



# Discipleship TRAINING CENTRE

# Newsletter

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MICA (P): 124/03/2012 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...*

### Introducing our New Students (2012-13)

#### **Antok and Florence Wibowo (Indonesia) ➔**

Antok served as staff of a campus ministry amongst engineering students at a major university in Jogjakarta before coming to DTC. After his studies in Architecture he worked for a while as lecturer at a Christian university in Jakarta where he met his wife, Florence, who was then studying mechanical engineering. They are here for two years with their two children Kezia (7) and Grace (3).



#### **Naomi (Fona) Fortuna (Indonesia) ⤴**

Naomi was staff team leader of PERKANTAS Jogjakarta (IFES) before coming to DTC for her sabbatical. Originally from Borneo she studied architecture in university and joined the staff of Perkantas Jogjakarta immediately after graduation. Born and raised in a Christian family she committed her life to Christ when she was in senior high school.



#### **Cherlyn Oh Li Ling (Singapore) ➔**

Cherlyn graduated from the National University of Singapore with a degree in Social Work. After working for two-and-half years she decided to study at DTC as a step towards fulfilling her desire for missions work which she had since she was a young child. This desire was inspired by her father's previous involvement with missions through OM.



#### **Angela Tuason (Philippines) ➔**

Angel is the youngest of this year's batch. Her passion for missions started early when she was still a pre-teenager. She went to Medical School hoping to become a missionary doctor. But her fire for missions dwindled in the midst of studies. She decided to quit her studies and nurture her passion for missions by volunteering with OMF Philippines. Her coming to DTC is part of fulfilling her desire to be used by God in missions.



#### **Joshua Chong (Singapore) ⤴**

Joshua came to know Christ when he went with a friend to Nepal to volunteer in a Habitat for Humanity (Singapore) project. He later joined Amazing Grace Presbyterian Church where he was nurtured and grew as a follower of Christ. After working as a programme coordinator of his church's outreach ministry to youth, he, with the blessing of his church's leaders, decided to come to DTC to prepare for full time ministry in the church.



# “Should I Not Be Concerned?”

When we were in Sumatra last year for missions immersion, our missionary host said something during the debriefing which caught my attention. He said, “You don’t have to love a people to be interested in them and to reach out to them. You only need to love God. Be concerned with God and his glory and your perspective and attitude to peoples will change.” Although I have questions about the first part (Can we really separate loving God and loving people?), on the whole I heartily agree with him. *Our perspective of God determines to a great extent our attitudes to peoples and to missions.*

Mission flows from the nature and character of God. God is a missionary God. Mission is God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit-acting in the world to fulfil his purposes. God in grace redeems lost mankind and transforms the world because it is in his nature to do so.

We see this in the book of Jonah. Many writers, both ancient and modern, believe that the narrative emphasizes the missionary concern of God whose love and mercy went beyond the Jews. The main focus, however, of the book is on who God is and what he does. It tells us where and how and why the God of Israel is at work.

What is the character of God that he acts to save and calls us to participate in his action? Let me share some reflections from Jonah.

## God is Gracious and Compassionate

When God first called Jonah he ran away from him. He found out that he could not escape from God. So after he was thrown out into the sea the Lord provided a great fish to rescue him. From inside the fish Jonah praised and thanked God for listening to his cry and saving him (2:9). God showed his grace to Jonah by rescuing him and sending him out again. God is a God of second chance. He will not be deterred by our disobedience although we miss his blessing when we do so.

Chapter 4 verse 2 summarizes the character of God revealed in this story. Jonah reacted in anger when God forgave the Ninevites after they repented. The reason for this as well as why he disobeyed at first is his knowledge of God. “I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.” Jonah knew that God would forgive when people repent. And he did not want this to happen to Nineveh. As the capital of the Assyrian empire, it was a threat to the continuing existence of Israel. In fact the same would be responsible for the destruction of Israel later (2 Ki. 17: 1-23). The revelation that God is a God of grace and compassion is found in many places of the OT (e.g., Ex. 34: 6-7, Ps. 103:8-13) that it forms the heart of Israel’s understanding of God.

Jonah is to learn that God’s grace and compassion extends to all people (cf. Ps. 145:13). “Should I not be concerned” he later told Jonah. His love extends to the whole sinful, wicked world of

wrong and violence. Nobody or no nation is so wicked as to be beyond the grace of God. He does not want “anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

## God is Sovereign

God continues to be gracious to Jonah despite his anger. He provides a vine to give shade to Jonah from the scorching heat (4:6). But then God took it away and “provided” a hot east wind which made Jonah angrier, “angry enough to die.”

By providing the vine and taking it away God is showing Jonah that his grace is free and sovereign. The vine belongs to God; Nineveh also belongs to God and the cattle. He can act freely on them. The vine has become an object lesson for Jonah to learn both God’s compassion and his sovereignty. If Jonah could show concern for a vine which he did not plant or tend, how much more would the Lord? “Nineveh has more than a 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?” In contrast Jonah’s concern for the vine was dictated by self interest and not genuine love. The vine represents our narrow and petty concerns. Like Jonah, we are more concerned with the vine than with a lost people. When our personal concerns outweigh God’s concerns they become our vines.

God’s sovereignty also means we cannot like Jonah put God in a box. We cannot let our own ideas determine how God should be working in this world or to whom should he be merciful (cf. Rom. 9:15).

One commentator suggests that the biggest obstacle in the fulfilment of the great commission is not the sin or the wickedness of individuals or nations. It is the narrow, prejudiced heart of the messengers, our preoccupation with the “vine” than with “Nineveh.” There are still many Ninevehs that are waiting to hear the good news of salvation. Our withholding of, and refusal to share, the message of God’s grace to nations and peoples who desperately need it reflects the same attitude that Jonah had on Nineveh.

The God of the Bible weeps over this sinful world. Look out at the world as God’s world. See it through God’s eyes and feel with God’s heart. And let your new vision overcome your narrow perspectives, your hardness of heart, and your petty concerns. Let the love, grace, compassion and sovereignty of God flood your own hearts. Should you not be concerned?



George N. Capaque

# Alumni in Focus

Nonchai and Pornpanna Wiwatwongthron with their two sons visited Singapore recently and stayed at DTC. We took the opportunity to interview them.

## *Tell us something about your family and your present ministry.*

My wife, Pornpanna (Tabb), is a teacher and we have two sons: Nanon (14) and Napat (8). I serve the Lord at Grace Baptist Church in Bangkok, Thailand. The church has two congregations – Thai and Chinese. I serve in Thai congregation. I also serve as a counselor for both Christians and non-Christians. I also take another role as a visiting lecturer at Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary.

## *When did you study at DTC? How would you describe your time here? What did you learn most?*

My wife and I studied at DTC in 1995-1997. We did not have a dean in the first year and all teachers were new. It was a good time to learn the meaning of the word “community”. We spent a lot of time discussing issues in our midst. We tried many new things together and solve problems to keep the community going. One year later, we had Dr. David Hurley as new dean. In the two years we were in DTC we learnt most about “community life.” Community is not just a place which people meet and stay together. But community is a place to share our life to each other, a place to accept and respect each other, a place to forgive and love, a place to learn to give and receive, a place to help and encourage and a place to transform life to be like Jesus.

## *How can we pray for you?*

- Pray for my pastoral ministry at Grace Baptist Church, especially among the young generation. Pray that I may be able to raise them up in the word of God and they would commit their lives to the Lord.
- My counseling ministry, both my practicum as a counselor and teaching at the school.
- My wife and I to have wisdom from the Lord to raise our sons to grow both in faith and personal life.



# To be sent out...

## Excerpts from the testimonies of 2012 graduates



After finishing the GDIS last year, both the church council and ourselves discerned that we should continue for a second year. We were overjoyed to be able to study more Biblical books like Job, Isaiah and Revelation. I felt God was really preparing me for His call for us in Cambodia. He has given me perseverance in the midst of suffering and clarity of vision in his purpose and plan. I went through surgery and missed some classes. Christ's words in Matt. 6: 25-33 spurred me to seek Him earnestly, trust him for my life and feel the urgency of going. Spiritual disciplines like prayer, reflection on God's Word and spending extended silence before God have helped me to trust God more. We are truly grateful for an experience we never imagined we would have.

*Annalisa (Singapore)*

I would like to share with you how God has blessed me during my time at DTC. In our subject 'Christian Spirituality,' the assignment was to construct the timeline of our life and journey of faith. For me, the one year in Cambodia, followed by the two years in DTC – is the turning point of my life. Besides the defining moment of accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, the years spent in DTC are the **defining years of my life**. God has taught me two important lessons: 'Discipleship' and 'Sabbath Rest.' **Discipleship** involves my commitment to imitate our Master, to be Christ-like. This involves total commitment to live not according to my own will but according to God's will. **Sabbath Rest** involves me trusting sufficiently in God and to 'let go', not being self-reliant, not worrying unnecessarily and relying on my own strength. Jesus calls us to come to him, take his yoke and walk with him, learning to be gentle and humble in heart, and we will be able to find rest for our souls.

*Tuck Weng (Singapore)*



In our time at DTC I focused on learning what discipleship training in DTC is. I'd like to share three lessons. First, a teacher's personality influences students more than the contents of his/her teaching. When a teacher shares something with excitement and passion, students are attracted towards what he is talking. Second, a leader must lead people to the goal. Each student may have different ability, interest and response to the subject. The teacher must be flexible enough to adjust to students but he still must lead them to the goal he has set. Third, it is very important to build group identity. The intentional small communal living is the essential characteristic of discipleship training in DTC. Because they are in a small community, students cannot keep pretending there are no problems; rather they must deal with their character issues in the light of the Word of God. I want to use what I learned here for my future ministry.

*H (Country K)*

I am really thankful that the Lord has given me this one year Sabbatical from the mission field to study at DTC. I believe the Lord brought me to DTC to teach me that life is made for relationship. In this Sabbatical year, I learned that while there are so many needs and so many important works to do, nothing really matters compared to my relationship with Jesus. What He desires in my life is for me to have close relationship with Him, trust Him and follow Him. I believe this is what mission is all about. Without His presence in our lives, all our works are in vain. I am beginning to understand what it means to be yoked with Jesus, learn from Him and find rest in Him. To me it means to remain faithful in my calling, without being distracted by anything else. In other words, it is to remain faithful to my true self whom God has created, without trying to become someone else.

*Y (Country K)*



I would like to give thanks to the Lord for his full work in my life -head, heart and hands. The theological training I received corresponds to the head part. I found all subjects to be very practical and meaningful for my ministry. They help me develop a Christian mind, critical thinking, contextualization skill, and the fear of the Lord plus understanding and love for people. As for the heart part, living in a small cross-cultural residential community is a big blessing as well as a big challenge. Coming from a mono-culture into a multi-cultural environment is my big step of faith and intensive lesson of trust. There were plenty of adjustments, conflicts, misunderstanding and cultural lessons to learn. As for the hand part, DTC trained me for servant leadership: to get our hands dirty and to do any kind of job with joy. I value the clean-up after meals because it is the time when both lecturers and students work together. I also learned new skills like cleaning, sewing and cooking so now I have many things to bless people back home with.

*Paula (Thailand)*



I thank God for the two years I spent at DTC. The Lord has enabled me to fulfill my objectives of learning to grow in breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of my faith. But that is not all; God knows what I really need to learn. Some of my friends asked me before, "How would you do your ministry differently now that you have gone through theological studies?" I realized that it is not how I would do my ministry differently, but how I would live my Christian life differently. This is the chief lesson that the Lord has taught me in DTC. He has given me a renewed perspective and attitude towards my relationship with Him. One key event that has tremendously impacted me was our individual mission trip. It was a lesson of faith in God and God's goodness and faithfulness. I have finally come to understand what it means to say that it is God whom I am serving and not about the work/ministry.

*Esther (Singapore)*