



中國神學研究院
China Graduate School of Theology



CGST Bulletin

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■ Vision for China • Mission to the World

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Feature

Love the Bible, Love Reading the Bible



Kwok-Kuen Leung

Director of Word of Life
Ministry

Last November was the time we celebrated the 7th anniversary of Word of Life Bible Study Series with heartfelt thanksgiving.

Seven years ago, a question brought forward by a staff and a board director of CGST, "Why don't we have a Chinese Bible study class similar to that of Bible Study Fellowship?", coupled with the vision of President Emeritus Carver Yu: "A seminary must walk together with the churches, help believers to love the Bible, and build up the lives of our brothers and sisters firmly on the Word of God", gave birth to a program to bless brothers and sisters through studying the Bible – the Word of God. From the first class of 120 people to the enrolment of nearly 18,000 people each term this year, we have students across Hong Kong, USA, Canada and Australia. "Love the Bible; Love Reading the Bible" is the slogan of this ministry.

China Graduate School of Theology (CGST) is a "graduate school". In fact, she is more than a graduate school— she is a seminary, an organization which walks alongside the churches. She serves churches and cares how the churches are doing. CGST trains graduate level brothers and sisters to enter into church ministry, also trains believers of high school level and above to be church leaders by her "Theological Education by Extension

(TEE)". Previously, CGST had started a full-time program to train grassroots evangelical workers. At the moment, the "Certificate for Homemakers Program" offered by TEE nurtures all homemakers regardless of their education level. The Word of Life Ministry further brings theological education to Christian community in churches and offers them a systematic approach to study the Bible.

This ministry is named "Word of Life," indicating our deep conviction that the Bible not only relates to our lives, but also brings abundant lives. However, many believers have no idea how to read the Bible properly and thus find the Bible daunting. They often shelve this precious gift from God or would only read it during church worship. Through assignment, worship, group discussion and expository preaching, the Word of Life ministry aims to enable students personally to experience the Word of God as not "just idle words for you – they are your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47) and to nurture in their hearts a love and desire for the Word of God. The assignment is developed on the basis of O-I-A (Observation, Interpretation, Application) so that students understand the structure of the passage and its key message through working on the assignment. The worship and group discussion let students experience the fellowship and mutual support

of a group of believers. The Bible exposition in the form of lectures emphasizes the importance of biblical knowledge and the messages they carry so that students can see how the Bible lives in their lives.

We believe in the life transformation power of the Word of God, we also understand human weaknesses and deficiency. Many believers claim to be disciples of Christ but pay little attention to the basic character and decency of a human being such as punctuality, self-discipline, obedience, trustworthiness and a respect for others. We therefore introduce in our program some regulations for students to practice their faith through basic

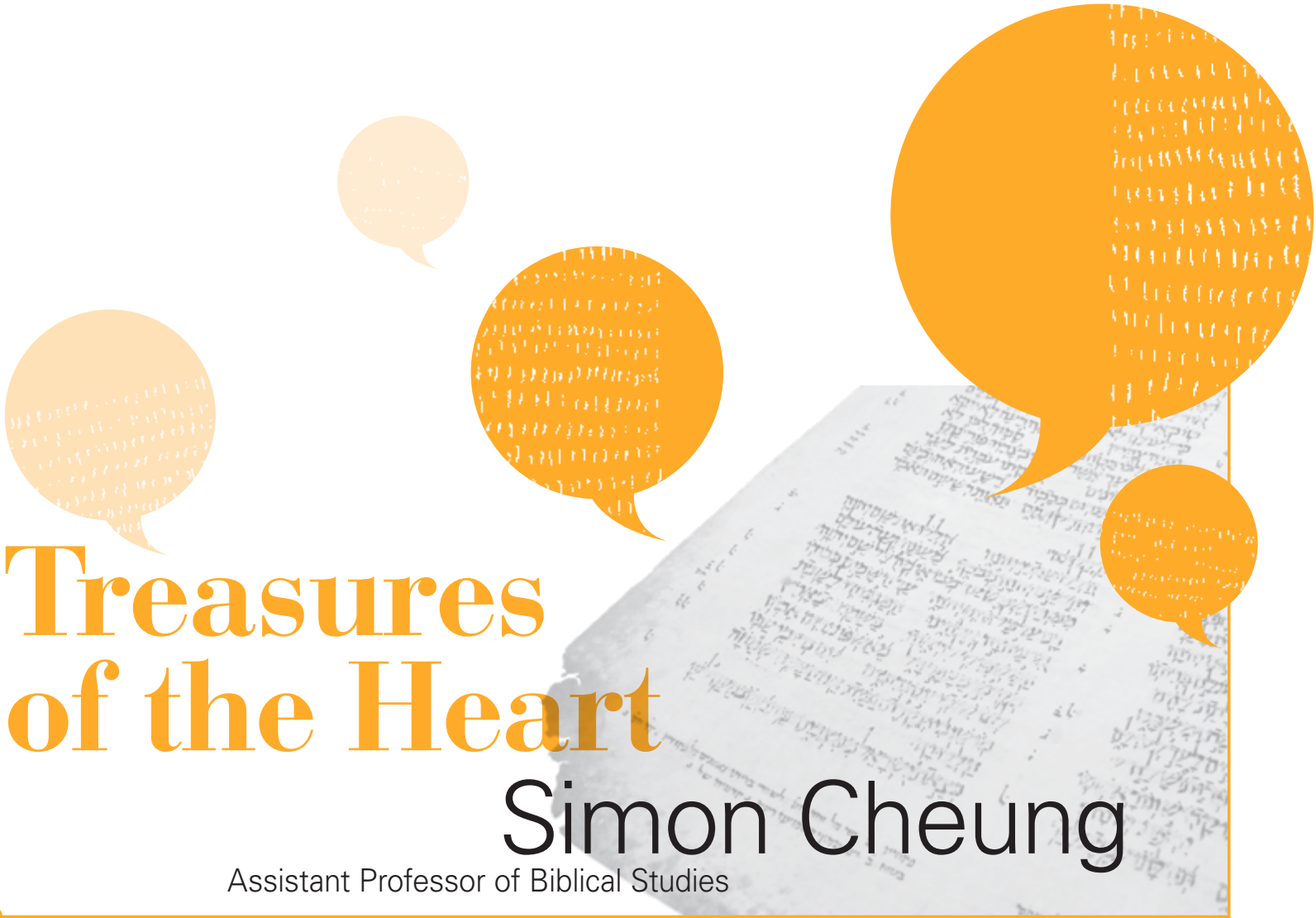
character formation.

“Word of Life” is indeed a program offered by a seminary, we are grateful to be able to cooperate and partner with churches. We hope that this Bible study series can become one of the teaching ministries of churches and can go hand-in-hand with their other nurturing courses to build up the spiritual life of their congregation. The “Word of Life” classes are free of charge so as not to create any financial burden on brothers and sisters and to allow all who have a desire for spiritual growth to attend and enjoy the Lord’s banquet. Our information shows that we are now partnering with more than 180 churches just within Hong Kong.

Commemorating the 7th anniversary, I come with a thanksgiving heart to thank the Lord for this opportunity to serve. I also convey my deep gratitude to all volunteers, including brothers and sisters in the US, Canada and Australia, who have given a lot for this ministry. They faithfully serve in various positions including venue management, core group leaders, ushers, worship teams and so forth. We are also thankful to the church pastors for their participation and support which have given us the opportunity to serve Christ together.

May all glory be to our Father in heaven.
Amen. 🙏

Interview



Interviewed and Written by
Mimi Tang
MDiv 96

In the preface of his commentary on the Psalter, Martin Luther wrote, “The Psalter is the book of all saints; and everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation Psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake, so that he could not put it better for himself, or find or wish for anything better.” Simon Cheung, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, also discovered in Psalms the life that the Lord has so meticulously weaved for him while he was still in his mother’s womb.

Simon was aspired to be a teacher since he was a child. Whenever he studied he would imagine his own room to be a classroom, writing on make-do whiteboards the main learning points for a group of imaginary students sitting in front of him. Of course, the highlight of the study was the quizzes which he set and marked himself. In retrospect, these silly acts were only signs of his budding interest in teaching. Due to various reasons, he chose to do business administration for his undergraduate studies. Though not studying his subject of choice, he took those college years as the time to explore and discover his academic potentials and his interpersonal styles. As soon as he finished his bachelor degree, he pursued his studies in teacher training.

After six years of teaching, Simon recognized the fact that while counselling could identify the issue and try to provide solutions, only faith can answer and solve the fundamentals of life. That's when he left the classroom and started theological studies. "When I studied at CGST, I just wanted two things. One is going back to serve my mother church to express my gratitude to them for building up and nurturing me all these years. Second is to continue serving youngsters, my passion." Simon never would have thought of his love for biblical studies went far beyond in such a way that he is willing to devote his life to it. "After serving in church for a while, I once told a fellow student: if I may will one thing with a pure heart, that thing will be to interpret the Word of God for the rest of my life."

When studying at CGST, Simon found biblical interpretation the most gratifying subject. The book of Psalms particularly struck his heart. "I am lost for words in front of her! Her depth, her richness, her beauty all are very attractive to me!" Out of his love for Psalms, he preached quite often from this book. To write a thesis on Psalms became a natural choice when he began his postgraduate research in England. His thesis was about a group of 'wisdom psalms' in the Old Testament. He then became steeped into the kind of



research called genre studies. “Over the years, biblical studies have been greatly influenced by historical criticism approach. The context and purpose of each type of psalms have been investigated. I support such notion is important to the church. However, we would have lost, in the process, the communication purpose of the psalmist as a communicator using that particular genre. Literary style and rhetoric are signposts for receivers to understand the theology behind the psalms. I then introduced “communication purpose” to replace historical background approach as the criterion to determine psalmic wisdom in the Book of Psalms.

People are not mistaken that praise and thanksgiving form the main hub of the book of Psalms. Even at the end of a fervent petition, the psalmist always turns toward praise and thanksgiving and concludes with a positive note of faith. Yet, a detailed reading of the 150 psalms reveals that is not the case. “When we sing praise and thanksgiving hymns, our faith is confined within a bright and positive dimension. In fact, over 50 or so of the psalms are laments. They were written in the darkest days of the psalmists’ faith journeys, asking why the Lord was not with them. It is a pity

"The significance of 'laments' has been reinforced in English and German academic discipline in recent decades. Unknowingly since when the churches have lost this invaluable treasure, leaving a missing piece behind in nurturing the spirituality of believers. Western academic world was then awakened to start looking into the importance of 'laments', while we seem not having a sense of importance about laments among Chinese churches." Returning to where he belongs after his academic study, Simon identified with the needs of today's churches and the current situation of Hong Kong and becoming more worried. "I was furious about the situation in Hong Kong since March last year. As I preached, I chose Psalm 5 which is a lament. *'When the Wicked is in Control'* was the topic of my sermon. I used the words of the psalmist to teach myself and the congregation how not to despair and keep praying. A brother came to me after the worship and said, 'I know how to walk ahead from this day onwards.' His response reassures me that laments can lead and guide us into the domain of God that we are not familiar with. It is exactly right there that we are told how we can still seek God and keep our faith." Simon is convinced that when a lament knocks on the deepest part of our soul, moving it to respond to the struggle and outcry of the people of this age. "Faith is not just repeating the goodness and faithfulness of God in our doctrine, but to teach us that our faith can also be shown at times when we find it difficult to talk about it, and doubt it or even resist it."

1. William L. Holladay, *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbooks of a Cloud of Witnesses* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).



Stephen Lee

President

Lam Ko Kit Tak Professor
of Biblical Studies

A Blessed Journey by His Grace



Three CGST Presidents visited Shanghai together. *The Bible-CGST Study Edition* is available for purchase at a local church book store.

During 11-14 November 2014, I attended the 20th anniversary celebration activities of the “Chinese Church Ministry Consultation” organised by the Christian Leadership Exchange. Led by Dr Danny Yu and Rev Dr Wilson Chow, 37 pastors and professors from North America and Hong Kong visited Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Nanjing and Beijing. Rev Dr Carver Yu could only manage to join us on the first day in Shanghai as he had to give a talk in Kuala Lumpur.

The first Consultation was held in April, 1994 in Hangzhou. Rev Dr Wilson Chow and Dean Rev Lawrence Chan attended that on behalf of CGST. Rev Chow could still remember it vividly: “We went to Nanjing Union Theological Seminary after the meeting and visited Principal K H Ting. That started the exchange between CGST and seminaries in Mainland China, and initiated our compilation of *The Bible—CGST Study Edition* (in Chinese) which was subsequently published in Mainland China by China Christian Council as a reference tool for local pastors and Christians. (Danny Yu, *Breaking Down the Dividing Wall: Christianity and a Chinese Society in Transition*. Beijing: China Religious Culture Publisher, 2007, Preface 3)

In the past two decades, by God’s grace and through the connections of our Chinese Culture Research Center, CGST has started academic exchanges with Christian scholars and researchers in Mainland universities. We have also made some contributions in the training of teachers from seminaries in Mainland China. Beginning summer of 2004, CGST has welcomed pastors and leaders of Mainland churches to enroll in our Putonghua Intensive Theological Training Programs. They are able to further their studies in the areas of biblical studies, theological studies, pastoral ministry, and missiological studies. Their participation in spiritual formation groups and retreats also enable them to be nurtured and grow. Looking back, we are amazed that the over 200 students and alumni from Mainland China have come from provinces spread across most parts of China. This indeed is the gracious guidance of our Lord. We are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.



The delegation from North America and Hong Kong visited Nanjing Union Theological Seminary.



President Emeritus & Mrs Wilson Chow went to Egret Park, Suzhou; behind them is Dushu Lake Christian Church, located at the Suzhou Industrial Park district.

Just before school year 2014-2015 began, our Faculty-in-Preparation Dr Esther Xue (MCS 07/ThM 10) graduated from McMaster Divinity College and returned to CGST. Esther was a graduate of Fujian Normal University and Renmin University of China, and has joined CGST as Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies (New Testament). The current research students in our Doctor of Philosophy programs also consist of teachers from Mainland theological schools and leaders from Mainland churches. Over the recent years, although the budget of the “China Mainland Theological Education Fund” has increased over the years, we have never been short of donations from brothers and sisters in Christ. We truly experience the faithfulness of our Lord.

Having retired from Presidency since August 2013, Rev Dr Carver Yu gave lectures twice in Hangzhou and Nanjing last year. Vice President Rev Dr Luke Cheung also taught classes regularly in Guangzhou every year. Then only did we realise that the Lord has always put a burden in the hearts of our faculty team, so much so that many of our faculty members have been frequently travelling to, or even have moved to, places in Mainland China to serve and take part in the theological education in China, offering our good, faithful and humble service.

Over the past 20 years, each step that CGST has taken in the footsteps of the Lord has been filled with praises for our Lord, testifying that it is indeed a blessed journey by His grace.

You are the potter, we are the clay

.....Yue Mei-Yuk

Interviewed and Written by
Chan Hing-Ling
Alumni Affairs Coordinator

MDiv 2001, Part-time Pastor of
Fu Shan Peace Evangelical Center

Volunteer Pastor of
Western District Peace Evangelical Center



Yue Mei-Yuk, just as her name suggests, a piece of precious stone with jade inside, requires substantial carving and cutting before it can become valuable. The life of a pastor is much the same as a piece of precious stone. If we do not go through the Lord's moulding, we will not become a tool suitable for the Lord's use.

The Lord's Choice of Clay

When Mei-Yuk served at church in the early years, she learned pottery to reduce stress. When she rubbed the clay in her hands, it could become a man, bending forward with a large document cabinet on his back. She was shocked to see that this person was herself, and the cabinet contained her own records. It would appear that she had transformed the struggles and screams accumulated in her growing up journey and her years of ministry into the many pieces of ceramic items. Clay and fire are the main ingredients used for the refining and moulding process in pottery. Mei-Yuk's life has undergone a similar moulding process in the Lord's hands from growth to work to serving in church.



Mei-Yuk grew up in a big family and has been used to many injustices at home. She started asking herself the meaning of life when she was in middle school. This did not appear to be a casual question a little child would be asking, but revealed the internal struggle and helplessness of this little girl. After graduating from university, she became a teacher with the belief that teaching could have an impact on lives. Seven years later, she answered God's calling and received theological training at CGST. During her study in CGST, the deep influence from her family upbringing became evident. She started to embark on a journey of seeking how the Lord has been moulding her life. That also inspired her to start equipping disciples from the orientation of one's personal growth and development.

Mei-Yuk obtained her MDiv degree in 2001 and began her ministry in church. In real life, politics and attacks are inevitable whenever

there are people, as we tend to love as well as hurt each other at the same time. Facing politics, Mei-Yuk felt hurt, being misunderstood and unjustly treated, and began to doubt her calling to serve in church. This piece of clay did not realise that it was in the hands of the potter at that time and had no idea what type of tool it would become in due course. It could only feel the destruction and rebuilding work of the potter, and know that its life would be trimmed neatly and nicely for it to humbly submit to the will of the potter to become any earthenware that the potter might want to use it for.

The Trial of Fire

Mei-Yuk left the church she had served for six years with a heavy heart, feeling physically, mentally and spiritually exhausted. She knew she had to rest so that her overworked body could recover. She felt exhausted all the time but could not find the root of the problem. Finally, she realised that her exhaustion was caused by a rage which she had suppressed for a long time due to an unforgiving spirit. With this spiritual trauma, she could only return to the Lord's arms. Like Job, she kept asking the Lord questions. As she wrestled with the Lord, she poured out to the Lord all that she had experienced in her ministry and her troubled spirit. The Lord answered her with Isaiah 40:27-31, "Do not ask why!" When a piece of clay is in the hands of the potter, it can only wait silently for the Lord's work.

While Mei-Yuk was waiting, the potter gave her a lesson on forgiveness: When she returned from the market one day, she heard the Lord telling her that if she had known how those people who had hurt her had been growing up, she would have hugged them. The knot in her heart was immediately untied. When the Lord looks at a person, He looks not just on his good and bad behaviour, but also on the whole person including his growing up process and his history. The Lord does not see a person as good or bad, but as a lost sinner who desperately needs the Lord's gentle heart to grant him mercy. This revelation from the Lord helps her to add a portion of mercy and acceptance to the forgiveness that she gives to others.

Rest allows Mei-Yuk to face the weakness and darkness in her life, and of that, the most

difficult part is the loss of self-confidence and becoming self-deceptive, with frustration filling all over her heart. Yet, the freezing point of a person is also the ice-breaking point when he meets the Lord. During the time of pottery making, Mei-Yuk reflected on her understanding of the Lord and her own value. She began to truly understand that she was only a person created by the Lord's hands, so it would only be through the Lord's grace that she could become strong again. She also reassessed her serving attitude and saw her misconception and foolishness. Confession and repentance enable her to reconstruct an appropriate attitude towards ministry and her self-worth.

Waiting for the pottery to air-dry before painting is a time for rest. It is also a preparation time for the furnace. It is only through the trial of fire that the piece of clay can turn into a fine piece of ceramic. During her restful wait, she experienced weakness and then regained strength. It is all the refining work of the Lord.

Mei-Yuk regained her ardour in ministry and deeply felt how the Lord has treasured each individual life as special and honourable, just like her own. She then realised that she should see each person as he or she really is, and she is willing to patiently nurture each life that she comes across. Today, Mei-Yuk is back in her mother church taking up the ministry of cell groups and Bible teaching. She attentively listens to the stories of each brother and sister and is amazed with the Lord's work in each of them. She said that one can never be impatient with the growth process. All that we can do is to water and plant. The Lord will make each life grows. When a person experiences the Lord, his life will be renewed and transformed.

Each piece of clay is special and beautiful in the potter's hands. After more than ten years of refining, from studying theology to ministry, from rest to church ministry again, Mei-Yuk realises that she is not the same now. She feels free from the need to compare herself with others. The Lord uses the ups and downs in her growth journey to let others see the amazing grace and work of the Lord in her life. Shepherding is to let others see the treasure in this jar of clay, and to know that "He is Lord and we are merely unworthy servants. May the Lord's will be done." 🔥

The President Office

- Vice President Kang Phee Seng takes part in the special project on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, organized by the Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelism. This project will be a highlight of the 9th Chinese Congress of World Evangelization which will be held in Taiwan in 2016.
- April 12:** President Lee was invited to attend the meeting co-hosted by World Evangelical Alliance and Lausanne Movement.
- May 2:** President Lee accepted the invitation by Hangzhou Chong-I Church to join its 10th Anniversary Thanksgiving Services.
- May 16 – 17:** President Lee was the speaker of the Spring Conference hosted by the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Free Church.
- May 18:** We commemorate the 40th Anniversary by having the first Thanksgiving Service in Fraserview MB Church in Vancouver. President Stephen Lee gave the sermon.
- May 22 – 24:** Being invited by Calgary Chinese Pastoral Fellowship, President Lee preached at the Calgary Cantonese Revival Meetings.

Faculty Engagements

- March 26 – 29:** Dr Sarah Shea Ip attended the ACERP 2015 The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy hosted by The International Academic Forum. “Power” was the theme of the Conference. Dr Ip also presented a paper entitled “Listening to the Powerless: Religious Education for Adults with Severe Intellectual Disabilities.”
- April 20 – 24:** Mrs Wance Chan attended the “2nd Annual Christian Forum for Reconciliation in Northeast Asia” in Nagasaki, Japan.
- May 3:** Rev Dr Kin Yip Louie was invited by Hong Kong Professional Educational Services to speak at its forum for marketplace Christians.

- February – July:** Dr Daniel Lee has been on leave for research writing.
- Dr Kasper Wong’s recent essay was published in the Festschrift in honor of Professor Lo Lung-Kwong, the retired President of Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Chinese Christian Literature Council was the publisher of the book.
- March:** President Emeritus Carver Yu’s publication *Listening* in Simplified Chinese version was published by Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in China.
- May:** Dr Wing Yan Chan Mok’s new book, *The Church Fulfilling Divine Mission*, was published by Christian Communications Ltd.

Staff News

- March 26 – 29:** Dr Sam Ip attended the ACERP 2015 The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy hosted by The International Academic Forum. “Power” was the theme of the Conference. Dr Ip also presented a paper entitled “Pontius Pilate as an Embodiment of State Power.”
- April 1 – 15:** Mr Kwok Kuen Leung, Director of Word of Life Ministry, went to the United Kingdom between the 1st and the 8th, and onward to New Jersey, Washington DC and Boston of the US from the 9th to the 15th, to promote Word of Life Bible Study Ministry.

Condolences

- We mourn the death of Rev Samuel To, Washington DC Regional Council member of the US Board, who passed away on April 12. The memorial service was held at the Chinese Bible Church of College Park on April 17.
- We extend our deep sympathy to the family and friends of Mr Heili Hong Chak Lee, one of the founding CGST Board members, went to be with The Lord. The memorial service was held at the Chinese Bible Church in California, USA on April 18.

Graduation Exercises and Dinner

- The Thirty-eighth Graduation Exercises is to be held at the Wing Kwong Pentecostal Holiness Church at 3:00pm on June 27, Saturday. Dr Michael Chiu, CGST Board Chairman, is the guest speaker. Graduation Dinner is to be held at Paramount International Banquet Hall in Kowloon Bay that evening.

Prayer Requests

1. Pray for the students who are graduating in June, that God will grant those entering full time ministry a humble heart to serve in faithfulness wherever God places them. Pray also for those who have completed the evening part time programs. May God use them to integrate what they have learnt in their workplace and to witness Christ in their professions.

2. Pray for the applicants who are being considered for the new school year. May God direct the selection process and give wisdom to the Admission Committee members.

3. Pray for our students in field education assignments overseas, at local churches and para-church organizations during the summer. May God strengthen their passion for mission and pastoral ministry, and may the students experience new learning lessons.

General Fund Financial Report
Jan to Apr., 2015

General Fund	US\$
Donations	1,417,060
Tuition & other income	976,351
	2,393,411
Expenditure	(2,174,411)
Surplus	219,000

Outstanding mortgage loans as at Apr, 2015 : US\$ 2,440,182

Response

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