



# Discipleship TRAINING CENTRE

# Newsletter

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## How to be a Good Minister of Christ Jesus

*(Charge given to 2010 graduands during the 41st Thanksgiving and Valedictory Service)*

Having gone through one or even two years of holistic formation in community at DTC does not guarantee that you have now become a good minister of Christ Jesus. Hopefully we have laid the foundation for you to become one. But you have to put yourself wholly to certain basic practices to make you a good minister of Christ Jesus.

Paul's instructions to Timothy in I Timothy 4: 6-16 provide us a guide on "how to be a good minister of Christ Jesus" (v.6). He warns about certain ascetic practices some in the church at Ephesus have propagated (v. 1-5). If Timothy will point these things out to the church, he "will be a good minister of Christ Jesus." I will focus on the verbs Paul used here and they will comprise the main points of my charge to our graduands tonight.

### Make sure you are nourished by the Word of God (v.6)

"Truths of the faith" and "good or sound teaching" for Timothy came through the apostolic teachings preserved today in the Bible. To be a good minister you should constantly feed from the Word of God. As food is for the body, so is the word of God for the spirit. In the language of the Old Testament you should "eat" the Word by reading, meditating, praying and obeying it. Having acquired the skill to interpret the Bible is not enough. You should allow the Word to form or shape and transform you (note passive, "nourished," NRSV). Let the Word of God be your daily nourishment if you are to be sustained in your spiritual life and ministry.

Nourish yourself also with "sound teaching" (NRSV). There are many teachings proliferating in the world today. You need to discern between "godless myths and old wives' tales" or spiritual junk food from sound teaching based on the Word of God.

### Train yourself in godliness (v.7-8)

Instead of engaging in spiritual junk food, Timothy is to train himself in godliness. "Godliness" is reverence or piety toward God. It is "the life of faith strengthened by training in the Word of God" (v.7, *Phillip Towner, 1-2 Timothy & Titus, 107*). Physical training, Paul says, has some value but it is limited. Spiritual training or godliness has eternal value useful for both "the present life and the life to come." A good contemporary term is "spiritual disciplines" - spiritual practices or God-given means we are to use in the spirit-filled pursuit of godliness. Spiritual disciplines are necessary if we are to be spiritually strong and healthy. They enable us to become like Christ who lived in total awareness of the presence of God and intimate fellowship with Him.

How do we become like Christ? By intentionally engaging in practices that kept him constantly in fellowship with the Father (Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, ix). Such practices are solitude and silence, prayer, simple and sacrificial living, intense study and meditation of God's word and God's ways, service to others and rest. Silence, solitude and rest need to be emphasized as we evangelicals tend to identify our

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Some DTC alumni during the Valedictory. L-R: Regine (George's daughter), George Capaque, Rev. Canon Dr Louis, Priscilla Tay and Cora Navarra.

## 2010 GRADUATES

During the 41<sup>st</sup> Thanks giving and Valedictory Service held at Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church on 13 May 2010, five students received their diplomas in Graduate Diploma in Christian Ministry (GDCM, two years) and Graduate Diploma in Inter-Cultural Studies (GDIS, one year). We share portions of their testimonies here.

Coming to DTC for me is like finding a mine full of biblical treasures waiting to be dug out to give me a biblical understanding of life and ministry... My time at DTC not only gave me knowledge but also instructions on how to dig by myself. I can say that DTC has provided me with instruction manuals and equipment that I will take with me to continue digging after returning to Indonesia....

*(Sopar Bonggas Hutapea, Indonesia, GDCM)*

My two years at DTC changed my attitude regarding training to go into ministry for the Lord. Previously I thought I knew all there was to know the Bible and how to demonstrate Christ's love practically. After two years I realized that this was not the case... Learning from various books of the Bible was a great challenge as well as studying mission and what that really means. Mission does not necessarily mean going overseas to do God's work. I can do mission in my own country. My own home church in Chiang Mai can help the needy in the city as she comes to realize that this people are also made in the image of God. I now understand better what the kingdom of God really means.

*(Wipawee Maijaroensri, Thailand, GDCM)*

I was a church planter and pastor of a small congregation in North Sumatra when God led me to study at DTC. Here I was able to study the Bible more thoroughly and learn about cross-cultural mission. Because of my misconception about revelation and the holiness of the Bible my faith was initially shaken when I learned how the Bible was written. It took months for me to accept that God used human language through his chosen people, and he also used human culture to make us understand him and his message... I also experienced personality clashes. But I realized that



*L to R: Sopar, Wipawee, Tetty, Sudawan, Philips.*

cultural diversities are God's gift to us. It is God's way to mould me, to refine my character and to help me gain a wider perspective.

*(Tetty Sinulinga, Indonesia, GDCM)*

What have I learned from DTC in the past year? I have learned to overcome my anxiety, to extend my faith, and to exceed my limitations. I will not fear any difficulties for the Lord is with me... Life at DTC is like playing Amazing Race that requires teamwork. We and our partners have a mission to accomplish in the limited time available. We always help each other to carry on with the race. I have learned to work under pressure in the limited time I had. When I was about to come apart at the seams, God always delivered me in many ways.

*(Sudawan Nattawatusit, Thailand, GDIS)*



One of the things I learned at DTC is to be authentic (who I really am) and to be prepared as a Christian to live and follow Christ in this world. Unless we are the "real thing," the chance of getting beaten over and over in spiritual warfare is high... I found the study of Asian religions helpful in facing the multi-cultural setting of our world. For the first time, I was able to see more clearly the mind of a family-oriented Chinese Buddhist, which is my family's background... I will definitely miss the community meals. Besides the healthy food, conversations and jokes abound around the table. Often my roommate Sopar and I are asked to finish up the food because I was too skinny, the group insisted!

*(Philips Laulia, Indonesia, GDIS)*

*The graduands with other DTC community members rendering a special song.*

## Introducing Our New Students



*Look Tuck Weng and Annalisa.*

**Look Tuck Weng**, a Singaporean architect & urban designer for 15 years, together with wife **Annalisa**, spent a year immediately prior to DTC managing & running a 120-child orphanage in Cambodia. It was a year of blessing and struggles though Annalisa's 13-year experience heading a student care centre in Singapore was put to good use.

Through the recommendation of their church mate & a DTC alumna, both are at DTC doing the one-year *Graduate Diploma in Inter-Cultural Studies*. Their prayer request: "please pray for us, that our time at DTC would give us the space to sort out our life & ministry directions together as a couple and with our home church; also, that our biblical knowledge and convictions would be strengthened for whatever service God may call us to."

For eight years **Esther Ng** (from Singapore too) served as a Staffworker for Singapore Youth For Christ, reaching out to neighbourhood kids through holiday & after school programmes. During her seventh year in ministry while taking stock of her life and ministry the Lord urged her to take time off from ministry for theological studies. Taking her ministry advisor's advice she checked out DTC and was impressed by the training-in- community ethos. Esther's prayer request: "pray that I will have a humble and teachable heart to learn; pray too that I will take joy in community living and serving at DTC."

**Kunlatida Luangthep** (from Thailand) had served five years as a Staffworker with Thai Christian Students' Fellowship (TCS) before taking this break for theological studies as part of TCS' staff development programme. She agreed with her TCS mentors that DTC's training-in-community would be specially suitable in preparing her for future responsibilities as a Staff Leader and Trainer. Kunlatida's prayer request are threefold, "While I'm studying here pray I'll grow more in Christlikeness



*Esther and Kunlatida.*

in attitude and in behaviour; that I will be able to apply all I'm learning here so I will be able to bring them to bless TCS' ministry."

**Zaw Ko Maing**, his wife **Thiri Luaia** & their young daughter **Nay Chi Ko** made their first trip overseas from Myanmar to come to DTC! Zaw was a Staffworker for Myanmar True Light Fellowship (MTLF) ministering to young believers through regular prayer meetings and teaching conferences twice a year. Thiri was in charge of a church-based Pre-school serving the community. Their prayer requests: "Pray for improvement in our English as we have to read, write and attend lectures in English; and also for a pre-school for Nay Chi Ko (turned two in August) so that Thiri could have more time to focus on her studies. Pray for our ministries in Myanmar in our absence, and also for adequate monthly support for our needs."



*Zaw and Thiri with daughter Nay Chi Ko*



DTC community posing for posterity.

spirituality with our activity leading to a sense of indispensability and a 24/7 mentality of ministry.

### Lead by example (v.12)

Lead an exemplary life before the believers. Paul impresses upon Timothy that authority or leadership is contingent on character, not on age. Leadership is not to assert your authority but to lead by humble service. Your life should be a model in "speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in [sexual] purity." Your public life should be consistent with your private life. Effective ministry and godliness are inseparable.

### Minister the Word of God faithfully (v.13)

The Word is not just our source of nourishment. It also determines the nature of our ministry. Pastoral ministry is essentially ministry of the Word of God to meet human needs. As you are fed by the word you should also feed the Word to others. You are to do this through the public reading of Scripture, preaching or exhortation and teaching.

### Exercise your spiritual gifts and calling (v.14)

Paul puts it in the negative form. "Do not neglect your gift." God has given you all spiritual gifts for ministry. So I would like to remind and exhort you to exercise your gifts.

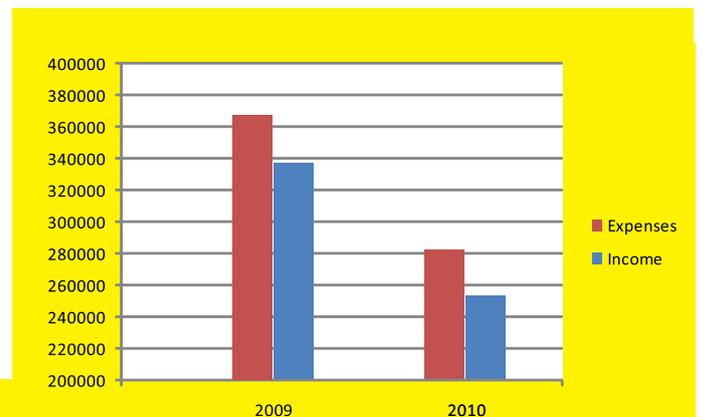
Finally, "**be diligent in these matters**" (i.e., the above basic practices)." Immerse yourself wholly to them. "Cultivate these things" (*The Message*). In modern idiom, "live and breathe these things" (Towner,

112). This way people will see your progress and growth. It will silence your critics. More importantly, progress of this kind is evidence of a vital and deepening relationship with the Lord (Towner, 113).

Paul summarized all these practices with "Watch your life and doctrine" or "Watch your self and your teaching." There should be no dichotomy between your preaching and practice. A friend of mine puts this nicely: "Many try to practice what they preach. It is much better to preach what your practice." The end result is "you will save both yourself and your hearers." Salvation is a process that makes you become more like Christ.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. AMEN. ✝

George N. Capaque, Ph.D., Dean



## Opportunities to Participate in DTC's Ministry

### 1. General Fund (see chart)

July 2009 – June 2010 (preliminary and unaudited)

Income: SGD 253, 914.25

Expense: SGD 282, 447.07

July 2008-June 2009

Income: SGD 336, 054.01

Expense: SGD 366, 531.26



### 2. Library Fund

DTC needs about 1, 700 titles more to meet ATA's requirement of 10,000 titles. At approximately SGD 30.00 per book this amounts to SGD 51,000.

### 3. A new guitar

