



Going “Viral”: Lessons from History for Missions

By Rev Dr Andrew Peh

It was in early December 2019 that the first cases of a new zoonotic disease were reported in China and, to date, the virus, named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes COVID-19, has infected more than 60 million worldwide with a death toll of more than 1.4 million. According to virologists and medical experts, “all available evidence to date suggests that the virus has a natural animal origin and is not a manipulated or constructed virus”. The interconnectedness of our modern world facilitated the rapid spread of the pandemic and forced the world to be reacquainted with the eerie “sound of silence” (“Hello, darkness my old friend”) in a desperate attempt to stem the contagion.

Over the months, many in the various faith traditions have sought to adapt to what is perceived as “the new normal”. But Christians living out our faith and piety amidst a pandemic is indeed normal and there is perhaps nothing new about it. The early Christians were well acquainted with the darkness of their times, whether as persecutions or pandemics.

Notably two pandemics shook the Roman world. The first was the Antonine Plague of the 2nd century, presumably caused by a strain of smallpox, which persisted between 165-189 AD, waxed and waned for a generation, peaking in the year 189 AD. It was estimated to have decimated a quarter of the Roman Empire. But, as Lyman Stone rightly noted, this provided the context that “led to the spread of Christianity, as Christians cared for the sick and offered a spiritual model whereby

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plagues were not the work of angry and capricious deities but the product of a broken creation in revolt against a loving God”.

The second and more serious pandemic was the Plague of Cyprian, a zoonotic pandemic (similar to Ebola) which arose in Ethiopia and spread to various parts of the Roman Empire, lasting almost two decades. It was so named after the bishop, Cyprian, for his first-hand observations about the illness through his sermons and in his work, *De Mortalitate (On Mortality)*. Cyprian’s admonition to Christians was that they were to care for those afflicted. Cyprian wrote: “Although this mortality has contributed nothing else, it has especially accomplished this for Christians and servants of God, that we have begun gladly to seek martyrdom while we are learning not to fear death.”

His fellow bishop, Dionysius of Alexandria, wrote of the witness of Christians: “Most of our Christian brothers and sisters showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbours and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead.”

At a time where the high death rates terrified everyone, Dionysius noted that Christians understood the times as one of “schooling and testing”. At a time where many questioned their faith, Christianity provided comfort as well as purpose, and “Christian doctrine provided a prescription for action.”

This self-giving would again be evident in the witness of Martin Luther amidst another pandemic. The Black Death, which had wiped out a third of Europe’s population in between 1347 and 1351, had resurfaced in Luther’s hometown of Wittenberg. Luther refused calls to flee the city to protect himself, choosing instead to minister to the sick. It was a costly decision that Luther paid with the life of his infant daughter. Yet it underscores the high cost of discipleship in following Christ. Luther produced a tract, *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*, where he articulated a clear Christian response in the face of a pandemic: we die at our posts.

In more recent history, for fear of infection, the government in Hawaii quarantined and deposited those suffering from Hansen’s disease (leprosy) on a triangular piece of land called Kalaupapa in Molokai. Those who were

infected with the disease were transported to the island and left to fend for themselves: They were made “pariahs” of society. Yet Joseph De Veuster (Father Damien) chose to go to Molokai, with the specific intention of ministering to the pariahs. He immersed himself in their world, dressing sores, hugging children and burying the dead. When he referred to the congregation, he did not say “my brothers and sisters” but “we lepers”. Literally becoming one of them when he later contracted the disease, Father Damien lived, ministered and ultimately died among a people he loved on 15 Apr 1889.

In the history of plagues and pandemics, the Christian witness of sacrificial care is a recurring theme. Cyprian, Dionysius, Martin Luther, Father Damian all sought to live out Christlikeness – following Christ’s example of walking the path of death in order to give life.

Undoubtedly, many churches are seeking to make sense of the way forward where missions and ministry are concerned. Before adopting new practices and adapting to the “new normal”, perhaps we need to examine the ways the Lord has helped to align the mission of the church with His mission, in the history of the church. Essentially, we have to ask what Christlikeness looks like in our times. Amidst a new abnormal, the mission of the church (*missio ecclesiae*) must be modulated afresh, aligned to the mission of God (*missio Dei*). Just as God sent his Son, similarly he sends us to live (and to die) in witness of the sacrificial love of Jesus, who, on that first Christmas, tabernacled amongst us. The miracle of

Christ’s incarnation tells us that we cannot simply love from a distance.

‘Contagious’, ‘infectious’ and ‘viral’ are probably three words that will make the taboo list in view of the current coronavirus pandemic. In following Jesus’ example in his incarnation, however, the church’s mission in this day and age is to demonstrate contagious compassion, infectious influence and viral vicarious living.

On behalf of the principal, staff and faculty of Trinity Theological College, allow me to wish you all a blessed Christmas and may you go viral with Jesus this season and always. ❖



Rev Dr Andrew Peh
Lecturer in Missions & Missions History

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Crossing Borders

Phase 3 of Singapore’s reopening is a highly anticipated event. After nearly a year of incessant changes to life at all levels of society, news that Phase 3 may commence before the end of the year or in early 2021 has brought about a general sense of relief and jubilation to many.

Singapore’s Education Minister, Mr Lawrence Wong, sounded a word of caution in his announcement on 10 Nov 2020. He warned that “it’s more important that we do it right than we rush into phase three and end up with bad consequences down the road.” One aspect of “doing it right” concerns the need to manage border-crossings with stringent care.

Borders are not simply geographical demarcations that mark out the territory a nation inhabits. They have political, sociological and economic functions. In the context of the global pandemic, borders have become instruments of containment and defense against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The impact of border policies is unavoidably double-edged. Protecting the interests of the in-group will mean the exclusion of others. While insignificant for some on the receiving end, such exclusion may be detrimental to others.

Many of TTC’s international students have had to cope with the stressors brought on by border restrictions. Most of those who were due to arrive in Singapore to be matriculated at TTC in August 2020 had to defer their studies for a year. This sudden change of plans meant that those who had resigned from their jobs to begin theological training were caught in a quandary and without income. Due to border closures, some of

our existing international students have been unable to return to their home countries during the semester breaks. This meant the incurrence of additional cost for food and accommodation.

Through no fault of their own, international students have had to bear the weight of additional stressors brought about by border restrictions. This is in addition to the psychological strain of being away from home and having to adapt to a foreign culture. Amid these challenges, modern technology has enabled the College to cross the virtual border to minister to the pastoral and educational needs of students.

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Relying on online platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Classroom, our faculty members have been teaching and ministering to students remotely when in-person gatherings are either limited or not possible. Live-streaming technologies allowed our whole community to gather for weekly chapel services as part of our formational rhythm of study and corporate worship.

There was a poignant moment in the semester when members of our community gathered in support of a foreign student whose father had passed away in her home country. With the help of fellow students and several faculty members, a memorial service was conducted at which members of the grieving family in her home country were gathered virtually with her spiritual family at TTC. I was struck by how the borders that separated two countries and communities were “crossed” in virtual space for the hope and comfort of Christ to be shared.

At the Incarnation, the border that separates a holy God from sinful humanity was crossed. The Son of God “became flesh” so that we may become “partakers of the divine nature” (Jn 1:14; 2 Pet 1:4). In the words of the Church Father, Irenaeus of Lyons, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, of his boundless love, became what we are that he might make us what he himself is.” As we remember the birth of our Lord this Christmas, may our eyes be opened to the borders that need to be crossed for the sake of Christ and may our hearts be emboldened to do so. ❖





All Black Seeds Will Flower To Life Again

By Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

Almost exactly seventy years ago, on 26 November 1950, after Thanksgiving Day, the police of the new communist People's Republic of China came at night and arrested the missionary Francis Olin Stockwell as he and his wife were sitting down to dinner at home in Chongqing. Olin would spend the next two years in various prisons.

were later dropped, anti-American sentiments and a corrupt legal system were enough to keep Olin in prison, much of it in solitary confinement, accompanied mainly by a copy of James Moffatt's translation of the New Testament that Esther had slipped to him during his arrest.

Months of solitary confinement did not break Olin; they only made Olin more aware of the providence of God.

Olin and his wife, Esther, had gone to China in 1929 as missionaries after Olin had served for five years as a Methodist pastor in his home state of Oklahoma, in the United States. They went first to Fuzhou and then to Chengdu in Sichuan, where Olin taught the New Testament at the West China Union University. In 1949, the Stockwells moved to Chongqing to take over the mission there, and it was there that Olin was arrested.

Olin was initially accused of 'mishandling furniture' and of 'disseminating information through the mails'. Other spurious charges were later added, including entertaining an American journalist and accepting gifts from the U.S. Consulate. Later it turned out that a maverick Chinese Methodist pastor who had got into some trouble had accused Olin of being an American spy in order to cover up his own mess. Not only had this Pastor Chu made a false accusation, but he also manufactured evidence against Olin, going to the extent of creating a 'code' which he used to frame Olin the American. Although almost all of the charges

Yet it was this solitary confinement that drew Olin back to Scripture. As Olin put it, "A Bible teacher in theological college once remarked to a group of us that he had never discovered any way to get his students to read the Bible. They would read books about the Bible, but not the text itself. I can now tell him. Put them in solitary imprisonment for months with nothing else to read."

Olin thought his solitary confinement unnecessary and cruel, but he could see how God could use all difficulties for good. Olin confessed, "If I had had a companion in my cell, or all the books I wanted to read, I would have written nothing and would have seen little that was new in the New Testament." Olin thought that accidents and misfortune in life were to be accepted not in a spirit of resignation, but of creative venture, and he was certainly creative.

During his imprisonment, Olin kept a diary, produced a study of John's Gospel and a volume of poetry. He told the story of this imprisonment in *With God in Red China: The Story of Two Years in Chinese Communist Prisons*. In fact, within the

first year of prison, Olin had already written and rewritten (because they kept being confiscated) a series of devotional talks that were later compiled into another book, *Meditations from a Prison Cell*.

Prison not only allowed Olin's creative juices to flow, it also deepened his faith and enriched his prayer. After a year of imprisonment, Olin would write,

*I know not why the Master's eye
Sought me in that vast throng;
I only know He does supply
The grace that keeps me strong...*

*I know not where the Master leads
O'er mountain trail of pain;
I only trust that all black seeds
Will flower to life again.*

And his life did flower again, in Singapore.

In November 1952, Olin was released from prison and deported to Hong Kong, where Esther had escaped to after Olin's arrest. Olin was the last Methodist missionary to leave China. Spending some time recuperating, the Stockwells came to Singapore on vacation in 1955. The former Principal of Trinity Theological College, Hobart Amstutz, encouraged the Stockwells to remain and serve in Singapore. The TTC Board of Governors subsequently invited Olin to join the faculty. Olin accepted and from September 1955 taught New Testament, Practical Theology and Homiletics at TTC.

After serving as Acting Principal from 1957-1958 and 1961-1963, Olin finally became Principal of the College and immediately started innovating. One of his ideas to create a warmer fellowship between faculty and students was to have them eat together once a week on Monday evenings. There was a programme of "games, stunts, music or pictures". As Esther explained in her book, *Asia's Call*, "Because faculty as well as students paid for these meals, the cook was able to add something special each week, some delicacy that the students couldn't normally afford."

Olin also enlivened the monthly faculty meetings by inviting all faculty members to the Stockwell's house for lunch before the business meeting. A simple meal of curry chicken and rice, or fried rice (which Esther called "nazi goering") followed by fruit or dessert was served. Eventually, other families



Rev Francis Olin Stockwell

took turns hosting lunch before faculty meetings.

Then realising that churches needed current information about TTC and its goals in order to support the college, Olin started a monthly newspaper which he called *Trumpet*.

And, of course, Olin wrote the TTC Anthem, with Esther composing the music. The first two stanzas of the anthem were actually written years earlier, when Olin was in solitary confinement in prison.

Principal Olin Stockwell is a prime example of how God's sustaining power can work in dark times. Months of solitary confinement did not break Olin; they only made him more aware of the providence of God. He was confident that "it is this overshadowing presence of God that can keep us from worry, give us courage, and help us to interpret our difficulties as opportunities for growth". Instead of being depressed or becoming bitter, Olin felt such unprecedented peace and joy in prison that he believed, as he wrote, "my years in Chinese Communist prisons may well prove to have been the most wonderful years of my life."

May we be able to offer up our difficulties and suffering to God, knowing that we will experience God's sustaining grace in a deeper way. As Olin wrote,

*I offer Thee my pain in trust
That it will not all fruitless be;
Planted in Thy heart it must
Bloom to life from sorrow free. ❖*



Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

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By Dr Roland Chia

2020 began with distant reports about a virus outbreak in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in China. Subsequently identified as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the menacing pathogen quickly proved to be a dangerous threat to global health.

At this writing (in November), more than 55 million cases have been reported worldwide, and the death toll has crossed the one million mark. WHO predicts that before mass vaccination is available, the death toll could hit two million!

COVID-19 has brought in its wake such chaos, havoc and misery that the world has not witnessed in a generation. It has pushed healthcare services around the world to the brink of despair, and brought some of the world's strongest economies to their knees.

But to those who are willing to learn, the pandemic has many important lessons to teach – lessons we ignore to our peril! What are some of these lessons? Let me highlight just two of them.

The first has to do with the illusion of invincibility that pervades our modern culture and society. The remarkable advances in science and technology we have witnessed in the past two centuries and the tremendous powers they bestow upon humankind have fostered a misplaced confidence in our species –

the notion that we are in full control of our destinies.

The pandemic has shown how a virus so tiny that it is imperceptible to the naked human eye can turn the world, as we know it, upside down!

In this sense, COVID-19 can be said to be truly iconoclastic. It has smashed the idols of self-sufficiency and forced us to ask uncomfortable questions about the confidence we have placed in ourselves and our sciences.

Together with the ever-worsening ecological crisis, COVID-19 has revealed the precariousness of the human species, despite its laudable achievements – our sheer impotence in the face of forces larger than ourselves, over which we have little or no control.

The realisation of our powerlessness should – it is hoped – cause us to turn to what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the celebrated author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, has called “the Higher Power” – God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, who alone is sovereign.

It is hoped also that amidst the terrors of the pandemic and the uncertainties that accompany it, we will, together with the ancient psalmist, acknowledge that God alone is our refuge and fortress, and learn to put our trust in him (Ps 91:2).

I say “it is hoped” because we simply cannot assume

that everyone would be receptive to the lessons God wishes to teach us through the pandemic. And lest the reader thinks that these lessons are meant only for the non-believer, let me be clear that even Christians need to disabuse themselves of misguided self-confidence and pride, and learn how to trust in God.

There is another lesson that can be gleaned from this global health crisis. This lesson has to do with human relationships. It has to do with the fact that we are – all of us – profoundly dependent on one another.

On its website, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia published a series of reflections by its “young reporters” under the broad heading “Lessons We Will Learn from This Pandemic”. A number of the contributors – all in their teens – wrote about how COVID-19 has made them more aware of the importance of human relationships.

“This situation has shown us that we are all the same regardless of our religion, culture, customs, whether we are rich or poor,” writes Eva Hadzipetrova, aged 15. “We do not live without relationships and we should never forget that.”

To be sure, the pandemic has reshaped human relationships in profound and unexpected ways. Lockdown measures have necessitated close and constant contact with some people, while social distancing and travel restrictions have isolated us from other people and the wider community.

The outcomes of these restrictions have not always been positive as the rise in the cases of domestic violence and the unprecedented surge in divorce in Europe and elsewhere tragically indicate.

But the pandemic has also brought about a profound sense of solidarity, a global togetherness, if you will, that is truly remarkable. In a very real sense, the crisis has caused us to realise that we are all neighbours in the world, and that our survival and well-being, our success in overcoming this threat, depends very much on how we help and support one another.

Solidarity is a central theme in the social teaching of the Church. Theologically, it is grounded in the truth that each individual is a bearer of the divine

image (Gen 1:27) and a valued member of the human family. Ethically, it is premised on Jesus’ command to love our neighbour (Mark 12:31).

According to the Christian faith, solidarity is the basis for social responsibility. As Pope Francis has so eloquently put it, solidarity

“is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

During the pandemic, we see the bright lights of human solidarity across the globe that is truly heart warming.

In April, the UK government called for volunteers to help support the National Health Service, setting a target of 250,000. More than 750,000 signed up!

In Somalia, Syria, Peru and South Sudan, young people join forces in an initiative to tackle misinformation, raise community awareness of the pandemic and support the elderly.

In Singapore, volunteers distribute food to the elderly and less privileged during the national lockdown or circuit breaker.

No one can predict how things will pan out in 2021, and when (if?) the deadly virus will be completely vanquished.

But if we are willing to learn the lessons it teaches – to put our trust in God and to reach out to one another in solidarity and love – we will surely find the resources and resilience to weather this global scourge together. ❖



Dr Roland Chia
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Passing the Torch

Service for the Induction of the 12th Principal of Trinity Theological College

By Dr Leow Theng Huat,
Lecturer in Theology

Daunting Task

ATo take over the helm of the oldest seminary in Singapore; to do so from the hands of its longest-serving principal who had ably led the college for close to two decades; to assume this responsibility at the relatively young age of forty-seven; to have to provide leadership at a time when our church and world faces the unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic — these are challenges severe enough to daunt the stoutest of hearts.

This was perhaps why Rev Dr Edwin Tay chose 1 Cor 2:1-5 as the text for his sermon at the service held on 26 Aug to induct him as the 12th principal of Trinity Theological College. Standing at the pulpit, Dr Tay expressed his deep gratitude to Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian, the former principal, for his guidance. He then solicited the prayers and support of the congregation for the responsibility he had assumed.

The Centrality of the Cross

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor 2:3 that he began his ministry in Corinth “in weakness with great fear and trembling”. Dr Tay shared that these words describe well how he was feeling. But he went on to say that there was a basis for our service to God despite our manifest inadequacies. This was the cross of Christ. The cross is central to Christianity, as it is both the message we proclaim, as well as that which shapes the messengers we form.

The cross as the message we proclaim has offended its listeners in the past and continues to offend today, as it seems to depict foolishness, weakness and defeat. Yet the apostle Paul saw the cross as the heart of the Christian faith. He used it as the reference point for dealing with the numerous controversies in the churches he ministered to. The cross is also that which shapes its messengers, as true ministers of God do not call attention to themselves and their abilities, but instead rejoice that their weaknesses help point others to Christ. TTC therefore sees theological education as far more than the mere conveying of knowledge. It involves the shaping of the messengers of the cross after the message. Such shaping needs time and can only take place in the context of a community. It also needs the cooperation of both church and seminary.

Dr Tay ended his sermon by noting how TTC’s history



Rev Dr Tay preaches on the centrality of the cross of Christ



Intercessory prayers offered for Rev Dr and Mrs Tay and family

“The careful study of theology has to be carried out in tandem with the spiritual formation of students after the message of the Cross.

was also patterned after the message of the cross. The idea for a union college was birthed from discussions in prison amongst church leaders when they were incarcerated by the Japanese during the Second World War. These leaders did not know if their plans would ever see the light of day, as they were not even certain they would survive the war. But God, in his grace, took what was pitifully weak and made it strong. TTC was founded in grace, grew in grace and continues to depend on that same grace today. Dr Tay concluded with a prayer for the college to remain always a faithful witness to the cross of Christ.

A Service Patterned After the Cross

The service of induction was, by necessity, a simple one.



Handing on the Principal's Bible



Recessional with congregation singing, 'Lead On, O King Eternal'

The college chapel was sparsely filled. Present were the heads of the governing churches and other members of the Board of Governors, our former principal Dr Ngoei and the faculty members. In attendance also were a few other church leaders, supporters and students. Dr Tay’s wife, Angela, and his parents rounded up those physically present. The rest of the TTC community had to watch the livestream of the service. There was, moreover, no singing, and the face masks worn by the participants and attendees added to the rather sombre mood. It did not help that all of us dispersed rather quickly after the service ended, as there was no provision of refreshments, and consequently no joyous fellowship around food and drink. It was certainly not a normal event of induction of

a new principal. The pomp, grandeur and celebratory mood were noticeably missing.

But if the message of the cross is true, such deprivations necessitated by our COVID-19 safety measures do not undermine the reality of God’s presence at the service and his ability to bestow his grace. Under the able leadership of the College’s chaplains, the congregation (both in person and online) came before God and affirmed our faith using the words of the Apostles’ Creed. The Rt Rev Terry Kee, the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Singapore and the Chairman of TTC’s Board of Governors, then inducted Dr Tay as our 12th principal. Dr Ngoei proceeded to hand over the principal’s Bible to Bishop Kee, who in turn handed it to Dr Tay. This was a deeply symbolic act signifying the importance of God’s Word in the life of the College.

After the sermon, as Dr Tay and his wife knelt, heartfelt prayers were offered by representatives of the various sectors of the TTC community. The Rt Rev Rennis Ponniah, Bishop of the Diocese of Singapore, represented the Board of Governors in praying for the new principal and his family. Rev Dr Gregory Goh Nai Lat (class of 1992) represented our alumni in interceding for the faculty and staff of the college. Our Academic Dean, Rev Dr Lim Teck Peng, then prayed on behalf of his colleagues for our supporting churches and alumni. Prayers concluded with Mr Aldran Wong, the president of our Student Council, asking for God’s blessing and guidance for his fellow students.

The congregation was then treated to a slide presentation, featuring photographs of the life of the college, past and present. There were looks of surprise as we saw the (much) younger selves of faculty members and alumni. The presentation was carefully put together by Ms Elena Yeo (class of 2019), and it provided a visual reminder of God’s faithfulness to TTC in her 72-year history. Finally, Bishop Dr Chong Chin Chung of the Methodist Church in Singapore gave the benediction, and the service drew to a close.

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). This service of induction has allowed us a glimpse of a leader and a College determined, like Paul, to cling to Christ and his cross. This, surely, represents the grandest and best of beginnings. ❖

A Heart that Burns for God: TTC's 72nd Anniversary Service

By Rev Dr James Lim, Lecturer in New Testament, Associate Director of Field Education

Trinity Theological College celebrated its 72nd Anniversary with a Thanksgiving Service on the theme “A Heart that Burns for God” at the College chapel on 2 Oct 2020. The morning service was graced by members from the Board of Governors, faculty, students, alumni and guests of the College.

The Rt Rev Terry Kee, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Singapore, was the speaker at the service. In line with the theme of the Anniversary Service, Rt Rev Kee spoke on the topic “A Heart for Being the Light of the World”, exhorting all to fulfill our calling to be the light of the world by shining for Christ. With the reminder that the ability to shine for Christ is determined by the depth of our relationship with God, Bishop Kee encouraged all to shine for Christ wherever God has placed us.



Dr Leow Theng Huat receiving his long service award.

The Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, then highlighted two important aspects of our college through the lens of our anniversary theme. First, it captures for us the way in which God has sustained and blessed TTC since its founding. Amidst the global crisis of the Second World War, the vision of a union college for the service of church and society was birthed among church leaders whose hearts burned for God while interned in prison. The divine gift of a heart that burns for God is also evident in the faithful and sacrificial service of past and present leaders, lecturers and staff of TTC. Second, the theme captures a necessary point of reference for TTC's journey into the future where developments in modes of teaching and communication need to be made in light of the increasing importance of technology. Nevertheless, TTC will not neglect the theological training of those with no access to technology, as a heart that burns for God is a heart that loves the Body of Christ without partiality. Finally, Rev Dr. Tay also thanked all supporters for their faithful and generous support to the College amidst trying circumstances.

This year also saw the presentation of the Long Service Award to Dr Leow Theng Huat (10 years). Students who have completed the course requirements from Equip and QiCheng, the Lay Training Initiative of TTC, were also awarded their certificates and licentiates.

Reflecting on the service, Stephanie Ng (Cert. in Mission Practice, 2020) comments: “Receiving of the certificate physically at the service was a milestone for me and refreshing in this year of pandemic. It nudged me in the direction that God has shown me.” May TTC continue to kindle aglow hearts for the service of God. ❖

EQUIP Online Modules : January to March 2021

Christian Spirituality & Ministry	Journeys Beyond the Comfort Zone	Christian Doctrine	Evangelical Theology & Spirituality
Rev Dr Jimmy Tan (Instructor)	Rev Dr Wong W F David (Instructor)	Rev Dr Edmund Fong (Instructor)	Rev Dr Simon Chan (Instructor)
Dates : 11 Jan — 1 Mar Every Monday	Dates : 12 Jan — 2 Mar Every Tuesday	Dates : 13 Jan — 3 Mar Every Wednesday	Dates : 14 Jan — 4 Mar Every Thursday

Each lecture module is conducted via Zoom from 7:30pm - 9.30pm

Visit www.ttc.edu.sg for more details



College Day of Prayer A Reflection

By Jason Lee, MDiv 1

After merely five weeks of my time here in TTC, I desperately needed time away from textbooks, research and writing. I must admit that my heart was failing to catch up with my head and hands, which were increasingly fatigued. The Day of Prayer provided the space for me to slow down and realign myself with our heavenly Father.

I had heard many devotional sharings and sermons on the prodigal son, but I was humbled by the time of guided meditation when I had to envision myself as that son.

As a son, sometimes I get bored of being “at home” with God. I am sometimes tempted to forsake the boundaries that were set at home to keep me safe because I want to experience the freedom of being in the “outside world” and what it had to offer. After all, the grass always seems to be greener on the other side. Yet, after straying and tainting myself with sin, God patiently waits for me at home and lovingly washes away my filth when I return to him.

After the guided meditation, I took some time to sing worship songs which I had not done on my own in a long while, and thanked God for His faithfulness despite times of backsliding.

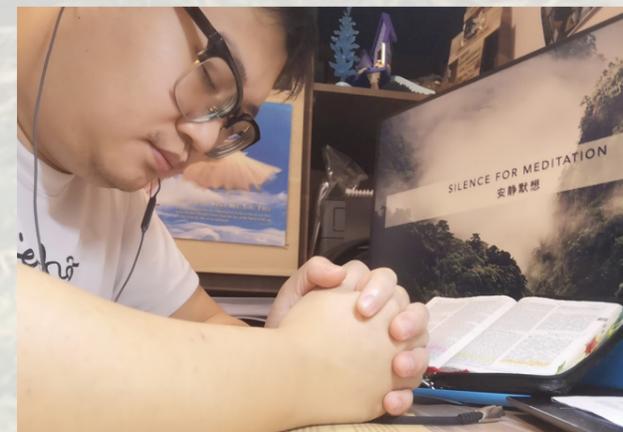
I am thankful for the time spent and truly appreciated all of the DOP activities. It was a much needed time for me to reflect and commune with God. Many thanks to our seniors who laboured in love to plan the day for us! ❖



DOP guide



Silence and solitude



Praying from home



Meditation through art

For Church and World

By Dr Mark Chan, Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology

A thanksgiving gathering was held to honour the College's recently-retired principal, Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian on 28 Oct 2020 at the TTC Chapel. Dr Ngoei is the 11th and longest-serving principal in the history of the College, having been at the helm for close to 20 years. In line with COVID-19 restrictions, only 50 individuals were present in the chapel, with the rest of the TTC community, friends and alumni joining in the live-streaming of the event.

The emcee, Dr Tan Kim Huat, kicked off the evening by highlighting seven key achievements of Dr. Ngoei's principalship: overseeing the big campus move from Mount Sophia to the current facilities, strengthening the faculty, increasing enrolment and programmes, managing "dollars and sense", extending regional outreach, enhancing the global reputation of the College, and spearheading and attending to local collaborations.

This set the stage for words of appreciation from Bishop Chong Chin Chung, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Singapore, who spoke on behalf of TTC's Board of Governors. Bishop Chong pointed to the remarkable energy, focus, and industry that distinguished Dr Ngoei's tenure as principal.

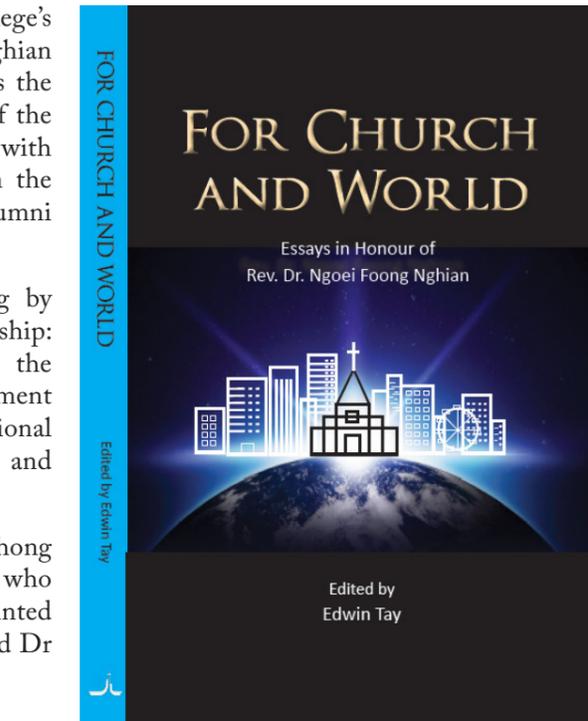
Ms Dawn Lee, TTC's Administration and Finance Manager, then provided some insights on what it was like to serve with Dr Ngoei in the administrative office. With candour laced with humour, Dawn painted a portrait of a leader who was both exacting and sensitive to the needs of his subordinates.

Representing the faculty from the Chinese and English Departments were, respectively, Dr Lim Teck Peng and Dr Roland Chia, both of whom testified to Dr Ngoei's unwavering commitment to the College as well as the public witness of the Church in Singapore.

Principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, then stepped forward to thank his predecessor and to launch the festschrift, *For Church and World: Essays in Honour of Rev. Dr. Ngoei Foong Nghian*, a collection of essays by present and former faculty members as well as friends.



Presentation of card with well-wishes from faculty to Dr Ngoei



Dr Tay then invited the honouree, Dr Ngoei, to the podium, who thanked the faculty for the gift of the festschrift, as well as shared highlights and reflections from his long years of service at TTC. He was quick to acknowledge the support of friends and family, thanking in particular his wife, Evita, who was present with their son and grandson.

The evening ended with Bishop Terry Kee, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Singapore and Chairman of TTC's Board of Governors, praying God's blessings on Dr Ngoei as he embarked on the "new normal" of retirement.

Blessings on you, Dr Ngoei! ❖

Spiritual Retreats at TTC

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

The role of spiritual formation continues to receive focused attention at the College, especially as educators, pastors, and church leaders alike appreciate that graduating with a degree in Divinity does not always translate to a life formed after the mind of Christ and in tune with the Spirit.

The challenge, however, is not just to offer a set of formational activities for students, helpful as they may be. It also requires integrating them into the curriculum and helping students to incorporate them into a praxis of the Christian life and ministry.

Consequently, concerted effort is being given to the integration of academic rigours with spiritual formational exercises toward a holistic formational experience for the student. An integral aspect of this endeavour is the spiritual retreat.



Spiritual retreats, however, must not be taken as the all-in-all aspect of spiritual formation. The work of spiritual formation encompasses a much wider range of spiritual exercises in conjunction with a rhythm of life. Nevertheless, the spiritual retreat is both a catalytic event and a culminating experience in the scheme of spiritual formation.

As a strategic move, spiritual retreats were thus integrated into the course curriculum for Pastoral Theology and Praxis since the last academic year. In Part I of the course, students were introduced to rudimentary spiritual exercises and guided on their practice and the formation of a theology for Christian ministry. The rudimentary exercises included learning to wait upon the Lord through a time in silence, praying the



Scriptures, spiritual journaling, and forming a rule of life. These exercises rest upon a spiritual theology of the Christian life and are especially drawn from historical antecedents in Scripture and the Christian Tradition.

The 30-hour silent retreat is structured after the hours of the liturgy and includes guided spiritual exercises along with time apportioned for communal and individual prayer.

Every student is accorded a 40-minute session for individual spiritual direction with a trained spiritual director. This aspect of the retreat is particularly labour intensive, but it is also one that students feedback to be especially helpful to them.

In Part II of the course, students attend a half-day spiritual retreat specially focused on an aspect of the course, for example, the art of bi-focal listening.

We are thankful that despite constraints brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts at spiritual formation persist. This semester, students were still able to participate in a full-day retreat at the College Chapel and from their homes.

Students' feedback on our formational initiatives is very encouraging, with many requesting further opportunities for retreats, for example, at the close of a semester. ❖



"God and Creation" Ethos Annual Conference 2020

By Dr Tan Loe Joo, Lecturer in Systematic and Historical Theology

The Ethos Annual Conference, formerly known as the Ethos Annual Seminars Conference, was held on 3 Oct 2020. It witnessed the coming together of academicians and lecturers from eight theological institutions in Singapore to reflect on a common theological theme. This year, the topic was on the doctrine of creation, which is a central tenet of the Christian faith, and found in the first pages of the Bible as well as enshrined in the ecumenical creeds of the Church, such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.



Due to concerns over live participation because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference was held via the Zoom webinar platform for the first time. The first presentation was given by Mr Isaac Wong, Lecturer and Practicum Coordinator with ACTS College. Isaac ably and succinctly took the online audience through the underpinnings of the doctrine of Creation as it is presented in Scripture and tradition. The next speaker, Dr Lim K Tham, Dean of Discipleship Training Centre (DTC) and Adjunct Lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Asian Pastoral Institute, examined the place of this doctrine in the Church's Theology and Worship. The third speaker, Dr Robert Sears, Lecturer in the Online Department from TCA College, then explored the significance of the doctrine for dialogue with the natural sciences based on the theme of creation and evolution. Rev Dr Andrew Peh, Lecturer in Mission from TTC, was the final speaker and he examined the relationship between the doctrine of Creation and the current ecological crisis.

The conference was moderated by Dr Tan Loe Joo and concluded with a Q&A panel discussion that involved all the speakers. The novel arrangement of Zoom webinar allowed for spontaneous questions from the online audience to flow in at any time during the presentations. Questions that had been posed were also seen by all participants and could be upvoted so that the most frequently asked questions were addressed immediately. The collaboration among different theological seminaries is an expression of a deepening unity among the Singapore churches. All papers presented at the conference will be subsequently published under the ETHOS Engagement Series. ❖

TRINITY NEWS

Congratulations to...

Xie Wei Guang (BD 2016) on being ordained as Associate Minister of Bethel Presbyterian Church on 12 Sep 2020 by the Prebysterian Church in Singapore (Chinese Presbytery).

Hu Susu (MTh 2020) on her ordination as pastor on 2 Aug 2020. She serves in the Zhengzhou Christian Council and Shenghe Road Church in Zhengzhou, Henan.

Chan Xinhui (MDiv 2020) and Mr Benjamin Tam who were joined in holy matrimony on 15 Aug 2020.

Damien Wong (MDiv 2) and his wife, Matilda Hong, on the birth of their first child, Oliver Wong, on 4 Sep 2020.

Jeremy Ong (MDiv 2013) and his wife, Joelene, on the birth of their daughter, Natalie, on 11 Sep 2020.

The Rt Rev Dr Titus Chung (BD 1995, MTh 2003), on his consecration and enthronement as the 10th Bishop of Singapore (Anglican Diocese) on 18 Oct 2020.

Elena Yeo (MDiv 2019) and Amos Yeo (MDiv 3) who were joined in holy matrimony on 28 Nov 2020.

...continued on next page

Rev Dr Gordon Wong for his consecration as Bishop of The Methodist Church in Singapore on 4 Dec 2020. He was elected as Bishop on 7 Sep at the Church's 12th Session of the General Conference. A former faculty member, Bishop Dr Wong was the William F. Oldham Professor of Old Testament.

The following alumni on their ordination in the Diocese of Singapore on 23 Aug 2020.

To the Priesthood:

Rev Glenn Chan Jian Wen (MDiv 2017)
Rev Ian Chew Houng Meing (MDiv 2017)
Rev Ezra Sivakumar S/o Sathiasillan (MDiv 2016)
Rev Lew Kiat Lern (MDiv 2017)
Rev Thomas Jacob S/o Issac (BD 2015)

Joint Ordination with The Church of the Province of Myanmar

To the Priesthood:

Rev Moses Israeli (MDiv 2019)

The following alumni on their election/ordination in the Methodist Church in Singapore.

Emmanuel Tamil Annual Conference (7 Nov 2020)

Election as President

Rev Philip Abraham (BTh 1988, MMin 2004)

Ordination as Deacon

Rev Jeremy James (BD 2018)

Chinese Annual Conference (19 Nov 2020)

Re-Election as President

Rev Dr Gregory Goh Nai Lat (MDiv 1992)

Ordination as Deacon

Rev Nathanael Goh Jun Chuen (BD 2012)

Rev Patrick Lim Kok Chu (MDiv 2018)

Rev Lin Ming Zhong (MDiv 2018)

Rev Florence Ngu Siew Ning (MDiv 2014)

Rev Joshua Ong Chee Xian (BD 2018)

Rev Wang Hai Bin (MDiv 2018)

Trinity Annual Conference (26 Nov 2020)

Election as President

Rev Stanley Chua (BTh 1997, MMin 2012)

Ordination as Deacon

Rev Joey Chen Siru (MDiv 2016)

Rev Alex Chew (MDiv 2018)

Rev Benjamin Lau (BD 2016)

Rev Allan Lee (MDiv 2018)

Ordination as Elder

Rev Eddie Ho (MDiv 2016)

Rev Poh Zhi-Hui (MDiv 2014)

Rev Byron Teo (MDiv 2016)

The following alumni on their election/ordination in the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

Chinese Annual Conference (8 Dec 20)

Election as President

Rev Dr Wong Tik Wah (MTh 1999)

Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (3 Dec 20)

Election as President

Rev Lau Hui Ming (BD 1994)

Ordination as Deacon

Rev Lindberg Wong (MDiv 2017)

Condolences to...

Rev Jessica Tiong (MMin 2004), whose husband, the late Rev Sea Khemra, was called home to be with the Lord on 6 Jun 2020.

Wong Chi Ping (BD 2015) on the passing of her husband, the late Mr Tse Chung Wong, on 28 Jul 2020.

Caiyu (MDiv 2020) and his wife, Lin Weizhen, on the passing of their son, Cai Jingzhi, on 29 Aug 2020.

Wen Tianyue on the demise of her beloved father, the late Mr Wen Renhe, on 18 Sep 2020.

Brenda Loy (Staff of St Peter's Hall) on the passing of her mother, the late Mdm Tan In Eng, on 1 Oct 2020.

Rev Erick Tan (BD 1997) & Shanti Merry (MDiv 1995) on the passing of their father and father-in-law, the late Mr Lawrence Tan Boon Seng, on 8 Nov 2020.

Ng Chow Lian (MDiv 2017, MTh 3), whose husband, the late Mr Ong Soon Nyuk, was called home to be with the Lord on 25 Nov 2020.

Support TTC

We invite you to support the ministry of Trinity Theological College to ably equip men & women for effective ministry in the church and market place in Singapore & the region amidst the global pandemic.

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, please visit our website www.ttc.edu.sg



20 Jan 2021, Wed, 10:00am - 11:30am
via Zoom

Come join us for online lectures, live-streamed chapel, a virtual campus tour and conversations with faculty.



Visit Our Website for More Details
<http://ttc.edu.sg/>

Trinity Theological College: Serving the Church for 72 Years

TTC develops in students a mature understanding of the historic and biblical faith through an academically rigorous, spiritually nourishing, and vocationally formative curriculum that reflects a variety of church traditions from an Asian perspective.

“Rare is a theological school that is profound and intellectually stimulating, yet accessible and spiritually reinvigorating... offering both self-study and communal learning opportunities. I found this all at TTC!”
- *Lisman Komaladi (MTS 2016), General-Secretary, Fellowship of Evangelical Students*

“TTC not only provides a robust environment for theological dialogue and debates, but it also provides an inter-denominational platform for me to interact with my fellow classmates from different church traditions. In addition, the international nature of the community offers me a broader perspective of our faith from different cultures.”
- *Louis Leong (MDiv 2), Acts Centre, English Congregation of My Saviour’s Church*

APPLICATION OPEN for academic year starting July 2021

Application Deadlines

DIPLOMA

- Diploma in Theological Studies
- Joint Programme with
Biblical Graduate School of
Theology (BGST)

Singapore : 28 Feb 2021

BASIC DEGREE

- Bachelor of Divinity
- Master of Divinity
- Master of Theological Studies

Singapore : 28 Feb 2021
Others : 31 Jan 2021

ADVANCED DEGREE

- Master of Ministry
- Master of Theology
- Master of Letters
- Doctor of Theology

All applicants : 31 Jan 2021

For more details (including information about financial aid), please visit www.ttc.edu.sg or email registrar@ttc.edu.sg

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Rev Dr James Lim, Ms Christine Ting, Ms Pauline Wong

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