

We are Christ's ambassadors



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¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

In this passage, the apostle Paul highlights the primary calling and ministry of every disciple of Christ.

The message of reconciliation

Firstly, God has committed to every disciple of Christ the MESSAGE of reconciliation (v. 19).

As Christians, we understand that the meaning of Christ's death is a revelation from God. If God had not revealed to us the meaning, Christ's death would be like any criminal's death. From a human point of view, Jesus was a victim of the greatest frame-up in history. He was a victim of the greatest miscarriage of justice. But the Bible tells us that Jesus' death was ordained by God, not by men. His death has an eternal purpose – to reconcile men to God.

The Bible declares that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". All of us are sinners. There is no exception. Only those in mental hospitals may claim otherwise. Sin has separated us from God. We become His enemies and we rebel against His authority. We are condemned to eternal death. That's the penalty of our sins. This is the true state of every man and woman.

But this is not the full picture. Praise the Lord! John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." God loves us so much that He initiated a plan to rescue us from eternal damnation. He sent His one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. Christ died as our substitute. He died so that we do not need to die. This is the meaning of verse 14: "We are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died." Christ's death was the death of all, in the sense that He died the death we should have died. He died in our place.

In verses 18 and 19, Paul tells us that Christ died to reconcile us to God.

Verse 18: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself."

Verse 19: "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself."

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Lessons from mission trip to Cambodia

Five students led by the dean, Dr Wan Chee Wan, visited Cambodia from Nov 22 to Dec 5 last year as part of their field education. They shared their testimony, taught Bible stories and songs, and played games with university students, youth and children in Phnom Penh, Takeo and Siem Reap. Here are the highlights.



Children's ministry at a primary school in Siem Reap.

Accepting one another

Dorcas (Singapore)

The aim of this trip was to provide an opportunity for us to be exposed to a different culture, in order to appreciate what it means to serve in a cross-cultural situation.

The exposure came to me in a fashion that I had not expected. The crucial takeaway for me was birthed out of my struggle with the differences in my team. I had thought that I was comfortable with differences until this trip. Each of us in my intergenerational team has come from a different country and a different culture. We each possess different personalities and ministry experiences. We had also just weathered weeks of heavy assignment deadlines. Differences can either complement or clash.

The challenge to me when it clashed was simple but difficult. This question captures the essence of it: "Do you accept them (the team/community and each individual)?" There are certain things that we should never accept. But to love a community, to build the church and to appreciate serving cross-culturally, acceptance is a necessity.



Meeting university students in Phnom Penh.

Praying is very important

Arm (Thailand)

I really enjoy seeing people serving in different areas. I learnt a lot from the trip, not only from the field but also from the team.

Serving in several areas has different challenges, maybe from the team and from the people we serve. I found that prayer is very important. Without praying, I think I could be lost because, in the mission field, there are a lot of needs. Another thing is that when working among the people, being sensitive is important. This trip taught me to talk to others with "heart".



Praying for God's mercy for a woman's family.

The Lord's gift of prayer

M. A. (Indonesia)

Every mission trip, I often ask God to direct me to the person who needs prayer or some encouragement.

In Cambodia, a local pastor asked us to visit the people nearby the church who are not believers yet. We passed one house with a family, and someone prayed for them. Finally, we went to a small house where a lady lives. I felt the Lord's compassion for her. I heard she lost her son and now she was pregnant, but her husband lived and worked far away from her. I prayed for her, interpreted by the local pastor, and I saw her eyes watering. I believe the Lord will continue His love and mercy for this little family. I pray for a smooth delivery during her time of labour.

The Lord reminds me: "Freely you received, freely give." So even to pray for someone, there's nothing to lose. It is a gift from the Lord to see what He sees.



Reunion with DTC alumni based in Cambodia.

Learning about women in the red-light district

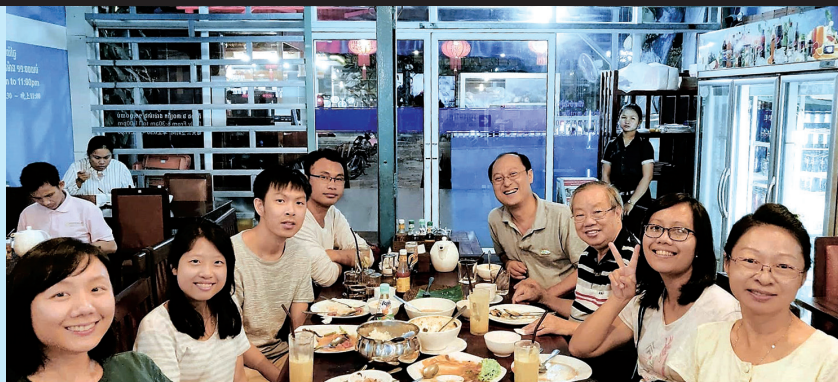
Amy (Singapore)

We visited Daughters of Cambodia, an organisation that helps women in the red-light district leave the trade.

I especially appreciated the visit as it allowed me to see the difference between the ministries to people in the red-light district in Singapore and Cambodia. Their ministry reported 100 girls joining them each year.

This is such a big number compared to the rate at which people leave this trade in Singapore (and in Hong Kong, having visited a ministry like this there). Perhaps it is due to the difference in resources in both countries and access to education. It is probably more difficult for those in Singapore to leave the trade because of the complex circumstances that led them there in the first place.

At the same time, I was overwhelmed by the thought of how big the industry must be to have 100 people walk out each year, yet I also see hope in the existence of ministries like these.



Mission team with Yew On (DTC alumnus '00-02, fourth from right) and his wife Chern Chern (first from right).

Encouraged by commitment and zeal

Nelson (Northeast India)

The mission trip was a tremendous blessing for me. Honestly, from the very first day, I was excited to see the places and the culture and to taste different kinds of local food. Furthermore, I love to meet people. Learning that my look was almost like the Khmers added to my joy. Cambodia was just like Assam city in India, the place where I came from.

Before we travelled, our Dean had mentioned a few times to us to be prepared mentally for changes either in timing or cancellation of the programme, and he may call us to share our testimony on the spot. So throughout our journey when some changes took place, I was not upset. I laughed because it was almost like what we would do in India.

In Siem Reap, through Yew On (DTC alumnus) and Chern Chern, we were able to meet Christian youth and do ministry in different places in the city. The couple's commitment to the ministry was another encouragement for me.

One evening we visited a university from the back gate and had fellowship with Christian students inside the campus. We introduced ourselves to them and encouraged them. We prayed for one another.

The students' zeal for God inspired and moved my heart so much that I shared about it with my students back in North-East India during the Christmas season.



Left: Dean Wan Chee Wan (left) preaching at the Sunday Service with Pastor Raiya Beth (DTC alumnus '13-15) interpreting. Right: Ministry with students from a private university in Seam Reap.

It is clear from these verses that the initiative in reconciliation came not from people who had offended God by sin but from a God who was offended by sinning human beings. God is the initiator and Christ, His one and only Son, was the agent in effecting reconciliation ("through Christ ... in Christ"). Elsewhere the apostle Paul tells us that reconciliation is the divine act by which, on the basis of Christ's death on the cross, God's wrath was appeased, the enmity between God and man was removed, and man was restored to proper relations with Him. Amazing grace! Marvellous love!

The ministry of reconciliation

Secondly, God has committed to all disciples of Christ the MINISTRY of reconciliation (v. 18)

The point is found in verse 18: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

God has done everything necessary to reconcile mankind to himself. But this good news must be proclaimed far and wide, to all peoples and nations. The point here is that those whom God has reconciled to Himself have been given the ministry of reconciliation. That means you and me. All of us. No exception. You have a ministry to fulfil – the ministry of reconciliation. Is this a revelation to you? Has it ever dawned upon you that you've already been given a ministry – the ministry of reconciling men and women to God?

God achieved reconciliation through His Son; we are to proclaim it. He made reconciliation possible; we are to make it actual in human lives. Christ was God's instrument to do what only He could do; we are His instruments to do what we are able to do and commanded to do. We are given the ministry of reconciliation. What a privilege and what an awesome responsibility!

Ministers of reconciliation

Thirdly, God has appointed all of us MINISTERS of reconciliation (v. 20).

We are therefore Christ's Ambassadors, Paul says. Isn't it great to know that we are ambassadors of the King of kings and Lord of lords? What a privilege! What an honour! What an awesome responsibility!

An ambassador is a representative of one country to another. He is a messenger as well as a representative. He does not speak in his own name. He does not act on his own authority. What he says are not his own opinions or demands, but simply what he has been told or commanded to say. But at the same time, he speaks with authority, in this case, the authority of Christ Himself.

As ambassadors, our goal is to turn sinners from being enemies of God to friends of God. Our task is to deliver the good news of Christ, the message of reconciliation, in every way possible. We are to implore them, "Be reconciled to God" (v. 20). Our task must be carried out with a deep sense of urgency: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) Tomorrow may be too late! The climate may change, and the opportunity gone.

God has appointed us ambassadors for Christ.
He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.
He has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation.



Just ponder over this solemn truth: We are an integral part of God's plan for the reconciliation of mankind. As Augustine said, "Without God, we cannot. Without us, God will not." What a mystery!

Wan Chee Wan
Dean

Replacement of Old Assets

Since November 2018, we embarked on a major renovation of DTC. We are very grateful to God for providing the funds through the generosity of our friends and supporters to complete all the major renovation projects amounting to about S\$72,000 excluding donations in kind. Please pray with us that God will provide us with the funds to buy the following items:

1. Replacement of all expired fire extinguishers (12 nos.)	\$800.00
2. One notebook computer, software & external hard disk	\$2,200.00
3. Two fridges (>500L)	\$3,400.00
4. Two air-conditioners (10,000BTU)	\$2,400.00
5. Two standing fans	\$200.00
Total:	\$9,000.00

Giving to DTC

Donors may issue a cheque made out to Discipleship Training Centre Ltd. and mail it to **33A Chancery Lane, Singapore 309554**; or transfer the funds to DTC's account number **024-901049-4** with DBS Singapore by ATM, Internet banking or telegraphic transfer. Donors may also scan the PayNow QR code.

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