Different people have different ideas of heaven. Lim Sok Yee visualises it as a place where people of different tribes and tongue stand before the King at the throne and worship Him. “The 10-month experience in Training In Mission (TIM) gave me a taste of that,” she says. “Ten different people representing 10 different nations, with different cultures and languages, bound together with the love of Christ. I have seen and experienced how difficult it is sometimes for churches or denominations to work together, but after the TIM experience, I truly believe that it can be done.”

Through the TIM programme, a group of 10-12 young people from the churches and ecumenical partners of Council for World Mission (CWM) are brought together for seven months of intensive mission training.

Since the beginning of its existence in 1977, CWM has been characterised by its service in the transformation of individuals, communities and the society at large. Its Theological Statement calls for a deeper involvement in social issues—to take a stand on the side of the poor, the powerless and the oppressed. But the commitment is not merely to bring immediate relief to the suffering but also to work towards the creation of global structures that will ensure basic dignity and humane existence for all people. This also means taking a stand against the present structures of society.

According to the CWM’s Common Resources Handbook 2017, “TIM is an enabling experience of participants for an adventure of faith, rooted in God and enacted in the world. It is a journey of transformation, a dialectic of self and society.”

As the Handbook states further, TIM is not just another youth training programme. “It seeks to offer a radical alternative to the mission formation of young adults.”

Participants are expected to:

🔹 Be the visible expression of God’s calling of every Christian to be ‘sent-out’ as witnesses to the risen Christ in the world;

🔹 Witness to the new humanity in Christ by taking action to break down cultural, racial, linguistic and other barriers. They are called to a lifestyle that is shaped by more than one culture and tradition;
Be living examples of partnership in mission, the principle upon which CWM is founded, by challenging and enriching the lives and mission of other partners in mission and being responsible for and accountable to one another, and

Engage in community activities such as worship, shared meals and other common responsibilities, which contribute to creating a harmonious group experience.

Lim Sok Yee, a member of the Presbyterian church in Malaysia, or the Gereja Presbyterian Malaysia (GPM), spent 10 months in 2007 in South Africa and India for TIM. “We had devotion together every night without fail, singing praises to God, sharing the Word of God and praying together. We learnt to sing praises to God in many different languages. Though we had our disagreements and disappointments we were always reminded that we were one body, we served the same God. We spent time to pray about difficult situations and cry together when someone was sad,” she says about her experience.

She says her understanding of mission broadened during her time in TIM. “I had first-hand experience of how a missionary would feel and the many problems they would face. All these prepared me for my service now,” says Lim Sok Yee.

Returning from the TIM programme, Lim Sok Yee worked for five years in the church kindergarten before she decided to go full time in missions. “The TIM experiences of working with children who are sick, underprivileged and victimised really lit up the fire in me. I wanted to be a voice for the poor and oppressed, to help children know that they are special in God’s eyes, that God has a special plan for each one of them,” she says acknowledging the opportunities she got to work with children in different parts of the world. “The lessons learnt in TIM are always very useful.”

She has ended her service as a missionary and is back home in the church kindergarten, after being away for seven years. She sees the kindergarten and her town as her mission field now.

Ten years after her training, Lim Sok Yee says the relationship with her batchmates of the TIM 2007 batch is still going strong. “We learnt how to deal with conflict, we learnt how to complement each other,” she says. “God placed them in my life to mould me into who I am today. I really thank God for each of my team members.”

In 2010, the batchmates had a reunion. Three of the participants are today missionaries, three are pastors, two are involved in social work and two others are serving their respective churches. Says Lim Sok Yee: “We all agree that TIM has changed our life so much.”