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# TRUMPET

VIEWS AND NEWS FROM TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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## Christian Witness in a Pluralistic World

*By Dr Roland Chia*

**H**onour Christ and let him be the Lord of your life. Always be ready to give an answer when someone asks you about your hope. Give a kind and respectful answer and keep your conscience clear (1 Pet 3:15–16a).

The apostle Peter wrote these words to “God’s people who are scattered like foreigners in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1). They lived and worked in societies that were religiously and philosophically plural—very much like ours today.

In writing this pastoral letter, Peter wanted to remind these Christians of their identity as God’s people. Applying the vivid language that the Old Testament uses for Israel to the Church, the apostle writes: “But you are God’s chosen and special people. You are a group of royal priests and a holy nation. God has brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Now you must tell all the wonderful things he has done” (1 Pet 2:9–10).

Peter reminds them that God has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light so that they can be his witnesses. Mission belongs to the very being of the Church. It is not one activity that the Church does alongside others. It is not an optional extra.

To be a Christian, therefore, is to be a witness to the truth and love of God.

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But how can Christians be faithful and effective witnesses of Christ in a multi-religious and multi-cultural society? This passage offers invaluable insights.

Firstly, Peter tells his readers that they must “always be ready to give an answer when someone asks about your hope”. The Christian must not be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom 1:16). Neither should he try to conceal his faith so that he may blend in with the general public unnoticed—a temptation for some Christians living in pluralistic societies. Rather he should always be ready to share his faith at the appropriate time.

But notice that the Christian’s witness is situated within the context of his relationship with the religious other—the person who is not a Christian and who may or may not be an adherent of another religion. The Christian’s witness takes place “naturally” in the course of his daily interactions with his neighbours.

When the occasion arises for the Christian to share his faith in Christ, he must seize the opportunity to do so. But Peter also gives specific instructions on how this should be done: “Give a kind and respectful answer”. The English Standard Version (ESV) translates this verse thus: “yet do it with gentleness and respect....”

The Christian’s witness must never be aggressive, arrogant or offensive. It must always be “kind” or “gentle”, respecting the dignity of the religious other and his freedom to embrace or reject the Gospel. There can be no place for pressure or coercion in the communication of the Good News about God’s love.

The goal of Christian witness is not to denigrate other religious faiths but simply to point to the one who is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

Neither should the Christian’s witness be manipulative or inauthentic. Peter says that the Christian must share his hope “with a clear conscience”, that is, in a way that is blameless—as the second half of verse 16 clearly emphasises.

The Christian must always remember that while it is his responsibility to witness to Christ, it is the Holy Spirit who brings about that change of heart which we call conversion. Thus, while the Christian must

be a faithful witness, he must also acknowledge the sovereignty of the Spirit of God, who blows where he wills (John 3:8).

But Christians can only be authentic and effective witnesses of Jesus Christ when they themselves are fully surrendered to Christ. This returns us to verse 15: “Honour Christ and let him be the Lord of your life.” Or, as the ESV renders it: “...in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy”.

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**Christian witness cannot be in any way separated from the lives of the witnesses, those who claim to belong to the holy God.**

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Christian witness has to do not only with the words that Christians speak. It is also about their actions and their behaviour as disciples of Christ before the observing world. The Christian’s witness cannot be in any way separated from their lives as witnesses, as those who claim to belong to the holy God.

The words that Christians use to share the Gospel, however eloquent, will appear vacuous to the unbeliever if their lives consistently contradict the truths they proclaim. Thus, Christians are called to

always conduct themselves with integrity, charity and compassion. They must not display arrogance and condescension towards their neighbours.

Instead, they are to imitate their Lord Jesus Christ—whom they hope to introduce to their family, friends and colleagues—whose life was lived in humble service to God the Father and for his glory. ❖



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

## Standing Together in the Spirit of Christian Unity

Visitors to Trinity Theological College would often be taken around our college grounds for a campus tour and led to the TTC Chapel. On one such occasion, I brought an overseas visitor to the Chapel, stood before the communion table, and offered a brief account of our common worship as a gathered community.

I did not expect to see this visitor’s shocked expression when I offered details of our regular practice of the communion liturgies of our Governing Churches. He was visibly moved at the way students from various denominations at TTC are nourished at the same Table of our Lord regardless of denominational liturgy and the ecclesial associations of presiding ministers. Such a Gospel-uniting reality was a rare occurrence in our visitor’s ministerial experience.

Christian unity, as experienced at TTC, is God’s precious gift that our College does not take for granted. There are two expressions of this unity that deserve special attention.

Firstly, unity in corporate worship can be traced to the experiences of our founding fathers in Changi Prison during the Japanese Occupation. Confronted with the need to depend on one another for survival, common services were started for the spiritual sustenance of those incarcerated in Changi Prison.

Encapsulating the conviction of the Christians who were imprisoned, Rev Robert M. Greer, himself an intern, comments: “When the first Sunday came along we felt that the need of the hour was for a United Service, not for separate denominational services, and so we started a tradition which, with exceptions for special occasions, was carried on throughout the three and a half years of imprisonment.”

The same spirit of unity in corporate worship continues today, albeit expressed differently in form. The integrity of each Governing Church’s liturgy is upheld at our Wednesday chapel services while all members of our community are invited to the Lord’s Table regardless of their denominational affiliations.

Secondly, unity in leadership is evident from the very beginning of our founding. Our Articles of Union

identifies the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches as “cooperating missions and churches” that founded the College. The Lutheran Church joined the union in 1963.

The TTC Board of Governors is made up of 18 voting members from our Governing Churches. Voting members include five Anglican, three Lutheran, five Methodist, and five Presbyterian representatives.

The Board is further supported by denominational representatives to the Audit, Finance and Personnel Board committees, while the Heads of Churches exercise shared-leadership through a Board chairmanship that is rotated annually. In the truest sense, TTC is an extension of our Governing Churches.

The deep sense of camaraderie and solidarity in leadership among our Governing Churches is the result of intentional Gospel-partnership since TTC’s founding in 1948. The goodwill and trust built up through seven and a half decades of ministry together cannot be taken for granted. Ecclesial

friendships and relations need to be constantly nurtured through common worship and shared leadership in the context of mutual service for Christ and his church.

TTC’s ministry is only possible through the divine gift of unity in Christ’s church. Published in 1960, the following extract from the first edition of Trumpet captures aptly the spirit of our united approach to theological education: “WHY DO WE DO THIS JOB TOGETHER? Trinity Theological College is a united training center. We are doing our training together because we cannot do it alone.... Standing together, we ‘bear one another’s burdens’ in the spirit of Christian unity.”

We look forward to celebrating TTC’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Thanksgiving Service and Dinner on 6 Oct 2023. It is a day on which our Governing Churches will renew their Gospel-partnership for the future of TTC and our mission of training workers for the Lord’s harvest field. May God who birthed TTC through the gift of Christian unity, continue to prosper the work of our hands for the service of Christ and his church. ❖

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**We are doing our training together because we cannot do it alone....**

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# Whose Meaning? Which Reality?

By Dr Leow Theng Huat

The meaning of words depends on the framework they are embedded in. This framework forms a kind of reality in which these words exist and from which they draw their meaning.

Take, for example, the word “ball”. Within the game of golf, it refers to a small spherical object. In the sport of rugby, however, the “ball” is not of the same size nor shape. When we talk about a co-worker being “on the ball” or a rich man hosting a “ball”, we are not referring to anything remotely like the earlier “balls”. There are also people whose family name is “Ball”, and the term could also refer to a brand of watches.

When we see a word being used, it therefore pays to ask, “Within what framework do you use the word? What is the larger reality you operate in?”

This may seem obvious, but it is surprising how often Christians fail to make this interrogation when faced with challenges to our faith. For example, it is common to hear opponents of the traditional Christian position on marriage claim that it depicts God as both unloving and unjust. Those of a heterosexual orientation are permitted to find fulfilment in marriage and family life. Yet those attracted to persons of the same sex are denied this same privilege. How could a loving and just God allow this?

Christians sometimes find ourselves agreeing with such arguments. What we may have failed to realise is that the terms “love” and “justice” in this argument take on their meanings within a particular framework, and this framework is a world away from the reality depicted by Christianity.

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The framework within which this argument operates is one which sees human desires as morally neutral. We therefore have equal right to pursue the paths our desires lead us on, diverse though they be. This framework also sees human beings having the capability to correctly discern what is truly best for us. After such discernment, we have complete autonomy to make the choice to pursue these good ends. With this set of conditions in place, love and justice demand that a person’s choice for their life journeys should be honoured and facilitated to the greatest possible extent.

Another way of describing this framework is that it is one in which the Fall never happened. The Fall is a momentous event in the Christian narrative. As a consequence of our rebellion against God, our human desires have been misdirected, such that a significant portion of what we want goes against God’s will. In this regard, it makes little difference whether these desires are innate (a product of nature) or acquired (the result of nurture) or a combination

of both. Christianity understands the effects of the Fall to be so profound that they may impact even our innate characteristics.

Sin has also blinded us. We are often not able to judge accurately what is good, even for ourselves. This is why we go against God’s will—the will that seeks true fulfilment, joy and peace for us. The Bible also calls us “the slaves of sin” (Rom 7:14). Even in the instances where we are able to discern what is right, we may not have the ability to choose accordingly. There are powerful malignant forces which exercise an undue influence over us.

In the light of the Fall, genuine love and justice cannot operate in the fashion prescribed in the argument above. God’s love cannot consist simply of allowing us fallen creatures to walk our chosen paths towards the fulfilment of our desires, as these might be paths which lead us away from God’s good plan for us. Similarly, God’s justice cannot reside in the sanctioning of all manner of human choices, when these choices are actually not equivalent in God’s eyes, as they lead to drastically different outcomes.



It is worth clarifying that the severe consequences of the Fall apply to all human beings, whether heterosexual or homosexual in orientation. The former are equally plagued by sinful desires and wrong judgements, and are equally the slaves of sin. Therefore, God’s love and justice also significantly constrain the choices available to those of a heterosexual orientation, and they do so in all aspects of life, including the decision whether to get married. For example, should two persons of the opposite sex seek to enter matrimony “unadvisedly or lightly” (to cite the phrase uttered at the beginning of the wedding service), the church should urge them to desist because God’s love and justice demand so.

All this may sound terribly paternalistic to modern

ears, but it represents the Christian view of reality. We are free, of course, to reject this reality and turn to alternatives, but we should be aware that we would no longer be functioning under a Christian framework if we do so. The words and phrases we use may then take on very different shades of meaning.

One reason why Christians have been slow to undertake such exercises of critical questioning could be because we are unfamiliar with the

Christian understanding of reality. Some of us might even be unaware that Christianity presents a view of reality different from that given by the world—these would include those who have embraced the faith mainly in order to obtain supernatural help to achieve success according to the world’s framework.

There is therefore an urgent need for our churches to inculcate the Christian view of reality in our members. We do this in our preaching and teaching, as we paint the reality portrayed by the gospel and invite others to enter it.

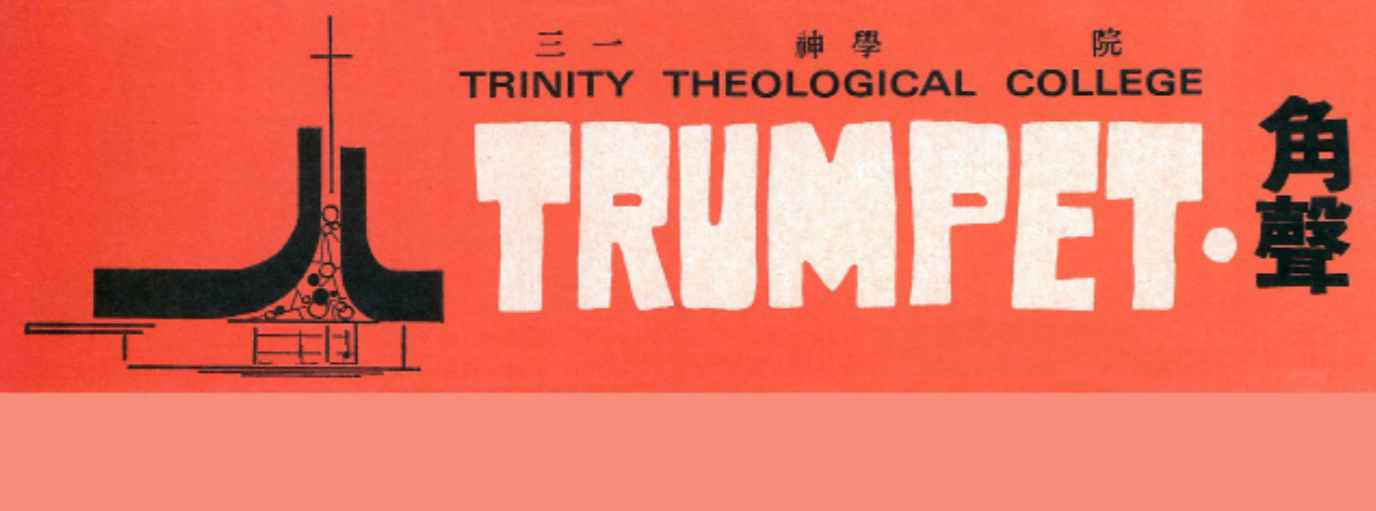
We do this through our church practices (like the liturgy and sacraments), which shape us and our perspectives as we carry them out habitually. We do this through practical acts of love and witness, and in so doing demonstrate that this new reality is not a myth but a living fact in this world.

Unfortunately, many today have decided that the best way to attract people to church is to make them feel comfortable, and the easiest way of doing so is to throw out much of our traditional teachings and practices (which tend to appear strange) and remake the worship service and the church’s life so that they fit more smoothly with the norms, practices and perspectives of this world. In doing so, we lose much of the power of the gospel—the power of a world-challenging reality.

Reality-building needs to happen again. May God give us the grace to do it well. ❖



Dr Leow Theng Huat  
Lecturer in Theology



By Rev Dr Andrew Peh

The Trumpet was first published as an occasional newsletter in 1960 and the Chinese publication, 角聲, debuted a year later. It became a regular publication from May 1965. The purpose for the publication was for the college to provide updates and information to the wider church to be acquainted with and participate in the life of the college. The name of the publication is based on the verse in Joel 2:1—“Blow the trumpet in Zion...for the day of the Lord is near”.

This series of three articles provide snapshots from the Trumpet in 25-year segments of the college’s history as captured through the articles. It is a reminder of what the Lord has done and what He continues to do in and through the college.

very close to our target. If the college is going to pioneer the development in this region of a theology that is distinctively Asian and related to the events - past, present, and future - of this part of the world, a locally grounded faculty is a necessity and to this end we move” (June 1972).

The college leadership understood the significance of ensuring a more robust curriculum that engaged Asian theological perspectives. To that end, “recent revisions of the curriculum have seen the introduction of an important and new course, ‘Theology in Asia’, during which the writings of Asian theologians who have made significant contributions in this field are studied” (June 1972). The college has been conscientious in curriculum revisions in order to meet the needs of the churches. New programmes were introduced—Masters in Ministry (MMin) in Sep 1973, Bachelors in Ministry (BMin) in 1975, and a (full residential) Masters of Divinity (MDiv) in Sep 1977. In 1980, the MMin programme was further bolstered through the establishment of regional study centres in Malaysia, Indonesia and the then Burma. The growing demand for further theological education precipitated the establishment of TTC’s own graduate school, which included restructuring the existing MMin programme and offering the college’s own MTh course, with a new intake on 12 Jul 1992.

In 1975, one of the faculty members, Dr Karl Hammar, instituted a lay training programme, for which he would be the first chairman of the Committee on Continuing Education. Theological education was not to be confined only to those who were training

In 1972, the TTC Board of Governors announced the appointment of Rev George T T Wang as the sixth principal of TTC as well as the appointment of two other Asian faculty members, Dr Yeow Choo Lak and Dr Martin Wang. Rev George Wang’s appointment was opportune especially amidst the ebb of western colonialism and a rising consciousness to engage with the diverse cultural and religious contexts of Asia. At the onset of his appointment, Rev Wang noted,

“The policy the college is pursuing at the moment seeks to establish a ratio of 2:1 in the number of Asian faculty members over those from elsewhere. This term we have 13 full-time faculty members, 8 of whom are Asian, and thus we are already getting

for full-time ministry. The notion was—“Instead of asking church members to come to Trinity, Trinity will go to church members where they are.” This initiative attracted a total of 92 lay persons in its first session of five courses in partnership with four local churches. This remains the impetus for TTC’s EQUIP and *QiCheng* to persevere in providing lay theological education today.

Quite interestingly, the college similarly evidenced an expansion in the area of church music studies as there were plans in place for the establishment of a church music department. The programme was in some ways catalysed by the demise of Mrs Koh Geok Kheng on 13 May 1980. She had served more than two decades at TTC. The college approved the setting up of the Koh Geok Kheng Memorial Fund in order to build a music studio in the library complex in her honour for her contribution to music education at Trinity. Through the 80s, the college through the Continuing Education Music Programme (CEMP) offered courses for lay training, such as vocal methods and choral conducting. Additionally, through the 80s and 90s, the TTC choir made frequent choir tours in the cities of neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.



Mrs Koh Geok Kheng (1<sup>st</sup> row, 1<sup>st</sup> from left) with the choir.

Another significant and understated development was the formation of the Institute for the Study of Religions and Society (ISRS) by the faculty of Trinity College in 1969, with Rev Dr Ray Nyce as the first director. The role was to promote the study of religions in the Asian context and to better understand the role played (and might be played) by the religious communities in developing society. The establishment of such an institute predates the prestigious Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme offered by the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and is indicative of the foresight of the college leadership.

These developments attest to the fact that the college was unequivocal in ensuring that theological education must be relevant both to the local church as well as the regional context. By the time of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the focus was on “building for the future”. The college embarked on a comprehensive revision of the curriculum, plans for faculty development, which included both local as well as overseas teaching staff and the publication of the Trinity Theological Journal. At the same time, the college was planning a massive S\$4 million extension and renovation to meet with the increasing student enrolment and to better serve the local church and the wider context. In many ways this was an upgrade of the “hardware” as well as the “software”.

This second period of the next twenty-five years would culminate in the Jubilee celebrations, with the theme, “*Lux Mundi*—Our Heritage, Our Future”. As part of the celebrations, the new college crest was unveiled, and the Trumpet was published for the first time in bilingual format. But amidst the celebratory outlook, TTC was undoubtedly at a crossroads, in view of the government’s earlier announcement on the acquisition of the property at Mount Sophia. The estimated costs of relocation and reconstruction was between \$35-40 million. The Principal then, Rev Dr John Chew, wrote:

“Undoubtedly, we will always feel pain over the acquisition, but we must do all we can to continue what is clearly of God. This is all the more imperative when we consider that TTC has over the years established itself as the premier theological college with a strategic development of Asian national Christians for senior leadership and theological education in their respective countries”(Jul-Sep 1998). Just as the Lord guided His people in the dark periods in Changi Prison to found this college, the news of the acquisition would not in any way extinguish what He has lit—*Lux Mundi!* ❖

**The defects in the images are inherent to the sources themselves.**



**Rev Dr Andrew Peh**  
Lecturer in Missions & Missions History

# Growth in the Wake of the Pandemic

*By Rev Dr Leonard Wee,  
Registrar, Lecturer in New Testament*

The Chinese characters for “crisis”, 危机 (wei-ji), conveys the twin meaning of danger and opportunity wrapped in that one expression. This was true of TTC’s experience during the global Covid-19 pandemic. It was both a challenge and an opportunity.

The years spanning the pandemic, namely 2020 to 2022, were also crucial transitional years at TTC. We had a new Principal, a new Academic Dean, new Administrative Committee members, new Directors for Field Education and EQUIP, and so on. By the grace of God, TTC navigated through these transitions with the strong support of our Governing Churches, friends and supporters, and came out of the crisis stronger as a college. I would like to highlight a few of the significant developments in college facilities and infrastructure that set the stage for our college’s future.

## Library Developments

TTC library has been upgraded with new furniture and an increased study space. New personal workstations for advanced degree students were added, increasing the number from 6 to 28. This is in addition to the existing study carrels that have been used by doctoral degree students. It is part of an ongoing initiative by the college to cater to the needs of our students, as we witness an increasing number of enrolments in our advanced degree programmes.

Furthermore, all study tables in the library are now equipped with power sockets to support the charging of laptops and mobile devices by each user. An additional 20,000 books were added through a ProQuest Religion and Philosophy E-book subscription. This is made available to current students, TTC alumni and other members of the library, who can also access these resources externally via the internet even while overseas.

## Classroom and Chapel Upgrade

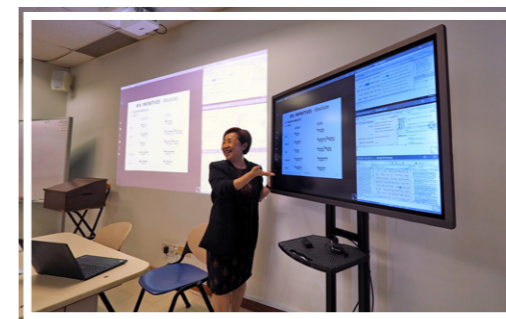
All the classrooms have been upgraded with new interactive panels, replacing the traditional whiteboards. These interactive panels have access to the internet. Not only do they offer wider capabilities in facilitating classroom discussion and presentation, they also enable



More personal workstations were created for advanced degree students.



Three screens at the multipurpose hall plus new video cameras equip the venue for hybrid live-streamed events.



New interactive screens in our classrooms expand teaching possibilities.

all the electronic pages written during class sessions to be easily and quickly made available to students’ mobile devices.

In addition to the classrooms, the Chapel and multipurpose hall have also been upgraded with new equipment, giving the college additional audio-visual capabilities, including the live-streaming of college events.

## Learning Management System

A digitalisation roadmap was adopted by TTC in 2021. Its IEE (Integration, Enhancement and Expansion) framework provides the guidelines for the College to engage the task of digitalisation in a thoughtful and coordinated manner. After a process of careful study and deliberation, a learning management system called Open LMS has been successfully implemented college-wide. Lecturers and students can now use a common platform to distribute handouts, carry out discussions, track learning outcomes, receive instructions, submit assignments, consolidate course grades, mark attendance, make announcements and so on, all within an individual virtual space that is created for each module.

Course materials can now be accessed using mobile devices. In future upgrades, the Open LMS system would also integrate with the newly-installed Student Information System, which means courses that are graded in the Open LMS would be reflected automatically in student records. Course registrations can also be done using mobile devices, and payments made electronically through banking apps.

## Digitalisation Programme

All the contents of the college handbooks, policies, guidelines, announcement of events and other information for life at TTC are progressively made accessible electronically by students, faculty and administrative staff, as part of the Open LMS platform mentioned above. This digitisation and consolidation of college information allows for relevant information to be available to everyone in the TTC community on a timely basis via computers or mobile devices. It also facilitates the updating of information in real time.

## Online Instruction

The Covid-19 pandemic also paved the way for the use of digital technology in delivering our courses online. As a result, EQUIP, our ministry for the equipping of lay Christians, has offered its modules for live online teaching. Feedback from participants have since been largely positive, as it allows EQUIP to cater to working Christians and professionals who are otherwise too busy to attend the courses physically.

Having said this, however, we should also note that TTC has refrained from offering programmes which are delivered fully online in theological education. This is especially true of programmes that are training pastors and full-time Christian workers. The reason is that, in ministerial formation, the presence of a physical learning community is indispensable for the formation of our students.

Holistic theological education entails face-to-face engagements among lecturers and students, something that has its limits in virtual space. Crucial conversations and discussions can take place outside of the classroom through the exchange of ideas and mutual encouragement, during meals, tea breaks, informal study time together, in student lounges and study rooms. It is an embodied experience in the face-to-face exchange of life that has shaped TTC’s ethos and conviction since our founding.

## Going Forward

These are just some of the changes that were undertaken by the college during the pandemic years. One should be mindful of the fact that in themselves, these changes do not capture comprehensively the growth and development of the college. They facilitate our mission and set the stage for TTC to develop God’s people for the service of Christ in God’s kingdom as we humbly seek his leading and direction in the years to come. We look forward to serving God and the Christian community faithfully in fulfilling God’s mission to train workers for his harvest field. ❖

## Faithful Servant, Good Shepherd

On 13 May 2023, 46 students donned academic regalia to participate in TTC's 73<sup>rd</sup> graduation service. Hailing from Hong Kong, Myanmar, India, China, Malaysia and Singapore, their years of research, reading and other rigours of theological training had finally paid off. It was fitting to praise God for his faithfulness and goodness.

Having spent most of their years of training under Covid-19 restrictions of all kinds—lock downs, social distancing, masked interactions, virtual learning, dining in twos, then in groups of five, then eight, this batch was especially pensive as they processed into the sanctuary of Paya Lebar Methodist Church to the singing of *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* and *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*.

In rapt attention, they soaked in the wise counsel of our guest-of-honour, Rev Darryl Chan, Senior Minister of Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church and member of TTC's Board of Governors, as he exhorted them to remain faithful servants of their Good Shepherd.

The congregation broke into spontaneous, rapturous applause as the degrees were conferred by Principal Rev Dr Edwin Tay to each student and they were handed their graduation scroll.

Ms Christine Seah who graduated with a Master of Theological Studies degree, summed up what many graduands felt in their hearts: "Thank God for seeing me through the years of studying in TTC! It's such a blessing to sit at the feet of very dedicated lecturers. I'm thankful to all the faculty for their teachings and impartations. I pray God will continue to enable me to apply what I have learnt in TTC in the work of ministry for building up the Body of Christ." ❖



Mr Ho Qi Heng, our 2023 student council president, was the crucifer.



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



Bishop Lu Guan Hoe pronounced the benediction.

## Valedictorian Speech

By Mr Koh Chao Rui, MDiv 2023

Kite: A frame covered with paper, cloth, or plastic, designed to fly. At the end of a long string.

Like a kite, the Graduating Class of 2023 flew through three extraordinary years at TTC. Extraordinary because of two constants.

The first constant was change.

As the Covid-cohort, change was the constant that confronted us. All aspects of college life—lessons, meals and community life were overturned. Our international students could not return home.

At the same time, we witnessed a change of Principal.

Rev Dr Edwin Tay took over the mantle of leadership from Rev Dr Ngoei Foong Nghian in Jul 2020. A Covid-cohort, with a Covid-Principal.

Change was the constant.

Like a kite, we had to weather through these undulating changes and uncertainties as a cohort. It was not easy. Yet, like a kite, we remarkably flew through these tumultuous years, only because of another constant. And that constant is Christ. We could surmount the challenges and changes, only because of the string that was attached, the cord of faith in Christ.



Mr Tham Wen Chen (3<sup>rd</sup> from the left) was the valedictorian of the Chinese Programme.

Today, 13 May 2023, having experienced two very different constants—change and Christ, we stand amazed at the successful completion of our journey at TTC.



Mr Koh Chao Rui (back row, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the right) with his classmates.

On behalf of the Graduating Class, whom I am honoured to represent, I would like to thank all our families, well-wishers, sending churches, denominations, and TTC staff and lecturers. Without your unwavering support and love, we wouldn't be here today.

To the graduating class, *Saranghaeyo!* We made it!

Like kites, we will soon be flying in different directions and serve in various ministries. Some of us may remain in Singapore; some of us may go abroad.

No matter where we are, irrespective of the winds of change and waves of challenges, remember, that you and I still fly under the same sky, under the same Lordship of Christ.

Let's look out for each other, visit one another, lift each other up; when you seem to be flying in the doldrums and valleys, down and out, remember to draw back to the string, that cord of faith in Christ.

So, my friends, like kites, Go! It's time for you and I to fly! Fly well, fly high! Stay connected, attached to Christ.

Whatever the change may be, Christ our unchanging constant will be; only then, can we be 'Faithful Servants, Good Shepherds' in Christ who calls us and sends us to be *Lux Mundi*—light of the world. ❖

# Fostering Meaningful Discussion

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

The ETHOS Institute for Public Christianity held two of its annual keynote events over the period of April to early May 2023. We are happy to report that both events resumed the format of a physical onsite meeting.

The first event held on the 5 Apr 2023 in the evening was the ETHOS Seminar 2023 entitled “The Origin of Humanity and Evolution: Science and Scripture in Conversation”. Participants had the privilege of listening to Dr Andrew Loke from the Hong Kong Baptist University address a topic that he covered in his recent book publication of the same title. Dr Loke highlighted that science is not incompatible with Scripture. If that is so, it is not impossible for the first homo sapien to have arisen out of the process of evolutionary creationism, and this first homo sapien served as the common ancestor for humanity. Participants were challenged through the seminar to consider the coherence of science and our Christian faith and belief.



The second event held on the 2 May 2023 in the evening was the ETHOS Conversation 2023 entitled “Mental Health and the Church”. As the title suggests, this was an opportunity for the Christian community in Singapore to learn about the vitally important topic of mental health and the church. Hearing from two qualified speakers, psychiatrist Dr Adrian Loh and theologian Mr Leow Wen Pin, the session focused on two issues: first, whether mental health conditions were associated with a religious context, and second, how the church can come alongside better in attending and journeying with our congregants who may be facing mental health struggles. A good number of questions were raised during the Question & Answer, showing the keen interest in this topic from the participants.



Mr Leow Wen Pin (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) and Dr Adrian Loh (4<sup>th</sup> from left) with ETHOS members.

The ETHOS Institute is grateful to Dr Andrew Loke, Dr Adrian Loh and Mr Leow Wen Pin for their significant contributions to both Ethos events. ❖

# Iron Sharpens Iron at ATESEA Teachers' Academy

By Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun, Associate Dean, Lecturer in Church History

The ATESEA Teachers' Academy on Church History was held at the YWCA Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand from 5-6 July 2023. It gathered lecturers on the History of Christianity to discuss current development and trends in Asian Christianity. 13 specialists from seminaries, theological colleges and universities in Indonesia, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Taiwan, the Philippines, the United States of America, Malaysia and Singapore presented papers on a wide range of topics on the development of Christianity in Asia. Topics the participants looked at included indigenisation, decolonisation, religious pluralism, identity, missions and the politics of recognition in the Asian context. A volume compilation of the papers presented will be published by ATESEA next year.



Dr Dale Irvin (Left) and Dr Chiang Ming Shun (Right).

TTC was represented by Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun who presented a paper on “The Development of Christianity in Singapore”. The keynote speaker was Dr Dale Irvin, Professor of World Christianity at the New School of Biblical Theology and a founding editor of the Journal of World Christianity. Dr Irvin gave two lectures on “Remembering the Ancestors and Reconsidering Theology of Indigenization” and “Decolonizing Theology Today: Where are We?” A former President of the New York Theological Seminary, Dr Irvin is the author of the multi-volume History of the World Christian Movement, which are used as church history textbooks at TTC. ❖

## TTC 75th Anniversary Conference

# The Church in a Changing World

**Date** Wed 4 Oct 2023

**Time** 9am to 5pm

**Venue** Trinity Theological College

The conference allows both onsite and online attendance.

Only onsite attendees will get a free copy of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

- **Christian Faith in a Hyper(Dis)connected World** by Dr Mark Chan
- **Is There Such a Thing as Online Eucharist?** by Rev Dr Simon Chan

### BOOK LAUNCH

Launch of TTC's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book **Becoming a People of Light: For a Phygital, Hyperconnected, and Fragmented World**. Three faculty members will present their chapters:

- “Rethinking Church and Worship in a Pandemic” by Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun,
- “Polycentric Mission: From Everyone to Everywhere” by Rev Dr Andrew Peh, and
- “Pauline Perspectives on Sōma for our Time” by Dr Tan Kim Huat

**FOR MORE DETAILS**, please go to [ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-Anniversary-Conference](http://ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-Anniversary-Conference)  
Note that there is a Chinese programme on Thu 5 Oct 2023.



### REGISTRATION

**Registration is necessary for all attendees.** Register by **Wed 20 Sep 2023** via this QR code. A fee of S\$12 (incl. lunch and tea breaks) is payable

## We Invite You to Support the Ministry of Trinity Theological College

Your support will enable our college to:

- keep tuition fees affordable,
- be equipped with a competent and dedicated faculty,
- offer financial subsidies to less fortunate students, and
- house an outstanding theological library.

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

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



To view 角声, the Chinese edition of the Trumpet, please visit our website at [www.ttc.edu.sg](http://www.ttc.edu.sg)

# Orientation 2023

By Mr Lou Weixin, MDiv 1

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy name!” The resounding cry echoed through the TTC Multi-Purpose Hall. The start of the new academic year began with a warm welcome extended to the incoming cohort of students in the spirit of worshipful fellowship. Despite hailing from a wide variety of places local and abroad, voices were raised in different languages but for a common song, reflecting the spirit of Psalm 103.

The Orientation programme focused on bringing students together; reflecting, praying, singing—worshipping the one unchanging God, whose faithfulness lightens the hearts of many, and whose love overcomes our darkest and most challenging times. Current and recently graduated students attested to His presence in their lives through the Student Sharing Panel, and freshmen were welcomed to see themselves as more than just students in TTC in the Community Service Fair.

Still navigating the post-pandemic era, it was a joy to be able to worship and fellowship together freely. The novelties of this year’s programme as a labour of love grew from personal reflection: while we grapple with the complexity and beauty of the Word, students undergo a fiery transformation. Our refinement can be at times painful, and a balm given to us freely is each other. Through our commitment to fellowship and corporate worship, we do as David did, to remind ourselves: “Bless the Lord!”



Accompanied by a well-rehearsed band, the many worship sessions in the orientation programme reminded all to give continually thanks to God.

“It was T-minus 1 to 3 July. My heart was filled with anxiety as I wasn’t sure what to expect. Would I be able to make friends? Was I good enough to begin my studies? To my relief, I found that I wasn’t alone. The Orientation Group (OG) I was placed in was small and cosy, which made making new friends much easier! What I treasured the most was the opportunity to share our reflections within my OG after every talk—discovering that we are all on this same journey of growth, and forging a bond that will extend beyond this academic phase of life.”

Ms Michelle Koh, MDiv 1



Seniors led orientation groups, helping new students ease into life at TTC.

“I am what you call, a banana (“*jiak kan tang*”). Entering an orientation that was fully and completely bilingual was a culture shock to me. But even one morning into it, I cannot help but say, it was a beautiful and revelatory shock. One that my tiny anglicised worldview needed. The beauty of worshipping in two languages TOGETHER may be commonplace for some, but to me, it displayed the glory and strength of God’s universal church. And I could not help but remember that we are “from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever!” (Rev 7:9-12). Orientation 2023 was a glimpse of heaven for me, and I see no better way to begin this journey.”

Mr Kyle Yeo, MDiv 1 ❖

# TRINITY NEWS

## Congratulations to...

Jackson Lum (MDiv 2023) and his wife, Grace Chua, who celebrated the arrival of their 4<sup>th</sup> child, Lum Meng Ze Charlesmagne, on 6 May 2023.

Joel Yong (BD 2022) and Qu Danru (MDiv 2022) who were joined in holy matrimony on 3 Jun 2023.

Elysa Chen (MDiv 2016) and Jonathan Huang (MDiv 2016) who welcomed their firstborn, Huang Yi En Zachary, on 15 Jun 2023.

Ho Qi Heng (MDiv 3) and Isabelle Jang who were joined in holy matrimony on 10 Jun 2023.

Pastor Moe Nilar (MDiv 2011) on her ordination at the First Burmese Baptist Church of San Francisco on 8 Jul 2023.

Adriel Yeo (BD 2019) and Jane Ovidia Yu who were joined in holy matrimony on 29 Jul 2023.

Zhang Yudong (MDiv 2020) and his wife, Li Yaping, on the birth of their 3<sup>rd</sup> son Zhang Shangen Shawn, on 3 Jul 2023.

## Condolences to...

The family of the late Rev Norman Chan (BTh 1968), who was called home to be with the Lord on 11 May 2023.

Rev Dr Tan Yak-Hwee, our former faculty member, and family, on the passing of her mother, Mdm Margaret Kang Ngak Choo, on 4 Jul 2023.

The family of the late Rev Seet Keng Tat (MDiv 2006) who returned home to the Lord on 2 Jul 2023.

Rebekah Lim (MDiv 2023) and her family, on the passing of her grandmother, the late Mdm Lily Lim-Thng Hooi Eng, on 18 Jul 2023.

Jerist Lew (DCM 2007) and her family, on the passing of her father, the late Mr Lew Chew Leong, on 23 Jul 2023.

# Building Inter-Religious Relations

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

Rev Dr Edmund Fong, Rev Dr Andrew Peh and Rev Dr Nathanael Goh had the privilege of attending the 8<sup>th</sup> Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Executive Programme organised by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, over a period of two days from 3-4 May 2023. The theme of this year’s SRP was on “Religion and Non Religion: Impacts on Plural Societies.” During the first day in the morning, participants were introduced to and discussed the notion of non-religion, both as a global phenomenon and its expression in our Singaporean context. In the afternoon, participants explored religious perspectives of non-religion, and non-religious perspectives of religion. The second day was spent discussing non-religion from other perspectives, namely that of social attitudes and outlooks (Dr Mathew Mathews), public square and public reasoning (Dr Eugene Tan), and constitutional law (Dr Jaclyn Neo). The participants attended to some case studies before the programme was drawn to a close. Rev Dr Edmund Fong presented a paper entitled “Why the Religious and Non-Religious Need Each Other for Public Square Deliberations: A Christian Perspective.” Overall, the programme gave us much food for thought on this societal phenomenon whose full effects has yet to be felt. ❖



Dr Edmund Fong presented the Christian perspective.





# 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar of Events

Trinity Theological College celebrates her 75th anniversary in 2023 with the theme: **Changing World, Unchanging Light**. It is our joy to share with you key events in this historical milestone. Our celebrations will culminate with an anniversary service and a thanksgiving dinner on Fri 6 Oct 2023.

## APECSS Conference

**7-9 Sep** 9.00am-6.00pm  
TTC

TTC will host the 13th Annual Conference of the Asia-Pacific Early Christian Studies Society (APECSS) on the theme "Pluralistic Contexts in Early Christianity"

## Anniversary Conference and Book Launch

**4-5 Oct** | 9.00am-5.00pm  
TTC

TTC will host its 75th anniversary conference on the theme "The Church in a Changing World"

Registration is now open at [www.ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-Anniversary-Conference](http://www.ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-Anniversary-Conference)  
Please register soon. Registration closes on **Wed 20 Sep 2023**



For details, please visit our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary microsite: [www.ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-anniversary](http://www.ttc.edu.sg/english/75th-anniversary)

## Thanksgiving Service and Dinner

**6 Oct**  
**Service** | TTC Chapel | 11.00am  
**Dinner** | Orchid Country Club | 7.30pm

Our 75th anniversary celebrations will culminate in an anniversary service and a thanksgiving dinner



## FOURTH QUARTER 2023 EQUIP COURSES

TTC is pleased to offer a series of online lectures for the Christian public for the fourth quarter of 2023. The subjects in these courses are explored in depth by EQUIP instructors who include both TTC faculty and other guest lecturers, all of whom are highly qualified subject matter experts in their fields. Many of our own alumni, pastors, Christian ministry staff, missionaries, and lay leaders also attend our courses for their own continuing education.

EQUIP courses are conducted from 7.30-9.30pm via Zoom.

**Experiencing God in Ordinary Worship**

by Ms Leong Chin Yee  
Mondays, 18 Sep-30 Oct

**The Gospel of John**

by Rev Dr Tan Yak-hwee  
Tuesdays, 19 Sep-31 Oct

**Church Mission Programme: Churches as Missional Communities**

by Mr Lawrence Ko  
Wednesdays, 20 Sep-1 Nov

**Shared Leadership in the Missional Church**

by Rev Dr Bernard Chao  
Thursdays, 21 Sep-2 Nov



For details and for online registration, go to [www.ttc.edu.sg/english/EQUIPinfo](http://www.ttc.edu.sg/english/EQUIPinfo)



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