

God of All Nations

By Rev Dr Maggie Low

Will there be a Singapore 50 years from now?" This question was posed to the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew by an old friend. That conversation took place just a few months before Mr Lee passed away. At the SG50 National Day Rally last year, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong quoted this friend's letter:

"At each of our gatherings, it had become a tradition to ask Mr Lee, "Will there be a Singapore many years from now?" Once, Mr Lee said "Maybe". On another, Mr Lee said "Yes, if there is no corruption"...Continuing with our tradition and in the spirit of SG50, that evening we asked him "Will there be a Singapore 50 years from now?" Mr Lee's answer took us all by surprise. That evening, for the first time, Mr Lee said, "Of course there will be ... even better!"

We will not know Mr Lee's reason for his confidence. What basis for hope can we have in a time of Zika, terrorist attacks, militarisation of seas, declining global economy, and rising global temperatures?

For us as Christians, we turn to a God who transcends time and human power, a God who cares for the nations. The Bible, beginning with the Old Testament, shows that God is the Creator, Provider, and Judge of all nations.

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Deut 32:8 tells us that “when the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples”. Paul says as much in Acts 17:26 in his address to the Greeks, “From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live”.

It was at the Tower of Babel that God divided humankind (Gen 11:1-9). The confusion of language and the scattering over the earth put a halt to human hubris and its potential for great evil. Scholars see this as a historical reference to the hegemony of the Babylonian Empire, especially with its towering temple ziggurats. God is against the subjugation of peoples and nations under one tyrant. Rather, each nation is free to live in its own place and to nurture its own language and culture.

This primeval vision is consummated in the eschatological revelation: “There was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev 7:9). The turning point for this unity in diversity took place at Pentecost, signified by Spirit’s gift of tongues so that all peoples could hear about God (Acts 2:1-13).

Trust God, the Provider of all Nations

However, God was at work even after Babel. He began anew with Abraham to bless all the families and nations on the earth (Gen 12:3). In Genesis, we find God giving a dream to Pharaoh, interpreted through Joseph, in order to preserve Egypt and others from famine.

After the Exodus, when they were about to enter the Promised Land, God warns the Israelites not to engage in battle with the Edomites and the Moabites because their land was given to them by God (Deut 2:5, 9). Amos states that God cares not only for Israel but also for other foreign peoples by overseeing their migration: “Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?” (Amos 9:7)

Even emperors ruled under the sovereignty of God. Insofar as they accomplished God’s will, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was called “my servant”, and Cyrus of Persia was “his anointed” (Jer 27:6; Isa 45:1).

Trust God, the Judge of all Nations

The One who raised nations is the same one who judges them. We hear this through the Oracles against the Nations pronounced by prophets from Amos to Jeremiah.

They are judged by whether they follow God’s moral standards. While not having the Torah or covenant law, the ancient Near East had an understanding of order embedded in creation. Old Testament Wisdom Literature (such as Proverbs) reflects this worldview, albeit rooted in the fear of the Lord.

For the people of God in particular, guidance for nation-building is found in Deuteronomy, which functioned as the Constitution of the new nation. I want to highlight three Deuteronomic values applicable to Singapore: community, justice, and inclusivity.

First, community is rooted in strengthening the family (the fifth commandment of the Decalogue) and extending respect to all socio-political appointments such as judges, officials, priests, and constitutional kings (Deut 16-19).

Second, such leaders are admonished to administer “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut 16:20).

Third is the insistence on inclusivity. The trope “widow, orphan, and alien” is mentioned about 11 times in Deuteronomy, showing God’s special concern for the vulnerable: “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings” (Deut

24:19). In our context, we might speak of the elderly, the low-income, the disabled, and the migrant workers. The blessing of a nation depends on how well we take care of the needy.

Conclusion

“Building our Singapore of Tomorrow”: The theme for our SG51 National Day Parade is a call to Singaporeans to build our future collectively. We heed that call as Christians by acting and advocating for community, justice, and inclusivity.

Will our children celebrate SG100? That is certainly our prayer, trusting not in ourselves but in God, the Creator, Provider, and Judge of all nations. ❖



Rev Dr Maggie Low
Lecturer in Old Testament

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Whither Denominational Seminaries?

Trinity Theological College reached another milestone in April 2016. It marked the first time that the Board of Governors is composed solely of governing denominations based in Singapore. It may help to recall that our college was founded at a time when denominational churches in Singapore and Malaysia were not yet separate entities. Thus since its founding in 1948, TTC’s governing board has always had representation from both countries. Even as recent as 2012, our Malaysian counterparts were still members of the governing board.

As the two neighbouring countries progressed as independent nations, it soon became clear that the Malaysian churches needed to establish seminaries of their own to address contextual issues. And on our side of the causeway, one critical event which brought home the reality that the future of TTC would be best determined by Singaporeans themselves was the acquisition of the Mount Sophia campus and the challenge to relocate to new premises.

With our Malaysian counterparts focussing more on their churches and supporting their own seminaries, it would be a matter of time before they considered withdrawing from the TTC Board of Governors. So it was that in July 2012, the Lutheran Church in Malaysia tabled its decision to withdraw as a governing church. This was followed by the Methodist Church in Malaysia in February 2014, and most recently, the Gereja Presbiterian Malaysia in April 2016. With the withdrawal of all our Malaysian counterparts (Malaysian Anglicans left the Board a few decades ago) a chapter of our history which has lasted 67 years has finally come to a close.

To be sure, the leadership at the Board level has already been in the hands of Singapore governing members for quite some time. And while the parting of ways was not unexpected, we are certain that the historic ties between our founding churches will never be severed by national priorities and needs. The constitution of TTC still provides for 18 voting members composed of representatives appointed by the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches.

We are aware that not all theological institutions governed by mainline denominations are thriving. Many such seminaries have been overtaken by those which claim to be ‘non-denominational’ or ‘trans-denominational’. It is also unfortunate that the old mainline denominations are often perceived as anachronistic and not responsive to changes. This may be true in other parts of the world, but we thank God that in the case of TTC, new vistas still beckon us. In fact, the synergies of our four governing denominations and their rich heritage combined with the vibrancy of their ministries promise a rather positive future.

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... to raise the level of
theological education in
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and encourage Asians
to help Asians
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While a chapter has been closed, a new one is developing. The long standing ties with our Malaysian counterparts have paved the way for us to connect with Malaysian seminaries, which include Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (Seremban), Methodist Theological School (Sibu, Sarawak) and the Sabah Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu. Each has its distinctive indigenous programmes which have relevance for their context in both East and West Malaysia. TTC, together with these Malaysian seminaries, find common ground through membership in the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA).

ATESEA is more than a fellowship of regional seminaries. It sets standards for its members through accreditation visits. It conducts courses on curriculum development, holds conferences for principals, deans, librarians and offers workshops on governance. A priority for ATESEA is developing current and future faculty members for the region in collaboration with institutions which have advanced degree programmes such as TTC.

In short, ATESEA aims to raise the level of theological education in our region and encourage Asians to help Asians. Through these engagements, friendships are forged and trust established across denominations, ethnicity, theological differences and national boundaries. We learn to appreciate the different conditions and challenges faced in other seminaries and such interactions draw people together seeking to be God’s instruments of peace and goodwill in Asia. ❖



On Diapers, Dichotomies and Vocation

By Rev Dr Edwin Tay

It has been more than fourteen years since I left for the United Kingdom for theological studies. I remember the well wishes of a sister in Christ when she first heard of my plans for theological training and full-time Christian service. With a sparkle in her eyes, she exclaimed enthusiastically, "It's so good to serve the Lord!" It was a comment with which I heartily concurred.

My elder daughter was then a year old. Since her birth, I had been actively involved in her care, including changing her diapers upon return from the hospital. Despite my research on baby-care, I remember being a little anxious when I first caught sight of her greenish-black stool. Bracing myself, I did my best at what seemed like a most delicate



work. However, I did not recall anyone saying to me, nor did I say to myself anything that came close to the comment, "It's so good to serve the Lord!"

Inherent in the above examples is a sacred-secular dichotomy that is deeply entrenched in the psyche of many Christians. This dichotomy has taken various forms in popular Christian discourse and practice. Churchly work, for instance, is often thought to be of greater worth and dignity than the work done in our offices and homes. Another example is the false but persistent notion that full-time Christian workers such as pastors and missionaries are called by God to perform spiritual work of eternal value, while Christians who are not "called" are left to pursue secular or ordinary work of temporal worth.

The sacred-secular dichotomy has been around for a very long time. There was a widespread conception among the ancient Greeks that "un-leisurely" life in our physical bodies is inferior to life lived in rational contemplation. In his influential *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle, for instance, conceives of practical work as secondary to philosophical reflection (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X.). The latter is a godlike activity towards which human beings are to approximate in our pursuit of happiness. Not surprisingly, many in ancient Greece thought of manual work as cursed and demeaning.

The church is not immune to such dichotomies.

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 Is the choice between sacred and secular work, contemplative and active life an inevitable one for the Christian?

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 All work, when performed in faith and obedience to God is sacred work, divinely dignified and humanly expressed

Writing in a period that spans the third and fourth century A.D., the church father Eusebius of Caesarea, distinguished between two types of Christian life in his work, *Demonstration of the Gospel* (Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel*, I.8.). He explained that the "perfect form" of the Christian life is "above nature and above common human living." Those who are called to it live a priestly life of celibacy, simplicity and devotion to God. This is distinguished from Christians who live a "more humble, more human" life that engages in such work as soldiering, farming, trading and other work of "secular interests." According to Eusebius, the "more humble" life expresses a kind of "secondary grade of piety" in relation to the former.

Such a two-tiered conception of the Christian life was carried over into the subsequent history of the church. This is seen, for instance, in the distinction between a life focussed on external actions (active life) and one that consists largely in the contemplation of truth (contemplative life). Maintained by such eminent theologians as Gregory the Great and Thomas Aquinas, the active-contemplative distinction was not employed at the expense or denigration of physical work. Work was necessary for livelihood and undoubtedly good when performed for the benefit of others. Nevertheless, a life dedicated to contemplation was perceived to be the better life. In the words of Aquinas, "the contemplative life is more excellent than the active." (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIb, Q.182, Art. 1.)

Is the choice between sacred and secular work, contemplative and active life an inevitable one for the Christian? Must a priest who provides spiritual counsel be necessarily more dignified in his work than a cook who labours in the kitchen? There is sufficient Scriptural and theological warrant to suggest that the dichotomies recounted above need not be construed as such.

Scripture often describes the Christian life in terms of vocation. Vocation in modern usage is almost synonymous with occupation. However, it once took on the meaning of calling (from the Latin *vocare*, "to call") in popular English usage. Scripture describes believers not only as those who are called to belong to God as his children, but also called to live a life that accords with that identity. Christians are called, for instance, to turn from sin (Luke 5:32), to freedom (Gal 5:13), to be holy (1 Cor 1:2), to bless when reviled against (1 Pet 3:9), to follow Christ in suffering (1 Pet 2:21) and to eternal life (1 Tim 6:12).

All of the above descriptions are directly correlated with God's calling. They reveal aspects of the



called life of a Christian. Whether one is a pastor or professional is irrelevant. Every Christian is called by God to live a life worthy of one who belongs to God. Since this is the case, every Christian can be said to bear a divine vocation. In the Protestant tradition, this reality is sometimes termed, "primary calling." Its primacy arises from its character as the fundamental reality that informs and shapes every sphere of the Christian's life.

When this vocational reality is brought to bear upon our relationships, responsibilities and stations in life, the sacred-secular dichotomy is no longer sustainable. Mindful contemplation and bodily activity are equally directed by the summons of God. All work, when performed in faith and obedience to God, is sacred work, divinely dignified and humanly expressed.

I may not have said to myself, "It's so good to serve the Lord" when I first tried my hand at changing diapers. But having journeyed for some time with some of my spiritual forebears in church history, I have come to see the implications of those words more clearly. When I last consulted Luther, I heard him say to me, "God, with all his angels and creatures is smiling, not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith." (Luther, *The Estate of Marriage*, LW 45.40.) ❖



Rev Dr Edwin Tay
 Dean of Students
 Lecturer in Theology



True Worship Isn't Found in This World

By Dr Tan Loe Joo

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. Isa 6:1-4, ESV

During my postgraduate studies in the UK, our family had an opportunity to catch a performance of the famous musical *Les Misérables* at the Edinburgh Playhouse. The Playhouse is a 90-year old historic building with a seating capacity of 3000, making it one of the largest theatres in the country. What first struck me when I entered was how imposing its stage was, with huge red velvet curtains covering it from ceiling to floor. As the musical started, the thick curtains were raised, and then we were mesmerized by the magic of the performance. After a couple of hours, when the musical had ended, the red curtains were lowered and then the stage with the entire theatre returned to normalcy.

In Isaiah 6, the prophet saw a vision of the Lord seated on his throne. The circumstance of that vision was the year that King Uzziah died. Uzziah had ruled Judah wisely for fifty-two years. During his reign, he drove back the Philistines who tried to encroach

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 We need eyes of faith to penetrate the thick curtains and see that God is still there on his throne and being worshipped



upon Judah's land, and he set up towers for the protection of those in the pastures and plains. Israelites under the age of 50 have known only one king all their life, and when he died, they were in deep shock. The ques-

tion asked by many, and the prophet himself, was, what is going to happen to Judah after Uzziah died? At this critical juncture, God gave Isaiah a vision of heavenly worship. It was as if he raised a red curtain to show Isaiah the cosmic drama that is taking place on a celestial stage.

What did Isaiah see in the vision? First, he saw a throne, and the Lord seated on it, high and exalted (v 1). This was meant to remind him that while one king had died and vacated his throne, the true King remains seated on his throne. The king has died, long live the King! Then, Isaiah saw the seraphim (v 2), angels with six wings worshipping God. The word “seraph” in Hebrew means to burn, and therefore, these are angelic creatures continually burning and giving out light and glory. Yet, their own light and glory are eclipsed by God's glory that is far greater than theirs is. At the same time, he heard them calling to one another, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ Holiness is the utter otherworldliness of God, and so vast is the chasm between God and creature that the seraphim repeated the word three times. Finally, just to remind Isaiah that what he had seen was neither a mirage nor a dream, in an intersection of heavenly and earthly scenes, v 4 says that the doorposts of the temple shook as it was filled with smoke. This means that the voices of the angels and the smoke of the heavenly places, from a realm beyond all time and space, have actually penetrated into human time and space such that the thresholds of the temple shook and smoke filled the temple itself. What a sight and what an experience it must have been, for the prophet to see the Lord, to hear the voices of the seraphim and to feel God's very presence!



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 Our earthly worship is meant as a vehicle to bring us to participate in the heavenly worship

What does Isaiah's vision have to say to us about our worship today? Fundamentally, it tells us that God is eternally seated on his throne and is being worshipped by his angels. However, that message did not end with the vision. Herein lies the key difference between a musical and a vision. In a musical, after the curtains are lowered, the show is over, and the audience leaves the playhouse. However, for a vision, after the curtains are lowered, the reality continues behind the curtains. What we need are eyes of faith to penetrate the thick curtains and see that God is still there on his throne and being worshipped. Actually, we also need eyes of faith to realise that before the curtains were raised, God was already seated on his throne. Once we see that, we begin to realise that whatever worship we see on this earth is a pale shadow of reality; our fluctuating love for God daily—even several times a day—means that our earthly worship simply does not match up to the true worship that is taking place right now. Since true worship is in heaven, whenever we attend worship in church on Sundays, we are like perpetual latecomers, because the worship has already begun before we arrive (though that's not an excuse to be late for Sunday service).

Although our earthly worship pales in comparison to the heavenly worship, it still serves a purpose. Our worship on earth is meant as a vehicle to bring us to participate in the heavenly worship, to bring us into God's presence. The question we should be asking ourselves of our earthly worship shouldn't be, what have we gained from worship this morning? Rather, we should ask, have we entered into that heavenly worship through our earthly worship? Have we participated in that true worship that Isaiah saw, that has not stopped, and that will never end?

So let's remember the vision of Isaiah in the midst of our own circumstances and our worship. Let us pray that we do not get distracted by the phenomenon of what we see on earth, and that we may develop eyes of faith unhindered by curtains to see our God seated on his throne, always and forever. ❖



Dr Tan Loe Joo
 Lecturer in Theology

ANNUAL COLLEGE RETREAT 2016

On Spiritual Direction

By Eric Chiam, a 2nd year MDiv student

Every academic year at TTC begins with the annual college retreat. It is an expression of the ethos of the school, which recognises theological education as both an academic and a spiritual enterprise, and is best carried out in the context of community. From the begin-

ning of the retreat it was clear that this was a family reunited, as warm greetings rang out across the chapel, and many a person uttered the words, “long time no see” with heartfelt gratitude.

The opening icebreaker was an introductory exercise, as students and faculty alike became quickly acquainted with each other’s favourite food and hobbies via mime. Without words, the activity easily overcame language barriers and bonded everyone over much laughter. In the later part of the first day, new family groups were formed, and had their first activity travelling to Rail Mall, Beauty World, and other nearby places of interest in the Upper Bukit Timah Area. Although the weather was hot, groups were all smiles by the end of the day.

Aside from the fun and games, the retreat also had a spiritual dimension. Speaking on the subject of spiritual direction was Rev Dr Simon Chan, who currently serves as spiritual director of the college. “As many students may not be familiar with the concept and practice of Spiritual Direction, I thought the introductory talks will give students an idea of what to expect,” said Dr Chan. Over two days, Dr Chan taught about and led the college in a number of spiritual exercises, aided by his colleague Dr Jimmy Tan on the second day. The community practised silence, praying the ‘Jesus prayer’ as a breath prayer, and *lectio divina* together. “When people learn to pray, they also learn to discern God’s will and direction in the process,” explained Dr Chan.

Despite drawing from ancient practices, the overall retreat experience was rich and novel. Justin Chan, a year 1 MDiv student from a contemporary church background, enthused, “I do not get much exposure to ‘high church’. Going through liturgical reading of scripture, call-and-response singing, and structured prayer is a breath of fresh air for me.” His experience no doubt mirrors that of many others’, who in a short span of two days engaged in a spectrum of worship

practices, all of which served to re-centre the community on God. On the twin notes of community and worship, the retreat drew to a close, as the college prepared itself to equip saints to engage the world. ❖



Welcoming New Students

By Eric Chiam, a 2nd year MDiv student

On 4 and 5 July this year, Trinity Theological College welcomed a new batch of students into its community. Hailing from various stages in their academic journey—some embarking on their first theological degrees, some on exchange from their own seminaries abroad, and some post-graduate students pursuing masters or even doctorates—students from 14 different nations were introduced to life at the college.

Kicking things off were twins Yeremia and Yehezkiel, who emceed in English and Mandarin respectively. Their good humour and literal fraternity set the tone for the rest of the orientation, which was filled with much laughter and a strong emphasis on the communal aspect of TTC life.

Students were granted a glimpse of what it means to join the TTC family, both spiritually and communally. Kjelti Koh, a year 1 MDiv student said, “Even as a newcomer, the sense of community is evident.” The briefings throughout both days made much of the point that academia and life together were essential for their spiritual formation. At his welcoming address, the principal Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian emphasised that TTC’s pedagogical focus on theology was a matter of putting “first things first”, as preparation for ministry requires a strong theological foundation. Building upon this, the dean of students Dr Edwin Tay encouraged students to look forward to both the joy and challenges of living together at TTC: by recognising, as Martin Luther did, that life experience—including the trials—is essential to being a theologian.

Of course, no introduction to TTC life would be complete without choir auditions with Mrs Simon Chan, the school’s choir conductor. Many were



nervous, but freshmen and seniors alike were quick to encourage all ‘auditionees’, regardless of their performance, and a few even stayed back to retry their auditions out of a desire to serve in the choir.

Behind the scenes was the orientation planning committee, led by year 3 MDiv student Alvin Chee. Many months of labour finally came together on these two days, and by God’s grace even things beyond their control still fell in their favour. Perhaps most rewarding was the Rite of Passage, where the new students offered this season of their lives to God as seniors prayed for them. “It reminded us of our own calling,” said Alvin. “And it was a privilege to have been a part of their journey in theological studies.” ❖



Substantive Lectures on Subversive Liturgy

By Rev Dr Andrew Peh, Lecturer in Mission

This year’s Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA) Lectures were particularly significant in that we had the privilege of having as Lecturer one of TTC’s most experienced and erudite faculty members, the Rev Dr Simon Chan. Dr Chan is the Earnest Lau Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College. A published scholar, a rigorous lecturer and also a magnanimous colleague and mentor – these are the descriptions of Dr Chan as he was introduced by the respective chairpersons for the three lectures. He unpacked the theme of the CSCA 2016 Lectures, “Subversive Liturgy: Christian Worship and its Implications for Social Ethics and Ecology” over the three evenings of 19-21 July 2016.

In the opening lecture, “The Liturgy as Enactment of the Faith of the Church”, Dr Chan stressed the centrality of the Liturgy as the definitive and enacted creed of the church. In his critique of the subjective and reflexive nature of modern worship, Dr Chan categorically outlined a more theologically sound and scriptural approach as encapsulated in the Roman missal as well as the Orthodox liturgy.

First year MDiv student Kjelti Koh said, “The talks opened my worldview to something that I had always just taken as mere rituals that could be picked apart, according to one’s whims and fancies. Dr Chan changed my perception through his passionate sharing on the need for the ‘enactment of the Gospel narrative’ through the Liturgy.”

In the second lecture, “The Liturgy and the Formation of an Ethical Community”, Dr Chan reasoned that the church’s societal engagement is a natural development of the liturgy, where “in the liturgy we enact a social imagery which forms participants into a distinctive public.” In his final lecture, “The Liturgy and the Transformation of Creation”, Dr Chan offered us an eschatological glimpse of the redemption of all creation, a theme intrinsic in the liturgy itself.

Those who attended the lecture left with a deep sense of appreciation and satisfaction. Participant Sean Tan was encouraged by the “impassioned plea for the church to re-establish the centrality of the liturgy” and came to a “new-found appreciation of the significance of the Eucharist as part of the liturgy.” In the same vein, final year BD student Jerome Li appreciated the call to move beyond understanding worship as an emotive experience to an appropriation of the church’s liturgical roots. By so doing, “the Church will enact the gospel truth not just in song, but in their lives, community and the world.”

Through these lectures, Dr Chan has articulated afresh a latent and revolutionary perspective of liturgy. He has plumbed the depths of the theological fecundity encapsulated in what the modern church often casually and callously dismiss as archaic traditionalism. For those who missed out on this theological feast, the good news is that CSCA will publish these lectures along with three responses from various church traditions. Watch out for the title from CSCA! ❖



Valedictorians Speak

Each year, two graduating students are selected to represent their cohort to address the guests at the Graduation Service. On 14 May, Chin Yoke Fen (MDiv 2016, Chinese) and Byron Teo Yongxin (MDiv 2016, English) were Valedictorians at Wesley Methodist Church. Here are the abridged versions of their speeches.

To Be Stained Glass Artwork of God

By Chin Yoke Fen



Three years ago, we came to TTC with a vague idea about theological education. Indeed, it is rigorous. This Chinese poem aptly describes our sentiments: "I lift up my eyes to gaze at the moon, and bow down my head to write papers (instead of missing home)." But we gradually felt God's presence even in the midst of our struggles and our daily lives. We discovered a new perspective to our faith.

TTC lecturers are strict, yet they set good examples and point us to God, our teacher par excellence. We tried 'wrestling with God' but He would always triumph. Our defeat made us all the more humble and strong.

From total strangers with diverse background, we became friends. We shared each other's laughter, tears, brokenness and restoration. We were fragments of glasses of different shapes, sizes and colours, yet God the Master Workman formed us into a beautiful piece of stained glass artwork.

Our final lesson is one that we need to continue learning even after graduation: "Pressing on the Upward Way". We need to trust God for His mercy: may His love heal those who are wounded, and help us to forgive each other for the past hurts. Only then can we press on together. Though we are going separate ways, we will always remain the same piece of stained glass artwork of God.

Our hearts are filled with immeasurable gratitude. We want to thank the Lord for His grace, our lecturers for their teaching, our churches for their blessings, our family and friends for their support. Thank you all. ❖

Pressing on the Upward Way

By Byron Teo Yongxin



The theme for our graduation is "Pressing on the Upward Way". It speaks of our experience as a class at TTC, and reminds us of the road ahead.

As we journeyed on the path of theological studies, white hair appeared, sleep was averted, coffee was greatly desired, intellectual sacred cows were slaughtered, personal struggles entered, and self-centredness disappeared. The more that we studied to know, the more we realised that we did not know.

More than an intellectual journey, TTC was a spiritual journey for us, because we came to know that our need for God is greater than we could ever know. Our time in TTC has been an upward way, because it has brought us closer to Jesus Christ, THE only Way.

Let us not forget what we have gained from theological education: the ability to reflect and respond biblically to what we encounter in the world; the discipline to love the Lord with all our minds through diligent study; and the heart to skillfully shepherd and love others with the love of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps a part of us wishes that we would never leave today's mountain top experience. For it is easy today to be hopeful and excited for the journey ahead.

But there will be days when it becomes hard to be hopeful.

When those days come, friends, keep on keeping on; press on the upward way; fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Thank you! ❖

The Faith Foundation Fund A Vision of Faith Methodist Church

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

True to its name, Faith Methodist Church envisioned by faith their being called to play a significant role in promoting the growth and maturation of churches in Asia. Recognising that proper leadership development is the key to all this, Faith Methodist Church has generously set aside a sum of S\$500,000 to provide scholarships for Christians earmarked for leadership in Asian churches to study at TTC.


The MOU between Faith Methodist Church and TTC was signed on 17 July 2016, at the celebration of Faith's golden jubilee. What is so significant here is that Faith's golden jubilee has also become a sort of jubilee for many in Asia. Worthy candidates can now be empowered to embark on a journey of leadership development, without being hampered by the lack of funds. We at TTC are grateful for this partnership and Faith's trust in the quality of our theological education.


More information on this scholarship is available at TTC's website. ❖



The Bible as Canon of The Church

Have you ever wondered how the bits and pieces of the biblical books and passages fit together as one united voice? If you have, then these talks are for you! Come and learn from a world renowned scholar on the profound meaning and theological beauty of the Bible as Canon of the Christian Church.



Session 1: The Character of Christian Scripture The Bible is a unique literary witness to God in Christ. It has a particular form and design by which it accomplishes its purpose. It has been preserved in communities of faith who have been guided by its literary witness. Date: Wed, 28 Sep 2016 Time: 8pm-9.30pm Venue: St Andrew's Cathedral, New Sanctuary	Session 2: The Design of Christian Scripture The form of the literary witness of scripture is an important index for how the message is conveyed and is intended to be received. Date: Thu, 29 Sep 2016 Time: 8pm-9.30pm Venue: St Andrew's Cathedral, New Sanctuary
Calling All Pastors and Ministry Leaders! Special Afternoon Talk: The Use of Israel's Scriptures in Hebrews Date: Wed, 28 Sep 2016 Time: 1.30pm-3pm Venue: Trinity Theological College (Multi-Purpose Hall)	About the Speaker  Christopher Seitz was Professor of Old Testament at Yale University and the University of St Andrews before going to Wycliffe College, University of Toronto in 2007 to be the Senior Research Professor of Biblical Interpretation. His publications on the OT and biblical interpretation are highly acclaimed and widely cited.
FREE ADMISSION Online registration closes on 19 Sep 2016!	

Visit bible.org.sg/ibexseminar for more details.
For enquires, contact us at 6304 3772 or ibex@bible.org.sg

Spiritual Retreat for Lay Leaders

By Rev Dr Jimmy Tan, Associate Director, Field Education and Lecturer in Pastoral and Practical Theology

The inaugural “Spiritual Retreat for Lay Leaders” was held from 6 to 7 May at TTC. As its title suggests, this weekend programme is designed to offer the lay leaders of our churches the much needed time and space to tend to their relationship with God. Structured around the liturgical hours, the retreatants were guided through set times in corporate and individual prayer. They also received individual spiritual direction from the retreat leaders, Rev Dr Simon Chan and Rev Dr Jimmy Tan. Our college’s

facilities, surrounded by lush greenery, with its beautiful chapel and prayer garden, provided just the right ambience for our time of prayer, reflection and refreshment.

This first run of the programme was fully subscribed, and received very heart-warming reviews from its retreatants. We are very grateful to the Lord for the privilege of offering this very important ministry to the key leaders of our churches. We look forward to how our future retreats might similarly bless its participants. ❖



Here are some excerpts of the feedback given by the retreatants:

- *“It has been a great personal spiritual experience and a good equipping session. It revealed that a spiritual retreat is something quite ‘doable’. This retreat is also a precious time set apart for communion with God.”*
– Aldrian Obaja
- *“A ‘must sign up’ retreat as it teaches one to be silent. You will definitely meet with God and experience a different level of spiritual awakening.”*
– Marvies Holborn
- *“It teaches us the basic spiritual disciplines we can do on our own, and encourages us to make them a habit in our lives. The time with the Spiritual Director helps us with the spiritual direction in our life and also guides us in enhancing our prayer life.”*
– Charles Lim
- *“This has been a wonderful session that I truly enjoyed. I came with little expectation, but have received much blessings.”*
– Khoo See Kiang

The 2016 September and November Retreats are fully booked
However, we invite you to join us in 2017



- 3 - 4 Mar
- 5 - 6 May
- 1 - 2 Sep
- 3 - 4 Nov

Each session is limited to 12 participants
You may also attend as a church group
Do plan in advance and register early

More details at www.ttc.edu.sg

TRINITY News

Condolences to...

Mrs Mildred Tan, member of the Board of Governors and Audit Committee, on the passing away of her mother, Mrs Jenny Sim, on Friday, 13 May.

Li Pei (MDiv 3) whose mother and grandfather passed away on 8 June and 9 June respectively.

Bishop Rennis Solomon Ponniah (MDiv 2000) and his wife Amir on the demise of his mother-in-law, Mrs Florence Caldwell, aged 95, on 21 June.

Lim Yin Mei Sue-Anne (MTS 1) on the sudden demise of her mother on 29 June.

Congratulations to...

The following alumni in the Anglican church on their ordination on Sunday, 8 May 2016, at the St Andrew’s Cathedral.

To the Diaconate:
Rev Joshua Raj Sundraraj (BD 2013)
Rev Yap Chee Han (MDiv 2014)
Rev Yee Meng Ann Bernard (BD 2014)

To the Priesthood:
Rev Chan Wei Han Christopher (BD 2010)
Rev Peter Jeremy Ponniah (MTS 2010)
Rev Prem Bahadur Tamang (BD 2011)

Timothy Yong (MDiv 2016) and his wife Valerie Tang who became the parents of a son, Zion Yong, born on 5 February.

Wang Haibin (MDiv 2) and his wife Wan Jing on the arrival of their newborn, Wang Tian En, on 28 March.

Esther Tan Ah Lan (MMin 2015) on her installation as Director of Gospel Operation for Chinese Christians on 30 April at Glory Presbyterian Church.

Rev Dr Marnungsang (DTh 2007) on his appointment as the 4th Principal of Clark Theological College, Aolijen, Nagaland on 1 May.

Brury Eko Saputra (MTh 2016) and Chai Su Fang on their marriage on 7 May in Indonesia.

Lim Han Hui David (MTh 1) and his wife Lim Suk Fern Hannah, on the birth of their twins, Lim Yu-Yi Joel and Lim Yu-Heng Jonathan, on 19 May.

Gabriel Ling How Sain (MDiv 2016) and **Tan Wan Lin (MDiv 2016)** on their marriage on 4 June.

Jeremy Ong Wang Jing-Qi (MDiv 2013) and Jolene Tay on their marriage on 25 June.

Thank You for Your Partnership in Theological Education

TTC depends fully on the generosity of well wishers. Your gifts will be used to train men and women for Christian Outreach and Ministry in Singapore and the region. We invite you to consider the following ways to contribute to our ministry:

- **By Cheque** payable to “Trinity Theological College”. Mail to: 490 Upper Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 678093
- **By Bank or ATM transfer** to our DBS current account 033-017261-3
- **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 67676677.



The Trumpet is published in English and Chinese
To view the Chinese edition, please visit our website www.ttc.edu.sg

CDCM Evening Classes

Reformation: Then and Now

Dates: 28 Sep – 9 Nov (7 Wednesday evenings)
Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Venue: St. Andrew’s Cathedral
Instructor: Rev Dr Andrew Peh

Ethical Issues in Asia

Dates: 22 Sep – 10 Nov (8 Thursday evenings)
Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Venue: TTC Lecture Room 2
Instructor: Dr Kwa Kiem Kiok

Details are available on our website www.ttc.edu.sg

Seminaries Collaborate

BGST & TTC offer joint DipTS

The Biblical Graduate School of Theology (BGST) and TTC have agreed to jointly offer the Diploma in Theological Studies (DipTS). Under this arrangement, registered students can take courses at either institution to complete the requirements of the programme. In this way the strengths of both institutions are made available to the students. Moreover, the credits gained in this programme will be recognised and transferable to more advanced theological programmes, such as the BD or MDiv, in either of the institutions.

The DipTS is targeted at Christians, who desire strong foundations in the understanding of their faith, either because they would like to bear good witness for Christ in their work places, or

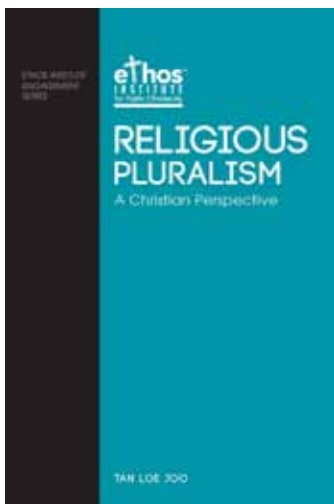
help their pastors in providing leadership for the Church. BGST and TTC strongly believe that a bigger pool of theologically trained people in the Church will result in establishing a much stronger and broader base for Church growth.

The joint DipTS will be launched in January 2017. More information on this can be found at the websites of BGST and TTC. ❖

Diploma in Theological Studies by



A Lecture and Book Launch on Religious Pluralism: A Christian Perspective



In our contemporary world of religious diversity, how should Christians respond to other faiths? How should the different religious beliefs co-exist in society? This lecture describes the various positions that have been explored through the history of the Church under the rubric of a three-fold schema — Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism.

Date : 27 Sep 2016 (Tue)

Time : 8pm-9.30pm

Venue : St. Andrew's Cathedral, Prayer Hall A-C

Speaker : Dr Tan Loe Joo

Free Admission

Register at www.ethosinstitute.sg/pluralism.

Call 6304 3765 or email info@ethosinstitute.sg for further enquiries.

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