

## A WORD FROM THE DEAN

# Being small: challenges & merits

It is a privilege to be appointed dean of Discipleship Training Centre (DTC). I am thankful to God for guiding my path and giving me such an opportunity to serve. I am also grateful to the Board of Directors for the confidence they have placed in me.

When the idea of DTC was first floated around the mid-1960s, the proponents had envisaged “a small training centre restricted to perhaps fifteen people, with students and staff living and working closely in community” (C. Armitage, *Reaching for the Goal: The Life Story of David Adeney*, OMF Books, 1993, 202).

It is thus no accident that what came to characterise the DTC model of theological education till the present time situates students and faculty members within the context of a small live-in community. That some 384 students have passed through the portals of DTC and are serving in 27 countries around the world in various Christian ministries and roles is proof of its efficacy.

Admittedly, there are challenges inherent to the smallness of number and these apply to the DTC situation. I shall touch briefly on just two of them.

The first is that our day-to-day operation will not be cost-effective. While this is conceded, we are far from saying that our type of training is less than worthwhile. I have long learned in Christian service that money must not be the true measure of worth.

A second—and perhaps more besetting—challenge which faces us is that of being discouraged or demoralised on account of our smallness. The reality is often overlooked—that we are rich in community. As one of our alumni has put it, “This small context does not mean weakness but



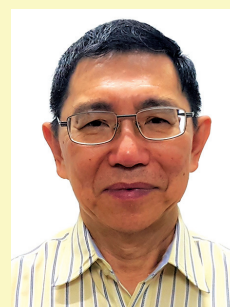
rather strength.”

These and other challenges facing DTC should not be taken lightly. But it is important that they are not looked at in isolation from the biblical perspective on how discipleship is nurtured. To recall, Jesus had only a few disciples who were especially chosen “to be with him and to be sent out to preach” (Mk 3:14). He would love them, teach them, and pour himself into relationships with them, thus forming the first-ever “small group”. And they would converse, stay, travel, and do things together

(Luke 12:1; John 11:54; Matt 8:23; Luke 22:39, Matt 9:10, etc). This model of community life was continued by the apostles (Acts 2:42-47).

There is, to my mind, undoubted merit in the DTC approach to theological education. As the late Jeanette Hui, one of the members of the first cohort and a longstanding lecturer, so amply articulated, what matters most is “the spiritual development of every trainee through the disciplines of prayer, bible study, attending classes (and sitting for exams too), caring for one another, and going out to preach and serve others in obedience to Jesus’ command, and all in the context of students and staff (faculty and other families) living together in community”.

Please “help us by your prayers” (2 Cor 1:11) and as the Lord leads, by your financial contributions.



**Dr Lim K Tham**  
Dean

# Giving thanks on Zoom

The DTC community met online for a thanksgiving chapel on May 13 in place of the annual valedictory service because of COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings. The four leaving students who shared their testimonies will be invited to attend next year's valedictory service. Dr Wan Chee Wan, who was finishing his two-year term as Interim Dean, gave his farewell message.



## 4 lessons on leadership and ministry

Dr Wan Chee Wan drew four lessons on leadership and ministry from Paul's farewell message to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-38):

- 1. Lead by example.** Paul followed Christ's example and urged others to follow him. We, too, lead others by setting an example, particularly in service.
- 2. Focus on your life's mission.** Paul never lost his focus or forgot his life's mission that he received from his Master to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Our specific calling may differ from another person's calling, but we are all commissioned to make disciples of all nations.
- 3. Keep watch over yourselves.** Paul instructed the Ephesian elders to first watch over themselves and only then over the flock. Ministry is an outflow of our heart (Proverbs 4:23). "If our spiritual life is dry or dead, we minister death to others. If our spiritual life is filled with the Spirit of God, then we minister life to others."
- 4. Learn to let go gracefully.** Paul knew that false teachers would create havoc among the flock and he would not be there to protect them. But he believed God would take care of the church: "Paul was not afraid to let go even though it was very painful because he believed that the church belonged to God, not to him.

This is true of our ministry, our children, our possessions, our life. When the time comes for us to let go or return them, we must willingly surrender them to the One who has given them to us in the first place."



## STUDENT TESTIMONIES

### Conversations for an introvert

Eittikorn Denkittikhun (Arm) (Thailand)

Someone said: "The most important Christian education institution is not the pulpit or the school...but it is the Christian family, and that institution has to a very large extent ceased to do its work." DTC gives not only knowledge but also family.

DTC has shaped me to see things differently in terms of worldview, perspective and opinion on the situation today. The interaction in the international environment opens my mind to respond to issues differently. I appreciate the conversations during meal times even though I am not the one who usually starts the conversation.

The highlight of my studies is informing the argument to discuss issues. DTC taught me to have a principle to decide what should I discuss as the biblical foundation. I also experimented in my small garden and cooked during this pandemic. I have never cooked before this. I was a part of the Thai ministry to mainly housewives. God brought me to see a different ministry that I had never thought about. Sometimes, God wants us to reach out to people with knowledge and reason. But sometimes, God just works in a very simple way as the Holy Spirit reveals.

As an introvert, talking to others requires more effort to think of topics or stories for conversation. DTC helped me to think about others more. I received care and love when I needed it.

Finally, I would like to thank my family; Thai Christian Students (TCS), to trust and send me here for training; all the lecturers. I thank God for his provision.

### A pause to read Asian religion and culture

Y (Indonesia)

I thank God for the sabbatical studies (Jan-May 2020) in DTC. I graduated from seminary in 2009 and served in a seminary in a Creative Access Nation (CAN) and then as a mission pastor in a church in Indonesia.

God knows more what I need than I do myself. When I first came to DTC, I loved the community and the environment where hornbills fly freely. Initially I was disappointed that the mission classes held this semester were few, but I could learn about Asian church history and Asian religions, and do guided research about the history, religion and culture of the Creative Access Nation (CAN).

My study in DTC has prepared me for further study: I have not written a paper for more than 10 years and now I need to write it in a foreign language. The lecturers not only grade my paper and train me in critical thinking, but also correct all my grammatical errors and explain them one by one. I got good pastoral care from the lecturers, who mop the floor with us.

DTC gives me a beautiful healing community. Although we are from different backgrounds, we become one family in Christ. COVID-19 has enriched our experience in this area: Suddenly, all of us have become chefs.

Lastly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my family, the lecturers, board members, friends, my church and my lecturer in Indonesia, Ev. Ria Pasaribu, who encouraged me to come to DTC. I will continue my study (ThM) at Singapore Bible College. Please remember me in prayer.

# ...and bidding farewell



From left: M.A., Amy and Arm

## My Narnia experiences

Amy Yam (Singapore)

The Chronicles of Narnia have been my favourite series of books for many years now, and I have often turned to it to describe my mission trip experiences with much fondness. However this time, I felt like I was Eustace in the Voyage of the Dawn Treader. Just as Eustace was a great nuisance to the rest of the company because of his shock upon entering Narnia, I had not anticipated the culture shock in my own country, and found it effortful to adapt to DTC at the beginning.

Thankfully, that was not the defining experience for Eustace in Narnia, and neither was it for me here. His “undragoning” experience when he met Aslan was perhaps his significant moment. Eustace had somehow turned into a dragon and could only become a human again when he allowed Aslan to help him, after attempts of doing it himself, but failing. In a similar way, I felt many moments of “undragoning” during these 2 years. Through the assignments, I was able to write and think more deeply about issues on my heart.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader ends with Eustace and his friends approaching Aslan’s country. The journey becomes calmer and everyone is filled with peace and joy. It resonated with me during these final weeks when my outside activities had to be suspended because of the Circuit Breaker. My busyness of travelling in and out of school, and returning home on weekends were stopped. To my surprise, although this change was rather disturbing at first, I began to slow down and regain the peace which I had lost.

The book ends with the children meeting Aslan and He opens the way for them to return to their own world. Even as I am about to transition out of DTC back to life “as usual”, I am grateful for the adventures I have had here, the friendships made and lessons learnt.

## Serving street workers and youth

M.A. (Indonesia)

In April 2018, many things were happening in a Creative Access Nation. I could not return to the field. So I asked the Lord if I could go for theological studies. My pastor suggested DTC. As an alumna, she felt that it would be a perfect fit for me to learn about culture and theology.

I am thankful that God used these two years at DTC to equip me and grateful for the church’s support and the support of family and friends.

God brought me to two places for my Field Education. During my first year, I served in Tamar Village among former street workers. The Lord taught me about leadership in ministry, to be more compassionate and to see the beauty of God in people’s lives.

During the second year, I served with Orchard Road Presbyterian Church (ORPC)/ GPO Indonesian youth ministry. It was a unique experience that enabled me to be more creative. Field Education has taught me how God takes care of

His children in different challenges and seasons of life.

I enjoyed the classes with my lecturers and learnt a lot from their teaching, experience and personal stories. I struggled with my writing. I had to force myself to read and write more. My goal was not the grades, but the knowledge that would equip me to serve the Lord better. Towards the end of the second year, I received a compliment from two lecturers: “M., your writing skills have improved.”

Due to COVID-19 measures, our cook was unable to return to work. We took turns to cook our dinner. I have enjoyed cooking. I will miss the kitchen and the people who eat from it.

I do not know what the future holds after DTC, but I thank God for the message of hope I have received in DTC, churches and among friends. I quote David Adeney, DTC’s founder: “I want to know Christ, to preach Him and to please Him.” This is also my desire and my prayer.

# Goodbye, Jeanette

Our dear sister, teacher, colleague and mentor, Dr Jeanette Hui, was called home to the Lord on April 25, 2020 at Assisi Hospice in Singapore. She was 73.

Jeanette belonged to the first batch of DTC students from 1968 to 1970. After a two-year stint in the IFES Asian Office in Singapore, she did further theological studies in the UK (the then London Bible College) and, later, in the USA (Wheaton Graduate School and Fuller Theological Seminary). She was a co-founder of Pusat Latihan Kristen Melaka (1975) which subsequently became the English Department of the Malaysia Bible Seminary.

Jeanette returned to serve on the Faculty of DTC in 1981 and left in 1988 to serve in the pastoral team of her home church, Barker Road Methodist Church. She rejoined the Faculty of DTC in 2001 teaching Christian Spirituality, Biblical Theology, Introduction to Asian Religions and Old Testament Books such as Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Job.

Former students would remember Jeanette as their teacher, mentor, friend, sister, mother and even grandma. A write-up on Jeanette in her younger years, in the June 1985 issue of Asian Challenge, DTC's journal, notes:

"Jeanette's teaching benefits from her wide reading, and she is one who can be trusted to have personally read most of the many books she includes in her bibliographies! Her interest in books is also reflected in her willingness to accept the responsibility of being Librarian and in her readiness to supervise purchases of books from overseas.

"Besides teaching mainly in the areas of Theology, Asian Studies and Bible books, Jeanette also serves as Registrar,

Asian Challenge Editor and oversees different aspects of our community life. She still finds time, however, for her evening strolls with a student or two. Her concern for students and fellow staff is reflected not only in the time she spends with them but also in the thoughtful help and little (and big) treats that one has come to associate with Jeanette."

Jeanette taught her last two classes on March 31 and April 2 this year. Despite the sudden, uncomfortable swelling in her leg, she arranged for the three second-year students to come to her home for a lesson on Biblical Theology, where she taught about the Holy Spirit in Christian life.

Two days later, she received five students at her home, where they watched a DVD on the life of Mother Teresa, to understand the context of India for Asian Religions. She also sent them back to DTC by taxi with lunch: 10 packets of chicken rice and roasted pork rice.

Many of us would have more personal stories to tell. In due time, when the COVID-19 situation stabilises, we hope to hold a memorial service for her.

On April 15, warded at KK Hospital, Jeanette recorded a 40-second farewell message for all of us who had been praying for her:

"Hi everyone. Thank you so much for your prayers, your love and your concerns... I know that my time has come to go, so... I'll say goodbye. See you there... and may the Lord establish the work of our hands. Keep going. With all my love and prayers, Jeanette. Bye bye."

Goodbye, Jeanette, and see you there!

## 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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