



# Discipleship

TRAINING CENTRE

# Newsletter

JAN-APR 2011

MICA (P): 022/03/2011 | CRN: 578/71E 33A Chancery Lane S309554 Republic of Singapore T: 6256-3208 F: 6256-2705 E: disciple@singnet.com.sg W: www.dtc-singapore.org

## To be with Him... and to be sent out...

*Discipleship* is a major ethos and core value of DTC. "We are called to be with Christ, and to be sent out to disciple others." We are a "discipleship" training centre. We take seriously Christ's command to make disciples of all nations (Mat. 28: 19). We believe that theological education and ministry preparation must take place within the larger context of discipleship.

### What does discipleship involve?

#### To be with Him

In Matthew's account of the calling of the first disciples (Mat. 4: 18f.), the context of their calling is Jesus' proclamation of God's kingdom (4:17). The dawning of God's rule in Christ demands a fundamental response of repentance and faith (Mk. 1:15 has both "repent" and "believe"). "Turn from your old life and receive the gift of the kingdom like a child."

Integral to this fundamental response is to "follow him," i.e., to be his disciples. Matthew demonstrates this in two parallel stories involving two sets of brothers- Peter and Andrew and James and John. Discipleship is essentially a matter of relationship with Jesus. To follow Jesus is to be personally committed to him, to be with him. In the contemporary practice of Jewish Rabbis, the disciples attach themselves to their master. They literally "follow" (or, "come behind") the master and "learn" (Gk. *mathetes*, usually translated "disciple") from him.

In Jesus' call of the first disciples we see the pattern of true discipleship. It involves leaving behind past preoccupations and attachments and the unhesitating and unconditioned response of following Jesus. "At once [or, immediately] they left their nets and followed him." "Nets" and "boats," for the first disciples, symbolize their whole way of life, their preoccupations and attachments. Henceforth their primary occupation is following Jesus.

DTC's communal living, just like the community of Jesus and his disciples, seeks to provide an environment for people to be with Jesus and to follow him in wholehearted and lifelong obedience.

#### To be sent out

Jesus calls disciples "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority..." (Mk. 3:14-15). Disciples are also to be "fishers of men," i.e., they are to take active part in the proclamation of God's kingdom. Disciples are sent out under the authority of Jesus to make disciples of all nations which include "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mat. 28: 20).

Following Jesus involves also following the way or style of Jesus' ministry. Mat. 4:23 forms an *inclusio* (like book ends) with 9: 35. They introduce and summarise Jesus' ministry and provide continuation and a pattern for the parallel ministry of the disciples. Matthew summarises Jesus' ministry under three headings: teaching, preaching and healing. It involves both words and deeds. Healing is proclamation in deeds, signs that the rule of God that Jesus proclaims is indeed present. In a word, Jesus' ministry is *holistic or integral*, ministering to whole persons.

At DTC we seek "to bring all of life under the lordship of Christ" and "to inculcate a holistic/integral view of mission and ministry." Missions comprise a major component of our learning. Theology is orientated toward committed discipleship and the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

Discipleship at DTC is central, holistic and geared towards wholehearted obedience to Jesus as Lord.



George N. Capaque, PhD  
DEAN

# INVITATION

JOIN US in our **42nd Thanksgiving & Valedictory Service**

on Thursday 12 May 2011 at 7:30 PM

**Venue:** Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church, 77 Prinsep Street, Singapore 188649

# Serving God in a Challenging Environment

Sebastian and Jacq Gopal, with their three boys, JJ, Kiran and Josiah, are missionaries of the Methodist Church in Singapore to Nepal. They are currently on home assignment living in DTC. They came to DTC in 2005-06 to do the Certificate in Christian Ministry. The family returns to Nepal on 21st March 2011.

## Why did you decide to enter missionary service?

It was a calling from God to serve in a cross-cultural ministry that developed over the years since I (Sebastian) was a 13-year-old boy. Jesus was our first missionary and we are called to follow him... When I (Jacq) said yes to marriage, it was with a clear understanding that I would eventually be serving cross-culturally. Over the years after marriage, it was a family vision and calling that we serve God in Nepal. We left for Nepal during our 6th year of marriage.

## How did your time in DTC help you to prepare for cross-cultural ministry?

The one year spent in DTC was a good initiation to what cross-cultural living and ministry are all about. It humbled me and helped me to be more teachable as I (Sebastian) serve in a cross-cultural environment... Living in DTC had helped me (Jacq) to understand and have a foretaste of what it really meant to be a wife and mother in the mission field. Without the experience of living and studying in DTC, the transition in Nepal would have been harder.

## Tell us briefly about your life in Nepal and the ministry you're doing. What adjustments did you have to make?

Our main ministry is in the area of church planting. We started with 2 churches and 1 preaching point. This year (2011) it has increased to

8 districts with 4 churches and 8 preaching points. We are also involved in community development work and we help run a Café, both supporting the church planting ministry. Jacq coordinates the children's ministry in our Mission Conference.



Sebastian and Jacqueline Gopal

The continual lack of water and gas, the constant strikes and road blocks, and the almost daily power cuts of up to 18 hours a day make living and raising three young children extremely challenging.

## What do you hope to achieve in your current sabbatical?

We wish to *reflect* on our missionary service, *renew* our ties & relationships with family and friends, and *refresh* ourselves physically and spiritually.

## How can we pray for you?

Pray that God will continue to give us the strength as we serve him in the mission field; that he will protect our personal, married & family life as we serve him. Pray that in our busyness in our ministry, we are able to spend more time as a family in Nepal.



Sebastian and Jacqueline Gopal, with their three boys, JJ, Kiran and Josiah

# Mission Trips: Reports and Reflections

Mission trips and exposures form part of the training of students at DTC. During the long break from mid-November to end of December 2010, individual students went to different countries in Asia to fulfil this requirement.



I had no idea at first where to go for my mission trip. I only wanted to know more about other religions and to go to as far a place as the Lord would allow me. When Timor-Leste became a possibility, I thought I could not afford the expenses. But the Lord marvellously provided for my needs. As I did not know the local language, I prepared myself to help in whatever way I could and learn from the people. I did not expect that God would use my “dormant” gift of painting when I was there. I was so excited to discover that the reason the field team accepted me to come to Timor was they thought I was the answer to their prayer for someone who could paint to finish the paintings they made to explain the meaning of Christmas to children!

**Paula Luangthep** went to Timor-Leste through WEC (Worldwide Evangelization for Christ).

*Paula conducting children program.*

We have discerned that God’s calling for us as a couple in this season of our lives is to work in His harvest field in Cambodia. Hence, we have chosen to make a 3-week mission trip to this country. Prior to DTC, we worked for a year in an orphanage in Prey Veng province. So we spent the first week visiting with friends, former colleagues and the orphanage children. We also explored the feasibility of ministry through setting up of a kindergarten and English tuition centre. Then we spent the next two weeks with OMF Cambodia learning from their church planting and development work. In this trip we have learned to submit ourselves to God’s plan which often pleasantly surprises us with unexpected doors opened and people coming along our way who help us confirm the increasing feasibility of the vision God placed in our hearts.

**Look Tuck Weng and Annalisa**

*cont’d on p.4*



*Tuck Weng preaching at Neak Leung church with OMF missionary Rebecca interpreting.*



*Annalisa conducting children program together with Australian mission team*

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Going to Taiwan for my mission trip was the first one I ever made travelling alone. My first exposure was the shopworkers' ministry conducted by OMFers in Taiwan. I have never seen something similar done in Singapore. This involves conducting Bible study and fellowship after 10 PM to accommodate their schedule. Prayer walk was also a first time for me, praying for the schools and communities and for what we see along the way. One of the highlights for me in this trip was learning from a senior missionary from Switzerland who has been in Taiwan for 30 years. Her goal is not so much to be concerned with conversions or number of conversions (which is God's work) as to be a faithful witness, in words and deeds, to Christ. These are precious lessons for a worker like me who is orientated to results and numbers and find it difficult to leave to God the work of conversion.

**Esther Ng** went to Taiwan through OMF.



*Esther teaching in a Kid's Club class.*



In the very first night I had my first experience of local culture. It was *Loi Krathong* Festival to honour and thank the goddess of water. This spectacle reminded me of an impression I had a few years ago when I watched a film on missions in Thailand. I was saddened then that many people are afraid of the spirits and by the efforts they make to appease these spirits to bring good luck to their homes. In my first six days I learned about doing missions through the Music, Arts and English Centre in Phang-nga. When I went to Yala for my next five days I was full of fear because of the peace and order situation. But God quieted my fears and removed the prejudices I had with the majority population. Interacting with some Filipino tentmakers doing creative missions work was a highlight in this trip.

**Celgen Aurestila** went to South Thailand.

*Celgen with students learning Filipino culture through songs and games.*

## THANK YOU

In response to our appeal for more books for our library, we have received a few hundred titles donated by alumni and friends. Although we appreciate donations in kind, we really need funds to purchase the needed titles for our collection.

We also received a Yamaha acoustic guitar.

## ACTI and DTC to Collaborate Together

The Boards of both ACTI (Asian Cross-cultural Training Institute) and DTC have agreed to work closely together beginning July 2011.

DTC will share its facilities with ACTI for their 8-week Residential Cross-cultural Training Course. Although there will be separate classes and administration, both institutions will form one community and will join together in at least one course.

If the current arrangement works, it is envisioned that both groups will work toward greater collaboration and integration in the future.

**May Easter renew your joy  
and hope in the RISEN CHRIST**