

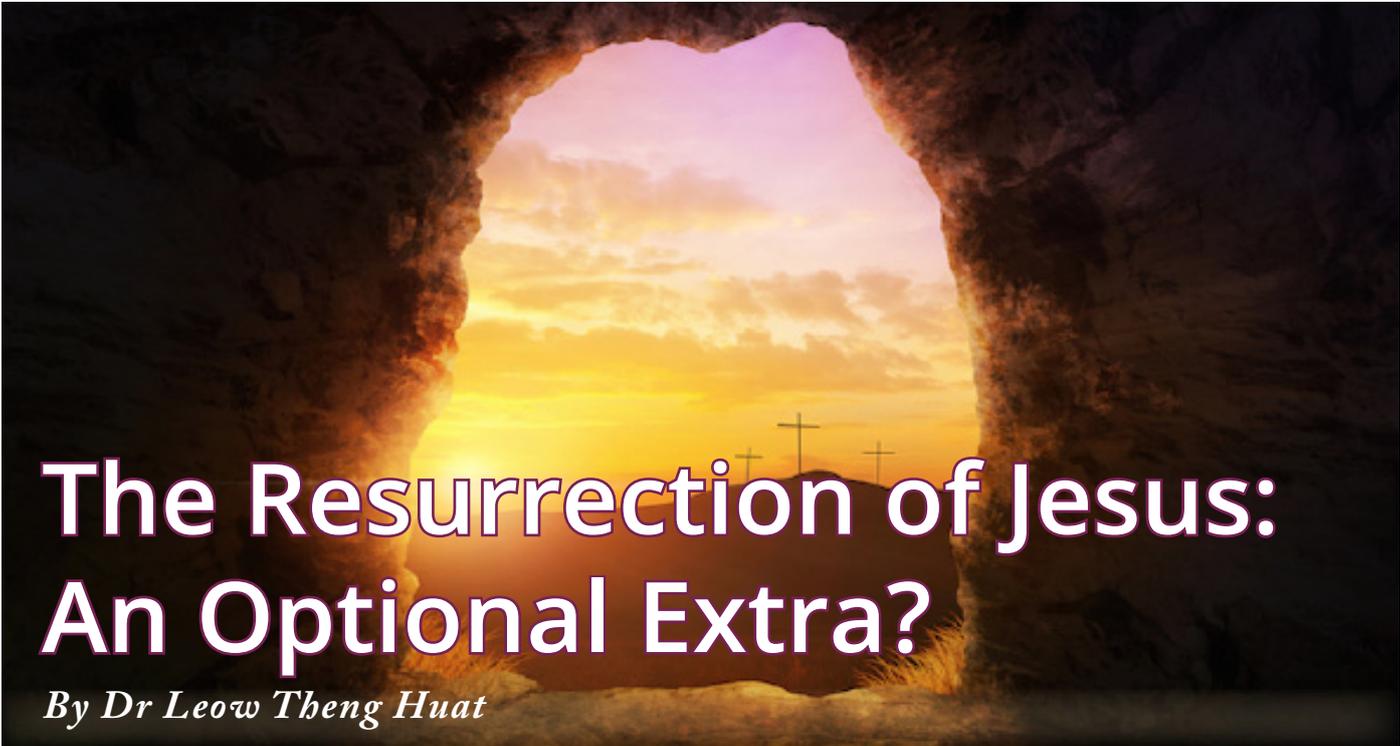
TRUMPET

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VIEWS AND NEWS FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE



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The Resurrection of Jesus: An Optional Extra?

By Dr Leow Theng Huat

Puzzlement over Jesus' Resurrection

We celebrated Easter Sunday a short while ago. This is therefore an appropriate juncture for me to make a confession: For the first decade or so of my life as a Christian, I did not know what to make of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, when we download a piece of software into our computers, we are presented with the choice to install supplementary programmes. These are not essential to the operation of the main software, but might be useful to have in certain circumstances. These supplementary programmes might be called "optional extras". For a long time, the resurrection of Jesus constituted something of an "optional extra" to my Christian faith.

The reason for this is simple. I had embraced a version of the gospel (or good news) of Christianity which went something like this: "Because of sin, we human beings are guilty in God's sight and are destined for the punishment of hell. Out of his grace, God has sent his Son Jesus Christ into our world. Jesus died on the cross, where he paid the penalty for our sin and also transferred to us his righteousness. All those who acknowledge Jesus as their Lord and Saviour obtain the salvation won by him at the cross, and our spirits have a place in heaven when we die." One searches in vain for any mention of Jesus' resurrection in this gospel account. Indeed, for a long while, I wondered about the purpose for this resurrection. Hasn't the penalty of our sin already been paid on the cross? Hasn't the righteousness of Jesus already been transferred to those who have faith in him

INSIDE

The Singaporean Preacher

Doctrines as Performing the Truth

What Kind of Light is the Light of the Word

Rhapsodic Voices

Reharmonization of the College Anthem

Christianity and Religious Diversity

...continued on page 2

as a result of what happened on Calvary? Isn't the cross sufficient to fulfil the mission of Jesus to save us from our sins? What is the point of the resurrection? Is it merely to provide a satisfactory conclusion to the narrative of Jesus' life; a "good ending" to the story; a kind of icing on the cake?

My sense of puzzlement increased when I read the Bible more thoroughly, and discovered that it proclaimed quite clearly the indispensability of Jesus' resurrection for the Christian faith. The apostle Paul, for example, states rather emphatically in 1 Cor 15 that "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (v. 14) and "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (v. 17). All these do not sound like the description of an "optional extra".

Things became even more incongruous when I observed that, in many churches, the service on Easter Sunday was the grandest one of the whole year, often overshadowing the Good Friday service. Some churches would have a "combined Easter service" with different congregations gathering to worship together and translation services provided. Others would put up banners and other special decorative pieces to adorn the church building. Yet other churches would assemble a band, choir or drama team to put up special items for the service. For the Roman Catholic churches, Eastern Orthodox churches and Protestant churches which retain the traditional practice, what is called the "Easter Virgil" is the most elaborate and important service in the entire liturgical year, involving the lighting of candles, extensive Scripture readings, the administration of the sacrament of baptism and numerous other carefully performed rituals. I was confused: Why do we go to such lengths just to celebrate an "optional extra"?

A Deeper Understanding of the Gospel

Thankfully, my puzzlement and confusion received a sort of resolution when I embarked on my theological studies at Trinity Theological College. Under the guidance of wise and competent teachers and with the help of my fellow students, I began to realise that the root of the problem lay with my understanding of the gospel. The account I gave above is not wrong, because it describes accurately the miracle of what Protestant Reformer Martin Luther calls the "wondrous exchange" which took place on the cross. It also serves well as a simple introduction to Christianity for those who are unfamiliar with the faith. But this account is simply inadequate for the long run. It does not include as integral to the good news many other critical elements of the faith, e.g., creation, the triune God, the two-natures of Jesus Christ, the Church and her sacraments, the last things and, of course, the resurrection of Jesus. In fact,

the various "doctrines" we study in a typical course on Christian theology are simply an explication of the good news which our Christian faith proclaims.

Moreover, the more one probes into this gospel, the more we are led to see that it goes so deep and extends so wide that we will never fully plumb its depths and traverse its breadth, even throughout eternity. The good news about who our God is and what he has done for us is so marvelous that there will always be fresh perspectives to discover and new things to praise our gracious God for. We sometimes imagine heaven to be a (frankly) boring place, where we do nothing but strum our harps all day. The Christian view of heaven is quite the opposite: It will be an exciting journey of never-ending discoveries of God and his love for us.

Coming back to Jesus' resurrection, I am thankful that the notion that it is an "optional extra" has been firmly thrown out of the window, now that I have a better understanding of the gospel and the critical place of the resurrection in it. The Bible passages which proclaim the indispensability of Jesus' resurrection for our faith now appear more comprehensible, and the extensive efforts which many churches put into making the Easter service an especially elaborate one seem fully justified.

Are you curious about what I (and many others) have discovered about the Christian gospel? One way to find out more is to undertake a stint of theological education. This can range from committing a few years of your life to obtaining a theological degree to attending the occasional day or evening course which TTC and other seminaries regularly offer.

This being TTC's 70th Anniversary, I will close by sharing about the aspect of the college's ministry I am most thankful for. In these 70 years, TTC has made important contributions to the life of the Church in many key areas. One such contribution which I am particularly grateful for is its constant challenge to Christians to continually probe the depth and width of our gospel and to communicate its surprising wonder and life-changing power to others. May we never cease from this exciting journey of discovering who God is and what he has done for us. ❖



Dr Leow Theng Huat
Lecturer in Theology

I began to realise that the root of the problem lay with my understanding of the gospel



The Singaporean Preacher: Prophet Without Honour?

The Trinity Rhapsody held on 2 February was the first of a series of events to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Trinity Theological College. The concert featured our TTC choir as well as several talented singers in our community. The audience was treated to an inspiring evening of musical renditions. On the same evening, the Trinity Anthem which was composed in 1960 and reharmonized for our 70th Anniversary, was launched and sung with gusto and conviction. The choir also produced a CD of songs, and copies are now available for purchase at the college.

In the month of March we turned our attention to the vocation of preaching which is one of the primary duties of those in the pastoral ministry. Preaching continues to be an important medium of teaching and exhortation, and it is not uncommon for members of the congregation to assess the spiritual impact of a Sunday service based on the sermon they heard.

Many decades ago, it was said that TTC graduates lacked skills in sermon delivery although they were more than adequate in terms of content. While the feedback was largely anecdotal, the college took it seriously and paid more attention to the teaching of Homiletics. Judging by the performance of current students, we are confident that TTC's budding preachers have been competently trained. Although not everyone has the gift of eloquence, yet when one preaches with passion and conviction, the message touches the listener in a special way.

Pastors are aware that one of the main reasons why people choose a church and remain in that congregation is because they appreciate the quality of preaching. It is sometimes assumed that the independent and charismatic churches are the ones drawing the crowds,

but many traditional denominational churches are also packed on Sundays. Rev Dr Maggie Low, a TTC lecturer, in her book *Preaching That Comes Alive* reminds us that "people are hungry to learn the Word and to meet with God so that they can be strengthened to go back and live their lives in the world. It is when people are spiritually fed that the church can minister to the rest of the world."

We should be proud of our homegrown preachers.... As a maturing church, not to affirm our own pastors and their gift of preaching is to treat them as "a prophet without honour" and reflects a lack of respect for Asian talents and their gifts of the Spirit.

It is heartening to note that churches in Singapore, over the decades, have produced a good number of outstanding preachers who are sought after locally and overseas. We should be proud of our homegrown preachers from various churches who are trained in our local theological institutions. Unfortunately, some still admire and regard preachers from the West, whether as guest speakers or missionary pastors, as superior to locals. As a maturing church, not to affirm our own pastors and their gift of preaching is to treat them as "a prophet without honour" (Matt 13: 57), and reflects a lack of respect for Asian talents and their gifts of the Spirit.

If anyone is still in search of a role model for preaching, our Lord Jesus shows the way. He captured the audience's heart and attention with his authoritative preaching about the Father's love, the need for repentance, receiving forgiveness and the call to discipleship. In his parables, Jesus' profound messages are told in a way that even the ordinary folk could understand. And as he often did, his messages were thought-provoking, engaging the listener to consider a life-changing response to the gospel. Let us pray that all preachers will be blessed with God's insight and wisdom as they boldly preach the Word. ❖



Liberal Arts and the Word of God

By Rev Dr Samuel Wang

New theological students initially wonder why there is so much required reading. Some may even think that Christians should learn the Bible above everything else because it is the Word of God. What is also of concern is that in recent times, Christians in Singapore sometimes mistake the term “liberal arts” to mean political liberalism or the word “liberal” to mean laxity in morals or a combination of both meanings. Such sentiments are far from what Luther and the other Reformers think when it comes to such secular learning.

What makes the liberal arts different from most current university curriculum is that it aims at imparting intellectual capacities through the study of general subjects in contrast to a professional or technical curriculum that aims to give mental abilities and knowledge for a specific job. Today, the liberal arts curriculum suffers compared to the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in higher education as they are widely believed to be more advanced and relevant today. It also suggests that STEM is crucial for securing jobs. Hence people devalue the liberal arts, especially the study of languages, the classics, humanities, philosophy and literature. In contrast, the church had always found such subjects useful not just because of the content but because it brings with

it an intellectual rigour that helps the church and the world.

The idea of the “liberal arts” came from the medieval European universities which inherited this educational curriculum from the Greek and Roman civilisations. They use the term “seven liberal arts” (*septem artes liberales*) to mean the seven subjects studied in the university: the trivium (grammar, dialectic, rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy).

One starts with the trivium which establishes a foundation for the quadrivium. Grammar teaches you the mechanics of language; dialectic teaches you logical thinking and rhetoric teaches you to speak with eloquence. The trivium is the foundation upon which you build in the quadrivium. Subjects in the quadrivium have developed over time to include philosophy, law, medicine and theology. Liberal arts colleges today include the study of literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics and the social sciences as the basis for a general university education.

Luther and the other Reformers valued especially the trivium among the seven liberal arts. Subjects such as grammar, dialectic and rhetoric help to form a person to be able to think critically. Grammar gives you an understanding of the mechanics of language

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Firstly, that truth and knowledge have a divine origin. Since Augustine, this foundational understanding justifies the use of liberal arts

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for language is the building block for the world of ideas. Then you learn to think well by learning dialectic, which teaches the ability to think logically. Subsequently, a person who can use the gift of language to reason will need to learn how to articulate his thoughts well, which is what rhetoric teaches.

Out of the three, Luther places a premium on grammar for he says that is the most important of the arts for theology as he investigates the meaning of the text in the Bible. Hence reformers urged that trivium should be given priority to determine the meaning of the text of Holy Scripture. After you make sense of it, you can teach it to others, serving to explain the meaning of Scripture with clarity. Therefore, the liberal arts are employed to help in comprehending the Word of God.

The humanist, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) advocates such a curriculum to bring learning from the university to the very young. He argued in *A Declamation on the Subject of Liberal Education for Children* that the best type of education for a young child was a liberal arts education. The Reformers subsequently modeled their schools using this educational philosophy. Hence, the liberal arts is not just the seven subjects but an educational theory derived from the humanistic endeavour of the church in the medieval age.

Why is there a need for the liberal arts today? The liberal arts is still essential for the church and the world not because of the subjects in and of themselves, but because of its educational philosophy which brings us a particular kind of Christian pedagogy.

Firstly, that truth and knowledge have a divine origin. Since Augustine, this foundational understanding justifies the use of liberal arts. He says “all truths are God’s truth” which Calvin picked up in his *Institutes* as follows: “in reading profane authors... If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to him, not to reject or condemn truth wherever it appears.” (II.2.15)

Secondly, secular subjects such as the trivium which is at the heart of this pedagogical model are understood not as a matter of content only, but also as tools of learning. Through learning the liberal arts, students will have the means to discover divine wisdom and truth. The critical skills learnt are

especially useful in the textual study of the Holy Scriptures, but not only that, they are also helpful to sort out the complexity of the world and help one to have wisdom in decision making.

Thirdly, the church’s theology is the norm by which one judges humanistic learning as the worldly knowledge provided by the liberal arts cannot save us from sin, death and the devil. What is useful, such as Erasmus’ humanistic model of learning, is taken up and sometimes adapted consciously or subconsciously. However, the church’s theology is the norm. It points to eternity and should not be confused with vocation which looks to the here and now.

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The critical skills learnt are especially useful in the textual study of the Holy Scriptures

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Fourthly, the liberal arts is a malleable model of education. This means it can be adapted to the times. The Reformers inherited this model as a living tradition, seeing themselves in a long line of teachers stretching all the way back to Augustine. Hence, the liberal arts is not a static model of education but one that changes and could be changed to fit the times. Since the Christian is called to live out their faith in the world in the different stations of life in which God calls them, they must learn what is helpful for their time in order to help their neighbours. To ape Jesus in his lifestyle and ministry which are specific to his time is not appropriate. Furthermore, his mission is that of Messiah, the Savior of the world, and this is not our calling. A Christian has the freedom to decide, in light of the times, how they are to fulfil God’s calling, and the liberal arts must change to serve this purpose.

In conclusion, secular subjects, and in particular, the liberal arts are tools that Daniel (Daniel 1:3-17) and Paul (Acts 17:10-23) mastered with the help of God, who is the source of all truth and wisdom. The church’s Reformers did the same and with such tools helped the cause of the gospel and formed Christians to serve the world in their God-given vocation. Let us not do otherwise and spurn such learning. ❖



Rev Dr Samuel Wang
Lecturer in Theology



Doctrines as Performing the Truth

By Rev Dr Simon Chan

Many Christians tend to think of doctrines as a set of ideas about God that the Church needlessly imposes upon its members. Doctrines are important, but why they are important is not apparent. Right doctrines are right ideas about God while wrong doctrines are wrong ideas about God. But why should right ideas about God matter at all?

Isn't it more important that we should behave right? We could cite examples of people who have perfectly right beliefs but are not living right, whereas there are others whose understanding of God may be quite incomplete and simplistic, yet may be living better lives. If right belief (or orthodoxy) does not necessarily lead to right practice (orthopraxy), what is the point of right belief?

A faith that does not lead to good works is a dead faith, according to James. If so, wouldn't it be better to have no faith at all than a dead one? A dead faith renders one more culpable than one who has no faith.

Furthermore, doctrines are shrouded in controversies. For every doctrine there are several different points of view each claiming to be the correct one. It leaves the average layperson confused. If theologians themselves cannot agree on anything, where does that leave ordinary Christians?

For many modern Christians these objections are sufficient reason to give doctrines a wide berth. They would rather go for a seminar on how to be an effective cross-cultural missionary than undertake a course of study that has no immediate practical benefits.

The true doctrine of God did not begin as abstract ideas but with...the encounter with the risen Christ which elicited a confession of faith

I would like to suggest that the problem may be due to a misunderstanding regarding the nature of Christian doctrines. Doctrines are not ideas about God—at least this is not the way doctrines began.

If we read the gospels closely, we will have noticed that although Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching his twelve disciples, they, for the most part, did not quite understand what he taught. On the most crucial matters regarding Jesus' identity, they misunderstood him. E.g. Peter rightly confessed (inspired by divine revelation) that Jesus was the Son of the living God; yet, he was thinking like most Jews of his day that Jesus' mission was to set up a theocracy. He could not conceive of a king who had to suffer and die. Peter had the right formula, but the truth did not quite sink in.

What brought about a decisive change in their understanding was their encounter with the risen Christ. It was after the resurrection that his

disciples recalled his teaching and understood (cf. John 2:22). Before the resurrection, all they had were jumbled pieces of a jig-saw puzzle; after the resurrection, the pieces fell into place. Everything that Jesus taught them now began to make sense.

Their encounter with their risen rabbi forced the first disciples to revise their inherited Jewish monotheism. They could not escape the fact that what Jesus claimed for himself was exactly what Yahweh in the Old Testament claimed that he would do for his people. But if Jesus is somehow identified with Yahweh, what are we to make of the One Jesus repeatedly addresses as "Father"? The attempt to answer this question constitutes the beginning of a trinitarian doctrine. The true doctrine of God did not begin as abstract ideas, but with the risen Christ coming to meet his disciples which culminated in Thomas' confession: "My Lord, and my God!" It was the encounter with the risen Christ which elicited a confession of faith.

The story of the risen Christ was circulated orally before it was finally written down in what we now know as the "gospels" (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Over time it was reflected upon and formulated in a more concise form to be passed on faithfully to subsequent generations of believers. These concise summaries of the faith (called the Rule of Faith) were eventually standardized in the Apostles' Creed. The Creed (derived from Latin credo: "I believe") is a confession of faith of which Thomas' confession was the archetype. This Creed was memorized and confessed by all believers at their baptism.

Believers today continue to confess the Creed at baptism. It is not merely a set of ideas but a precious,

living truth which links the newly-baptized with the first disciples who encountered the risen Christ and were radically transformed. Present-day believers too have encountered the risen Christ in the waters of baptism; there, they died with Christ, were buried, and risen with him to newness of life (Rom 6:4). Baptism is no mere ritual but a real participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

If we understand doctrines in relation to our baptismal confession which has its roots in the apostles' encounter with the risen Christ, then we begin to realize that doctrines are not mere concepts; rather, they are real links to the living faith of the people of God through the centuries. In the act of confessing "I believe..."

we are one with the first disciples who confessed, "My Lord, and my God!" We begin to experience the vitality of doctrine when we ask: What is this teaching calling us to do? Doctrines, according to Kevin Vanhoozer, are "prompts" to be performed rather than merely ideas to be glibly parroted.

The performance of doctrine is what we do regularly at worship, especially in the liturgy, where we proclaim, confess, and encounter God as Trinity. It is from this repeated doing of doctrines that they are 'inscripted' into our very being. Over time, they shape our worldview and behaviour. ❖



Rev Dr Simon Chan
Former Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology is retired and serves as part-time lecturer

Doctrines...are "prompts" to be performed rather than merely ideas to be glibly parroted.

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"The TTC campus is a quiet getaway, ideal for time away to pray and read the Bible. The small number of retreatants was also conducive for silence and solitude."

"Time alone with God is never wasted or unproductive, but is to be valued and cherished."

"The Retreat was a much needed spiritual pause to purposefully and intentionally re-evaluate my walk with God."



Anniversary Event

What kind of light is the

LIGHT of the WORD

Lux Verbi



By Elysa Chen, a TTC Alumna (MDiv 2016)



Appreciating a refreshing word on preaching

At the *Lux Verbi: Light of the Word* Preaching Symposium, this light proved to be a fire that burns bright with the beauty of Christ, with a warmth that ignites all who draw near to it, be it those with the sacred task of preaching or hearing it preached.

The two-day symposium with parallel tracks in both English and Chinese was one of Trinity Theological College's 70th anniversary celebrative event. Ms Nay Tar Mu, who teaches biblical preaching in Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College was one of more than 500 participants at the Symposium. Commenting on the way the symposium has been a great blessing to her, she said: "I have learnt many things on how to speak to my church. I also personally heard a Word from the Lord as He spoke to me, reminding me to be humble, as Christ was humble."

From the first plenary session, participants were led to see the centrality and the glory of God in preaching. Dr Paul Windsor and Mr Phil Nicholson from Langham Preaching spoke on the importance of keeping Christ as both the centre of the sermon (Christocentricity) and its goal and purpose (Christotelicity). This sets the tone for the subsequent plenary sessions by Rev Dr Maggie Low, Rev Dr Mark Chan, and Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott, who all serve on the faculty of Trinity Theological College.

Through the question and answer session, the

speakers exhorted participants to remain faithful to our calling to preach the gospel, a reminder which spoke to Mr Jerome Li of Ang Mo Kio Presbyterian church. Mr Li, who has been serving the students in Presbyterian High School as a chaplain after graduating from TTC last year, said: "I was reminded of my calling to be a preacher, and that in all that I preach, I ought to preach Christ."

If the first day was about beholding the brilliance of the Light of the Word, the second day was about the nurturing warmth of this Light, as the focus shifted from the glory to the love of God. Rev Dr Gordon Wong started the day by urging pastors and preachers to love the people of God. Picking up on that theme, Bishop Rennis Ponniah of the Anglican Diocese of Singapore underscored the importance of our "winsome witness of love" in a pluralistic society that may not always agree with the exclusive truth claims of Christianity.

The topics that were discussed during the plenary sessions and the dialogue which ensued resonated with many. Reflecting on his own ministry of preaching, Rev Lui Choo Huat, a TTC alumnus and priest of the Chinese congregation at Chapel of Christ the Redeemer noted: "Sometimes,

we preach until our hearts are breaking, because we don't see our sheep growing. But this symposium was a reminder for me to keep God's Word in focus, even as we face the challenges of an increasingly pluralistic society, with so many changing needs...I really appreciated this platform for us to come and share our experiences and affirm one another."

Agreeing, Rev Seet Keng Tat, another alumnus and a pastor from Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church said: "I caught the fire from the passion of the speakers. This is the difference between a symposium and merely reading a book on preaching. The fire is transmitted through their lives."

We were reminded through the conference of the character of God's preachers and the constancy of God's promises. Against the darkness of a sin-broken world, we proclaim the Word of God not merely by our lips, but also through our lives in the power of the Spirit, with the love of the Son, for the glory of the Father.

The conference may have ended, but our work of preaching continues. May we be nourished and transformed by the Light of the Word as we preach Christ, the Light of the World! ❖



Q & A with Plenary Speakers: (L-R) Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott, Rev Dr Paul Windsor, Rev Dr Edwin Tay (Moderator), Mr Phil Nicholson, Rev Dr Mark Chan and Rev Dr Maggie Low



A Dialogue with Practitioners: (L-R) Rev Dr Naomi Dowdy, Bishop Rennis Ponniah, Rev Dr Chris Chia, Rev Dr Gordon Wong and Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian (Moderator)

Rhapsodic Voices

By Gilbert Lok, a 2nd year MDiv student

On 2 February, TTC opened its 70th anniversary celebrations with a choral performance by its student choir. Accompanying this public concert was a specially-produced CD of the choir. Which of us students would have imagined that during our time of studies at TTC, we would cut a musical album, or perform live in a chorale concert? Who would have thought?

Each year, around a third of the choir leaves upon graduation, and a new batch of inexperienced “freshmen” replace those who have had two to three years of practice and nurture. Amidst this constant churn, one constant is our dedicated choir-mistress, Mrs Simon Chan. She has to work with whatever students she happens to get with each passing cohort. And work wonders, she does. Whether in full-choir practices or smaller-group voice classes, whether in good health or ill, Mrs Chan is tireless in training and guiding the ever-changing group of TTC singers. A transient choir recording an album and putting up a public performance - who would have thought? Yet the Lord used our humble voices.

And it wasn't just Mrs Chan and the choir that were involved in “Trinity Rhapsody”. The concert was a whole-college affair, with faculty members Rev Dr Mark Chan and Rev Dr Jimmy Tan leading in the singing of several Psalms. The organising committee too, was a joint faculty-student team led by Dr Yeo Teck Beng. In just a few months, the committee helped turn the concert from an idea to an actuality. Putting



Ladies' Duet: Sarah Ang and Lilian Goh

together a recording and a performance in mere months - who would have thought? Yet the Lord allowed it to come together.

Somehow, despite the short lead time, despite the fact that the singing wasn't perfect down to the last detail, the audience was moved. One listener thought the TTC choir was better than paid performances he'd attended at the Esplanade. Another was blessed by the liturgical dance that accompanied the music. One audience wrote: “I am so thankful to God. He ministered (to) me through every song and their lyrics. My heart was lifted up before the throne of the Lamb and I encountered Him once again. The past one month was one of the most difficult times I faced. But the Lord has ministered to my heart & soul by telling me, through these songs, that He cares and He will be with me. Praise God.”

And not just hearers, but singers ourselves were blessed. Several choir members reflected that they have

grown closer during these months of singing together. The mutual support was palpable during rehearsals and backstage: while smaller groups of choristers were on stage singing, the rest of us (literally) cheered them on in the holding area, even though no one else could hear. That both singers and audience were stirred despite the imperfections in the music - who would have thought? Yet the Lord touched hearts that night.

Toward the concert's close, the choir sang the TTC College Anthem, whose harmony was rearranged as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations. Generations of students have sung this tune, and lived out its lyrics in their service to God. That a theological college conceived in the midst of wartime captivity would go on to train so many pastors, missionaries, church workers, and denominational leaders - who would have thought? Yet the Lord has blessed TTC these seven decades, and through it bless Singapore and the region. “Trinity Rhapsody” was a testimony to God's unfailing provision, and in grateful response we said and continue to say, “Sing the Lord, Ye Voices All!” ❖



Dancers (L-R): Clara Loh, Elena Yeo, Charlotte Ng



“If With All Your Heart” (Mendelssohn's Elijah) by Samuel Choo



Choir Director Mrs Chan makes her contribution

Trinity Rhapsody songs are recorded on CD and available at the TTC Office @S\$20 each



Harmonious Voices of the College Choir



Audience participates in celebrative praise

The Reharmonization of the Trinity Theological College Anthem

By Rev Dr Jeffrey Truscott, Lecturer in Liturgy and Worship

The Trinity Theological College Anthem was composed by Mrs Esther B. Stockwell, a respected church musician and organist, for words by her husband, Rev Dr F. Olin Stockwell, principal of TTC (1961 - 1967).

The original version of the anthem consists of a single melody line with the words of the anthem, and a keyboard accompaniment below that line. It is not clear whether Mrs Stockwell herself was responsible for the accompaniment, but as an experienced church musician, she very likely composed both the hymn-like tune as well as its accompaniment.



The purpose for this reharmonized version is to provide two things: (1) an easier and updated keyboard accompaniment for pianists and organists, and (2) a score that can be sung in four-part harmony by a choir. In deference to Mrs Stockwell's fine contribution, much of the original harmony was kept, and so this new version will not sound foreign to those well-acquainted with the anthem. The arranger only made four changes in the harmonic basis, namely, in bars 5, 6, 7 and 9, the most significant being in bar 6 where a new harmonic progression has been inserted to enhance and support the melody line more effectively.

All of the above-mentioned changes have enhanced the attractive hymn tune by Esther Stockwell, which we are blessed to have for the singing of Dr Stockwell's equally beautiful words. We are grateful to the re-arranger, a dear friend of the College, who did not wish to be named. ❖

On Christianity and Religious Diversity

By Dr Tan Loe Joo, Lecturer in Theology

TTC and the NTU's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) signed an MOU in Feb 2017 for cooperation between our respective institutions. Recently, this cooperation was expressed in a course I conducted on "Christianity and Religious Diversity" from Nov 2017 to Feb 2018 at the university (following a previous course conducted by TTC in early 2017). This 12-week module forms part of the requirement for the Master of Science (MSc) course of the Studies in Inter-religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) programme.

The course aimed to provide students with an understanding of the Christian view of other religions throughout the history of the Church. It is of particular contemporary relevance given the trends of globalization and improved forms of communication such that most of the world's populations now live in religiously plural environments. A specific example

of the efforts of the Singaporean Christian community in engaging with other faiths was presented in the final lecture by Dr Roland Chia.

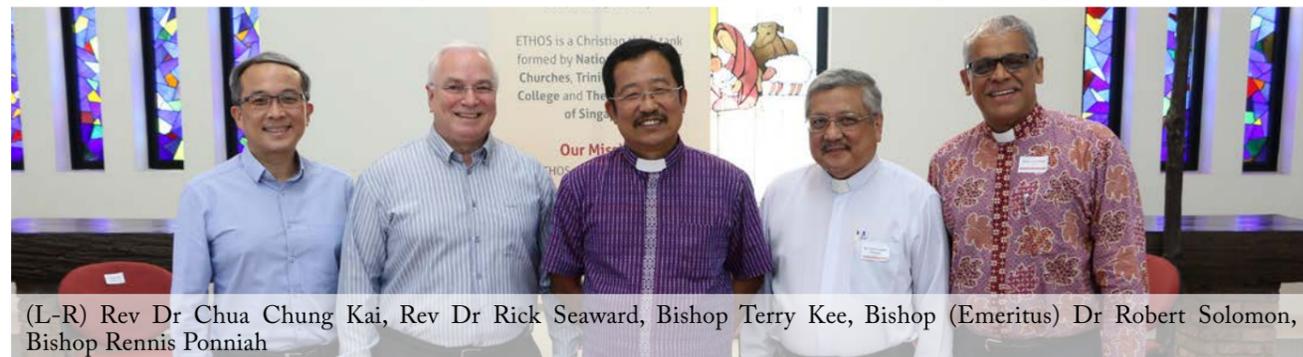
Among the students were those of other religious faiths who wanted to find out how the Christian Church had engaged with the phenomenon of religious diversity. These students included Muslims, Buddhists and non-religionists from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, and China.

The teachings of the Bible concerning Jesus and traditional doctrines such as the Trinity were first set forth to help them better understand Christianity. This was followed by an analysis of recent developments in the Christian Theology of religions. Most of the discussions were extraordinarily lively and fruitful, and as befit the course, held at a high academic level. It is hoped that through such interactions, a deeper understanding of Christianity would be maintained in our local universities and institutions. ❖

Future of the Church in Singapore

On 27 February, some 180 participants, including bishops, pastors and ministry leaders gathered at the chapel of Trinity Theological College for the Ethos Conversation on 'The Future of the Church in Singapore'. This closed-door event was organized by the Ethos Institute for Public Christianity in conjunction with the 70th Anniversary of Trinity Theological College.

Participants had a frank and open discussion with a distinguished panel comprising Bishop Rennis Ponniah, Bishop Terry Kee, Bishop (Emeritus) Dr Robert Solomon, Rev Dr Chua Chung Kai and Rev Dr Rick Seaward, moderated by Dr Roland Chia. Among the many issues that were raised and discussed were the importance of nurturing the future generation of leaders and the challenge of Christian public engagement in multi-religious Singapore. ❖



(L-R) Rev Dr Chua Chung Kai, Rev Dr Rick Seaward, Bishop Terry Kee, Bishop (Emeritus) Dr Robert Solomon, Bishop Rennis Ponniah

Exchange Student from Emory University

Jacob Cogman, a second year MDiv student from the Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, joined TTC as an exchange student for the January semester. We checked in to see how his experience has been so far...

Biggest Adjustment?

Being in a different time zone made communicating back home challenging at first. Now I have scheduled windows of time to contact my family and friends. It is great to know that I have a community across the Pacific who loves me and is actively praying for me.

Favourite food or meal?

On my first Sunday here, I was introduced to a local dish called chicken rice. One order is only [approximately] \$3.00 USD. Since I've been here, I've eaten Thai, Malay, Singaporean, and Chinese dishes. I appreciate

the communal nature of meals here. It reminds me of Sunday dinners at my home. Of course, I've tasted a few of the American franchises in Singapore and have been pleasantly surprised by the cultural adaptations on popular American fast food dishes.

Most memorable moment?

Admittedly, I'm not a big "birthday" person. I did not know what I was going to do to celebrate my 24th birthday in Singapore. I was still relatively new, having only been at TTC for a month. I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of love and care that was shown to me on my birthday. My adopted cohort got me a present, an official Trinity Theological College t-shirt. The students in the hostel also threw me a party that night and brought a cake to celebrate.

Plans after graduation?

In short, I don't know. Like many students at TTC, I am still discerning. My prayer is that God will continue to lead me and guide me as I journey through seminary.

Although Jacob grew up non-denominational, having attended a chapel at an army base that was run by both Pentecostal and Baptist clergy, he is currently a member of the United Methodist Church. Not only is he an avid consumer of opera and musicals, he is also a Double Dutch enthusiast. (This report is adapted from the article, "Singapore, a Great 'Melting Pot'" by Jacob Cogman) ❖



Jacob (far right) enjoys hospitality of new friends

Living the Holy Eucharist

By Wayne Fu, a 2nd year MDiv student and Student Council President 2018

Some time ago, as I was preparing myself for the Student Council election, I struggled at the thought of who is able to lead this community of students at Trinity Theological College. Then, it dawned on me that the duration of service for the office of President of the Student Council is extremely short. By the time you read this issue of Trumpet, I would only have about 8 months left to the end of my term and a new president will soon be elected. "What can God accomplish in this short period of time?", I wondered.

In the midst of seeking the Lord for His wisdom and knowledge, two questions surfaced. What do I hope to learn from this one year of service? What do I hope to leave behind? These two questions gave me much needed courage and assurance to serve among God's people.

You might find some contents of my reflections familiar, as if taken from the Bible. Indeed, they are reflections that arise from my meditation of 2 Chronicles 1:10, a verse that a friend in the college shared with me when I was visibly anxious. That friend's gesture highlights the fellowship in Christ embodied by the community at TTC. This fellowship is the legacy that I hope every student in the college will leave behind for future batches of students, and also bring back to their churches, parishes, organisations and families.

As the saying goes, "home is where the heart is". This is true for the experience of Christian fellowship. Although the nature of Christian fellowship captured in Acts 2: 42-47 might seem almost impossible in today's world,

the church's pursuit of it is never pointless. The Spirit of God who brought to life the one Church of Jesus Christ that exists together in diverse denominations is the same Spirit who dwells in us now. How then should we live in the light of the above reality?

A spiritual giant of our time, the late Henri Nouwen, provides some answers in our quest for this "ideal" fellowship. In his book, "Life of the beloved", Nouwen points his readers to the example of Christ that is captured in the Eucharist. Like Christ, the lives of his followers are to be taken, blessed, broken and given as "bread" to others.

We are to trust in him who has called us, and fully avail ourselves to be taken and used by God. We are to trust that our Lord who has blessed us is faithful and good. Should our Lord see the need to break us, it is to remind us of our brokenness, and that by His grace he continues to invite us to his table. We are to trust that the Lord will feed and nurture others through the offering of our hearts, souls and minds.

It is my desire to see a diverse group of students coming together as one community to be nourished at the Holy Eucharist and to live out its Christ-shaped reality! Indeed, this will be a fellowship that is diverse, yet united and nurtured in the one body of Christ. I hope and pray that such a fellowship will be the legacy that the TTC student body will leave behind for future generations of students, whose impact will be felt beyond the walls of TTC. Amen! ❖



2018 Student Council

Front Row (L-R): Pek Hui Ling Cecilia, Moses Esther Sangeetha, Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian (Principal), Koh Xin Xian Kjelti (Vice-President), Fu Wei Kai Wayne (President), Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun (Dean of Students), Tan Yang Yi Sean

Second Row (L-R): Lai Wai Leong Mark, Chan Xin Hui, Liu Wisda, Salim Grace, Peh Wan Qian Esther, Teo Pauline, Ma Run Zhi, Khaw Siew Ping, Teo Meow Ling, Ng Ee Chiat, Sofian, Tan Yang En Seth

Back Row (L-R): Chua Yan Xin Caleb, Nguyen Dinh Nguyen Le, Zhang Xin Yu, Jin Zhong Liang, Chan Heng Wee Rufus, Seah Kok Wee Daniel, Roshan Naveen, Yagamaram Ilango, Chok Chun Hong Anthony, Tang Yehezkiel Christofen, Tang Yerima Christofen, Kueh Chun Chiang, Chiam Choon Liang Eric, Lee Sheng Wei Daniel, Suvisedagan A Joseph Vasanth Sathyan

TRINITY News

Congratulations to...

The following alumni on their Ordination by the Methodist Church in Singapore:

- Chinese Annual Conference (16 Nov 2017)

Deacon

Rev Cynthia Choo Bee Lay (BD 2004; MTh 2017)

Elder

Rev Lau Chong Yaw (BD 2011)

Rev Lui Yuan Tze (MDiv 2012)

Rev Eric Soh Wai Foon (CTS 2005; BD 2010)

- Trinity Annual Conference (23 Nov 2017)

Deacon

Rev David Ho Seng Hian (MDiv 2014)

Rev Benjamin Fong Guo Wei (BD 2014; MTh 2016)

Elder

Rev Ian Lee Shangjin Andrew (BD 2011)

Rev Jeremy Ong Wang Jing-Qi (MDiv 2013)

Rev Ling Kin Yew (MDiv 2013)

Rev Jason Phua Kok Yong (MDiv 2011)

Rev Dr Yeo Peck Chan (MDiv 2005; DTh 2007) on her Ordination as Associate Minister of Singapore Life Church on 3 Feb.

Rev Zhu PeiJin (BD 2014) on her Ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of Cyprus and Gulf on 27 Jan. She is now serving as Priest in St Paul's Anglican Church, Ahmadi, Kuwait, Chinese Congregation.

Rev Tahir Wijaya (MTh 2013) on his election and installation as the President of the Chinese Provisional Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Indonesia during the Special Session in North Sumatra, 12 – 14 Jan.

Steve Lam Kuok Wang (MDiv 2016; MTh 2) and his wife, Cassandra, on the safe arrival of their first born, Isaac Lam Ieok Hei on 9 Dec 2017.

Rev Daniel Lim Chee Siang (BD 2011) and his wife, Jane, on the birth of their 3rd child, Abigail Lim Le Xuan on 19 Jan.

Dr Saw Htoo Htoo Ray Mya Moses Israeli (MDiv 2) and his wife, Nay Nay, on the birth of their son, Immanuel on 12 Feb.



The Trumpet is published in English and Chinese

To view the Chinese edition, please visit our website

www.ttc.edu.sg

Condolences to...

The family of the late Rev Rinson TK Lin (LTH 1969; BD 1970) who was called home to glory on 24 Mar 2017 in Vancouver, Canada. News of his demise was received in Jan 2018.

Mr Anthon Simangunsong (MDiv 3), on the passing away of his beloved father, the late Mr Bachtiar Simangunsong, on 20 Aug 2017 in Indonesia.

Rev Dr Andrew Peh Swee Kian (BD 1996), TTC Faculty, on the demise of his beloved mother, the late Mdm Yeo Thian Siok on 20 Dec 2017.

Rev Peter Goh (BD 1995) and Mrs Goh on the passing away of his mother, the late Mdm Chua Guat Har in Dec 2017.

Mr Timotius Thong (MDiv 3) and his wife, Heren Tjung, on the sudden demise of his father-in-law, the late Mr Tjung Nyan Liang on 31 Jan in Palembang, Indonesia.

Rev Dr Niam Kai Huey (BD 1985) and her husband Rev Chua Ooi Suah (BTh 1985; MMin 1995) on the demise of her father, the late Mr Niam Seng Sim on 10 Feb.

Rev Shaun Chong Jiawei (BD 2011) and his wife, Rulin, on the demise of his beloved mother, the late Mdm Tan Keng Boon on 12 Feb.

The family of the late Mr Steven Tok Chow Boo (BD 2007) who was called home to the Lord on 23 Feb.

We Invite you to Support the Ministry of Trinity Theological College

Your support will enable our college to :

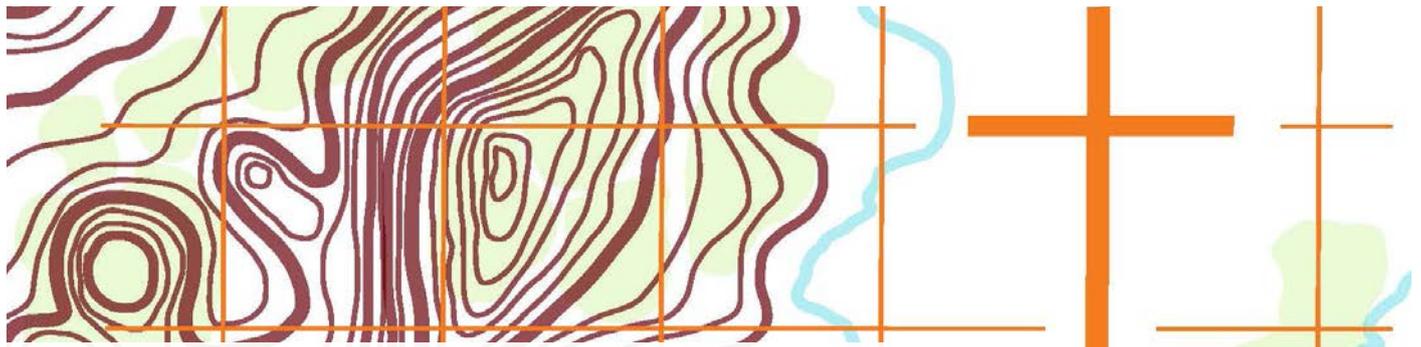
- be equipped with a competent and dedicated faculty
- provide substantial subsidies for tuition fees
- offer scholarships to less fortunate students
- house one of the best theological libraries in the region
- organise workshops and conferences at minimal cost
- furnish and maintain our 16 year old campus

Here are some ways you can make your financial contributions:

- By ATM or Bank transfer to our DBS current account 033-017261-3
- By Cheque to "Trinity Theological College".
Mail to: 490 Upper Bukit Timah Road, Singapore (678093)
- 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 us at 6767 6677



Anniversary Events in May & July



CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL FORMATION ITS NATURE, POTENTIAL, AND PITFALLS

Date: 15 May 2018 (Tuesday)
 Time: 9.00am - 12.30pm
 Venue: TTC, Multi-purpose Hall (Level 1)
 Speakers: Rev Dr Simon Chan & Rev Dr Jimmy Tan
 Resource Persons: Rev Dr Niam Kai Huey & Rev Joseph Goh
 Specially for: Pastors and Christian workers



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 Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun, Ms Dawn Lee, Ms Pauline Wong

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