



# Discipleship

TRAINING CENTRE

# Newsletter

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*From the Dean*

## TO KNOW AS WE ARE KNOWN

*The Nature of Theological Knowledge*

Knowing God is a primary pursuit at DTC. It is an essential part of the first half of our motto taken from Mark 3 : 14 ("to be with him"). It is in the company of, and in relationship with, Jesus that we know God. In seminary or Bible college, we study theology ("study or knowledge of God") but we may not really know him. What is involved in knowing God? What is the nature of theological knowledge?

Parker Palmer wrote a book with the title "To Know as We Are Known." This to me aptly captures the essence of theological knowledge. It is to know God as he knows me. It is based on I Cor. 13:12. Here Paul contrasts between the eternity of love and the "for now only" nature of gifts, prophecy and knowledge. Our knowledge of God now is partial ("in part"). It is like a poor reflection of a crude and unpolished mirror. "Then," i.e., "when perfection comes" (v.10), "I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

### Personal Knowledge

Knowledge of God is personal knowledge. Paul says that this future full knowledge of God is "face to face." It is one thing to know about President Obama, for example, through seeing him on TV and reading about him in the newspapers or in the web. It is another thing to meet him personally and much more to become his friend.

Knowing God is more like knowing my wife. I know certain facts about her. Based on these facts I committed myself to her. Moreover, I have personal, intimate relationship with her. In fact the Bible uses

the word "know" to mean sexual relationship between husband and wife. "Adam knew Eve his wife" (Gen. 4:1). To know God is to have personal, intimate relationship with him. It is to enter into mutual (more accurately, covenantal) relationship, to know him in relationship. It involves our heart, body and soul. In short our whole self.

When we say knowledge is personal, we are saying also that is communal- "face to face." To be a person is to be in relation, to be in community. Knowledge of God is essentially religious in character, that is, it unites and joins us to God and to each other. That is why we emphasize community as the context in DTC to pursue knowledge of God.

### To Know is to Love

Another aspect of knowing is to know is to love. The fact that Paul talks about a future full knowledge of God in the context of love alerts us to the intimate connection between knowing and loving. Knowing God is loving God. The wider context (chapters 12-14) tells us that Paul talks about true spirituality. The Corinthian spirituality focuses on tongues, wisdom, special knowledge, asceticism. Paul asserts that the exercise of gifts amount to nothing without love. Gifts will cease and knowledge will pass away (v. 8). The more excellent way is the way of love. Love, with faith and hope remain. But the greatest is love. To love is to be truly spiritual.

Since we live between the now and the not yet, between our present

partial knowledge and the future perfect knowledge, we need to let love transform our way of knowing and being (see I Cor 13: 4-7). Transformed by love, knowledge no longer allows the knower to control and detach himself from the object of knowledge. "The goal of knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds" (Palmer, 8). But we would rather distance ourselves from the object of knowledge because we can control it.

### The Love of God is the Source of Our Knowing

As we know God we also find out that we are known by him. In fact, only as God knows us, that we begin to truly know him. This knowledge by God of us is the basis of our knowledge of him. The love of God is the source of our knowing. What is crucial therefore in our relationship with God is not that we know him, but that he knows us. Our knowledge of God comes from grace. John expresses this in another way by saying that love is not "that we loved God but that he loved us by sending his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (I Jn. 4: 10).

How well does God know us? Paul said "fully" or perfectly. He knows us through and through. One of the most well-loved psalms is Psalm 139. This psalm helps us to see the details and depth of God's knowledge of us. God knows all my ways, all my thoughts, all my deeds and words. There is nothing in me or in my experience that is not known to

*Cont'd on page 4*

# Jo Thailand, Indonesia and UK

## Reflections on Mission Trips

The recent mission trips were undertaken by teams. One team, led by Dr. Eileen Poh, went to Thailand (Bangkok, Khon Kaen and Chaing Dao) from 25 Nov to 7 Dec 2013. Thai Christian Students (TCS) and the James O Fraser Centre were hosts. The latter equips students from the Lisu and Lahu tribes to reach tribal and unreached groups.

The other team led by the Dean, Dr. George Capaque, went to West Kalimantan, Indonesia from 27 Nov to 9 Dec 2013. They were hosted by New Tribes Mission (Semandang tribal ministry) and Bethesda Mission Hospital. Both teams were able to visit and fellowship with DTC alumni.

As the lone GDIS student, Sakae Matsu-mura went for a longer mission trip. She went to UK to observe various focused ministries and attend a missions course at the All Nations Christian College.

### Angel Tuason

The Thailand trip started out in the worst possible way. The night before our trip, I received news that my aunt passed away. Then on the flight to Bangkok I was either crying or throwing up... I was impressed with how TCS students passionately share the gospel and how they are looking for ways to be a Thai Christian university student. In Khon Kaen I was able to share my testimony even if I felt I wasn't up to it and I was questioning God. But my spirit lifted up when one of the girls came to me and said how she was encouraged by my testimony. Overall, I've been inspired by the passion of the believers I've met and seen how God has worked in their lives and how



With TCS students

He still used me despite my questions and anger.

### Antok Wibowo

Prior to this mission trip I heard from my friend that every year Christians spend too much money for mission trips all over the world. The money would be better spent if we send it to build schools, hospitals, and help the poor. But I experienced that this trip was not a waste of money. I saw that the alumni we visited felt very encouraged and happy with our presence and fellowship. Since I am doing student work in Indonesia, seeing it done in a different context gave me a different perspective and an enriching experience. In Khon Kaen, there were only a few Christian students but they were enthusiastic in having fellowship together every week. This was not the kind of enthusiasm I saw in my much bigger and established fellowship in Jogjakarta.



With children from Ban Phai

### San Sochenda

My goal for this mission trip was to find out about other ministries outside my own context. Student Ministry is one of the ministries that is close to my heart. Thank God for the privilege to see the TCS work in Bangkok and Khon Kaen. I was able to observe in the mission field what I've studied in the first semester- holistic missions and contextualization of the gospel. One of the greatest encouragements I received from this trip was from the lives and faithful service of our DTC alumni (Jim and Mot). As I reflected on my life after DTC I am hopeful as I saw how God blessed their lives and ministries when they blossomed to their full potential after they returned home.

### Joshua Chong

The Thailand mission trip encouraged and motivated me to do what the Lord has blessed me with. That is, to reach out to the people who have yet to hear the good news and make them disciples of Jesus through the ministry God will give me. It also affirmed my calling to where my heart is, to be in Myanmar. Seeing our alumni Jim, Mot and Paula serving wholeheartedly from where they are now is very significant to me and the fruits they are producing really encouraged me.

### Anucha Khobpee

The mission trip in West Kalimantan helped me see real mission work from what I have learnt in class. From my previous experience, sharing the gospel begins with the story of Jesus. But here the missionaries begin with creation and only later share the good news in Jesus. I learnt that the whole Bible is good news and people need to know the whole Bible not just the story of Jesus even if this is the most important part. I appreciate their concern for both local beliefs and Scripture and how Scripture gives light to local beliefs.

### Cherlyn Oh

This short trip brought many lessons and reflections on the life of a cross-cultural missionary, and also on serving the Lord. Through the lives of the missionaries who came to West Kalimantan in the 1970s and have continued to serve fervently until now (their two children have since joined them too), I witnessed what it means to be committed to the work God has called us to. I was amazed by their commitment



The Indonesian Team

and perseverance. I was inspired too that God can give us the determination and strength to work wherever He has called us. I also saw the same commitment and perseverance in Bethesda. There are few experienced doctors in the hospital, and most are general practitioners just out of medical school, and nurses trained by the hospital's nursing school. However, the passion of the leaders and experienced doctors spread to the young doctors and nurses as well.



*At one of Bethesda's outreach churches*

### Naomi Fortuna

I thank God for the opportunity to visit the Semandang Tribe church with their leaders and missionaries. I especially learnt from the life and dedication of the missionaries and local leaders doing church planting ministry. I was challenged by the testimonies of the first believers who were converted from animism to Christianity and are now the church leaders. At Bethesda Hospital I had the opportunity to share with the women fellowship, led a women's bible study (doctors) and also preached in a small church at a nearby village. I saw the same problem we observed with pioneering churches, i.e., handing the ministry from the pioneers to the next generation. It was precious to learn from these people who serve God wholeheartedly.



*At the home of Mot (alumna) and Kla at JOFC*

### Loida Domingo

Meeting the missionaries themselves, interacting with them and experiencing their life in action were some of the things that greatly impacted me during this trip. Life is never easy for missionaries either Western or Eastern. The experience has inspired and encouraged me to remain faithful to the task God has given me in the southern part of Mindanao. If God can establish His church in that part of Indonesia, He can also establish His church among the people group that He has called me and my team to work with, no matter how fierce the people may be and how dangerous the area may be.

### Raiya Bith

The mission trip in West Kalimantan was a very good time for me to learn from God's workers there. The most important thing I learnt from them was their heart for mission. The missionaries committed their whole life for the mission of God. They left their comfort zone and lived with the local people adapting to their culture and language. The missionary doctors at Bethesda Hospital sacrificed a lot so they could serve the people and tell them about Christ. I pray that whatever God would like me to do in the future, I will have a heart of love for the lost and proclaim to them the good news of salvation in Christ.



*Fellowship with alumni Drs. Husin and Wiwiek*



*Sakae and friends*

### Sakae Matsumura

Since the mission trip was in between two semesters I prayed that the Lord would use this time to show me where and which people group should I serve after my studies at DTC. Even if I planned to visit several focused ministries in Greater London, I had it in mind not to miss a chance to listen to workers from other parts of world mission. In the course I took at ANCC one of the speakers encouraged us that we should see people not by their religious category but as persons. In this trip God connected me to people in ways I have not even imagined. From conversations with them I learnt that there is a NT translation project going on for a people group in SE Asia whom I have been praying for. I am now opening myself and listening to what God will reveal about serving this people group.



*With NTM pioneer missionary and Semandang Church leaders*

## Alumni in Focus:

### Look Tuck Weng and Annalisa, Singaporean Missionaries to Cambodia

#### How were you led to serve in Cambodia?

God first prepared our hearts when we volunteered to work in an orphanage in Prey Veng province in 2009. During that time we saw poor orphans, widows and villagers, who really need the love of God and the hope of salvation in their lives. When we went back to Singapore, we spent the next two years seeking God's will and the counsel of our church leaders, and also study at DTC in preparation for full-time service as missionaries to Cambodia. It was at DTC that we have discerned God's calling to us and formed deep convictions to commit ourselves to serve in Cambodia.

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

DTC has helped us to first grow in commitment to be a disciple of Christ by giving us the time and space to seek the Lord and have deep communion with Him ('to be with Him'). Then we were equipped ('to be sent out') with the learning of Biblical Studies, Missions Studies, Cultural Studies and field education. The DTC community consisting of teachers and student from different countries and cultures certainly helped us learn to appreciate other cultures and adapt to life in a cross-cultural context.

#### What major challenges have you encountered both in the preparation and in the actual time you began your service in Cambodia?

Communicating with our church leaders, with the Cambodian church leaders, and between us as a couple, regarding our calling to be missionaries to Cambodia posed a major challenge. Humility is the key to meet these challenges. We need to humble ourselves before God and submit to His will for both of us; we need to be humble and gracious towards our church leadership in discussing the details of sending and supporting us; and we need to be humble to learn the Cambodian language and culture well, and communicate to the local leaders in culturally-acceptable ways. When we began our service in Cambodia, humility is still the key to overcoming the communication barriers in ministry work within a cross-cultural context.



#### What is your current ministry and how can we pray for you?

Currently, we have started teaching English to 20 village youths on three week days, and teaching cum feeding of 300 village kindergarten children on two weekdays. These are outreach platforms to share the Gospel with villagers and plant more house churches in the villages. Later when our language is more proficient, we will also be involved in preaching, Bible studies and discipleship training with the local church to strengthen the Christian disciples. Please pray for 1) God's enabling for us to learn the Cambodian language well; 2) God's empowering for us to serve the villagers and witness to them; and 3) God's wisdom to help us select and train those Cambodian disciples that He has called to Himself.

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God. This is such a comfort to those who know God but a scary thought to those who don't.

The key to good theology is prayer. For prayer is concerned with who God is, what kind of God is he and what difference does it make to us. Prayer, according to Palmer, is "the practice of relatedness." Prayer is the essential way we relate to God. As such it is not confined to acts of praying and devotions. To pray is to be with Jesus.

Community is essential to knowing God. "No one has seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12). Service is also important because its essence is self-giving which love is. The practice of prayer, community and service enable us to grow in our knowledge of God.



*George N. Capaque*

***Christ is risen, He is risen indeed!***

**May Easter renew your joy and hope in the risen Christ.**

### **45th Thanksgiving and Valedictory Service**

**15 May 2014 at 7:30 PM**

**John Willis Hall, Bartley Christian Church**

**4 How Sun Drive, S538526**

**Speaker: Rev. John Ting**

**Please join us.**

