



A WORD FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

The Paradox of the Gospel Ministry

Revd Dr Timothy Chong, DTC's board chairman, spoke at DTC's 55th Valedictory and Thanksgiving Service on May 23, 2024, at Bartley Christian Church (right). Here is an excerpt of his speech:

This year, I mark my 30th year of priesthood with the Anglican Church. I would like to reflect on my journey using Paul's framework in 2 Corinthians 4:7–18 as part of that shaping process of God in my life.

In 2 Cor. 4:7, Paul summarised his ministry: "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

Paul described his gospel ministry in paradoxical terms: treasure in jars of clay. The jars of clay are fragile and breakable, weak and inferior, just like any of us, because we are not always strong and not always able to accomplish all that God has given to us to do. The pattern of Paul's ministry was power through weakness. This treasure housed in jars of clay was to show that the surpassing power belonged to God and not to us.

The Weak/Strong Matrix

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."
(2 Cor. 4:8–9)



Photo: Moses Goh

persecuted, and struck down, that we see God's power at work to preserve him from being crushed, driven to despair, forsaken and destroyed. Paul's suffering was real, as in Gal. 6:17: "... for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."

As we take the Gospel to the world, it will be resisted. There will be challenges and suffering. We are always jars of clay, always weak and easily broken, but each time we cry out to God, God's power is released within us. When Paul reached that point, God's power was at work in him. No matter how dire the situation might have been, his situation would never reach the point

It was precisely when Paul was afflicted, perplexed,

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Learning and living together

Five graduating students share their stories at DTC's 55th Valedictory and Thanksgiving Service.

Bann Sambor
(Cambodia)
Master of Christian Ministry

In the classroom, I learned perseverance and resilience. I had to learn to speak, write, read, and listen in English. I used to cry alone because it was too hard. I persevered by the grace of God and with the encouragement of the community, especially Dr. June, who guided me in reading, writing, and speaking. Even the word "English" she corrected me again and again.

The study of Scripture and theology also expanded my understanding of faith. I have come to appreciate the beauty of questioning, seeking, and wrestling with the mysteries of faith, through which our faith is strengthened.

Outside of class, I learned the value of community and fellowship. Gathering with classmates for prayer, worship, and study has been a source of support. I learned that we are not meant to walk this journey alone but to share our burdens and celebrate our joys together as the body of Christ.

During my internship with a mission agency, I participated in mobilizing churches, helping them to understand God's Mission. I visited migrant workers to understand the challenges they faced. Through a church internship, I learned creative ways in youth ministry. Most importantly, I have learned the truth of God's grace and faithfulness. No matter what circumstances I face, He never leaves me alone, and His love is immense.

Jim Leong
(Singapore)
Graduate Diploma in Intercultural Studies

Let me compare my experience to Kung Fu Panda. Just as Po, the unlikely hero, entered the training hall of the Jade Palace, we too entered this discipleship centre, uncertain of what lay ahead but filled with excitement and a little anxiety.

We faced rigorous training in faith and scripture. Our lecturers, like Master Shifu, pushed us beyond our perceived limits but were always there to encourage us.

Just as Po learned the importance of community, we, too, learned the value of living and growing together.

Through shared meals, washing dishes, cleaning toilets, late-night conversations, and collaborative projects, we experienced what it means to be a disciple in the body of Christ. We supported one another, celebrated each other's victories, and stood by each other in times of struggle.

In the same way Po faced real-world challenges to become the Dragon Warrior, we were given opportunities to put our faith into action. During mission trips, we stepped out of our comfort zones, sweated it out, worked through conflicts and saw the Gospel's transformative power in our lives and the lives of others.

Profound lessons were learned within our community and in the relationships we have built. These bonds have transformed us from strangers of diverse ethnic backgrounds into a family. This is where we saw the teachings of Christ come alive. If we can embrace that with a heart of a servant, we will be a dragon warrior for Christ.

Jocelyn Tan Esguerra (Joy)
(Philippines)
Sabbatical Studies

Thank God for this place (DTC) that I was able to finish my project proposal for my DMin Program at Gateway Seminary in the USA. It was a challenging program, and I needed to get away for the first time in my married life of 38 years and as a pastor's wife. At DTC, God completed the "unfinished business" God prepared for me.

First, God brought me back to my identity as a child of God, a recipient of his unconditional love and grace and given many spiritual gifts so I can serve him fully with joy in my heart even when alone. My identity is not attached to being Pastor Andy's wife or a volunteer worker in churches.

Second, living together with other students, teachers, and even staff, who have different cultures, personalities, and perspectives in life, is the real test to practise love. My 37 years of experience as a mother was not a waste as they call me "Mama Joy".

Third, it was my first time ministering in the Filipino Ministry without my husband as the pastor. I could preach once a month and teach our Filipina domestic workers. It was my first time to be their choir conductor. With pride, our Filipino choir sang twice for the whole church.

Finally, it was my first time receiving a love gift from the churches I was serving, and I could pay my expenses.

I will cherish all the "first times".



Above: (from left) Jim, Joy, Sambor, and Efrain.
Right: Oyuka, in a video recording from Mongolia.

Efrain Elladora Balawag (Philippines) Master of Christian Ministry

Living in a diverse community, the language barrier is one of the most complex bridges that must be crossed. During my first few weeks in DTC, the others didn't include me in a group activity. I never thought my expression of saying "yes" to the schedule they set was very different from theirs. For Filipinos, sometimes we say "yes" by raising our eyebrows twice. They didn't get what I meant. I needed to communicate better with my classmates. However, I soon realized that effective communication is not about changing people, but about appreciating their unique expressions.

Living among a diverse group of people and cultures expands your worldview. You get to try new foods. Learning phrases like "thank you" and "have a good day" broadens your linguistic skills. Living together instils a positive sense of tolerance that reduces bias towards a specific race.

We may come from diverse backgrounds, yet our shared experiences of how God found us, His love and grace, is a thread that binds us all. The love of Christ can transcend cultural barriers, social status, race, language, and skin colour. It has the power to build a stronger community. There is unity in the Body of Christ regardless of nationality or ethnicity, as we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).



Photos: Moses Goh

Sukhbataar Oyun-Erdene (Oyuka) (Mongolia) Sabbatical Studies

Before I came to DTC, I knew that it was a small community school. But DTC was so different from what I had imagined. DTC is not just a school, but it was family. I learned biblical knowledge and wisdom from my teachers and friends, but I also enjoyed many fun times together, such as eating together, working together, and playing sports.

My nine months at DTC were a time of close fellowship with God and learning from my supervisor. It also gave me time to reflect on how I have served in the past, what God has done in my life during this time, and what I will do in the future. It helped me to continue my ministry.

Introducing our new students

Vareiyō Rungsung (Manipur, India)

I was raised in a Christian family with a pastor father and a homemaker mother. My father left us to be with the Lord when I was 14, leaving a legacy for us to follow in his footsteps. I am grateful to God for my parents for planting the seed of the gospel in my life.

In 2004, I attended a discipleship camp where God spoke to me through John 3:3–5. I realized that I am a sinner and accepted Jesus as my personal Savior and dedicated my life to God.

I began to pray for guidance on how God wanted me to live. God answered my prayer, and His calling became clear to me to serve Him. I pursued a Bachelor of Theology and a Bachelor of Divinity. Then, I worked with the Tangkhul Baptist Churches Association. Later, I managed a hostel ministry for students in Ukhrul Town, and then I worked at Veikhang Baptist Churches Fellowship in Ukhrul as a chaplain.

Chonchon and I married in 2021. God blessed us with a son, Songayam (30 months old). We are committed to serving the Lord for the extension of God's Kingdom. We prayed that God opens the door for us to gain more skill, knowledge and experience for God's ministry. God answered our prayer when I met a pastor who introduced me to DTC.

Pray for my family. As our journey continues, we are struggling in many ways. These challenges could be our opportunities to strive on to fulfil God's calling.



my principles in life, and my faith in Him began to activate. I began to desire to serve Him sincerely and faithfully. After graduation, in God's grace, He gave me an opportunity to serve Him through leading young teens in church, and even in my secular work; volunteering in the Muslim community, and the privilege to do Bible study with Muslim scholarship recipients.

One Filipino couple who graduated from DTC persuaded me to study in DTC, to widen my understanding about cross-cultural matters, and equip myself for Christlikeness. Please pray that my learning here will transform me and make me stronger. Pray for my family for guidance and to rely more on God. Pray for my father that he will turn back to God.

Linda Wang (China)

My husband William and I have been married for 17 years. We have two daughters Joy (14) and Ivy (10), who have been homeschooled from a very young age.

I had not heard the Gospel before I went to university. The first time I went to the church, when I heard the pastor say, "Jesus loves you", my heart was willing to believe. But my heart had been prepared many years before. My parents divorced when I was around 14. I almost became a marginalized teenager, skipping classes, arguing with teachers, and having no friends. I felt that my life was meaningless. Such a situation continued for almost eight years until I believed in Jesus in the last year of university.

Even though the original family lacked love, and I didn't know what a normal marriage looked like, God prepared a good husband for me and taught us how to manage the marriage in Christ.

For 10 years, I served in my family, learning about



Hannah Atacador (Philippines)

My life journey was full of challenges, suffering, difficulties, thorns and failures. However, my life did not end there. I could not escape God's purpose in my life.

My spiritual journey began in college. God's love renewed



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marriage and how to accompany and teach two daughters. These tasks require daily reliance on God's guidance. I am very grateful for the roles of wife and mother that God has given me.

Since 2017, William and I have been called to serve full-time at the church. Due to the strict religious policies, we were often unable to hold public gatherings, so our home became a place for hosting brothers and sisters.

After a year of prayer and preparation, in June 2023, William came to Singapore to study Master of Divinity. In November 2023, I and our daughters decided to visit him.

DTC provided our family with temporary accommodation for a month. During a conversation, I learnt that I could apply to study at this school. Before that I had prayed that one day I would study in a seminary in English. I didn't expect God to answer this prayer so quickly. Please pray for our seminary studies, as well as for our children and their relationship with God, home-schooling, and future direction.



**Rous Rathana
(Cambodia)**

I was not a believer until I finished university. I came to trust Jesus when I started to live in a Christian dormitory. I was the only believer in my family.

I was a dorm leader, a youth leader, a Khmer service leader, and an English teacher for orphan kids and poor kids.

I came to DTC because I wanted to have a deeper knowledge of the Bible so that I could help with evangelism in Cambodia.

Please pray for Cambodia to have more God's servants. Pray for our plans to have a Bible centre; my translation of materials from English to Khmer to provide more resources; and development of short daily devotionals to build up the daily habit of reading and maintaining one's relationship with God.

**Peres Lepcha
(Kalimpong, India)**

Historians and archaeologists say that Jesus lived among us, but only few believe that he still lives among us. I was like one of those historians and archaeologists who did not believe in Jesus and in God. I was blind and



deaf to see and hear his love.

In 2016, I was in Delhi. I was frustrated and hopeless and had left my home expecting new changes or even death. There I started reading the Bible, and my life was transformed. It was only because of his love and what he did 2,000 years ago that I have got a new life. Now I am a person who cherishes my life and lives a life filled with hope and love, showered on me by my Jesus.

Before coming to DTC, I was helping in my church, serving in Sunday School, teens, youth, and in some fellowships. I want to know more about my God. I want to have a heart like his. I want to perceive this world through his eyes, and most importantly, I want to love him back.

Kindly pray for my parents and my elder brother, and that I may acknowledge God in every aspect of my life.

**Tushig
Erkhembayar
(Mongolia)**

I and Nyamsuren Enkhbaatar have been married for 6 years. We have a daughter Nandin Erdene Tushig (5).

I graduated from the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST) in 2018 with a degree in Petroleum Storage and Transport. I started attending the FCS-Mongolia (IFES) student movement in the spring of 2012 through a Gospel event, where I heard the Gospel for the first time. I got to know how much God loves me and what Jesus did for me, and I decided to accept Jesus Christ into my life.

In the summer of 2014, God revealed to me that He has called me for His own glory among university students through Isaiah 61:1. Since then, I gained a passion to share with university students about the God who reached out to me when I was without God, walking in darkness, and transformed me in amazing ways. I decided to serve in FCS-Mongolia full-time and in July 2018 I officially started serving the staff of the MUST campus group.

We are overflowing with thankfulness to God for blessing our family with the opportunity to study for a Graduate Diploma in Intercultural Studies at DTC. I believe that this year-long study will be rejuvenating for our family on many fronts and that it will greatly equip and empower me to continue serving the youths of Mongolia.

Please pray about grateful hearts, God's provision, and protection over our family during our time here. May God's presence guide us as we strive to grow closer to God and create cherished memories rooted in faith and joy, allowing us to reflect God's grace in all.



where he would be defeated.

While God's power is in us, we also see God at work in our peripheries because God intervenes in our situations, opening doors of opportunities for us, or giving us a way out of our difficult circumstances.

The Dying/Living Matrix

In 2 Cor. 4:10–12, Paul argued that his suffering was patterned after Christ:

"...always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you."

This "death", in Greek, refers to the process of dying or a putting to death, rather than the final state of death. In our gospel ministry, Paul says that we always carry with us this "dying of Jesus". Like Paul, we who follow Jesus, would also carry the cross. Although we carry death, we also bring life to others. This is something constant: Paul used the term "always". We always carry with us this "dying of Jesus" and we always bring life to others. So suffering is not an option for us. It is part and parcel of our ministry on behalf of Jesus.

This vicarious suffering was also the principle of the cross. Christ died that we might live. We might have to make sacrifices, yet such sacrifices bring life to others. The ultimate goal of the dying/living matrix is found in verse 14: "...he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence".

Paul was looking forward to the day when he could be "presented" together with the Corinthians at the consummation of the age. On that day, the tears and pain once suffered now turns to joy. Esther Kerr Rusthoi writes: "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!"

The Decaying/Transforming Matrix

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that

ANNOUNCEMENT

DTC is open for applicants for 2025

We are open for new applicants for 2025–2026. By God's grace, we have limited scholarships and continue to seek local church partnership in missions to support the training of leaders from emerging nations.

We have found in the past candidates recommended by DTC alumni to have a good understanding of DTC's ethos and are prepared to live and learn together in a small cross-cultural community as disciples of Jesus Christ, "to be with Him...and to be sent out".

Please refer to our website at <https://www.dtc.org.sg/admissions> to submit an enquiry form, or email us at disciple@dtc.org.sg

are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:16–20)

Paul knew that as he served in weakness and carried with him the "dying of Jesus", his outer self was wasting away and decaying year after year. It is a process that cannot be reversed. However, in this matrix of decaying, there is an inner transformation. There is a glory that comes from God transforming us.

The resurrection was not just a future hope for Paul. It was also a present reality, as Paul claimed that his "inner self (was) being renewed day by day" through his sufferings and this would culminate into "an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" for him.

Our suffering will lead somewhere. Our inner man is being transformed. We may not see the glory outwardly in our aging bodies, but God is changing us internally. This is so that our inner man may grow from one glory to another glory. There are increments of glory in us. We look forward to our next phase of life in heaven. We put our hope in our future glorious resurrection.

As the resurrection is a present reality, God will still disciple you in whatever age you are in. God will still push you into places where you will need to cry out to Him, in places where you need to grow in your faith. God is not finished with us until we breathe our final breath here on earth.

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. **UEN Number:** 197100578E

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