

The Challenge Facing Theological Education Today

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The story of the China Graduate School of Theology began fifty years ago, with four Chinese students who were studying theology in the United States. With a heart for China, they bravely and prayerfully received a vision of theological education from God. They were determined to further their studies in theology after graduation and return to the Far East 'to establish an indigenous, inter-denominational, evangelical and graduate-level theological institution' that would emphasise both the training of pastors and the scholarly pursuit of theology and theological reflection. At the inception of this vision, none of these four young students had even completed their first degree in theology. There was no faculty, no funding, no campus, no support from any denomination, and no students. But God has begun a new movement in the Chinese church through them. It may seem as if they had nothing to begin with when they started a new page in the history of Chinese theological education, but what they in fact had was a clear vision of theological education, which they transformed into a mission. They started to pass the vision on to others and gathered a team of committed Christians to be faculty members and board directors. Many others would pray faithfully for the cause. On the 28th of September, 1975, the China Graduate School of Theology held its opening ceremony.

CGST's fortieth anniversary is a witness to God's abundant grace and faithfulness as well as the love and support of brothers and sisters in Christ. The theme of 'Carrying on the Mission with a Double Portion of the Spirit' is a prayer to continue the vision of the founders. Forty years is not a short time, but as a Chinese saying goes, education is a hundredyear project. Theological education is more than just the establishment of a seminary. CGST's vision is also a movement to advance theological education to a higher level. This is a task not for one generation but for many generations to come. It is a calling not for a few theologians but for the entire church. The fortieth anniversary is a good time to reflect on this calling.

Theology is faith seeking understanding. One of the greatest challenges of theological education is to build a seminary that achieves a high academic standard. With sound theological knowledge and solid academic training, students are able to acquire a proper understanding of biblical truths and the Christian tradition, as well as to uncover and examine the underlying presuppositions of contemporary value systems. Today many interpret the Bible and faith traditions according to their own preexisting beliefs. Without rigorous and thorough training, a pastor would find it difficult to rise above the widely divergent views to lead the Church to become a truer witness for the truth.

Theology is faith seeking dialogue. If theological education were to stop short at sound theological knowledge and solid academic training, then even at its best it would only be a study with little relevance to our lives. Theology begins with a dialogue between God and man. God reveals Himself to man, and man responds to God's call and love. Therefore, theological education is a dialogue, not a monologue. It seeks to communicate. Theological tradition is a dialogue in history, between man and God, and between one man and another. A person in dialogue with others lives in the present and learns from others as he listens genuinely and opens himself up to them, so that they can grow together in the pursuit of truth.

Theology is faith seeking action. Education aims to mold a person for a better world. How does theological education do this? On the one hand, theology does not overestimate its ability to do so. On the other hand, the theology of the cross lifts up Christ, so that those who put their faith in Him, submit to Him and long for His kingdom will respond to the cross's love through service and sacrifice. 'Not to be served but to serve' (Matthew 20:28, ESV), 'I... yet not I but Christ in me' (Galatians 2:20). We do not act because we think our actions alone can change the world. We act because when a person allows Christ to change him, the world itself is renewed by Christ through the service and sacrifice of Christ's servants.

The theme of 'Carrying on the Mission with a Double Portion of Spirit' is a resolution as well as a prayer. The term 'double portion' points to the affirmation and responsibility of the firstborn (Deuteronomy 21:15-17) to carry on the legacy of the founders. Passion is even more important than a sense of responsibility because theology deals with truth and life. This passion has to come from the Spirit who alone can give theological education its motivation, creativity and vitality. Hence we pray that the same Spirit that inspired and moved those four young theology students would continue to inspire and move us today, so that we, like them, may bear the prophetic calling for theological education. Because it is 'not by might nor by power, but by my [the Lord's] Spirit' that this will be done (Zechariah 4:6). 🚺

Interview

In the midst of miracles

interview with Board Chairman Dr Michael Chiu

Interviewed and Written by Mimi Tang Development Liaison

MDiv 1996

"CGST's establishment and continuity is a miracle." $^{\mbox{\tiny 1}}$

Witnessing this miracle which spans over forty years, and the everlasting grace of God is Dr Michael Chiu, who stepped down from serving as Chairman of the CGST Board by the end of June 2015.

Uncover the Word: vision became lifelong pursuit

1967 was a time of unrest and fiery in Far East. Dr Chiu enrolled to study in the Department of Biology of Hong Kong University. He saw himself as a fervent young man. After graduation he furthered his studies in the UK, focusing on environmental conservation and river pollution, a very unusual research area at that time. Upon graduation, he worked at the HK Government. -- At that time there had not been an Environmental Protection Department.

Dr. Chiu still remembered when he arrived in Britain, the school dormitories were fully occupied and he had to sleep in the park. Being alone in a foreign land, Dr Chiu would never imagine that frustration could be transformed into a channel of grace: a schoolmate who was a non-believer helped him ride out the storm. Another surprised move, he also brought Dr Chiu to a church. Dr Chiu then decided to commit himself to Christ, growing spiritually. Bible reading became a habit, and eventually a lifelong leisure pursuit. He even included Bible reading as part of his profile in his Curriculum Vitae. Recalling how this hobby was cultivated, Dr. Chiu believes that it is closely related to the church culture's passion in Bible reading and the opportunity for him to meet the devoted brothers-in-Christ and being edified by them. One of whom was the brother who brought Dr Chiu to Christ. He visited Dr Chiu every week for three years, reading Bible with him. The other two were Ronald Fung and Rev Che-bin Tan who served at the church. New Testament scholar Professor F F Bruce was their supervisor then. Every Friday evening after the church prayer meeting, they would study the Bible together, "the richness of Bible interpretation and the rigorous theological training they had, opening up new horizon for us. I recalled that Ronald spent two consecutive Friday evenings analyzing the first few verses of the book of Ephesians. As you can see~ I can still remember it until now! We were all amazed and in such joy! The passion they had for the Bible had ignited us! We were in awe of the Bible being uncovered, and could not help but praise 'Wow! God is so great, the Bible is really remarkable!""

1970s was a time when Chinese Bible interpretation and theological resources were extremely scarce. Nurturing such researchers to serve Chinese Church became an urgent cry. When Dr Chiu heard of CGST's vision, he became so excited that upon returning to Hong Kong, he immediately took the No. 7 bus to see CGST in person, "At first glance, 'oh, so small?!' It didn't look like a school at all, seemed like a residence." It was indeed the case. Devon Campus was modified from a residential building. Faculty, students and their families lived on the campus, learning and sharing their life together. It was both a small community and an extended family. "I came here very often. Every time I knocked the doors of Chebin Tan, Ted Ma, Gail Law, Peter Chang and so forth to talk in length. I still found those times enjoyable: children playing around, students bumped into the teachers asking questions when they passed by. The dialogue could last for over half an hour, like having a lesson."

Changed from the Inside Out: reflect on the past and see challenges ahead

From initial setup to the 1980s, Dr Chiu was a frequent visitor of CGST-attend classes, meetings or visiting faculty and friends. President Emeritus Wilson Chow invited him to join the CGST Board in 1993, which then kicked off his service as our Board member that extended across two decades. From mere acquaintance to active participant that covering forty years, Dr Chiu witnessed various changes, major or minor: faculty moved out of campus; no more student quarters after rebuilding of the school; at canteen, large round tables with dishes being shared communally had become history. While we cherish a big family life style of friends, Dr Chiu affirmed the necessity of the school's further development, "CGST's past and present is indeed very different. In the past we were oriented towards theological studies in general, now we have a diversified development, like Marketplace Theology and Word of Life Ministry. Responding to the everchanging society and the corresponding needs, the newer development is inevitable. In fact, more importantly, we ought to pause regularly and consider how we would take the next step, identifying CGST's orientation, thus focusing resources in those areas."

In the recent decade, inside CGST there has been a transition phase, in which the school's mission is being carried on as one generation retired. Outside CGST, the society becomes increasingly restless, with drastic change of current events developing. Facing changes and challenges, how would we respond? Dr Chiu highlighted, "CGST's emphasis on theological or biblical studies is our core, which should be upheld. On the other hand, "Incarnated" would be another key, which means 'identifying the rhythm' of what is happening around us, avoid shying away from the Church's experience in reality. If we simply focus solely on research and study, it would do harm to us." He admitted that external conflict is unavoidable, "No religious community is able to hold back from current issues in society, which is what the Center for Faith and Public Values is trying to accomplish. In view of the societal evolution, we have to get involved in the social issues. Not only that, we also need to move further ahead. CGST certainly has her tradition of approaching the issues, in which we may respond with a different perspective."

Returning God's love: do the best and unceasing endeavour

Even if Dr Chiu had retired from the Board Chairman position, the fellowship he has with CGST goes on, "I belonged to the CGST family, I still do." Dr Chiu grinned, "The retirement age of board directors can be up to seventy, so theoretically I can assume the same role again after a year. However, I tend to not allowing gerontocracy to appear at CGST. Rev Dr Philip Teng once said, "The Kingdom of God is broad." No one is indispensible. I have done my job, and it is the right time for me to step down in order to go forward. Do what God has entrusted to me in a different position and at different times. Do not hold back."

Since retirement, Dr Chiu began taking up a new ministry, and his passion of Bible teaching and preaching has never ceased, "We are only the servant of God. Life won't be in vain as long as we are faithful to the master."

¹ Chiu, Michael. "It Is All Grace", *CGST Bulletin*, Issue 282, Sep-Oct 2005.

Prayer Requests

- 1. Pray for teachers and students who are preparing for their end of semester teaching, learning, assignments, and exams. May God grant them strength and wisdom.
- 2. Departments are now planning next year's ministry development. Pray that God will give all department heads wisdom as they embark on a new year of ministries.
- 3. Pray that God may continue to guide those who will attend the Dedication Camp coming up in February 2016 to discern their vocation and calling from above.

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Faculty



Assistant Professor of **Practical Studies**

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Autor Au

Urban Mission Practicum sends CGST students from their comfortable campus to different corners of Hong Kong during summer every year. The six-week full-time practicum challenges students to roll up their sleeves and walk alongside people in our bustling city. On one hand, they learn to live and proclaim the gospel. On the other hand, they learn to allow the gospel to transform their own lives through observing and reflecting on their field experiences. Serving in various organizations enables students to engage with different communities, such as the marginalized minorities, and those who may have difficulty adjusting to mainstream church settings.

The goal of Mission Practicum is to nurture reflective practitioners. Before the practicum, students are required to take an introductory course on Church Mission. It serves as an orientation to a framework of mission practice so that students will be able to engage in skills learning as well as reflective thinking in the context of ministry in the city. Mission practicum takes students to a world beyond their churches, where they face the reality of tensions and even conflicts between faith and practice. It is through these tensions when they start to uncover significant issues for further reflection in the light of theological and biblical studies.

Issues that confuse or perplex students most during practicum are often the most important learning points for them. A student who served in hospital chaplaincy shares, "There is intense struggle in my heart when I see a patient dying in front of me. Should I grasp this final chance to preach the gospel? What about the status and needs of the patient and the family here and now?" What does this inner struggle reflect? Facing the patient and his family, what does it mean to be a messenger of the Lord Jesus' gospel of reconciliation? Another student joined an organization which serves sex workers. Among whom were new believers who are still involved in business as usual but were willing to study the Bible. The tricky question for the student is whether one can lead worship and Bible study on the bed where this new believer receives her customers. To these women ravaged by sin, what does it mean for the church to become their neighbor, besides evangelism and providing individual pastoral care? Another student who worked in an organization that serves the poor was puzzling, "I am so busy with manual labor, toiling every day. When can I truly 'preach the gospel'?" Students are challenged to reflect on the meaning of integral gospel, the value of service, and whether God can reveal the power of the gospel through our manual labor. In the context of real people in real communities, they come to realize the kind of loss that is incurred when the gospel is proclaimed without witnesses through acts of love done in Christ's name.

We have a vision towards the nurturing of our students through Practical Studies. This vision may be represented by three [M]s: Mature, Multi-culti, and Missional.

Mature: We hope to see our students grow to become mature leaders who are able to receive instructions humbly. While accepting their own limitations, they are willing to grow. We hope that our graduates are humble partners with other ministers in all arenas of God's Mission, serving in the church, Christian organizations, going on overseas missions or working in the marketplace. We hope to see them esteeming others better than themselves, looking out not only for their own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Multi-Culti: This is a term coined by a Dutch missionary and aptly describes our hope for students to be multicultural. In this day and age, not only overseas missionaries are required to meet the demands of cultural diversity. Theological students in local practicum also need to prepare for these challenges. In crosscultural exposures through Urban Mission, they learn to listen to people from different walks of life and observe God's works among them. They learn to preach the gospel in ways that others can understand, using one's life testimony to uphold the message that is shared.

Missional: We further hope that students will have a deeper understanding of the mission that is centered upon the Lord of missions, and have a firmer sense of the call. Students' concern at the beginning of their study is usually focused in where their own vocation will take them. They are eager to find out whether they will serve God in the context of the local church, overseas or urban mission field, or the marketplace. While this is a good starting point, we hope that during Mission Practicum, students will step out of their comfort zone, and meet the areat Shepherd and His sheep outside the fold. (John 10:16) We believe that moving amongst the people, they may draw close to the Shepherd's heart that crosses boundaries, and hear the call to move on from focusing on their personal callings towards leading the church in becoming His missional church. 🚺

Che Chun-Man

DipCS 2005, MDiv 2008, Pastor of The Mission Covenant Church of Hong Kong (MCCHK) Charis Church, former Chairman of CGST Student Association, current Chairman of CGST Alumni Association



We walk many different paths in our lives. We turn many pages in our lives. Our Lord allows us to have various experiences in these pages so that we will understand ourselves and know our calling.

Being a high school student in 1989, Chun-Man accepted Christ as his saviour in a study room of a church, growing up there since then. Having spent much time in soccer fields, the young Chun-Man was deeply influenced by its customs, enabling him to get along with others from all walks of life. The days he spent lingering in the soccer fields made Chun-Man a proactive and a people person. Soccer field is an important scene in Chun-Man's life. God nurtured him via this scene, getting him ready for a journey of serving others.

Chun-Man heard God's calling in 1991. While still in high school, he did not think about it seriously, nor did he respond. He had always yearned to become a social worker. Upon graduation from college, he immediately joined the workforce to become an outreach social worker for eight years. He entered another life scene – local community has become his workplace. God had been placing him among people, from soccer fields to workplace. He wanted Chun-Man to learn to care and serve in real life.

Chun-Man loved his work very much. He was very dedicated, and had lots of opportunities to develop his potential. However, God's calling had not disappeared. Chun-Man was sent by his church to plant a new church in Tseung Kwan O in 1993, starting everything from scratch. He learned to work and serve together with brothers and sisters in Christ. Ten years went by, Chun-Man was still an outreach social worker, but God used a special way to guide him into full time ministry, bringing him to the third scene of his life: church ministry.

In 2003, rumours were told that Chun-Man wanted to change his job, but this was not the case. As soon as these rumours spread out, both his mother church and the Tseung Kwan O church wanted him to return there to serve, pushing Chun-Man to respond to the calling he had once received from God. It was a lesson of submission. He remembered that right after he had resigned, he returned to his seat and found himself weeping. He knew that he still want to be a social worker. He would miss his ties with young people, and his colleagues. At that moment, he looked up and saw the words on his desktop calendar, reminding him that if he gave up his desire for God's sake, God would bless his future path. Without doubt, such was an instant comfort and encouragement God gave Chun-Man. He wiped his tears and stepped into, with faith, another new page which God had prepared for him.

Chun-Man started to serve in his church in 2003. One year later, upon hearing God's calling more clearly and having received confirmation from his pastor, brothers and sisters at church, Chun-Man enrolled at CGST the following year. His belief in training in Bible exposition as well as in Hebrew and Greek blends well with his love for Bible study, which made him opt for CGST. Therefore, after finishing the diploma program, Chun-Man moved on to pursue the Master of Divinity study as a mature student. He graduated in 2008 and became pastor of his mother church, MCCHK Charis Church.

If returning to his mother church to serve, Chun-Man would worry about adding financial burden to her. However, it was the deacons' intention that the church would do as much as possible to hire divinity students coming from their own church. They felt that if the church recommended a church member to pursue divinity studies, it would only be right to recognise and support him. Despite the tight financial constraints, the church decided to hire him as an additional pastor. Chun-Man was deeply moved and was thankful to God.

MCCHK Charis Church is a small church, but there were many matters for Chun-Man to learn. He sees the importance of collaborating together as a team with senior pastor, co-workers, deacons and church members. Having grown up by getting
 Chan Hing-Ling
 Tong Fung-Ping

 Alumni Relations
 MCS 2013

 MCS 2011
 MCS 2011

along with people from all walks of life, Chun-Man realized that it takes time to build up relationships, seeing others' strengths rather than focusing on their mistakes and weaknesses. He appreciates that communication is the key to establish good interpersonal relationships. Communication is not only about sharing one's thoughts and feelings, but is also based on the matters in question. The more we share our feelings, the easier it would be to become self-focused. On the other hand, one should not just look solely at the matter itself, otherwise relationships will become cold and rigid. Chun-Man has a pointer to help, that is often eating out with individual, chatting about life, interests and current affairs, allowing people to relax and hence cultivating the relationships.



Chun-Man, CGST faculty and alumni at his ordination service in November, 2014

Five years went by, Chun-Man started to ask the Lord if it was time for him to leave. Two things happened at that time. Through pastor's prayers, God told him to lead the community work of the church. The second thing was his ordination. Chun-Man's consideration coupled with brothers and sisters' prayers, finally move him to accept the invitation from the church deacons to be ordained. Being a new ordained pastor would not bring forth any particular change. He is always very certain that he should act in ways pleasing to God on all matters, like a tree planted by streams of water, connected to God.

Looking back, from the soccer fields to the workplace; from the workplace to his ministry field, Chun-man deeply feels that God has always been nurturing him to co-work with others, letting him to act as a light among people, leading them to the way towards abundant life.

Campus News

The President Office

- President Stephen Lee was invited by Hong Kong Baptist University to be one of four speakers of the Month of Religion and Philosophy Lecture Series on October 5. He spoke on "Social Justice in the Old Testament."
- President Lee led the joint revival meetings hosted by the Greater Los Angeles Chinese Ministerial Association from October 9 to 11, during which he gave an address at the Luncheon hosted by CGST Los Angeles Regional Council.
- President Lee was invited by the Chinese Christian Union Church in Chicago to speak at the seminar commemorating the $100^{\,\mathrm{th}}$ anniversary of the church between October 17 and 18. He also preached at the Centennial joint Sunday service.
- President Lee was invited by the Hong Kong Chinese Christian Council to be the keynote speaker of the 21st Revival Meeting Conference from November 1 to 7.
- President Lee attended the CGST 40th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service, the last event of the series of four, at Westminster Theologial Seminary in Philadelphia between November 12 and 16. During this time he also took part in the annual general meetings of the US and Canadian Boards.
- Vice President Kang Phee Seng attended the Symposium commemorates the 100th anniversary of Anglican Bishop Ding Guangxun's birth and Development of Chinese Christianity in Beijing between September 22 and 24. He also presented a paper during the symposium.
- Vice President Luke Cheung went to Beijing between October 14 and 16 and Singapore from October 28 to 31, to participate in Asia Theological Association's evaluation work for program accreditation.
- ٠ Vice President Cheung taught the Books of 1 and 2 Peters at the Guangdong Union Theological Seminary between October 21 and 23.
- Presidents Emeritii Wilson Chow and Carver Yu together with their spouses attended the 40th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service in Philadelphia on November 14.

Faculty Engagements

- Dr Jean Lee, Marketplace Ministry Coordinator Ms Angela Chiu and 2 alumni attended the "Transform Our World" Global Conference in San Jose between October 9 and 19, during which they also spoke at the marketplace revival meetings in San Francisco and San Jose organized by local Regional Councils.
- Dr Joyce Sun attended and presented a paper at the 2015 War and Peace International Colloquium: Religious Perspectives" hosted by Alliance Bible Seminary from October 30 to 31.
- Dr Annie Pan Yi Jung was invited by the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS) to join the editorial board of the Journal Spiritus (Johns Hopkins University) and the International Relations Ad Hoc Committee of SSCS.
- We congratulated Dr Raymond Au for his publication 9 Essential Abilities For The New Generation which was granted the Best Book Award at the 2nd Hong Kong Golden Book Awards.
- Dr Jean Lee's recent essay "Challenges and Opportunities of Marketplace Ministry" was published in the book Rediscovering our calling in the workplace published by Taosheng Publishing House.
- Dr Joyce Sun published an article "When Hospitality Encounters Fracturing: A New Testament Perspective" in Hill Road Journal Issue 35 (Jul 2015).
- Dr Simon Cheung's thesis Wisdom Intoned: A Reappraisal of the Genre 'Wisdom Psalms' was published by T&T Clark in October 2015.
- President Emeritus Carver Yu's The God of Extreme Mercy and Dr Jean Lee's God's Dwelling in the Marketplace were published by Christian Communications Ltd in October 2015.

Staff News

- Mr Kwok Kuen Leung, Director of Word of Life Ministry, went to Calgary, Edmonton, San Francisco and San Jose between September 7 and 16 to lead revival meeting, conduct training for volunteers and preach at Sunday service.
- We congratulate Mrs Rebecca Lai, Director ٠ of Education Initiatives, who was conferred Honorary Fellow of City University of Hong Kong on September 30.

- We also congratulate Ms Christina Kan, Director of Administration, who received the Chief Executive's Commendation for Community Service granted by HKSAR Government on October 31.
- Mr Daniel Law, Director of Development, • visited CGSTUS Office in San Jose between November 9 and 11. He went on to Philadelphia to attend the annual general meetings of US and Canadian Boards as well as the 40th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service from 12th to 15th.

"Theology in Dialogue" Seminar

Organized by the Center for Faith & Public • Values, the "Theology in Dialogue" Seminar was held between July 23 and 29. Participants included the Center Director Dr Kang Phee Seng, Assistant Professor Dr Bernard Wong, Dr Ng Wai Hang and Dr Kwok Wai Luen of Hong Kong Baptist University, Dr Hong Liang of Tübingen University, Dr John Chan of Alliance Bible Seminary, and Dr Qu Xutong of Beijing Normal University.

Publications

Dr Kevin Yao, Honorary Researcher of Chinese ٠ Culture Research Centre and Center Director Rev Dr Song Jun co-edited the publication A Watchman Vigilant in Spirit and Pure in Heart: The Study on the Thought and Ministry of Wang Weifan published by Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion & Culture in October 2015.

General Fund Financial Report Aug to Oct, 2015

General Fund	<u>US\$</u>
Donations	619,783
Tuition & other income	828,507
	1,448,290
Expenditure	1,697,088
Deficit	(248,798)
Surplus from Jan to Jul 2015	191,855
Accumulated Deficit	(56,943)

Outstanding mortgage loans as at Oct, 2015 : US\$ 2,289,053

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