported similarly.

This experience should caution us about being quick to “claim” certain individuals as witnesses to the Gospel. Dr Li Wen-liang could be a very good man, a loving husband and an exemplary doctor. His courageous act could even be said to be Christian-like. However, that is different from saying that he was an exemplary Christian. To be a Christian entails faith in Jesus as one's personal Lord and Saviour. As far as our sources could tell, they think Dr Li was not a Christian.

In 1 Thess 1:5 Paul says, “Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake”. Paul not only preached the Gospel; his life also exemplified its truths. In proclaiming the Good News, our methods and means are as important as the message itself. All of them—the message and its attendant methods and media, including the life-stories of the messengers—must be characterised by the quality of truthfulness. Attributing a false testimony, no matter how sensational that narrative might be, would become a disservice to our Gospel witness in the long run.

#### Going Forward

This virus epidemic might be a long-drawn affair. We are told to be prepared for the worst. The lives of our loved ones may be threatened. This is where the Christian community can and should make a big difference. By demonstrating love for one another, we can be strong even in daunting situations. That was how the Church was built. The early Christians demonstrated the love of Christ, especially so in situations that were adversarial to them. Paul exhorts the early Christians to “shine...like stars” in a dark world (Phil 2:15). May the light of Christ's truth and love shine through us during such challenging times like these! ❖



**Rev Dr Leonard Wee**  
Lecturer in New Testament  
Director EQUIP

By demonstrating love for one another, we can be strong even in daunting situations



## Our Distinctiveness: Enriching the Life of the Church

The establishment of theological schools is usually initiated as a response to the needs of the Church. Hence, the priority of theological schools or seminaries is to equip people to care for the spiritual wellbeing of the flock.

In the case of Trinity Theological College, the symbiotic relationship with its founding denominations and its engagement with the Christian public over the past seventy years have encouraged the formation of certain distinctives which have enriched the life of the church in Singapore.

#### Emphasis on Foundational Studies

The emphasis on Christian scholarship has always been a distinctive of TTC. Unfortunately, some people still perceive such emphasis as purely academic and fail to see the wholistic curriculum of our college.

In the 21st century, we are witnessing the core values of the Church being compromised and eroded by the onslaught of secularism. It does not bode well for the next generation if church leaders, both lay and clergy, are not well equipped. Therefore, theological education is not merely academic studies, but it is allowing God to engage our minds and our hearts, enabling us to face the challenges of our time.

#### Mentoring as Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is an integral part of theological education and every student who has ever studied at TTC would know the extent of mentoring taking place here. At TTC, true spirituality is to be experienced throughout our community life, when prayers are offered during lessons, and students pray together. We worship as a community three times a week at chapel services, and observe days of prayer and fasting. Weekly Family Groups deepen the faith of our students through discussions and prayer.

Our community's activities and events serve to develop the discipline of spiritual intimacy with God. In fact, faculty mentors constantly keep track of the welfare

of students for ultimately, TTC's aim is the development of the Christian character among our students.

#### Immersion in the Life of the Church

Our lecturers are not merely professional academics but also deeply committed to engaging ordinary people in the church. They preach on Sundays, speak at church camps, provide biblical perspectives to their churches, and serve as 'resident theologians' in their denominations. All this involvement is over and above their commitment at TTC which includes teaching, mentoring of students, research, writing and publications.

#### An Ethos of Collaboration

Since its inception, our college has always given priority to collaborative efforts. As a result, TTC has been actively engaged with regional seminaries through the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA).

On the local scene, it is committed to fellowship and joint projects with seven other seminaries, for we believe that collaboration among seminaries will be a blessing to the Church. TTC faculty is also actively involved in the Ethos Institute for Public Christianity. This is our contribution back to the church-at-large for supporting the ministry of theological education.

#### Going Forward

We believe that theological education is for every Christian and not only for those who are called to full-time service. Many lay people are already very active in church leadership and committees, as Sunday school teachers, small group facilitators, participating in ministry on a voluntary basis. It is our hope that more Christians will realise that theological education is essentially a companion to enhance their voluntary service in the church. Do pray with us that TTC will increasingly grow in partnership with the laity, equipping them for witness through their churches, in their homes and at their places of work. ❖

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# Future Warfare and the Battle for Ethics

By Dr Roland Chia

“The Fourth Industrial Revolution” writes Bernard Marr in an article published on the Forbes website, “describes exponential changes to the way we live, work and relate to one another due to the adoption of cyber-physical systems of the Internet of Things and the Internet of Systems”. “This revolution”, he adds, “is expected to impact all disciplines, industries, and economies”.

This explosion of technological innovations and increase in connectivity will not only change the way in which we live, work and play in profound ways. It will also change the way in which wars are fought – it will radically impact and shape future warfare, the scale of conflict as well as its character.

The ramifications of these developments will be so far-reaching that national and international bodies will scramble to come up with protocols to prevent their abuse that could result in the wanton loss of innocent lives. In short, in the wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, future warfare will push ethics to venture into new and unexplored frontiers.

Doubtless, one of the most serious threats of our time is a war that is not fought on traditional physical terrains but in cyberspace. Malicious actors could, through the use of technology, bring their enemies to their knees by disrupting, confusing or destroying

their sensors, communications and decision-making.

Cyber warfare will prove to be a game-changer. It will not only lower the threshold of war, but will also blur the distinction between war and peace. In addition, in a cyber war, the perpetrators – faceless hackers, terrorists, activists, criminals, etc. – are often elusive, and therefore difficult to identify much less monitor.

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Cyber warfare also poses immense and unique challenges to the international communities with respect to its regulations on the use of technology.

Scholars like Patrick Lin have observed that “International humanitarian laws, or the “Laws of war”, were not written with cyberspace in mind”. In fact, as Klaus Schwarb has perceptively pointed out, “We lack even a taxonomy to agree on what amounts as an attack and the appropriate response, with what and by whom”.

All this has prompted some ethicists to ask if it is indeed possible to wage a just cyber war.

For example, the traditional laws of war recognise only one “just cause” for war, namely, a defence to aggression, defined as acts that have the potential to put human lives in jeopardy. However, as Lin has pointed out, “If aggression in cyberspace is not tied to actual physical harm or threat of lives, it is unclear

then how we should understand it”.

Future warfare will also increasingly involve the use of military robots, powered by AI. These “Robo-wars”, as some writers have dubbed it, will be fought by mostly autonomous machines that are capable of identifying and obliterating targets without human instruction and intervention.

Because of the autonomous nature of these machines, “collateral damage” in the form of civilian deaths due to malfunction will pose serious ethical and legal problems.

Who is to be held responsible? The manufacturer? The programmer? The army? The country that unleashed these killing machines and whose mission they are carrying out? Or, perhaps the robots themselves should be held accountable, since they are supposedly autonomous?

The question whether the traditional “logic of responsibility” which asserts that “he who acts through another does the act himself” (*qui facit per alium facit per se*) and “let the master answer” (*respondeat superior*) are still relevant and applicable when it comes to robo-ethics, especially when autonomous killing machines are involved, is still being debated.

Another issue that theologians, philosophers, ethicists and policymakers have to grapple with in the Fourth Industrial Revolution is dual-use technologies. The European Commission (EC) defines dual-use goods as “items, including software and technology, which can be used for both civil and military purposes”.

For example, advances in neuro-science and technology, have made possible computer-brain interfaces that have enabled patients suffering from paralysis to control a robotic arm. But the same technology can also be used for a bionic soldier that can perform tasks that an ordinary soldier is unable to. Similarly, neurological devices that are used to manage Alzheimer’s patients can be modified to enhance the mental prowess of soldiers or even erase their memories.

To be sure, this issue is not new. But with the proliferation of more advanced and innovative technologies, questions concerning their proper governance will become infinitely more complex.

Writers have also speculated that the seabed

and space will be increasingly militarised as more and more state as well as commercial actors set up satellites and unmanned underwater vehicles with the capabilities of disrupting satellite traffic and fibre optic cables.

As Schwarb notes, “While more than half of all satellites are commercial, these orbiting communications devices are increasingly important for military purposes”. He alludes to a new generation of “glide” weapons whose deployment would increase “the probability that space will play a role in future conflicts and raising concern that current mechanisms to regulate space activities are no longer sufficient”.

More can be said about the challenges that the use of technologies such as nanotechnology, synthetic biology and 3-D printing (the list can easily be expanded) in warfare presents to the international community.

It is clear that no single country can impede the advancements of these technologies or foreclose their use for military purposes. This could only be to some extent achieved when countries work together to establish common ethical guidelines and protocols, and impose prohibitions in the form of international treaties.

But, as many theologians, philosophers and ethicists have repeatedly pointed out, it is also clear that a more concerted effort must be made to work out the profound ethical ramifications of these new technologies.

For the sheer speed and multifaceted impact of technological advances that we are witnessing in the Fourth Industrial Revolution have more often than not left ethics lagging woefully behind. ❖



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# What is Ritual?

By Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott

Life revolves around routines. Families regularly gather for meals, reunions, birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries. School children don uniforms every morning, assemble for the raising of the school flag, sing the school anthem, and then listen to an address by a teacher or the principal.

Church life also revolves around routines. Local congregations gather for public worship at set times, and have regularly scheduled meetings, retreats, and programmes. Each year churches observe special days and times, such as Founder's Day and Evangelism Month. Like other people in society, Christians engage in routines without any thought that these are related to ritual.

Protestants have tended to be suspicious of "ritual," associating it with the erroneous teachings and practices that led to the Reformation. Additionally, many churches are concerned that ritual acts can become "empty" and "meaningless" and so eschew them altogether.

But Protestants in the late-twentieth century began to rethink the place of ritual in church life. We came to view salvation more holistically, namely, as a reality that embraces the entire person — body, mind and spirit. Accordingly, ritual was seen more positively, since ritual actions involve the body and

the senses.

What is ritual? A ritual is a repeated, patterned action that expresses the beliefs and values of a community, and is meant to imprint these on the hearts and minds of community members. In the Christian church, rituals lead people to a deeper sense of communion with fellow church members and with God.

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The "patterned, repeated" aspect of ritual is important. Because a ritual is part of our common experience — our tradition — we know what it is every time that we see it. When we wash a person using the triune name of God, we know that this is baptism — a person's union with Christ and with the church. Accordingly, there is no need to "reinvent the wheel" every time that we have to make a new

Christian. Ritual therefore promotes good order (1 Cor 14:40).

In saying that ritual imprints certain understandings on our hearts and minds, we do not mean that ritual merely conveys information. Rather, ritual transforms our ways of thinking and behaving, precisely because it is a holistic experience. We all know that the best way to impart a new behavior is to get the body involved. So when it comes to teaching people how to swim, we not only explain it verbally, we get them in the pool, show them how to

do the front crawl ("free-style"), and then have them practice it. In the church, we form ourselves into loving, forgiving people not only by talking about love and forgiveness, but also by involving the body through singing and then sharing a sacred meal that proclaims God's self-giving love revealed in Jesus. By allowing our active participation through sight, smell, touch, and taste, ritual enables spiritual truths to be experienced at a deeper level and thereby to "stick" in our souls.

To say that ritual involves the church's beliefs and values is to say that ritual enacts what we believe is ultimately true about God, the church, and our relationship with God. In baptism, we plunge a person under water — nearly drowning him — because we believe that becoming a Christian means the death of the old sinner and the raising up of a new person. Baptism ritually enacts what conversion means — death and resurrection with Jesus Christ (Romans 6). Because God makes promises about baptism, we believe that a person participates in the reality pictured by baptism.

But is ritual necessary? Aren't words enough to express our beliefs? In fact, conveying heavenly, transcendent realities requires more than just words. How do we communicate things like sacrificial love, repentance, forgiveness, and eternal life? Certainly, words are a start, but by themselves they cannot do justice to the truth about God, his mysterious ways, and infinite love. Because words alone cannot express the fullness of our love for another person, we feel the need to give a hug, a kiss, or a rose. Through these tangible earthly means, deep truths are presented to embodied beings who need tangible things to help them comprehend.

Because expressing the faith through ritual is a necessity, ritual is integral to all Protestant worship traditions. At one end of the spectrum we have Lutherans and Anglicans who have retained many traditional ritual elements of Christian worship, believing that these are vital for proclaiming the

gospel. But even churches that arose later in history have public worship that is centred on ritual. The Salvation Army, which has neither baptism nor Holy Communion, nevertheless holds a swearing-in ceremony for new soldiers. The Society of Friends (the Quakers), which likewise observes no "sacraments" in the traditional sense, has regular gatherings in which participants wait upon the Spirit to bring messages to the assembly, and this is done according to prescribed customs. Charismatic churches, known for their freer forms of worship, have a recognisable ritual pattern to their worship: a "worship set" of songs lasting up to 45 minutes, announcements and offering, a sermon, and then the "altar ministry" for those with prayer needs. Thus some churches have many rituals, some have few. In all cases, rituals enact what a church believes about God's encounter with people in worship, whether God's presence is experienced through the "means of grace" (proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Lord's Supper) or perhaps through an extended time of singing. Although most Protestant churches would insist that they are free to add or remove rituals as their situations demand, it still is the case that their worship is bound up with ritual.

It is therefore not a question of whether any church has rituals, but the degree to which it has them — whether many versus few — and the degree to which ritual actions are governed by prescribed rules. What all churches also have in common is the need to discern whether their worship rituals build up faith in God and mutual love for God's people. ❖



Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott  
Lecturer in Liturgy and Worship

## Spiritual Retreat For Lay Leaders



Retreat directors:  
Rev Dr Simon Chan | Rev Dr Jimmy Tan

Join us in 2020  
Nov 6-7



May 2019 participants share their experiences ...

"I cherish the time to go into prayer. It is lovely to let God speak to us instead of us giving him our lists of concerns."

"The retreat is a time to pause and enjoy a time of fellowship with God."

"The retreat helped me to draw closer to God who loves us and wishes to bless us."

# Doxological Rhythms for Spiritual Formation

By Rev Dr Jimmy Tan, Chaplain,  
Lecturer in Pastoral and Practical Theology

Chapel services have been a central aspect of our College life and ethos since its founding. It reflects our College's belief that theology must lead to doxology and spiritual formation interwoven with academic formation in theological education. Thus, chapel services are very much part of a rhythm of life at TTC.

## Ethos

Just as the Benedictine motto *Ora et Labora* (prayer and work) calls a monastic to a balanced life of prayer and work, so participation in chapel services calls our seminarians to a balanced life of prayer and study. The two complement and strengthen each other. Our enactment of the liturgy at chapel services helps us to express the theology that we are formulating in the classroom. Conversely, the learning of theology receives a focused expression through the liturgy that is performed at chapel services.

In his writings on prayer, the Desert Father Evagrius Ponticus wrote, "If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian". It echoes the understanding that the study of theology is certainly not divorced from the practice of prayer.

Not only so, the prayers that are said at chapel services do not end there but find their expression in our daily living. The Church Father Origen, in discussing unceasing prayer, explained "that the entire life of the saint taken as a whole is a single great prayer. What is customarily called prayer is, then, a part of this prayer".

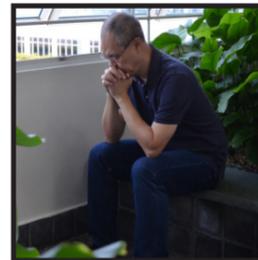
Consequently, it is our aim at TTC to pass this ethos on to our community. Chapel services are not an interruption to our studies or work but an important pause; an integral focus that brings all that we endeavor in seminary education to its proper end: living our lives as enacted prayers.

## Rhythm

Toward this end, we schedule chapel services at strategic junctures during the day and in the course of a week – guided by the liturgical hours and calendar. We pause for chapel at 11:30am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Monday chapel services are held along language lines for half an hour for the Chinese and English departments. All students get an opportunity to participate at chapel services. Typically, all second-year students lead Monday chapel services while they are enrolled in a Worship and Liturgy course, and all third-year students preach there while they are enrolled in Homiletics.

Wednesday chapel services are bi-lingual with the whole community gathered for an hour. It includes a monthly Holy Communion celebrated



with a denominational distinctive. Typically third-year students serve as liturgists on Wednesday chapel services. Some who are bilingual also serve as interpreters for faculty members who preach. Guided by the Christian year, sermons echo the emphases of the lectionary texts. Wednesday chapel services also typically involve cantors, special offertory items and the college choir.

Friday chapel services are led by Family Groups (FGs) – an arrangement wherein a faculty member mentors ten to twelve students. It offers a change of tempo and features special items by FGs. A highlight are the testimonies by first-year

students.

Apart from these, the chapel ministry also organises Tuesday Vespers at 5pm, while FGs pray together as part of their Thursday get-togethers.

With these arrangements, the rhythm of chapel services reverberates through the week.

## Special Highlights

The chapel ministry also organises special programmes in the course of the liturgical year. Most significant are the special commemorations

on Ash Wednesday and an entire week of special chapel services during Holy Week in Lent. Whether it is the imposition of ashes or the symbolic washing of feet, these special events remind the community of its centeredness in Christ.

During Ordinary Time, the chapel ministry also works with the student-led Spiritual Formation Committee to organise a day of prayer. The Day of Prayer has become a rallying point that both draws the community to pray and sharpens its missional focus as a witnessing community.

## Conclusion

Organised in the way delineated above, each student and faculty member is involved at chapel services at one time or another. TTC Chapels also involve a broad spectrum of volunteer personnel that include the music ministry (the choir, cantors and musicians), the Audio-Visual team, the sacristans, and administrative support.

Although labour intensive, these efforts are all worth the while when we understand that chapel services very much function like a hub that centres all our endeavours at the College in our triune God. The hour in chapel services, guided by the basic structure in the liturgy, provides a focus for our life of worship, study and prayer. It reminds us about why we do what we do. It keeps us grounded in God. Chapel services serve as a key formational component in theological education at TTC. ❖



## Our Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

By Rev Dr Edwin Tay, Vice Principal

Since the DORSCON level was raised from Yellow to Orange on the evening of 7 Feb 20, life at Trinity Theological College has been disrupted at all levels. Twice-daily temperature screening, cancellation of events, and social distancing measures are just some of the changes that had to be implemented.

Most of us are creatures of habit. As such, unexpected disruptions often evoke feelings of frustration. We feel safe with predictable rhythms of life and unsettled when the tempo of these rhythms become out of sync. But disruptions need not be destructive. When embraced as an integral part of God's providence, disruptions in life may be understood as moments of sovereignly-led transpositions in the symphony of life. They throw light on leitmotifs; those themes or convictions which may have faded into the background but for the direction of the divine conductor. Two of such "leitmotifs" stand out at TTC in the face of limitations imposed by the present circumstances.

The first is TTC's mission to equip the saints. Equipping at TTC involves learning in a classroom setting, and also being shaped into Christlikeness in the experience of spiritual formation. Care is thus taken to ensure that the precautionary measures are not implemented at the expense of equipping; online modes of teaching were deployed and lectures live-streamed when necessary. Unable to gather physically, faculty members mentored students in their family groups through communication platforms such as WhatsApp video calls and Zoom.

The second is TTC's commitment to engage the world. At a time when the fear of infection has led to frantic behaviours of self-preservation, our students look outwards for opportunities to be a blessing. Members of the Student Council prepared and presented hand-crafted well-wishes to thank and encourage healthcare workers at a nearby clinic. Some third year students prepared small care packages for our cleaners who have had to work extra hours to sanitise the College grounds. Others have given thank you cards to Grab drivers who took part in the Grab Care initiative to ferry healthcare workers.

Such ground-up initiatives of neighbourly love are among many others from Christian communities in Singapore to shine the light of Christ into the darkness of fear, disease and death. TTC is committed to fulfill our mission of equipping the saints and engaging the world despite COVID-19. ❖



Maintaining good personal hygiene



Temperature taking twice daily



Loving our neighbour



Observing safe distancing

## Spring Cleaning for the Spring Season

By Kirk Tan, MTS 1

Dressed mostly in t-shirts and shorts, the plaza was abuzz as students and faculty gathered for College Cleaning Day on the afternoon of the first Friday of the semester, 10 Jan 20. Acting Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, in his brief speech, exhorted us to see the physical act of cleaning up the college as a spiritual act. The enthusiasm of all of us was apparent when some pails and rags that lay beside our Family Group disappeared when we took our eyes off them momentarily! That said, we got going shortly after they were returned. Our task was to clean the metal railings outside the main foyer. We soon got organised with some of us cleaning the railings, some wringing the rinsed rags, others replenishing the dirtied water. For all of us, it was an eye-opener seeing how much dirt collected on these railings! It was a vivid reminder of the dross I had collected in my life and how essential it would be to do "spiritual spring cleaning" regularly. In the end it was a deep spiritual lesson and all good fun for a meaningful cause! ❖



Hitting the library for a different reason



Removing the tares

## Raising Chopsticks to Praise and Bless

By Lim Bi Xiu, MDiv1



Tossing the traditional yusheng with joy

Chinese New Year is a highly anticipated season of celebration with family and friends for many ethnic Chinese around the world. However, a dark cloud hovered over this year's festivities with the spread of COVID-19. Refusing to let it dampen our spirits, the Community Life Committee organised a celebratory lunch for all students, faculty and staff on 5 Feb 20, with all the precautionary measures in place.

Typical of CNY celebrations in Singapore, *yusheng* was served; a salad which consists of strips of raw fish (substituted by shellfish), shredded vegetables and a variety of sauces and condiments, each symbolic for the season. Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun, our Acting Associate Dean, kicked off the joyous occasion with a history lesson that took us back in time to when the dish was created, modified, and made popular by four master chefs. Shouts of blessings, laughter and festive music filled the air as we tossed the *yusheng* with a sense of gratitude for how the Lord has been watching over us. Indeed we rejoiced that we could celebrate CNY as a TTC community and were reminded to trust God regardless of circumstances. ❖

## Starting 2020 in Christ

By Rev Dr Samuel Wang, Lecturer in Theology, Associate Director, Field Education

The chapel was full of students and lecturers as anticipation filled the air on the first day of the new semester. Acting Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, challenged us to submit to the authority of Christ our Lord as he preached from Matt 2:1-12. He reminded us: “Even in the ministry, we can have rather set ideas on where we should be, what we ought and ought not to be doing, and how our ministry ought to look like. Ultimately, these are not ours to determine.” We were also challenged to live out our faith in Christ by offering our lives, labours and gifts to the Lord. Members of the faculty then joined the two newly installed lecturers, Rev Bernard Chao and Dr Yee Chin Hong to rededicate themselves to the ministry of teaching and thereafter students, faculty and staff celebrated communion together. This is a fitting start to a new academic year. ❖



Installation of Rev Chao & Dr Yee



Celebrating communion together

## Mercy in Judgment: Ash Wednesday Chapel

By Rev Bernard Chao, Lecturer in Practical Theology



The TTC Community gathered on Ash Wednesday

TTC marked the beginning of Lent with our Ash Wednesday chapel service on 26 Feb 20. The imposition of ashes was not observed this year due to the COVID-19 situation. Nevertheless, students and faculty were invited to adopt a Lenten posture that facilitates self-examination and spiritual renewal.

Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott preached from Joel 2. He exhorted us with regards to the calamities we face and fear they evoke. Our present-day calamities of wildfires and epidemics, like those described in Joel, point to the eschatological calamity of divine judgement which is even more terrifying. Indeed, we ought to heed the words of Jesus to “watch and pray” (Luke 21:36) and turn to God in repentance.

The good news is that God’s wrath is accompanied by an invitation to receive mercy and blessing. God offers us a means to escape his impending judgement, if only we would repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ. Rev Dr Truscott laboured to point out that repentance is not a condition for God’s mercy and grace, but rather, the way we receive them and the promise of salvation. ❖

## Trinitarian Theology and the Mission of God

By Terence Chua, MDiv1

Is God a missionary? Or is mission only an outflow of who he is? These were some of the questions posed by Dr Lalsangkima Pachuau in his lecture at TTC on 30 Jan 20. Dr Pachuau is the John Wesley Beeson Professor of Christian Mission and Dean of Advanced Research Programme at Asbury Theological Seminary. His research centres on theology and mission in a global context.

Drawing on current research, Dr Pachuau’s lecture highlighted an ongoing area of research involving the dialogue between the theology of the Trinity and of mission. Dr Pachuau began with a survey of the recent interest in Trinitarian Theology and traced the Church’s understanding of mission across history. He made a comparison between Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius of Loyola, illustrating how mission may be understood differently. For example, Aquinas had a theoretical understanding of mission as a way in which God relates to the world. In contrast, Ignatius articulated a more practical understanding of spreading the gospel to non-believers. While these two perspectives continue to be relevant, Dr Pachuau called for a more holistic understanding of mission that is grounded in who God fundamentally is — that God is missionary. Naturally, such an approach would also contain the contributions by our predecessors, but it would also provide for a more robust theology to guide the Church in knowing what it means to be a part of God’s mission. ❖



Dr Lalsangkima Pachuau expounding on Trinitarian Theology

## Experiencing God in the Great Outdoors

By Amos Yeo, MDiv2

The goal of the Gardening Club is to provide the TTC community with the opportunity and space to have a first-hand experience in the stewardship of God’s creation. It is our prayer that as our members join efforts to till the ground and experience the joys and challenges of cultivating its produce, this experience will facilitate their meditation of Scripture and contemplation of God. The garden, therefore, is a sacred space for work, meditation and reflection.

Inspired to “redeem” the space on which a disused water feature sat, initiatives started with the blessing of the Principal, the Gardening Club and the TTC facilities team. Blessed with the generous support of kind donors, the project kicked off with much enthusiasm and thanksgiving for God’s timely provision.

The pond was officially opened by our Acting Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, on 10 Jan 20.

Believing with the apostle Paul, that the divine attributes such as God’s “eternal power and divine nature” may be perceived “in the things that have been made” (Rom 1:20), we hope that the garden not only becomes a blessing for the members of the club, but for the whole TTC community and beyond. ❖



The newest feature in the garden - the pond

# Tasting a Slice of TTC Life

By Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun, Lecturer in Church History, Acting Associate Dean

The annual Open House was held on Wednesday, 22 Jan 20. This year, the half-day event attracted 70 participants, 38 of whom were interested in our English programmes, and 32 inclined towards our Chinese programmes.

The day started with the Acting Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, welcoming participants. Following that, senior faculty held briefings in English and Mandarin on “Why Theological Education at TTC?” and the admission process. Then the President and Vice-President of the Student Council, Daniel Lee and Teo Meow Ling, shared about their time at TTC.

After a short break, participants sat in one of two lectures – the History of Global Christianity II class in English or the Worship and Liturgy class in Mandarin. Chapel service and community lunch followed, before students took participants on a campus tour

Participants were impressed with the library, with one commenting that it had more books than the National Library! (He probably meant books on theology.) Another participant commented that TTC gave her a ‘homely feeling’. Participants were generally pleased with the overall experience, with one participant saying that the students’ sharing on life in TTC had helped him appreciate TTC’s context. ❖



Getting a taste of a lecture

# Student Council 2020

The Student Council for 2020 was installed during the chapel service of 31 Jan 20. The installation was presided over by our Acting Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay. The new Student Council was reminded of the privilege of serving their fellow students, just as our Lord Jesus came to serve, and not to be served; that the greatest in His kingdom is the servant of all. The Student Council was also charged to serve with humility and gladness, and at the same time, with boldness to take up the authority and responsibility to carry out their duties. ❖



Front Row (L-R): Isaac Tan Jit Choong, Lu Lili, Esther Peh Wan Qian, Rev Dr Jimmy Tan (Chaplain), Rev Dr Wilfred Ho (Associate Chaplain), Rev Dr Edwin Tay (Acting Principal), Aldran Wong Kok Leong (President), Teh You Siong (Vice-President), Rev Dr Edmund Fong (Acting Dean of Students), Lei Pui Man, Isaac Ngo Lok Foong, Joseph Chen Yong Chang, Vanessa Wang

Second Row (L-R): Natalie Lam Su-Yin, Deborah Siew Jun Yin, Lin Xia, Lin Siwei, Huang Lajie, Tan Siew Yen, James Lee Liat Shueng, Damien Wong Li Jian, Joel Yong, Ilango Yagamaram, Ang Aik Chew, Zhang Yudong, Arlina Permatasari Wiguna, Grace Chiam Che Lin

Back Row (L-R): Joyce Ngu Hung Ee, Zhang Xun, Christopher Ng Wei-Ern, Bryan Tan Tze Ann, Theophilus Kee Ern, Christopher Albert, Veasna Thav, Creda Cai Yinhong, Wang Shenggang, Chessa Lim Shi En, Low Yee Lin

# TRINITY NEWS

## Congratulations to...

Edgar Battad Ebojo (MThB 2006) for his appointment as the representative of the United Bible Societies to the Editorial Committee of the Greek New Testament, 6th edition, in late 2019.

Rev Dr Kuzipa Nalwamba (MDiv 1998, MTh 2009) for her appointment as Professor of Ecumenical Social Ethics at Bossey Institute and Programme Executive for Ecumenical Theological Education with the World Council of Churches.

Ho Wei Liang (MDiv 2019) and his wife, Nicola Hoon, on the birth of their daughter, Elise Ho, on 17 Sep 2019.

Png Eng Keat (MDiv 2019) and his wife, Abigail Koh, who celebrated the arrival of their baby girl, Genevieve Png, on 28 Oct 2019.

Han Xiaohuan (MMin 2019) on the celebration of her marriage to Dr Lee Foo Chiang on 18 Nov 2019.

Rev Anthony Phua Kok Ho (BD 2015) and his wife, Serene Wong, on the birth of their son, Asher Johannes Phua, on 23 Nov 2019.

Mrs Mildred Tan (TTC’s Board of Governors) on her appointment as an alternate member to the Council of Presidential Advisers by President Halimah Yacob on 2 Jan 2020.

Pastor Lee Lai Moi (BD 2014) on her ordination as pastor of Abundant Grace Presbyterian Church on 22 Feb 2020.

Naw Winsome Paul (MDiv 2016) on the celebration of her marriage to Saw Eh Poe on 22 Feb 2020.

Rev Canon Dr Titus Chung Khiam Boon (BD 1995, MTh 2003), TTC Board of Governors and guest lecturer, on his appointment as the Bishop-Designate of the Diocese of Singapore (The Anglican Church). His consecration/installation service as the 10th Diocesan Bishop is scheduled for 18 Oct 2020.

Rev Dr Malcolm Tan Thian Hock (BD 1984), guest lecturer at TTC, on being conferred the Doctor of Philosophy by the National University of Singapore on 28 Feb 2020.

Dr Lim Khay Tham (BD 1987) on his appointment as the Dean at Discipleship Training Centre.

## Condolences to...

Mrs Betty Garrett and her family on the passing of Rev Dr Guy Garrett, on 30 Nov 2019 at the age of 85. He was former missionary lecturer from the United Methodist Church, USA.

Rev Dr Liew Yoo Kiang, on the passing of his beloved mother, the late Mdm Chew Suan Chris, on 23 Dec 2019.

Rev Adrian Chong (BD 2014) on the demise of his beloved mother, the late Mdm Lee Swee Poo, on 6 Jan 2020.

Rev Eeli Pua (MDiv 2013), on the passing of her beloved father, the late Elder Mr Pua Soon Yong, on 17 Jan 2020.

The family of the late Pradeep Samuel (DipTS 2020) who was called home to be with the Lord on 20 Jan 2020.

Mrs Jenise Lim, former TTC staff and Dr Lim Khay Tham (BD 1987) on the passing of her beloved father, Lee Gee Chow, on 23 Jan 2020. He was 84.

The family of the late Rev Solomon Mudonhi (BTh 2002, MTh 2004) who was called home to be with the Lord on 16 Feb 2020.

## We Invite You to Support the Ministry of Trinity Theological College

Your support will enable our college to :

- keep tuition fees affordable during the current pandemic
- be equipped with a competent and dedicated faculty
- offer financial subsidies to less fortunate students
- house an outstanding theological library in the region

Here are some ways you may contribute to our ministry:

- By Cheque to ‘Trinity Theological College’
- By Bank or ATM transfer to our DBS current account 033-017261-3
- By <PayNow> to UEN No. T01CC1488C
- By Way of Bequests to TTC. We shall be pleased to discuss this plan with you. You may email the principal@ttc.edu.sg or call 6767 6677



To view the Chinese edition of Trumpet, please visit our website [www.ttc.edu.sg](http://www.ttc.edu.sg)

## New Books by Faculty

Lecturers at TTC continue to make significant contributions to serious theological reflection through their publications. One such publication is Rev Dr Andrew Peh's new book, *Of Merchants and Missions: A Historical Study of the Impact of British Colonialism on American Methodism in Singapore from 1885 to 1910*. It was released towards the end of 2019 and launched at Trinity Theological College on 21 Jan 20. Rev Dr Peh shares:

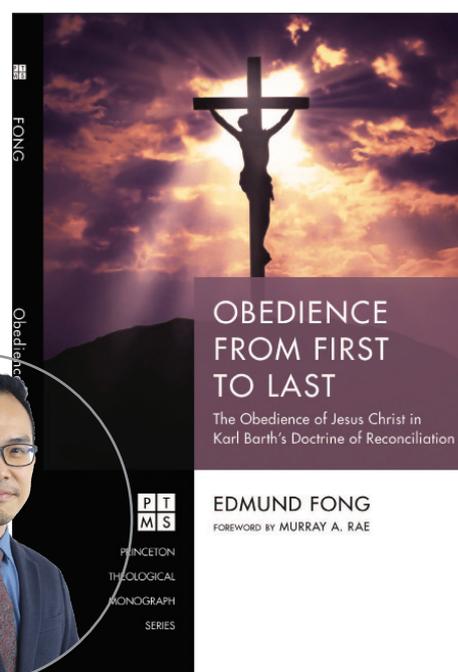
"This publication took about a whole decade since my graduation from Asbury Theological Seminary. It is a work that debunks the oft held assumption that "missions came on the coattails of colonialism" specifically where American Methodist missionaries were concerned in Singapore's colonial history. It is serendipitous that the book was published at the close of Singapore's bicentennial commemoration of Sir Stamford Raffles' arrival in 1819 and at the beginning of the 135th anniversary of the arrival of Methodism in Singapore. The book establishes that while the British colonial administration was driven by mercantile objectives, the

American missionaries were energised by an entirely different motivation of 'spreading Scriptural holiness'".

Of a different vein is Rev Dr Edmund Fong's publication, *Obedience from First to Last: The Obedience of Jesus Christ in Karl Barth's Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020). Hot off the press, the book was published in mid-March 20 and will be launched later this year. Rev Dr Fong shares:

"An expanded version of my doctoral dissertation, *Obedience from First to Last* explores the significance of the obedience of Jesus Christ in Karl Barth's theology. In the process of doing my research, I discovered that Barth not only affirms the importance of Jesus' obedience, but as a first in the theological tradition, gives that obedience a pre-eminent place within the being of God himself. This brings a deep penetrating insight into what freedom is — true freedom is found in obedience."

Both publications are available for sale at the Trinity Theological College Administrative Office. ❖



### TRUMPET EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian (Editor), Rev Dr Edwin Tay (Co-Editor),  
Rev Yap Seok Chin (Editor for Chinese), Dr Leow Theng Huat,  
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