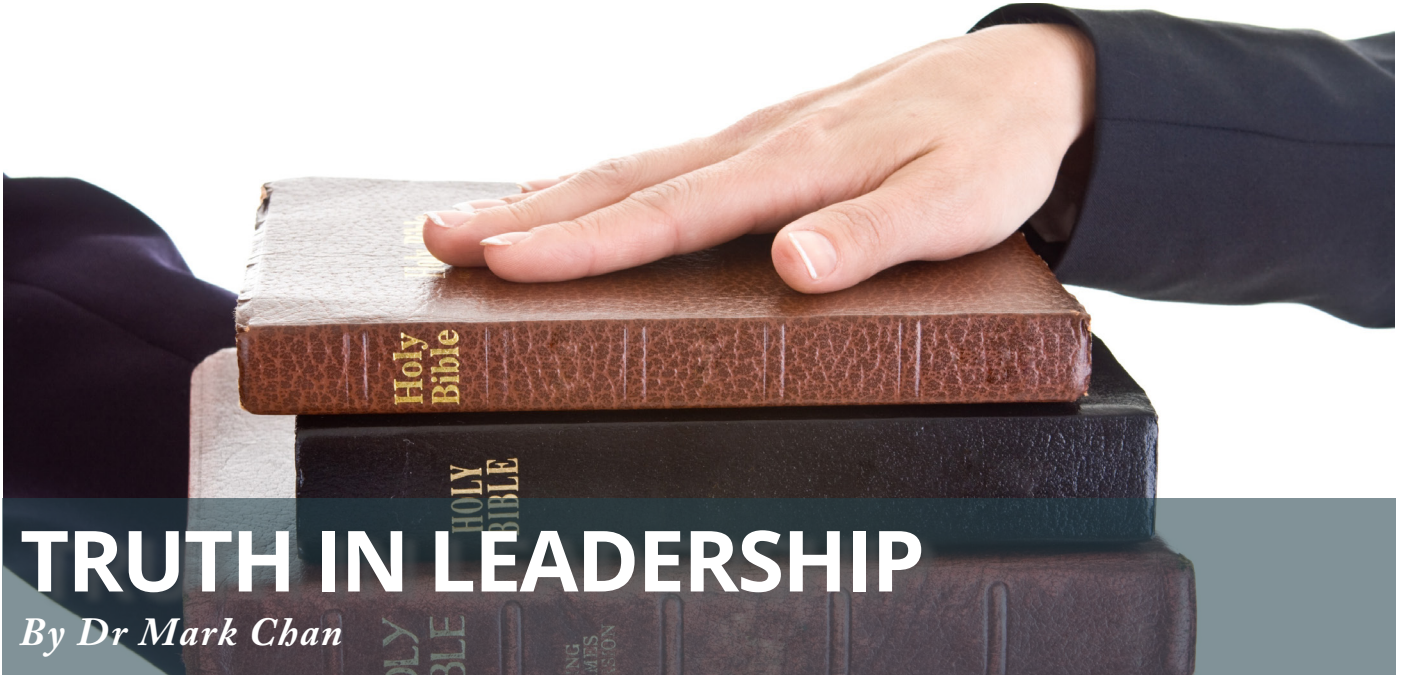


AUG-NOV 2020

# TRUMPET

VIEWS AND NEWS FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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## TRUTH IN LEADERSHIP

By Dr Mark Chan

**A**mong the lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic is the realisation that truth in leadership is of paramount importance. People look to leaders for truthful information in a crisis. But when leaders fudge their words and fix blame rather than problems, they short-change those who look to them for leadership. When looking good trumps looking after the welfare of people, or when the opinions of spin-doctors are valued above those of medical doctors in a health crisis, the death toll rises. Preening political self-interest makes the coronavirus all the more deadly.

What's needed in a crisis are leaders with feet firmly planted on the *terra firma* of reality, leaders who act on the basis of what is true or what corresponds to reality. Unfortunately, so much of what passes off as truth today in the media – social or otherwise – has little or, at best, tenuous connection to reality.

Social commentators tell us that we are now living in a “post-truth” age, a term that has gained traction since 2016. That year witnessed seismic political changes both in the US and the UK that are widely believed to have been impacted by deliberate distortions of the truth. Little wonder the Oxford Dictionaries selected “post-truth” as the word of the year for 2016.

“Post-truth” denotes circumstances in which “objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and

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personal beliefs.” What are “facts” to one party in the contestation of ideas in the public square are often dismissed as “fake news” by the opposing party. Never mind the facts, it’s the advancement of one’s political and ideological commitments that matters.

Compounding the situation is the proliferation of fabricated stories on social media. Falsehood doesn’t need to deny the existence of truth to exert an influence. It merely needs to multiply versions of truth. Populate the media screens of people around the world with a plethora of divergent interpretations of the truth, and you get a world thoroughly bewildered.

Thanks to the Internet, the dissemination of “alternative facts” has been easier. Cyber miscreants launch missiles of misinformation into cyberspace, and devious operatives inject the toxin of “fake news” into the bloodstream of the Web. And when such memes are shared by unthinking cyber-consumers, the truth is lost within a thick fog of confusion.

When people can’t distinguish facts from fiction, reality from opinion, they are ripe for manipulation. This is not new. Philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt warned in her 1951 book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, that the “ideal subject of totalitarian rule is...people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction...no longer exists.”

It is to a world marked by truth decay that Christian leaders are called to lead with truthfulness and integrity. This means disavowing the cavalier attitude towards truth that seems *de rigueur* in our post-truth/postmodern world. Instead of spin-doctoring the truth to serve one’s agenda, those who lead God’s people must let truth define who they are and what they do.

Under pressures to achieve great things for God, leaders may be tempted to cherry pick data and weave narratives to project a successful image. In the interest of favourable optics, mission leaders may inflate the number of decisions at evangelistic outreaches or burnish reports to give a better gloss to programmes. But by being parsimonious with the truth, they end up misleading others, even if they did not start off with the intention to deceive. Half-truths are just as effective as lies if they paint a picture that does not correspond to reality. One doesn’t need to be transparently self-serving to be self-serving.

Leading with integrity means refusing to make others look bad in order to make ourselves look good. We are all too familiar with political smear campaigns that demean and defame one’s opponents. In this regard,

Christian leaders distinguish themselves by refusing to bear false witness against others by misrepresenting them or characterising them unfairly. Respect is given to all, even to those with whom one disagrees theologically.

We live at a time when the trustworthiness of words is often in question, when what is said in public does not always match what is intended in private. As George Orwell once observed, political language is often “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.” But words do matter; and the words of a leader matter greatly. Words can either tear down or they can build up; they can either suck the life out of others or be life-giving.

The words of truthful leaders are their bond. They mean something. Such trustworthiness stems from an inner congruence between what they say and how they live. Ministry leaders may publicly declare that people will always come before programmes. But when they trample upon the dignity of people who serve with them, their words ring hollow. Their words mean nothing because they are not true to life.

To lead in truth is to be true to life. Such leadership corresponds to reality. And when the words of the leader are firmly anchored in reality, they bring forth life. “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life” and “the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Prov 10:11; 12:18b).

Attending to the integrity of one’s speech translates into having the courage to speak the truth, even when it is unpopular, inconvenient, and personally costly. It is tempting to fiddle with the truth and make it more palatable. But when leaders say only what people want to hear rather than what they need to hear, they cease to be truth-defined leaders.

Christian leaders lead in truth only when they are resolute followers of the One who is Truth Incarnate. Only when they bow to the authority of God’s revealed truth, a truth that stands over them, will they be able to resist the temptation to be a truth unto themselves. This is nothing but leadership from the standpoint of Christian discipleship. ❖



**Dr Mark Chan**  
Earnest Lau Professor of  
Systematic Theology

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.....



## Changing Times, Unchanging Call

The World Health Organisation named the disease that is caused by the Sars-CoV-2 virus as “Covid-19” on 11 February 2020. Since then, the term “Covid-19” has taken on more functional significance than merely the naming of a disease. In less than six months of its use, it has been deployed as a marker in the periodization of history in popular discourse.

For instance, *The Straits Times* published an article entitled “Dialogues for a Post-Covid-19 future” on 24 June 2020. Comparing the coronavirus pandemic with watershed events in history such as the Great Depression and the Japanese Occupation, the article announced a new series of national dialogues the nature of which may be traced to the “stable times” of a pre-Covid-19 Singapore.

The world has changed with Covid-19. This is the stark reality before us in every sphere of human life from environment to education. UNESCO estimates that nearly 75% of the world’s student population has been affected by school closures due to the global pandemic. Among other concerns, such closures would require significant changes to the mode and nature of lesson delivery and community life in schools for the educational needs of students.

Trinity Theological College has not been spared from the impact of Covid-19. Unable to enter Singapore or return to their home countries, many of our international

students, both new and matriculated, have been deeply affected. Like other educational institutions, the College had to navigate between offering onsite, in-person classes and online emergency remote teaching or a hybrid of both depending on the pandemic situation. The rhythm and mode of our community life has been significantly recalibrated in compliance with health measures for the safety of our community and neighbors.

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.....

Crises compel us to adopt reactionary postures. Such postures, while necessary to protect lives, are inadequate for the spiritual sustenance of the TTC community or any community for that matter. Bailing out water from a boat might keep it from sinking but will certainly not bring it to its destination. Thus, while compliance to health measures is necessary, the rationale of TTC’s decisions concerning the academic and formational life of our community in the midst of the Covid-19 storm are guided by the compass of our sacred calling. The circumstances surrounding TTC’s founding is instructive here.

Under the harsh conditions of life in prison, missionaries who were interned in Changi Prison during the global crisis of World War II were not simply preoccupied with issues of survival. Called by God to serve Christ and his church, they were gripped, while in prison, by the vision of a union college that will equip the church for ministry in the world. The inspiring stories of two of TTC’s earliest principals who had suffered during the war is told in this edition of the Trumpet by Chiang Ming Shun. As he puts it, “The privations of life in war led them not to focus on themselves but to think about others...how they could train others in ministry and...save others from evil.” Such life-giving perspective is made possible by the Lord of life who had called our founding fathers to self-giving service.

The global pandemic has stripped away the structures of our comfort zone and brought about radical changes to life in the world. Times may have changed, but the call to serve Christ in equipping his church for ministry continues at TTC. ❖





# Salted With Fire

By Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

In one of his more curious sayings, Jesus tells us in Mark 9:49 that, "...everyone will be salted with fire." Weston Fields, citing Bratcher and Nida decades ago, wrote that there are at least 15 different explanations of the verse. The general view is that salt and fire have something to do with purification and even suffering - the pain of suffering will purify and cleanse.

This phrase comes to mind when I think of two of the earliest principals of Trinity Theological College. Hobart Baumann Amstutz and Hubert Lafayette Sone were men of God who suffered through the horrors of war to be used by God to do great work.

Hobart Amstutz (1896-1980) went through two wars. He was drafted into the Army when the United States entered World War 1. After the war, Amstutz earned degrees at Northwestern University, including a Bachelor of Divinity in 1923. Amstutz came to Southeast Asia and Singapore in 1926. He was appointed associate pastor at Wesley Methodist Church. In 1928, Amstutz was made principal of the Jean Hamilton Theological School, a Methodist institution that trained local students to be preachers in vernacular languages. That same year, he was also made Dean of the Pastors' Institute, which conducted



continuing education for pastors, missionaries and teachers.

When the Jane Hamilton Theological School merged with the Eveland Seminary in May 1940 to form the Malaya Methodist Theological College at 7 Mount Sophia, Amstutz remained as one of the two principals. Amstutz was deeply involved in training people of all ages for ministry.

All this training ground to a halt when the Japanese invaded Singapore. Amstutz was imprisoned with other pastors at the Sime Road Camp. There is a photograph of an emaciated Amstutz and his Wesley Methodist Church colleague, Rev Tyler Thomson in the Camp.

It was during this internment that Amstutz began discussions with the Presbyterian Rev T. Campbell Gibson and the Anglican Canon Sorby Adams about forming a union theological institution after the war.

After the war, unlike other European missionaries who returned home to recuperate, Amstutz remained in Singapore. He retrieved and reinstalled whatever furniture remained for Wesley Methodist Church, including the Hammond organ and stained-glass windows. He restored the damaged Wesley Methodist Church. And he renewed discussions on an interdenominational theological college. The new college opened in October 1948, at the

.....  
Facing evil  
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site of the Malaya Methodist Theological College, which was absorbed into the new college. Amstutz suggested that the college be called Trinity College and he became its first Principal and Chairman of the Board of Governors.

Even as Principal, Amstutz was involved in missions work in other countries. In 1950, Amstutz wrote about a hair-raising experience in a longboat shooting the rapids of a mad, rushing river after visiting the Methodist Iban School in Kapit, Borneo. Amstutz was to become Methodist Bishop from 1956 to 1964.



While Amstutz was Bishop, the Principal of TTC from 1956 to 1961 was Hubert Sone (1892-1970), another Methodist pastor who had to live through war in Asia. Sone had gone to China as a missionary in 1920, building a mission station in Huzhou before being appointed to the faculty of Nanking Theological Seminary (today the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary) as Professor of Old Testament in 1933. Sone was there in 1937 when the Japanese army entered the city in December. Warned to leave the city by the presiding bishop of his Methodist Conference, Sone had sent his wife and children away to Mount Mogan in Zhejiang. But Sone stayed and so witnessed the "Rape of Nanjing."

For months, Sone wrote letters to colleagues, including the Senior Minister of Highland Park Methodist Church (today Highland Park United Methodist Church, the church that was supporting Sone), detailing the atrocities he witnessed. The Church published these letters in its bulletins and newsletters. Sone also wrote protest letters to the United States Embassy and to the Japanese Embassy in Nanjing. But beyond writing letters as a witness, Sone rescued victims.

The European foreigners left behind in Nanjing had formed an International Committee and created a Nanjing Safety Zone as a haven to protect civilians. Sone was initially the Associate Food Commissioner, responsible for buying and distributing rice to the refugees. He had to ride in the rice truck every day to prevent Japanese soldiers from stealing the truck and taking the Chinese driver and workmen away.

From February 1938, Sone was the Administrative Director of the International Committee.

Besides feeding and housing tens of thousands of refugees, the foreigners also had some restraining influence on the violent excesses of the Japanese. Sone wrote that the Committee spent "a good portion of their time running from one place to another to prevent the soldiers from raping the women or robbing the people." The Committee, including Sone, also documented the atrocities.

In 1941, Sone was finally furloughed out of China and he went to the University of Chicago Divinity School to work on his PhD. The United States' subsequent entry into World War 2 after Pearl Harbour prevented Sone from returning to Nanjing Theological Seminary until after the war. When he did return, it was only for a few years during and after the Civil War between the Kuomintang and the Communists. When the Communists emerged victorious, they expelled all foreign missionaries from China, and the Sones relocated to Singapore and TTC in 1951, among the last Americans to leave Nanjing.

At TTC, Sone taught the Old Testament in both English and Chinese. He was Dean of the College before serving as Principal. He retired in 1961 to his native Texas.

Both Amstutz and Sone had harrowing war-time experiences. But these did not dampen their enthusiasm or shake their faith. They remained unbowed in the midst of immense suffering. Unspeakable evil only plunged them deeper into the work of God. The privations of life in war led them not to focus on themselves but to think about others. Amstutz and Sone considered how they could train others in ministry and how they could save others from evil. Because of people like them salted with fire, we have a TTC today.

In this time of pandemic, the examples of Amstutz and Sone should encourage us not to be despondent, but to draw strength from God so that we may be a light to the world. ❖



Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

Associate Dean | Acting Registrar  
Lecturer in Church History



# Worshipping Together, Remotely

By Dr Roland Chia

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought untold disruptions to the life and ministry of churches across the globe. Never before in recent history have churches been required to make so many adjustments in such a short time, as services were transferred to online platforms due to the strict lockdown measures.

Digital technology has, of course, been of tremendous help to churches with access to them and has enabled offline activities to in some ways continue online. Pre-recorded or livestreaming services and meetings via Zoom or Facebook have in important ways mitigated the disruptions caused by the outbreak which has made physical gatherings impossible.

Some Christians, however, are of the view that something essential is missing when Christians participate in worship services online. They insist that the physical presence of the members of the congregation is indispensable if worship is to be authentic. Others think that virtual services erode the communion (*koinonia*) that believers have with one another.

To be sure, participating in worship services via the computer or television is not ideal and should never be seen as a substitute for physical services.

But is it true to say that there is little or no value

whatsoever in participating in services conducted in this way? Is it possible for Christians to worship God together while they are physically separated from one another? And can such worship be truly authentic?

I believe that the answer to this question can only be arrived at if we inquire into the nature of the church and the essence of that activity Christians call worship.

Let's begin with the church. At the outset we must acknowledge the fact that the church is not just a human organisation or institution. It cannot be reduced to a community of like-minded individuals or a society of people united by a singular mission.

Following the patristic theologians, we must say that the church is instituted by Christ and constituted by the Holy Spirit. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it, the church is fundamentally a "divine reality", brought into being and sustained by the gracious God.

This means that the true nature and identity of the church reside not in herself but in the God with whom she has communion through Christ and the Spirit. Put differently, the nature of the church must be understood theologically and should never be assessed in anthropological or sociological

categories only.

We turn now to Christian worship. In *Worship Old and New*, Robert Webber defines worship as "a personal meeting with God in which we hymn, magnify, and glorify him for his person and actions ..." To this we must add that the worship of the church must not be seen merely as a human endeavour, but as an activity made possible only because God by his Spirit has enabled his children to cry out, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

Thus, while the different historically contingent forms and practices that the church has embraced throughout her history are important and should not be glossed over or superficially dismissed, they do not in themselves guarantee her being or the authenticity of her worship.

Throughout their history, Christians did not only worship in the magnificent Baroque Cathedrals of Europe, but also in humble homes and even in makeshift refugee camps. Worship is offered through the architectonic complexity of the Byzantine Rite, surrounded by ornate furniture and icons, and with a hymn and a prayer, in humble halls graced by a simple wooden cross.

However, regardless of the location and manner in which their services are conducted, Christians are confident that their prayer and praise, offered by faith in the name of Christ, are accepted by God and are in fact energised by the Spirit (Romans 8:26).

In the same way, Christians can be confident that the disruptions to their life and ministry brought about by the pandemic will not diminish their identity as God's covenant people and deprive them of authenticity worship or genuine communion with God and with one another.

Through the agency of the Spirit, Christians can be confident that their worship is real even if it is done remotely in front of their computer monitors or television screens. In a similar vein, Christians can trust the Spirit to bring the transforming word of God to them – through the reading of Scripture and the sermon – even as they participate in online worship.

But what about the practice of Holy Communion? Should this sacrament or ordinance be conducted remotely?

Many churches around the world have elected not to practice online Communion. Their decision, informed by different eucharistic theologies and motivated by the desire to safeguard the sacredness of the celebration and prevent its abuse, must of course be respected.

Other churches have decided to practice online Communion on grounds akin to the ecclesiology that I have been sketching. If the Holy Spirit can indeed be trusted to bring God's word to the members of Christ's body as they participate in worship remotely, the same Spirit can surely also be trusted to ensure the reality and efficacy of Holy Communion.

As Canon Dana Dealap, a former member of the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England, has perceptively put it, the essence of the sacrament of Holy Communion is ultimately dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, "whose action is not contained within the crusts of a loaf, the walls of a church, or the doctrines of the Church, but who, through God's grace, meets us in bread and wine."

While the arrangements that the church has put in place due to Covid-19 do not diminish the church's identity and worship, they are nonetheless provisional and temporary. The church must resume her normal offline worship services and ministries once the restrictions are lifted and physical gatherings are allowed.

God has created us in such a way that physical presence and face-to-face interactions are an important aspect of community life. Thus, while we must for now continue to "meet" each other online, we must also yearn for the day when we can once again see each other in the flesh (Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:4). ❖

Through the agency of the Spirit, Christians can be confident that their worship is real even if it is done remotely ...



Dr Roland Chia  
Chew Hock Hin Professor of Christian Doctrine  
Theological and Research Advisor of the Ethos Institute for Public Christianity

# Tribute to Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian, 11<sup>th</sup> Principal of TTC (2000-2020)

By Dr Tan Kim Huat,  
Chen Su Lan Professor of New Testament

2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020



Isaac Newton famously said that if he had seen further, it was because he was standing on the shoulders of giants. Although the plural in the saying may puzzle some people when they try to depict this visually, the point is nevertheless well made: it was a community of scholars, and not one solitary teacher, who paved the way for Newton's success.

While the community's contributions must be tenaciously remembered, we should still emphasise and celebrate the achievement of the one who sees. This is so because history is littered with many who did not wish to see, even when propped up, and many who did not wish to be propped up, believing that their unaided vantage point was all that mattered. To be willing to be propped up and see are rare qualities indeed.

In this regard, TTC happily celebrates the many contributions of the Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian, the eleventh principal of the college, on the occasion of his retirement. Those who went before him certainly elevated him to a higher vantage point and their contributions should not be forgotten. Nevertheless, it was during the tenure of Foong Nghian that the college took significant strides toward greater heights. We take this opportunity to remember, before God, some of these achievements.

The first challenge—and it was huge—was to plan and execute the relocation of TTC from 7 Mount Sophia to 490 Upper Bukit Timah Road in the year 2001. The task was mammoth and debacles stood ready to unleash their discordant storms. But in his calm manner, Foong Nghian, like a maestro, conducted the orchestra of faculty, staff and students. The big move was completed without a hitch. It will be wide of the mark to regard the event as merely a testimony to mechanical efficiency because it was exceedingly meaningful, and hence memorable. We marched purposefully and unabashedly with the chapel cross, down the streets of Singapore, until we reached our destination—once ulu



Moving to new campus (2001)



TTC's 1st professorial chair established (2002)



MOU signed with RSIS, NTU (2017)



TTC's 70th Anniversary Dinner (2018)

(i.e. remote) but now no longer—and set it up to signify the continuation of the old, albeit in a new setting.

Perhaps it has something to do with the ethos of theological training that seminaries often face financial problems. We are non-profit and we train people often for ministries of myriad needs but paltry resources. We have no product that lucrative industries want. In the eyes of the world, our income will always be precarious. However, it is important to remember that seminaries are set up for the church and the principle of koinonia means that it is also the responsibility of Christians, however endowed they are in financial ways, to share in the training of pastors and Christian workers. But how might this message be communicated? It is here that Foong Nghian shone brightly. Gently and earnestly conveying the principle of koinonia to Christians, and encouraging the faculty members to teach and preach well so that Christians might see clearly the relevance of seminaries, he ensured TTC was financially sound.

This financial health empowered the college to strike out to new domains and make contributions. The faculty team grew in size during his tenure, enabling the college to strengthen its essential ministry of training local pastors and Christian workers. Enrolment went up. TTC's international reputation also grew. Exchange programmes with many institutions of repute were

started. Often, it was the foreign institution that came knocking on our door. The prestigious International Society of Biblical Literature Conference was hosted by us in 2005. TTC also reached out to many lands to train their teachers and strengthen their curricula. Countries such as China and Vietnam quickly spring to mind. The footprints of TTC are now found far and wide.

On the home front, Foong Nghian led TTC to invest heavily in the training of the lay people. The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) and the Diploma in Theological Studies (DipTS) were birthed to ensure that Christians, who felt called to contribute to the Christian ministry but had chosen instead to remain in the market square, might still receive quality training for their witness. The offering of night classes through EQUIP gathered pace. The Ethos Institute for Public Christianity was started as a collaboration with the National Council of Churches of Singapore and the Bible Society of Singapore to address timely issues from a Christian perspective.

Collaboration with local schools also featured strongly during Foong Nghian's tenure. The DipTS is now offered jointly with the Biblical Graduate School of Theology. In this way, the quality of koinonia that gave birth to TTC during the dark days of WWII could spread to other Christian institutions. TTC was

also invited to offer courses for the Masters degree in Asian Studies (MSc Asian Studies) at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Who knows what fruit may be borne through the strategic and generous scattering of seeds?

There comes a time when all leaders will have to hand over the torch and step back to survey what has transpired during their tenure, and wonder whether what has been built will stand the test of time. Time is respecter of none and its ravages will be unrelenting towards any edifice that is poorly founded or constructed. However, we will do well to remember the words of Paul: our work for the Lord will not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). What we have done for the Lord of eternity will not be ravaged by time.

So step back, Foong Nghian, and enjoy your retirement. Yes, there may be occasions when you think of reliving your days so as to execute some matters differently. But resist this temptation. Instead, survey with satisfaction and thankfulness what you have been enabled by God to build. And pray for us, who still have some distance to go, that we may press on, along the right path, for his name's sake. ❖

## Introducing TTC's 12<sup>th</sup> Principal

By Bishop Dr Chong Chin Chung, Chairman (June 2020), TTC Board of Governors



Leadership succession at Trinity Theological College has been a matter of concern for the College's Board of Governors since six years ago. As the Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian approached the retirement age of 65 in 2015, active steps were taken to search for a new principal for the College. After a careful process of interviews and a sustained period of assessment, discernment and prayer, the Board of Governors, at a meeting held on 12 June 20, unanimously appointed the Rev Dr Edwin Tay as the 12th Principal of TTC with effect from 1 July 20.

Having served as Vice Principal since January 2018, Rev Dr Tay is not new to TTC. He joined the College as a full-time faculty member in January 2013. As Lecturer in Theology, he taught foundational and postgraduate courses in systematic theology, offered a range of electives in historical theology, and supervised postgraduate research projects. Rev Dr Tay also held appointments as Warden of the Family Residence and the Dean of Students.

An ordained minister of the Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Singapore, Edwin grew up attending Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church. Prior to joining TTC, he served as Lecturer in Systematic and Historical Theology at the Biblical Graduate School of Theology (BGST). He is also a former staff-

worker with the Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

Edwin spent his primary, secondary and college education at the Anglo-Chinese School. Majoring in Psychology and Social Work, he read for the B.A. degree at the National University of Singapore. He first trained in theology at the BGST before studying for the M.A. degree in Systematic Theology at King's College, University of London. His increasing burden for theological education led to doctoral research at New College, University of Edinburgh, where he was awarded the PhD degree for his dissertation on the priesthood of Christ in the writings of the Puritan pastor-theologian, John Owen (1616-1683).

Passionate about the ministry of teaching, Rev Dr Tay sees theological education at TTC as an extension of the church's mission and educational ministry. He hopes to build on the good legacy of his predecessors and continue the mission of TTC to equip servants of Christ for service in the church and society. Commenting on his appointment, he writes: "I am deeply humbled by the decision and appointment of the Board of Governors. It is a sacred calling that I embrace fully in obedience to the will of Christ. Under the hand of our sovereign God, I am confident that the strong support from our Governing Churches, partners and friends, along with the dedication of the faculty to the service of Christ, will enable the College to meet the challenges ahead and move forward by the Spirit into God's purposes for TTC."



The Tay family - Phoebe, Dr Tay, Angela and Chloe

Rev Dr Edwin Tay is supported by Angela, his wife, and his daughters, Phoebe and Chloe. Do keep Edwin and his family in prayer as he helms the College for a new season in the history of TTC. ❖

## Humbly Offered to the Lord - Class of 2020

By Lee Sheng Wei Daniel, MDiv 2020

At TTC, the valedictorian is not only outstanding among the graduating class in academic pursuit, but also actively involved in community life. This year, Daniel Lee represented his cohort to deliver the following address:

Today, under these extraordinary circumstances, we have the privilege of celebrating the successful completion of our TTC degree. On behalf of the Graduating Class of 2020, whom I am deeply honoured to represent, I would like to thank all our families, well-wishers, sending churches, denominations and lecturers: everyone who supported us through our theological studies these past years. It may not have been easy for you as we were sent for seminary education; but you embraced our calling to serve God, and recognized that formal preparation at TTC was necessary for a fruitful and enduring ministry ahead.

Such foresight is unfortunately lacking in some Christian circles today. Yet, when believers are bombarded with so many kinds of biblical interpretations, TTC has brought us back to the original Bible languages, so that we may rightly discern God's Word. When the latest fads are mistaken as pious worship, TTC has introduced the perspectives from Church history, so that we may recover authentic forms of spirituality for our times. When new philosophies threaten the very notion of God, TTC has grounded us in systematic doctrine, so that we may defend the gospel and exemplify Christian witness and mission to the world.

If it all sounds like a lot to learn in just a few years, that's because it really was! But if such is needed to address the multi-faceted challenges of our faith today,

then although we have struggled, we gave it our best. That is why our class has chosen as our graduation theme this year, "Humbly Offered to the Lord". Like the little boy who surrendered his five loaves and two fishes—all that he had—so that Jesus might feed his flock, we offered our heart and soul and mind and strength—our whole selves—to the Lord, in service to God's Church and Kingdom.

Yet, as the story goes, the loaves and fishes were of no use unless they were broken in the hands of the Lord. So, we are thankful that here at TTC, broken and humbled we were in our own little ways: as God was working in us to put aside our pride and self-centredness. In this, we are profoundly indebted to the faculty who have also become our mentors and friends. They understood their task not merely in terms of imparting knowledge and skills, but also building character and forming the virtues of love and service. Our training in TTC was thus all the more meaningful, because it gave us the space to reflect, to cry, and to grow more and more into the likeness of Christ.

And throughout our formation process, whether the times were good or not-so-good, we always had each other. As we learnt in class and studied together outside of class, as we worshipped in chapel and prayed in smaller groups, as we simply enjoyed God's gift of friendship over food and fun, we became a part of each other's lives. I cannot think of a finer and funnier batch of brothers and sisters I'd rather graduate with, than you all. Only God could have brought us together like this, and only God will continue to bind us in spirit, as we encourage each other now as fellow ministers to fulfil his mandate to be Lux Mundi: light of the world. ❖



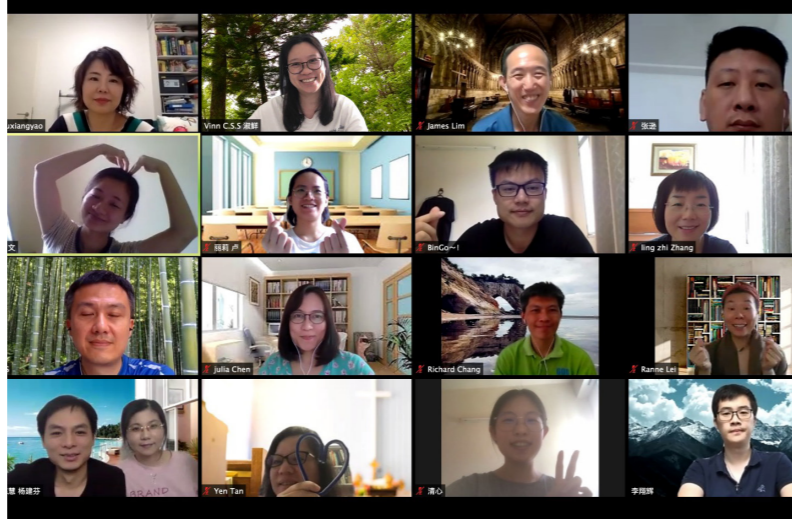
## Reflections on Remote Teaching and Home-Based Learning

After PM Lee Hisen Loong announced the Circuit Breaker measures on the 3 Apr, TTC adjusted to comply with the enhanced safety measures, including moving classes online. The following are the reflections of a student and a lecturer on the measures.

By Dr Leow Theng Huat, Lecturer in Theology

The idea of speaking in an empty room while staring into a computer screen and trying to look enthusiastic would have been unthinkable just a few months ago. Presently, however, I am doing the “unthinkable” as a matter of routine.

My first response is one of gratitude. I am thankful that we do not have to cancel our classes, and that our technological capability has progressed to the extent that we can have meaningful interaction during our online lessons. My favourite moments happen when I stop “sharing” my slides, revert to the screen where I can see the faces of my students and engage in conversation with them.



At the same time, however, the reality that we are embodied beings has hit home with greater force. I feel dissatisfied when I am not able to see and sense the responses of those I am speaking to. I miss the synergy which happens when teacher and students draw energy and encouragement from one another and push each other to ever greater heights. Online teaching is something to be grateful for. It is, however, an experience that makes me appreciate and long for physical interaction even more.

By Lam Wee Kian, MDiv2

The difference as a result of moving classes online was felt immediately. Nothing beats sitting in the classroom, soaking in lectures and experiencing the atmosphere of the class through the laughter and interaction. The expressions of our lecturers that would otherwise have been communicated through their body language were absent because we only saw their faces via Zoom.

Furthermore, classmates had to juggle family responsibilities with schoolwork since school-aged children would have to be supervised while on home-based learning. As childcare facilities were shut, TTC students with younger children had to mind them while attending classes.

Despite the challenges, I am still thankful for the technology that allowed classes to continue. I have learnt to be more appreciative of the classroom environment that aids holistic learning. There is something about face-to-face interaction that even the best of technology cannot replace. I have begun to treasure the precious friendships that I have in TTC. I am blessed to be able still to meet up via Zoom with my ‘friendship group’ that comprises of two other batch mates. We continue to pray and encourage each other to press on. Though the pandemic has caused much disruption and even challenges to our lives, God’s grace has continued to see us through this difficult period. I learnt to pour out my frustrations to God regarding the disappointments I face due to the restrictions to daily living and draw closer to God to find strength and comfort. Indeed, the simple God-given gift of human contact and interaction should not be taken for granted. ❖

## Farewell, God Bless

We bid farewell to two of our faculty members at the close of the Academic Year 2019-2020.

Rev Yap Seok Chin has taken early retirement to serve in Christian missions. She had served as Warden of Sophia Hall, Dean of Students, Field Education Director and Registrar at TTC. We deeply appreciate her contributions in the area of administration, mission studies and pastoral concern for students.



Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott has been given another assignment by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), his sponsoring church. A former Chaplain of TTC, we are grateful for his contributions in teaching Worship and Liturgy, and Homiletics. Jeffrey will be joining the faculty of a Batak Lutheran Seminary (HKBP-STT) in Pematangsiantar, Sumatra.

We wish both Seok Chin and Jeffrey God’s manifold blessings in their new phases of life and service. ❖

## Celebrating Academic Excellence

At the end of every academic year the college comes together to celebrate the achievements of some of our students. Such achievements are not just academic in nature because they are possible only through slog and grind, which are often accompanied by tears. However, the character is moulded in the process and the students emerge as hardy servants of the Lord.

These prizes are made possible by the generosity of well-wishers, and their winners are :

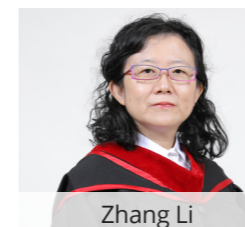
**Frederick Buechner Prize for Homiletics 2020** – Zhang Li, Rufus Chan

**Jerome Prize for Hebrew 2020** – Cai Yu (Top Student), Isaac Ngo (Most Improved Student)

**John Brown Award for Greek 2020** – Zhang Xun (Top Student), Barnabas Sim (Top Student),

Qu Xiangyao (Most Improved Student)

**Timothy Chow Prize 2020 Best MTh Thesis** – Christopher Chan



Zhang Li



Rufus Chan



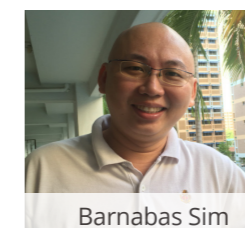
Cai Yu



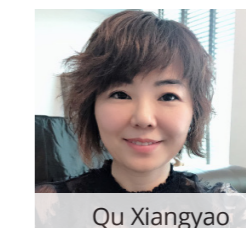
Isaac Ngo



Zhang Xun



Barnabas Sim



Qu Xiangyao



Christopher Chan

# TTC's Commitment to Authentic Theological Education

By Rev Dr Lim Teck Peng, Academic Dean

When this article was written in July 2020, the Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (DORSCON) remained at Orange, but the nation has moved cautiously to the second phase of its reopening since 19 June 2020.

## The Layers of Commitment

Under the ongoing impact of the current pandemic, TTC as a learning community, like any Christian community, has been constantly challenged to not only uphold our Christian faith, but also live out our values and commitments. In this respect, TTC's decision to reopen its face-to-face, on-campus classes, while in tandem with the national policy of re-opening, carries its own set of values and commitments unique to the college as a Christian theological seminary.

What sort of commitment, besides that of health and safety, undergirds TTC's re-opening?

A straightforward answer is: the commitment to the authenticity of theological education, to which physical presence and face-to-face koinonia (fellowship) are indispensable.

## Significant Theological Learning in a Vulnerable Time

In what sense is TTC's re-opening at this moment in a pandemic educationally significant?

From the perspective of theological education and spiritual formation, studying alongside others in an



epidemic situation is a challenging yet revealing process. It is also educationally significant. At both personal and communal levels, what is being revealed as we study with others in a vulnerable situation is educationally and spiritually as significant as the knowledge transmitted through books and lectures. In fact, this incarnated aspect of theological learning forms an important part of authentic theological study.

While this is an unsettling time for education in general, it is also an extraordinary time for theological education in which the relationship between theological study and spiritual reflection and growth is never more keenly felt and appreciated.

Although TTC's ethos undergirding its reopening is less noticeable compared to its commitment to safe management, it is no less significant for Christians who want to be equipped in a time like this.

## Conclusion

In and through the COVID-19 pandemic, TTC strives to maintain its academic ethos while working hard to provide a safe learning environment to those who are called to be trained to serve God.

Who knows what kind of teachable moments are awaiting our community in the new academic year. But I do believe these moments will be as rewarding as they are challenging as the TTC community persevere and press on to remain faithful to our calling. ❖



# TRINITY NEWS

## Congratulations to...

Caiyu (MDiv 2020) and his wife, Lin Weizhen, on the birth of their son, Cai Jingzhi, on 9 Apr 2020.

Linberg Wong (MDiv 2017) and his wife, Belinda Yeck, who celebrated the arrival of their second child, Theophilus Wong, on 2 Jun 2020.

Ian Lee (BD 2011) and his wife, Michele, on the birth of their daughter, on 24 Jun 2020.

Zhang Yudong (MDiv 2020) and his wife, Li Yaping, who celebrated the arrival of their second son, Nathan Zhang, on 21 Jun 2020.

Rt Rev Keith Lai who was elected as President of the National Council of Churches of Singapore, on 9 Jul 2020.

Shaun Chong (BD 2011) and his wife, Yeo Rulin, who celebrated the arrival of their third child, Kate Chong, on 3 Jul 2020.

Nathanael Goh (BD 2012) and his wife, Charmaine Weng, who celebrated the arrival of their second child, Joelle Goh, on 13 Jul 2020.

Zhang Xinyu (MTh 2019, DTh 2) on the celebration of his marriage to Ma Runzhi (MDiv 2020) on 25 Jul 2020.

Alvin Chee Ming Wei (MDiv 2017) on the celebration of his marriage to Ng Jia Lerd Charlotte (MDiv 2019, MTh 2) on 8 Aug 2020.

Our alumnae on being made Deaconess in The Diocese of Singapore on 26 Jul 2020:

Ti Lian Swan (MDiv 2005)

Grace Tan Puay Lan (MDiv 1995 MTh 2010)

## Condolences to...

Mrs Shirley Skelton Cole and her family on the passing of Rev Dr Alan Cole, on 21 May 2020. He was former lecturer of TTC.

Derrick Bubura (BD2) on the demise of his beloved father, the late Mr Crammer Bubura, on 3 Jun 2020.

The family of the late Mdm Huang Siew Tsuh @ Wong Siew Diik (Dip 1956), who was called home to be with the Lord on 12 Feb 2020.

Mrs Dawn Moore and her family on the passing of Canon Mervyn Moore, on 15 Jun 2020. He was former warden of Saint Peter's Hall.

The family of the late Jonatan Tan Keng Tong (SSC 1971), who was called home to be with the Lord on 6 Jul 2020. He was 75.

The family of the late Rev Dr E J Thorasingam (BTh 2002, MTh 2004), who was called home to be with the Lord on 12 Jul 2020. He was former lecturer of TTC.

The family of the late Joseph Kwok Sin Liong (MDiv 1989), who was called home to be with the Lord on 23 Jul 2020. He was 78.

## Farewell to...

Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian who retired on 30 June 2020 after serving TTC for 19 years and 6 months as principal.

Rev Yap Seok Chin who has taken early retirement to serve in Christian missions after serving 22 years and 6 months at TTC.

Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott who has been given a new assignment by his sponsoring church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, after serving 16 years at TTC.

## 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)



TTC is pleased to offer a series of special lectures for the Christian public for the second half of 2020. As we battle the viral pandemic that is affecting our nation and world, these lectures will be offered at no cost to participants.

## Online Special Lectures : August to October 2020



Visit [www.ttc.edu.sg](http://www.ttc.edu.sg) for more details

### August 2020

#### **Psalms for Tough Times**

Rev Dr Maggie Low  
(Instructor)

### September 2020

#### **The Hope of Things to Come: Reflections on Christian Eschatology**

Dr Roland Chia  
(Instructor)

### October 2020

#### **Twelve Whys of Worship**

Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott  
(Instructor)

**Each lecture series consists of four lectures and an online discussion via Zoom with the instructor. Please visit our website for more details.**

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TRINITY THEOLOGICAL  
COLLEGE  
490 Upper Bukit Timah Road  
Singapore 678093  
Email: [info@ttc.edu.sg](mailto:info@ttc.edu.sg)  
Website: [www.ttc.edu.sg](http://www.ttc.edu.sg)  
Tel: (65) 6767 6677

