



Discipleship TRAINING CENTRE

Newsletter

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ATA Accredits DTC's Three Programmes

On 23 -26 September 2011, a three-member Visiting Evaluation Team (VET) from Asia Theological Association evaluated DTC's programmes and facilities for accreditation.

The VET recommended the full five-year (2011-16) accreditation of our three programmes, namely, Graduate Diploma in Inter-Cultural Studies, Master of Christian Ministry (formerly Graduate Diploma in Christian Ministry) and Master of Christian Studies. Early this year we received our Certificate of Accreditation from ATA.

ATA is the main accrediting body of evangelical theological institutions in Asia. The accreditation will enable our graduates to transfer credits to ATA accredited schools and add value to DTC as a discipleship and theological education centre.

**The Lord is risen!
He is risen indeed.
May Easter renew
your joy and hope
in the risen Christ.**



From the Dean

Reflections on Mission from Mark 6: 30-44 "You give them something to eat"

George N. Capaque

We don't usually think "mission" when we read the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Reading and reflecting further, I discovered that it has a number of implications for mission. For one, the context tells us of Jesus sending the Twelve on a mission similar to his (6: 7-13).

I see four implications for mission in this story.

1. The *root* of mission. Christian mission proceeds from Jesus and his mission. Mark's purpose in telling the story here is for the disciples to understand the identity and dignity of Jesus (see 6: 51-52; 8:14-21). The miracle was meant for them to see that in Jesus' presence and mission God was acting decisively in the salvation of humankind.

Mark calls the disciples here (v.30) "apostles" (Greek *apostello*; same root as "sent them out" in v. 7). "Apostles" means "sent ones" or "missionaries." They were sent out to replicate and extend the ministry and mission of Jesus. This is part of discipleship (see Mark 3:14). Being with Jesus and sharing in his mission *belong together*. The call to discipleship is not for its own sake; it enlists the disciples in the service of God's reign (David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 39). The root of discipleship, as is the root of mission, is attachment to Jesus. The Twelve's action of reporting to Jesus demonstrates their dependent relationship to him.

Mission is not an option we can choose. When we heed the call of Jesus to follow him we not only become disciples but also "missionaries." Disciples are all sent out to proclaim the reign of God wherever they are, i.e., to be his witnesses at home, at work, in society as well as to the nations. Christians share in the apostolic mission given to the whole church, which has been sent into the whole world. In his death and resurrection, Jesus completed God's purpose and fulfilled his mission and provided the basis for our mission.

2. The *goal* of mission. The motifs of "quiet place"/"wilderness," "rest," "sheep without a shepherd" and "they all ate and were satisfied" indicate the goal of mission. What is in view is the recurring theme in Scripture of God providing rest (shalom, salvation) for his people within the wilderness (Num. 27: 17; Dt. 3:20; 25:19; Ps. 95: 7-11; Is. 63:14; Jer. 31:2; Heb. 3: 7-4:13). Jesus is the good shepherd foreshadowed in Ezek. 34 as the one who will take care of the neglected and leaderless sheep ("sheep without a shepherd").

The feeding of the 5,000 looks backward to the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness and forward to the future messianic feast (Mk. 14: 25). It is a foretaste of the messianic banquet, an introduction to the communal life of God's Kingdom. Jesus is the Shepherd-King who

Mission Trip Reflections

Sometime during the long break from mid-November to end of December 2011, students and staff went to different Southeast Asian countries for the annual mission trips. We share here excerpts of their reflections on the experience.

Annalisa

On the two mission trips I went to, I realized I could love all kinds of children – whatever their ethnicity. I thank God for helping me to discover more about this aspect of myself. I realized also that making craft and doing things together are helpful ways of interacting with children whom I do not know well initially. Probably craft, teaching and games being arranged in this sequence will help to reinforce the message we want to bring home to children and in the process demonstrate love.



Annalisa teaching kids at an orphanage in Malaysia.



Hideki sharing in a local congregation.

Hideki and Yumi

On our mission trip to M we linked up with a pastor sent by our church here in Singapore. As I, Hideki, observed, participated and reflected on his work, the Lord impressed on me two verses: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Mat. 9:37), and “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4). M is open to the gospel now, but the situation may not be like this all the time. I feel the urgency of mission as well as the prime task of training leaders for the next generation. God willing, we are going to serve in this country after our studies at DTC.

Paula

When we visited a Christian NGO, I was impressed by their holistic ministry which brought about the transformation of a poverty-stricken area through practical, creative and concrete ways. I really like the idea of helping the poor financially alongside a programme designed to build up Christian values. Their goal is to create long term self-sufficient, responsible and dignified lives and eventually to lead them to Christ who alone can bring fullness of life. I was so inspired by the work of this NGO that I hope that my country would have some gospel-driven Christian organizations providing micro financing to the poor. I hope to share this with my students and graduates to motivate them to think about business in the service of the kingdom of God.



Paula (shown here with students), Esther, Victor and Eileen went to the Philippines.

Esther

I was impressed by the student ministry of IVCF Philippines in Los Banos and Cagayan de Oro. Their student-led ministry is indeed very strong. The student leader was the one in charge of running the whole meeting. Though the staff worker was present she hardly did anything so much so that I felt like she was just one of the guests. I was encouraged to see that the Lord is raising up these young people to serve Him. It is also a joy to see them taking up the role of leadership in, and ownership of, the ministry.



Esther interacting with secondary students in Cagayan de Oro.

Victor

I come from a country where Christians are a minority and often marginalized. Coming to a place where the situation is reversed gave me another perspective. This time they are the minority and are being marginalized. It is sad to hear how they are being treated and the lack of opportunities for them to lead a better life. In the short visit to a group of their young people I was blessed through the songs and games we shared with them. I was excited to witness the contextualization of our faith among them. What I learned from the Gospel and Culture class came alive. Overall, I am glad I chose to go to the Philippines again even though I was initially hesitant since I have been to this country several times. This trip gave me a lot of 'firsts' in terms of experiences and understanding of the culture.



Ryoko

This trip taught me the importance of holistic approach in mission. Previously in my volunteer work as a nurse, I tried to show God's love through my work. However, I did not emphasize sharing the Gospel to people because I was afraid of being rejected by them. I learned that I need to show both God's love and tell the Gospel of salvation. This trip reminded me also of my identity as Japanese. When I came to DTC, I was a little bit cautious about my being Japanese because my lecturers and most of students come from countries which Japan had previously occupied. A course on Asian Theology made me aware of Japanese occupation history. In this mission trip, we visited a Japanese war tunnel built by the local people. During our debriefing, God convicted me through John 20 to ask forgiveness from people occupied by Japan during World War II. I thought I could avoid this since I wasn't born yet then. But I could not avoid being part of my people and its history.



Eden, Alvin, George, Zaw, Tuck Weng and Ryoko at a Children's Reading Centre in Indonesia

Eden

In this mission trip the Lord refreshed my faith journey, renovated my heart, and gently pointed out to me how to remain in Him. I was blessed to receive and learn from both the local and expatriate Christian workers who were our hosts. Their sacrificial service and long patience to see even a small fruit of their labour refreshed my spirit. The Lord warmed my cold heart and broke down the walls of resentment and prejudice. While reflecting on John 15 I realized that remaining wholly in Jesus means more than observing the spiritual disciplines vital for spiritual growth and fruitfulness. It also means loving whom he loves and accepting people who seem to be hard-hearted and reject him as Lord and Saviour.



Feasting on a sumptuous local meal.

Tuck Weng

I find the 'story-telling' approach to evangelism particularly suitable to village communities which are also found in Cambodia where we are hoping to go. I learnt many lessons on contextualization of the gospel from the testimonies of the local ministry workers. But what impressed me most are their courage, dedication and faithfulness—'sowing with tears' and 'waiting patiently for the harvest'. This mission trip has deepened my compassion for people of different cultures who are all made in God's image and precious in His sight. The people in Cambodia too deserve my utmost efforts to understand their culture, to enter their community in a non-threatening/condemning manner, and to live out our faith as witnesses to Christ.

Minangkabau (Indonesia) architecture.



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will save his people and gather them into his community. The goal of mission is the gathering of God's people into his community, God dwelling within them and graciously caring and providing for them.

3. *Motivation* for mission. *Compassion* moved Jesus when he saw the crowd. "Compassion" is to be inwardly moved so as to have to do something about it. Jesus taught them and fed them. His ministry is a ministry of compassion. The mission of God's people should likewise be characterized by compassionate service and action. The need of others is a genuine motive for service.

As compassion is a characteristic of God (in the Gospels it is used only to describe Jesus and in

his parables the actions of people who resemble him), we learn to share in this compassion as we know God more. This was driven home to me in our recent mission trip. During the debriefing our missionary-host commented, "You don't have to love a people to be interested in them. You only need to love God. Be concerned with God and his glory and your perspective of, and attitude to others will change."

4. Our *role* in mission. When Jesus told his disciples to "give them something to eat," he wants them to do something about the need of the crowd. Even if Jesus provided eventually the food, the disciples still took an active part in the feeding. Our role in mission is to place our lives and resources, however meager, in the hands of Jesus so he can bless them and give them back to us to meet the needs of people. "In the hands

of Jesus, little is always much" (Barclay). Jesus *both* taught the crowd *and* fed them. In our mission, we proclaim God's reign both in words and deeds meeting the holistic needs of people.

One of the things that impressed us most in the recent mission trips is the sacrificial service of God's servants. Immediately preceding the feeding of the 5,000 is the account of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Mark places it here as a sign of what the mission of God's Kingdom can expect from the kingdoms of this world. *Suffering* is part of mission. Jesus' mission was tied to the cross. His willingness to go the way of the cross (Mark 8: 31; 10:45) serves as a paradigm for the path the disciples must walk if they are to fulfill God's mission in the world.

Upcoming Events...

43rd Thanksgiving & Valedictory Service

17 May 2012 at 7:30 PM.
Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church,
77 Prinsep St., Singapore 188649

Speaker: Bishop Rennis Ponniah

*Please come along
with your family and friends.*

Intensive Course: Trends and Issues in Missions

Lecturer: Brian Michell

17- 20 April 2012

8:40 AM- 12:55 PM

Venue: DTC

DTC alumni and Board members are welcome to join.

Public Lecture on Everyday Spirituality: Looking for God in the Wrong Places... and Missing Out on Much God Has to Offer

Speaker: Dr. Robert Banks

23 August 2012 • 7:30- 9:00 PM

Faith Methodist Church.

400 Commonwealth Drive, S149604

Spiritual Retreat: Living at God's Pace in a Pressured World: Overcoming the Deadly Sin of Busyness

**Retreat leader:
Dr. Robert Banks**

29 September 2012

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Venue: TBA

*For DTC community but open to DTC
alumni, Board and selected guests*