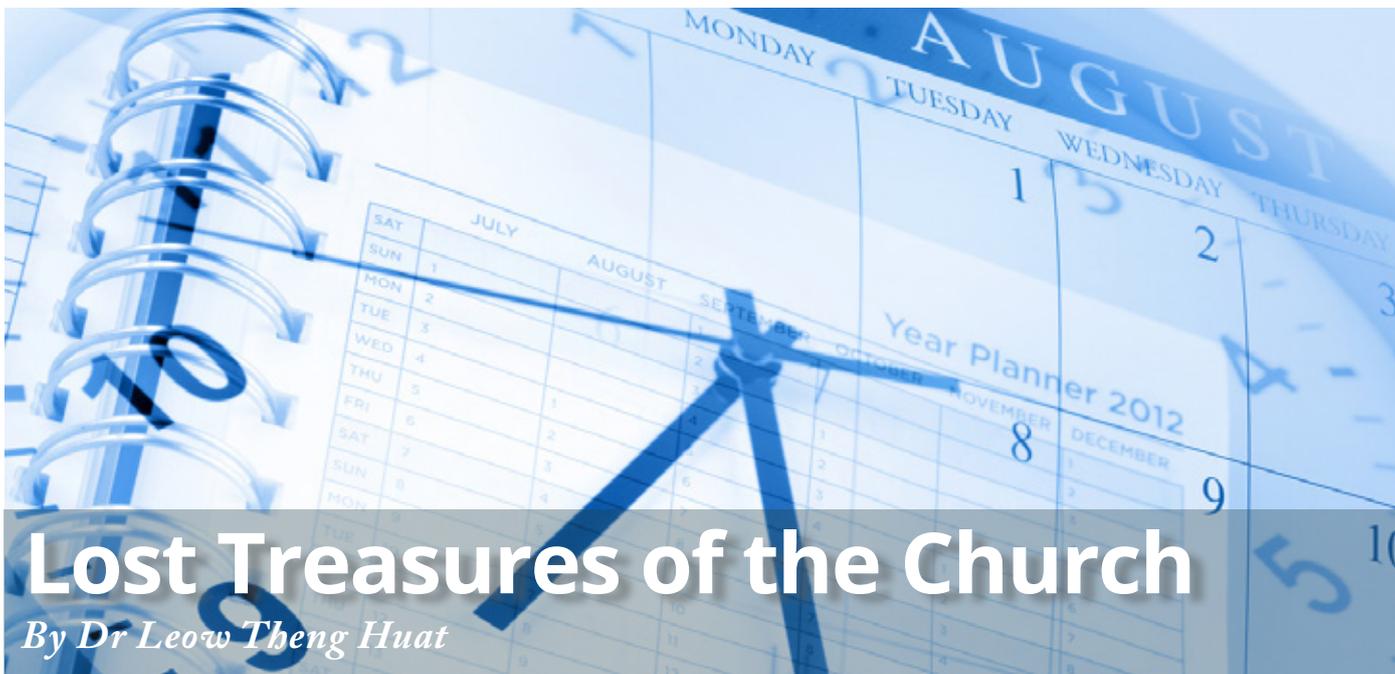


AUG-NOV 2022

TRUMPET

VIEWS AND NEWS FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

MCI (P) 072/03/2022



Lost Treasures of the Church

By Dr Leow Theng Huat

We recently celebrated Singapore's National Day. This is a major event in our nation's calendar. There is so much that one day (9 Aug) encapsulates.

The importance of the calendar in regulating and giving meaning to our lives is often underestimated. But think of how profoundly our lives are affected by the pattern of the seven-day week, with its specified days of work and rest. Think of how special days in the calendar (eg, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays) impact our mood and behaviour. The effect of the calendar on us is quite tremendous.

There is a Christian calendar of ancient heritage. It invites us to enter a rhythm of life patterned after the significant events in the life of Jesus and his church. It draws us more deeply into the reality created by the redeeming work of our Lord—a reality different from that presented to us by our secular world.

In our Protestant churches today, however, this Christian calendar is often neglected, if not completely forgotten. We pay, at best, lip service to it as when we mention in passing the prevailing season in our bulletins or announcements, or when we change the colour of our paraments or vestments. The fact is that the Christian calendar has little bearing on the way we order our corporate and personal lives.

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As an alternative, campaigns or themes to address what is perceived as the most pressing needs in our churches are preferred. However, we forget, that often the most effective way to address an issue is *not* to focus on it. For example, if the perceived problem in our church is poor relationships, focusing on the theme of “strengthening relationships” can easily descend into issuing simplistic prescriptions or organising superficial “fellowship” programmes.

Allowing the Christian calendar to assume prominence, however, draws us through our rhythm of life into a new reality. It is a reality where our only possible response is to love one another as God loves us. Significant and lasting change occurs only in the imbibing of a new reality, and few things are more powerful than a calendar to initiate us into this.

I have more to say on this in my article “Whose Calendar? Which Rhythm?” on the ETHOS Institute website: ethosinstitute.sg/whose-calendar-which-rhythm/. Next, let us consider how the Christian calendar can be implemented in practice.

The Lectionary

Regulating our lives according to the Christian calendar involves many steps, but none is more important than adhering to the lectionary.

The lectionary is a list of prescribed biblical passages to be read and preached on for every Sunday of the year. For example, the Revised Common Lectionary (endorsed by many denominations and churches) typically prescribes a reading each from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament Epistles and Gospels. These have been carefully chosen for their resonance with the particular season of the Christian calendar and their compatibility with one another in terms of themes. There is also a daily lectionary, which prescribes passages from both the Old and New Testaments for our devotional reading. These adhere closely to the Sunday lectionary, ensuring that both our personal devotions and corporate worship are in sync.

Traditionally, all four of the prescribed texts are read during the Sunday service (the Psalms might even be sung). The preacher might choose to preach on one of these texts or (more typically) weave two or more of them together to present their unified witness on the subject matter being preached—always keeping in mind the emphasis for that particular season of the Christian calendar.

This traditional adherence to the lectionary is, unfortunately, rarer than the unicorn in many of our Protestant churches. We prefer to preach from a biblical passage chosen, sometimes rather arbitrarily, by the preacher or based on a prescribed “sermon series”. The result is the loss of any meaningful role for the Christian calendar.

What other advantages does the lectionary bring? It leads, firstly, to more public reading of different

portions of the Bible, which must surely be welcomed by Protestants. The lectionary also forces preachers to depart from their favorite sections of the Bible, to consider what messages can be drawn from the prescribed texts.

The lectionary, moreover, functions as a key “anti-Marcionite” measure. Marcion was a heretic who taught that the Old Testament presented a different god from the one revealed by Jesus in the New. There may be Marcion sympathisers in our congregations today, who have honest difficulty reconciling the teachings of the two Testaments.

Good lectionary preaching, which demonstrate how the Old Testament texts are fulfilled in the New, is important to combat such tendencies.

Conclusion

Our neglect of the Christian calendar and lectionary is symptomatic of a larger issue: the perspective that we are the only Christians who ever lived, and the only way to “do church” is to depend on our own resources and ideas. We tend to forget that our brothers and sisters who have “done church” for over two millennia have handed down to us invaluable insights and practices, and that we do not have to keep re-inventing the wheel.

There are, besides the Christian calendar and lectionary, vast treasure troves to be mined. For how much longer will they remain lost to us? ❖



Dr Leow Theng Huat
Lecturer in Theology

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Structures of Corporate Formation

One blessing of serving in the seminary setting of TTC is the joy of witnessing the transforming work of God in the lives of our students. During the Principal’s annual afternoon tea sessions with first and final year seminarians, one matter students have consistently highlighted as having a significant impact upon their theological formation is our communal life.

Matriculated students at TTC are initiated into a regulated life patterned after the commitments of study, prayer, and work. This threefold pattern is worked out through formational platforms such as classes, family groups, and community service.

Students residing on campus have additional hostel-based engagements. There are also college-wide events such as our annual College Retreat and Day of Prayer. These platforms for corporate formation revolve around chapel services held on designated days and hours of the week.

Is it necessary for theological education to be concerned with structures of corporate formation other than lectures, tutorials, and course papers? The answer depends on our understanding of the nature and aims of theological education. Two interrelated aspects of theological education will help to demonstrate the importance of corporate formation.

Firstly, consider the object of theological engagement. Any theological training worth its salt ensures an adequate level of content mastery. It is impossible, for instance, to articulate the doctrine of the Trinity accurately if there is no facility in the church’s exegetical and theological traditions. As such, the object of theological engagement will necessarily include, among other materials, the text of Holy Scripture and the consensual documents of the church.

However, content mastery alone does not do justice to the realities to which theological content bears witness. The contents of Scripture and ecumenical creeds, for instance, point to the triune God as the ultimate object of our life’s engagement. Scripture teaches that God is “the living God” (Jer 10:10) who is named Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). All three persons of the Godhead are to be “worshiped and glorified” as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) confesses. Thus, God is not an idea to be bandied about in

abstractions of thought nor studied in clinical detachment. God is an infinite, eternal and spiritual being who is to be worshiped. If the modes of theological engagement are to be true to the nature of theology’s ultimate object, then faith must go with reason, worship with hermeneutics, and prayer with study in the theological task.

Secondly, consider the context for theological education. The Apostle Paul locates the saints’ equipping for ministry within the context of the church (Eph 4:12). The growth of believers is a growth into Christ, the church’s head (Eph 4:15). Thus, the context for theological and spiritual formation is clearly the community of faith.

Incorporated into Christ’s body, members of the TTC community grow in relationships of spiritual accountability in our life together. Community service through participation in the formal work of the Student Council or informal work of personal ministry are expressions of the fundamental reality that united in Christ, we are mutually dependent on each other.

As we observe the church’s calendar in our corporate worship, TTC marks the passage of time from Advent to Lent, and Eastertide to Kingdomtide. This corporate way of keeping time keeps our eyes fixed on Jesus into whose image we are being transformed (2 Cor 3:18). It situates the story of our personal lives within the larger story of God’s salvation of the world so that regardless of life’s circumstances, we are reminded of the glorious goal we are headed towards—God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Corporate structures of formation may appear superfluous at first glance. But understood in the light of the object and context of theological engagement, they are essential for theological education. ❖



Spiritual Pursuits and Deception of the Ego

By Rev Dr Jimmy Tan

The social, emotional, and psychological challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years have led many to seek solace and relieve through spiritual practices. Previously, people who are not into spiritual practices suddenly found them to be of help for coping with isolation, loneliness, and anxieties brought on by a relentless contagion. Many have turned to ancient ways like mindfulness and meditation to cope with the challenges—seeking a sense of peace, calm, and inner resources. With Christians, more are turning to practices such as silence, Christian meditation, spiritual friendships, conversations, and retreats.

On the surface, this development appeared to be good. Then I noticed the amount of attention that practitioners are drawing to themselves over social media about their new-found spiritual practices. For example, there was a post by a Christian while on a “silent retreat”. Is not a silent retreat meant to be a time in silence and solitude—and an opportunity to abstain from social media? Yet, attention is drawn selfward through a social media posting about being on “silent retreat”. There are other examples: posting pictures of exotic overseas retreat centres, self-publicity about being on “an extended retreat”, or meeting up with some special spiritual guru, and pursuing one

spiritual adventure after another.

Sharing newfound experiences on social media is probably not wrong. Yet these posts left me with a feeling of unease as I sensed in them the undertones of attention-seeking behaviour. Searching the internet for clues on spiritual pursuits and consumerism, I came upon the term “spiritual materialism”, first coined by Chögyam Trungpa in his book *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. Trungpa sought to address the common pitfalls of self-deception in seeking spirituality. He addresses it through three categories, which I found to be quite enlightening. Sadly, however, he fell into the very pitfalls he warned others about and ended his life in alcoholism and being embroiled in sexual scandals.

While it is not uncommon for some to go on shopping sprees, eating adventures, or to indulge in binge drinking to destress, it seems that some now go on spirituality quests for essentially the same reasons as those who go for bouts of shopping, eating, or drinking. Some with a newfound spiritual enthusiasm may be pursuing spiritual “highs” to fuel their egos. “Spiritual materialism” is essentially consumerism masked as spirituality. The needs of our ego are certainly real—and need proper attention. But if we now use spiritual means to satisfy it in place of what

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This, in my opinion, is an especially tricky issue. Engagement with spirituality provides such behaviour with a veneer of religiosity making it harder to detect the true motivations deep within. Apparently, this is one of the issues the apostle Paul had to address in the Corinthian church. There, members were boasting about their spiritual gifts and pitting themselves against each other rather than deploying their gifts for the common good as God intended (1 Cor 12). When we only skirt the surface on spiritual exercises, are we not in danger of going down the slippery slope of spiritual masquerade?

What then are some correctives that will guide us on the proper path of spiritual pursuits? In this regard, we return to the reliable criteria of Scripture and trinitarian spiritual theology. To the Corinthian malady, the apostle Paul provides a corrective for that church which is also applicable to us. It is that they must understand and remember the meaning



of their baptism into Christ Jesus. Previously they embraced the Corinthian values of individualism and flamboyance—seeking to outdo and outshine each other. But now that they were baptised into Christ Jesus, they had died to themselves and risen to a new life in Christ. This new life in Christ Jesus must now shape their spiritual worldview and practice—and one of them is learning to use their spiritual gifts for the common good of the entire body of Christ.

Similarly, trinitarian spirituality provides a corrective against egoistic spirituality. Rather than the self, the

triune God is at the centre. Trinitarian spirituality calls us to live for the glory of the Father, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to grow into the whole measure of the fullness of Christ Jesus, our Saviour and Lord. If we keep this trinitarian focus, it will steer us away from the dangers of egotism and wean us from the vestiges of the old self that lurks in the background in all our spiritual pursuits.

It will call us beyond the self to the community of God.

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These scriptural and theological bases provide us with defining criteria on the quality and trajectory of spiritual practices and pursuits—teaching us to discern their true worth and where they would eventually take us. We ask not just how apparently good the practice is but why we engage in it and where it takes us with respect to God’s rule in our lives. Do they make us more proud, more self-sufficient (yes, I know it sounds strange), and

more out of touch with God’s Mission? Or do they help us to die to ourselves more, to have Christ and his Spirit indwell more, and to build up his church more? These guiding criteria help to prevent us from going on an ego trip in our spiritual pursuits. Instead, they keep us close to the heart of God.

I wish to leave you with the definition on spiritual formation by Jeffrey Greenman and George Kalantzis which I found to be helpful for steering us clear of the dangers of self-centred and egoistic spiritual pursuits. In *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective*, Jeffrey Greenman wrote: “Spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world.” Keeping this definition in view will guard us against spiritual materialism. ❖



Rev Dr Jimmy Tan
Chaplain
Lecturer in Pastoral and
Practical Theology

Church Leadership: Whose Job Is It?

By Rev Dr Bernard Chao

This is the second of a three-part series on church leadership in Singapore discussing the findings and implications from the writer's research on the underlying beliefs shaping the relationship between leaders and laity in Singapore's Protestant churches: *Narratives and Ideologies that Shape Power Relations in Singapore Protestant Churches* (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2021).

Underlying Beliefs Shaping Leadership Practices

Previously, I described my research into the underlying beliefs that shape leadership practices and the relationship between leaders and laity. The first finding was hierarchy as the unquestioned norm across churches of different polities. This is often expressed by a high degree of control over decisions and discourse by leaders and presents temptations toward authoritarian and oppressive behaviour. Consequently, the voice and participation of laity in leadership processes can be excluded or discounted. I asked if there can be more than one way to imagine and express leadership, given our Christian ethic of love, ecclesiology that includes different parts of the body of Christ, and view of leadership as servanthood.

The Second Finding: Presumed Competence of Leaders

I found a belief in the presumed competence of leaders that regarded leaders as wiser, more knowledgeable, and their opinions more valuable than that of laity. Respondents referred to church leaders as “figures of authority...who know more than we know.” Consequently, the views and assessment of leaders

carry greater weight than laity, especially those of pastors. This presumption revealed the powerful influence of two major socio-cultural ideologies: paternalism and deference to leaders.

Paternalism casts leaders as more entitled, wiser, and capable than laity to make decisions. Leaders assume a parental mantle and laity are reductively viewed as children who should not be heard or challenge their “parents”—their leaders. Deference to leaders was intimately linked to respondents' Asian cultural upbringing to always show respect for elders, as a Chinese saying goes: “I have eaten more salt than you have eaten rice.” This cultural ethic ascribes honour, respect, and deference to persons by virtue of their seniority in age or position.

Paternalism and deference to leaders prioritise the opinions of leaders. This renders doubt or questioning of leaders as disrespectful and has a silencing effect on laity. The prominence of these socio-cultural ideologies of paternalism and deference to leaders amongst respondents and their emotional influence cannot be underestimated.

The Third Finding: Presumed Incompetence of Laity

The presumed competence of leaders was mirrored by a corresponding belief in the presumed incompetence of laity. Laity are minimised with a narrative that they are just sheep who passively receive direction from leaders. Respondents described laity being viewed or viewing themselves as less knowledgeable and capable for the work of leadership compared to leaders who are the shepherds. Good sheep are

therefore those who unquestioningly submit, follow, and accept whatever their leaders say.

Some respondents attributed their adoption of such a narrative to the biblical teaching of submission to leaders and their assumption that their leaders possessed the best intentions for the church. Leader respondents echoed this view, regarding laity having disagreements or different opinions as undesirable, and expecting laity to be always supportive.

An attitude of work avoidance held by some laity toward leadership work expressed as “it is not my job”, also resourced the presumption of laity incompetence. This distancing of laity from the responsibility for leadership was expressed in terms of a dependency on leaders, a preference to take a back seat and let leaders do the work of thinking through and making decisions, and a consumeristic view of church.

There was some contrasting data indicating laity consciousness of their competence for leadership tasks. Some respondents reported laity speaking up and engaging with leadership issues. Other respondents reported laity choosing to ignore or reject the decisions of their leaders, and some electing to leave their churches when leaders ignored their concerns. However, this contrasting data was muted in strength.

Leadership: Whose Job Is It?

The second and third findings indicate the presence of leadership beliefs and practices that cast those with formal leadership roles as the only ones who are competent to exercise leadership. Consequently, those who are not in formal roles of leadership—anyone who is not a pastor, pastoral staff, or a church or ministry leader—are excluded or exclude themselves from the work of leadership. Such underlying beliefs



convey that leadership is not the responsibility of the rest of the church as they are not competent.

Should this be the case? We are confronted with an important question: whose job is leadership? Do our congregations not have a role to play? Does the voice and opinion of laity not matter? Are our current practices aimed at the appearance of, rather than substantively, seeking laity voice, input, and participation in leadership processes?

There are at least two issues on which we must reflect. The first is the undeniable teaching of the Bible about obeying and submitting to leaders and elders (Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5). The second is whether every Christian shares responsibility for, and has some role in, the leadership of our churches.

To the first, I would suggest that we expand our biblical interpretation of submission. Submission is not unidirectional but bidirectional because the teachings of submission to leaders must be read alongside teaching about mutual submission (Eph 5:21). This is linked to the second issue because submission should not result in the suppression of gifts nor the oppression of people. If the people of God are one body but with different gifts (Eph 4; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12), how can

we exercise leadership in a way that reflects more of this oneness and diversity at the same time in our churches?

These are important questions that we should not ignore. I will discuss my findings, their implications, and the questions they surface more fully in the final article in this series. ❖

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Rev Dr Bernard Chao
Director, EQUIP
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Connector to the Past, Keeper of the Present, Gateway to the Future

By Dr Michael C Mukunthan, Librarian

also builds its serial collection of print and digital subscriptions. An important criterion in the development of the serial collection is to avoid duplicating secondary titles if these can be found in our local libraries as inter-library provisions are easily accessible. This policy would allow the Library to provide a more specialised and focused serial collection, while ensuring a better use of the available serials budget.

The second important area in the development of the Library's resources is in the archival collection with an emphasis on Southeast Asian materials. The Library works on enhancing its repository of the documentation of Christianity in this region by identifying and collecting both primary and secondary source documents, collaborating with the College's Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA) which initiated this effort. These would encompass the collection of secondary literature, including monographs and serials; "official" publications of various denominations and mission agencies such as annual reports, periodicals, and newsletters; "grey" literature with limited distribution and ephemeral materials; and archival material of ecclesial communities and individuals.

Adopting a tiered approach in its archival acquisition policy, the Library first focused on collating and completing the College's internal official administrative papers and publications. These would incorporate the minutes of meetings of the Faculty and Board of Governors, and serial publications including the *Trumpet*, the College's newsletter first published in 1960, and *Lux Mundi, the Annual Magazine of the Students' Association* first published in 1964. Another important area of collection are the student research papers pertaining to local church histories. Many of these papers focus on the mission work done by individual churches thereby adding a valuable contribution to appreciating the growth of Christianity in Singapore. To add value to this work, the Library also set about digitising these documents to enhance easier search and accessibility.

The next level of collection are the publications of the College's governing churches. These include the collection of the minutes of annual conferences and reports as well as denominational newsletters. Among the works that have been collected are the Diocese of Singapore publications (*Anglican News, Diocesan Digest, Singapore Diocesan Magazine*),

The Methodist Church in Singapore publications (*Methodist Message, Chinese Annual Conference News*), and The Presbyterian Church in Singapore publications (*Presbyterian Message, Saint Andrews Outlook*). Many of these materials are also now available in digital formats.

A third level of collection are the records of institutions and persons who agree to deposit their archival materials with the College Library. Currently, the Library holds copies of the Fellowship of Evangelical Students (Chinese work) archives, as well as a small collection of the Overseas Christian Fellowship (Australian collection) archives. The minutes of the annual meetings of Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA) and publications of the Christian Conference of Asia also form a part of our archival Southeast Asia collection. Additionally, the Library has received some personal archival materials.

The College Library will continue to acquire and develop theological and archival resources. However, we are cognisant that libraries globally are rethinking their provision of resources and services in the light of new trends in digital technology and concerns of environmental sustainability. After almost seventy-four years of existence, what lies ahead for our Library? Two areas can be reviewed.

The first involves meeting rising expectations for digital resources and services, especially as many are already familiar with such experiences on governmental and commercial platforms. Can our Library be sufficiently agile to engage newer forms of content provision? Can we develop and provide for more digital content while not neglecting the growth of our print collection? Witness how in the world of music the practice of having tunes stored in compact discs was upended by streaming services such as Apple music which provides access to a catalogue of 50 million songs through a single subscription. As such, one can envision new delivery models integrating access to a plurality of resources such as text, image, video, etc, becoming part of the nominalised experience in theological formation. Further collaboration across the globe among institutions would also be a necessary feature in this explosion of digital content, as libraries improve access to scholarly resources thereby redefining and enlarging research capabilities. For example, the availability of localised, unique archival materials in

digital form would be a decided plus to expanding research in local church histories. Simultaneously, the provision of a seamless environment and access between users and content would also require that libraries provide the necessary infrastructure to inculcate critical digital literacy skills to manoeuvre between different platforms and services.

The second area involves recognising the increasing ability of users to access materials outside of the physical library. This trend is further aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic where remote work and study become the new normal. Consequently, library spaces may need to be redesigned to include the creation of safe, co-working shared spaces to facilitate active communal interaction and conducive collaborative learning. This re-thinking of library spaces could also include elements that encourage sustainable environmental efforts. For example, sensors could be installed in our Library to automatically adjust air-conditioning and lighting to occupancy rates.

Libraries function as connectors to the past, keepers of the present, and gateways to the future. Today, libraries are seeking to adopt creative solutions to reinvigorate this primary function. The challenges for our College Library are to find innovative platforms and streamlining processes in content provision strategies, become flexible and nimble in its services, and to adopt smart budgetary measures as we continue to fulfill our College's purpose as reflected in the Articles of Union. ❖



1. A microfiche from our microform collection
2. Some of TTC's earlier publications

Founded in 1948, Trinity Theological College exists "to educate pastors for the Church and to train full-time or voluntary evangelists and church-workers for religious education or for Christian social service" (TTC Articles of Union). The College Library forms an essential continuum in this mission by providing adequate resources and services for the teaching and research needs of our faculty, the theological formation of our students, and the continuing pastoral needs of our alumni. The Library has approached this work of resource development by following a two-fold approach.

The first includes the acquisition of existing and new publications that would enhance the overall collection of the Library's holdings. Today, the Library holds over 120,000 items. These comprise approximately 115,000 books, serials, theses, and various church publications in print format. The Library also holds about 5,000 items in microforms that cover Protestant missionary work in East Asia and Southeast Asia by British and American missionary societies during the early 19th to early 20th centuries. On the digital front, the Library subscribes to the ProQuest Religion and Philosophy e-book collection. This database holds approximately 20,000 academic e-books. The College has also purchased the licensing rights for our alumni to access these electronic titles. The Library



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TTC 72nd Graduation Service

By Ms Dorothy Koh, MDiv 3

We celebrated with hymns of praise and great joy, God's faithfulness to our graduates at TTC's 72nd graduation service. Held at Faith Methodist Church on Sat 14 May 2022, this was the college's first large-scale, physical graduation service since the Covid-19 pandemic started. Schoolmates, friends and family members of the graduating batch joined in the celebrations on-site.

Our speaker, Rev Stanley Chua, President of the Trinity Annual Conference of The Methodist Church in Singapore, shared a message entitled "Into the Unknown", from Josh 1:1-9. Despite the uncertainties ahead in ministry, God gives us hope by calling us to be strong and courageous. Rev Chua exhorted us to obey the Word of God willingly and completely, and resist the temptations in ministry, so as to start well and finish well.

Our principal, Rev Dr Edwin Tay, charged the graduating cohort to be Teachable, Trustworthy and Christlike. Using the memorable acronym, TTC, he encouraged them to be inspired by the obedience and love of Christ in their future ministries.

The valedictorians, Ms Low Yee Lin and Mr Sun Ziming Benjamin, both recounted the challenges faced by students and lecturers as they journeyed through the storm of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms Low shared that on top of their academic studies, students learnt to navigate through life's challenges together, while learning to relate with each other. Mr Sun described the unforgettable moments when the circuit breaker lockdown was announced, and students had to rush to the TTC library for materials. They worked together to scan books and gather material for their assignments. Both thanked faculty and family members who journeyed and supported the cohort through trying times. Mr Sun also gave thanks for the blessing of having a spiritual community at TTC in the midst of pandemic isolation. He ended his sharing with "a different C-19" in Col 1:9, with prayers that all will remain steadfast in the storms of ministry.

Finally, the choir, led by Mrs Simon Chan, performed two songs. The first extolled the name of God, and the second, reminded all to be faithful to do God's work with the promise of his presence with us. We thank God for the blessing of the friendships made, and we wish for God's peace and presence to be with our graduates, to wherever God has called them. ❖



Ms Celest Cheong, our 2022 student council president, was the crucifer for the procession.



Mrs Simon Chan conducted the TTC Choir in the presentation of two anthems.



The Methodist Church in Singapore's TRAC President, Rev Stanley Chua, shared the message, "Into the Unknown".

Praise Amid a Pandemic

By Mr Sun Ziming Benjamin (MDiv 2022)



In his graduation speech, Benjamin, our English department's valedictorian, captured how the Class of 2022 was blest braving the Covid-19 upheaval:

"This service is the joyous conclusion of our TTC journey which began in 2019 before the pandemic started. Then, roughly 70 per cent of students joined the choir, singing heartily with no masks on. But from the next semester our education was shaped profoundly by Covid-19.

While many people across the world had their lives upended... we are blessed to continue our education. The hand of God was upon our college, protecting, guiding us. After our Prime Minister announced the circuit breaker, we were told that the TTC library would be shut in a few days. While the rest of Singapore *chiongged* to NTUC FairPrice, we *chiongged* (ie. rushed) to the library! One of my buddies held the books open while I scanned our readings, page after page, on my phone. That day we learnt how to do team ministry under high stress!

Despite hair-pulling moments, there was much to give thanks for. Our beloved lecturers "lost even more hair" than we did for our sake, modifying face-to-face lessons for online delivery. Back then, no one knew what Zoom was or how to "share screen"! Our teachers laboured to help us access course materials from home—and the learning management system came into being. The TTC faculty looked out for us, cared for us, prayed for us—they did not just educate us, they walked with us.

Second, we thank our loved ones, who cheered us on and supported us in very tangible ways. You encouraged us to persevere through long nights when we were armed with nothing but the Spirit, the Word, and *kopi* (ie. coffee). During our Zoom lectures, you helped supervise the children's Home-Based Learning when you yourselves were working from home and juggling many responsibilities.

Third, we give thanks for the blessing of spiritual community in TTC. The international students felt the pain of isolation most acutely. There were some stuck overseas, like Christopher Albert, who had to learn remotely. I will forever remember what the ceiling of his Johor Bahru home looked like because that was his Zoom background for one and a half years. Some were stuck here, separated from their families. By God's grace the TTC community became family for them. Together, we trudged through the valleys and celebrated at the mountaintops—often with Deliveroo food!

To our lecturers, loved ones and the TTC family, we thank you with all our hearts.



Benjamin Sun (MDiv 2022) delivering his valedictory speech.

Today we look back with thanksgiving, and forward with faith. We praise our Sovereign Lord that he has the last word, not Covid-19. I conclude with a different C19—not Covid-19 but Col 1:9. Paul wrote to the church at Colosse: "we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Covid-19 won't be the last challenge for the Church.

I pray with Paul that no matter how the winds of change blow, we would remain steadfast because we seek the will and the face of our King. As we do so, may he grant us the wisdom and understanding needed to tread into the unknown—to sail uncertain waters and navigate uncharted lands—all for the glory of the One who called us. In this way we will radiate hope to a broken world as we follow him who is *Lux Mundi*—the light of the world. May God bless you all." ❖

Photo credit: Eliza Poh (BD 3)

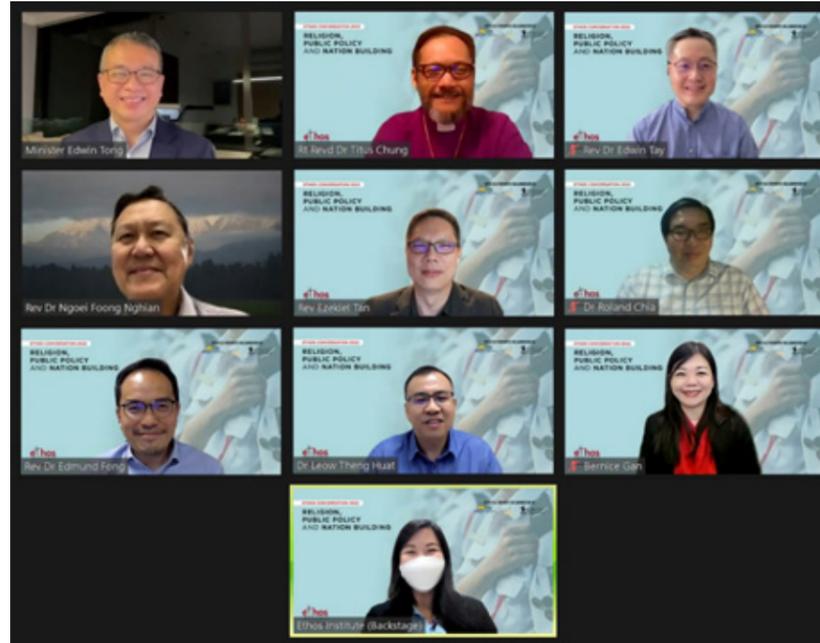
ETHOS Conversation and Seminar 2022

By Rev Dr Edmund Fong, Dean of Students, Lecturer in Theology

The ETHOS Institute for Public Christianity (ETHOS) held two of its annual keynote events over the period of March to April 2022.

Religion, Public Policy and Nation Building

The first event held online as a Zoom webinar on 23 Mar 2022 was the ETHOS Conversation 2022 entitled “Religion, Public Policy and Nation Building”. Participants had the privilege of listening to two addresses delivered by Minister Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, and Rt Rev Dr Titus Chung, Bishop of The Diocese of Singapore, before the time was opened for a rousing question and answer session. Through the ETHOS Conversation, participants were provided both “church” and “state” perspectives as food for thought to how religion continues to play a role in public policy making and the building of our nation, Singapore.



The ETHOS team with speakers Minister Edwin Tong and Rt Rev Dr Titus Chung

The Transgender Moment



The second event was also a Zoom webinar held online entitled “The Transgender Moment” on 29 Apr 2022. As the title suggests, this was an opportunity for the Christian community in Singapore to consider the vitally important topic of transgenderism. Our speakers were, Bishop Emeritus Dr Robert Solomon and psychologist Dr Eliza Lian. Following the addresses, the time was opened for question and answer. A good number of questions were raised, ranging from theological and spiritual perspectives to practical ministerial approaches to medical and psychological viewpoints. Once again, participants were provided many things to consider as we continue to navigate through this issue. ❖

Yale-Edinburgh Conference 2022

By Rev Dr Andrew Peh, Lecturer in Missions, Missions History

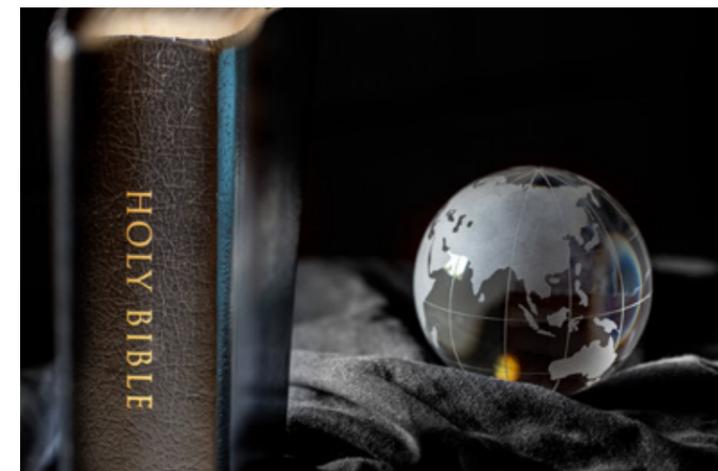
The Yale-Edinburgh Group is an informal group of scholars founded in 1992 by Professor Andrew Walls of the University of Edinburgh and Professor Lamin Sanneh of Yale University. The annual conference is sponsored and alternately chaired by the Centre for the Study of World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh and Yale Divinity School, with the specific purposes of facilitating discussion and the exchange of information about the development of world Christianity and historical aspects of mission.



In view of the uncertainty of travel due to border restrictions amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the organisers included three additional conference hubs (besides Edinburgh and Yale)—Nairobi, São Paulo, and Singapore—to widen the participation of scholars from the majority world. These three cities are representative of the growth of Christianity in the majority world (commonly referred to as the “global south”) and their inclusion is a fitting tribute to the legacies of Professor Lamin Sanneh (passed away on 6 Jan 2019) and Professor Andrew Walls (passed away on 12 Aug 2021). The theme for the 2022 Conference was “World Christianity: Legacy and the State of the Field”, in tribute to Professor Andrew Walls and Professor Lamin Sanneh. Presenters were encouraged to present a retrospective assessment as well as consider the prospective possibilities of the future of world Christianity in view of the global events of the current times.

On 29 Jun 2022, the second day of the conference, the spotlight was on the Singapore hub, where I was assigned to chair the presentations. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the keynote speaker was unable to be present. In consultation with the organisers at Yale-Edinburgh, we were able to adapt a presentation on Methodist missions in colonial Singapore which I had presented at an earlier forum, with a brief summary on the future trajectory for Southeast Asia.

I also chaired the two presentations by two Singapore historians, Joshua Sim (“Overseas Christian Fellowship and Australia’s Colombo Plan: Ethnic Chinese International Students and the ‘Cold War Religion’ Origins of Australia’s Oldest Overseas Students’ Ministry, 1959-1970”) and Joshua Tan (“Beyond the ‘Chinese Problem’: Diasporic Chinese Christians and ‘Cold War Religion’ in British Malaya and Singapore, 1950s-60s”). Professor Philip Wickeri, the Advisor to the Archbishop of Hong Kong on Historical and Theological Studies, was the respondent to these two presentations.



TTC’s inclusion and involvement in this conference underscores the truly global spread of world Christianity. It is testament to the growing significance of the part that Singapore can play as a centre for theological equipping. ❖

Welcome to the Family

Rev Dr Jeremy-Joe Tan joined Trinity Theological College (TTC) as a full-time lecturer in July 2022. He is an ordained minister with The Diocese of Singapore. Jeremy grew up attending the Chapel of the Resurrection (COR) and went on to serve there as a staff member focusing on chaplaincy and youth work. He completed his MDiv with TTC in 2014.

The Diocese and TTC then sent him as a faculty-in-development for his Master of Theology degree (2018) and PhD (2022) at the University of Edinburgh. His research focused on the philosophical and theological underpinnings of Archbishop William Temple's social thought. More broadly, Jeremy's research interests lie in theology, Anglican thought, as well as public and political theology.



Rev Dr Jeremy-Joe Tan and his wife, Tricia, and children: Joshua-Joe (left) and Anna-Joy (right).

Jeremy looks forward to the many meaningful engagements in TTC with his colleagues and students alike. These engagements are certainly not limited to the classrooms; much is achieved over coffee,

meals, or football too!

Jeremy is married to Tricia who currently works at Fei Yue Community Services. They have two children, Joshua-Joe (nine) and Anna-Joy (seven). The family continues to worship and serve at the COR. ❖



A New Chapter



Dr Mark Chan retired at the close of Academic Year 2021-2022. Since joining our faculty on 1 Jul 2006, Dr Chan had served in various capacities in his sixteen years of ministry with us. He was director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA) and editor of our publication, *Church and Society*. He was instrumental in getting various projects for CSCA published. In recognition of his contribution towards our college, Dr Chan was appointed as the Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology by our Board of Governors in 2017. Students have been blessed by his clear and edifying teaching, and expository preaching. We are deeply grateful for his ministry among us. Dr Chan has been re-engaged on a part-time basis. ❖

TRINITY NEWS

Congratulations to...

Ps Thomas Liew (MDiv 2021) and his wife, Liu Limin, who celebrated the arrival of their firstborn, Elliot Isaac Liew, on 12 Mar 2022.

Zephy Wong (MDiv 3) and his wife, Ho Jin Qing, who welcomed their firstborn son, Kavaiah Wong, on 11 Mar 22.

Ps David Illuri (BD 2016) and his wife, Mary Shiny Zion, on the birth of their daughter, Jebisha Emmanuel, on 16 Apr 2022.

Ilango s/o Yagambaram (MDiv 2020) and Diana Cheong (MDiv 1) on the birth of their firstborn son, Elijah John Ilango Cheong Han, on 22 April 2022.

Rev Edmund Wong (MDiv 2004) who was ordained at Covenant Evangelical Free Church (Woodlands) on 23 Apr 2022.

Rev Benjamin Lau (BD 2016) and his wife, Claire Chong, on the birth of their firstborn daughter, Charis Lau Kai Yi, on 7 May 2022.

Rev Chadrick Yeo (MDiv 2018) on his ordination at Grace Assembly of God Singapore on 26 May 2022.

Rev Dr Jimmy Tan (MDiv 1995) and his wife, Tan Soh Kwan, who were blessed as first-time grandparents with Noelle Chia Xuan En, on 10 Jun 22.

Liu Yanwei (BD 2016) who was united in holy matrimony to Rachael Anne Cochrane on 9 Jul 2022.

Anthony Peh Kah An (BD 1) celebrated the arrival of his newborn son, Nathaniel Peh, with his wife, Elora Ang, on 9 Jul 2022.

Condolences to...

The family of the late Rev Canon Dr James Wong Yui Kok (BTh 1965), who was called home to be with the Lord on 8 Apr 22.

Mrs Wong (Mdm Ching Wee Ling) and family on the passing of Rev Dr Wong Tik Wah (MTh 1999), Bishop of the Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, who was called home to glory on 19 Apr 2022.

The family of the late Rev Canon Ong Ming King (BTh 1972) who was called home to the Lord on 7 Jun 2022.

Former faculty member and former CSCA Director, Bishop Emeritus Dr Hwa Yung, and his family on the passing of his beloved wife, Dr Lee Bee Teik, on 11 Jun 2022.

The family of the late Rev Dr Stephen C K Tan, TTC's seventh principal (1975-1982), who was called home to the Lord on Friday 24 Jun 2022 at the age of ninety.

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, and
- house an outstanding theological library.

Here are some ways you may contribute to our ministry. By:

- cheque to **Trinity Theological College**,
- bank or ATM transfer to our DBS current account **033-017261-3**,
- **PayNow** to **UEN T01CC1488C**, or via QR code, or
- a **bequest** to TTC. We would be pleased to discuss this plan with you. Please email us at principal@ttc.edu.sg or call 6767 6677.



To view 角聲, the Chinese edition of the Trumpet, please visit our website at www.ttc.edu.sg



TTC is pleased to offer a series of online lectures for the Christian public for the fourth quarter of 2022. The subjects in these courses are explored at depth by EQUIP instructors who include both TTC faculty and other guest lecturers, all of whom are highly qualified subject matter experts in their fields. Many of our own alumni, pastors, Christian ministry staff, missionaries, and lay leaders also attend our courses for their own continuing education.

EQUIP Courses: September to November 2022

Helping People Become Fully Mature in Christ

Rev Dr Tan Soo Inn

Dates
Mondays, 19 Sep–7 Nov

A Short History of Israel

Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun

Dates
Tuesdays, 20 Sep–1 Nov

A Christian Response to the Arts and Popular Culture

Ms Lucilla Teoh

Dates
Wednesdays, 21 Sep–2 Nov

Christian Mission as Eschatological Event

Mr Lawrence Ko

Dates
Thursdays, 22 Sep–3 Nov

Visit www.ttc.edu.sg for more details

All modules are conducted via Zoom from 7.30pm–9.30pm

Online registration closes on 12 Sep 2022

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