

CGS TBulletin

2016 Jan-Mar

Vision for China • Mission to the World



Feature

Listening in the Course of History



Song Jun

Director of Chinese Culture

Research Center

MDiv 2010

PhD Student

Looking back the two decades' journey Chinese Culture Research Center went through, we can see a vivid footstep in its commitment of rooting and embodying the gospel in Chinese culture, and promoting a deeper understanding of the Christian faith against the background of Chinese culture and Mainland Chinese church today. Learning from the past, efforts are combined to edify churches in Hong Kong and Mainland China. This long path of endeavor will be continued and evolved by our successors.

How will our Chinese Culture Research Center progress in the next decade? There is only one question we have in mind: What criteria were there for church in China to gain worldwide recognition after 1949? The Chinese church went through three major reflections in the course of history. The first took place after the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The second was the Anti-Christian Movement in the 1920s. The third reflective time occurred in the 1950s when the church reflected on the subjects of missions in China, Christian faith and Chinese culture, which resulted in significant value and contribution to Chinese church and world missions. In the past sixty years, China has undergone dramatic changes and the churches therein are tested and tried. Incredibly, Christianity did not perish like *Da Qin Jingjiao* (Church of the East) but thrived throughout China. How was that done? Undeniably, God has worked new and great things these past six decades. If we have no regard for the deeds of the Lord, then we are disregarding His works (Ps. 28:5).

As the thorny and glorious path of the Chinese church unfold, reviews are necessary after certain stages. Reflecting on history and observing God's deeds throughout the ages, Mainland Chinese church could understand God's heart in building up the Chinese church, walking better in His will today. On the other hand, witnessing God working mightily with Chinese church, overseas church could faithfully observe the current situation and needs of the Chinese church. The Chinese society and the public are able to showcase the Chinese church development in a fair and objective manner. Reflecting on the position of the gospel in terms of national, social and cultural modern transformation, the Chinese church is able to testify God's grace and unique works in China's ideological discourse in the public arena. Finally, reflections contribute towards theological education would give students a wider vision and more sensitive insight, allowing the gospel workers of our times to be conscientious towards both the church and our society.

Even our single question is not easy to answer and requires an integrated learning of theology, hermeneutics, history, sociology, politics, economics, cultural and ethical studies. We are thankful that God has prepared Chinese Christian scholars of diverse disciplines. Since the 1990s, the gospel has borne much fruit in Chinese university campuses. Graduates today are committed to church and the society, glorifying God in various academic fields. Our Chinese Culture Research Center is eager to liaise and research with them, and together trying to answer this question of our time.

History is not merely for us to observe, but more important, we need to listen, for we can only speak after we have heard. As Christians, we ought to see what God has done in the course of history, listen to His revelations, and then go and proclaim, just as David says,"...they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what He has done." (Ps. 64:9) Therefore, let us come humbly before God and say, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening."

An Interview with Rev Timothy Au,

Assistant Professor (Practical Studies), Chaplain, Pastoral Ministry Placement Coordinator

Interviewed and Written by

Mimi Tang

Development Liaison MDiv 1996



If one could catch a glimpse of the Lord's footsteps in mathematics, Rev Timothy Au would testify he has seen the figure of the Creator God in the choices and leaps he has made throughout his vocation path.

In the early 1980s, Timothy, Assistant Professor (Practical Studies) was a civil engineering student at the Hong Kong Baptist College which happened to be the last civil engineering class. One day, a church mentor who knew him well asked, "Do you really want to measure rocks and stones your whole life?" That prompted him, a 'rational guy' who loved logical thinking and interacting with people to decide resolutely relocating to Canada for computer science study, in hopes of using his professional qualifications to devote himself to missionary work in China one day. With God's grace, he finished his university education and returned to Hong Kong in 1987. He worked as a system engineer until 1990 when he was called to study at CGST.

The Gravity of Faith

Timothy's four years of overseas education was indeed abundant. Being the youngest in the family, his first training of independency started from coping with the basic necessities in life, to emotional struggles and the ups and downs in his journey of faith. His preparatory work for studying abroad went very smoothly, which Timothy deeply appreciated how amazing it was to follow the footsteps of the Lord. Little did he expect to encounter unanticipated events that happened upon his arrival in Canada which thrust him heavily back to earth: he failed to register for the subjects he liked. Worse still, the high rental charge for his temporary dwelling place, coupled with an unexpected visitor of his landlord, forced him to share a bed with a total stranger. Surprisingly, there was another miraculous turnaround after two weeks.

Timothy said, "I have been a Christian for ten years at that time. But the unexpected turn of events and the sudden ups and downs made me realised in a flash that it was very risky being a Christian. It was not that God was not real, but I was really afraid."

After struggling for months, he came across this lyrics at a gathering: "Lord, I am willing to finish walking your path" (from the hymn "Send Me") which rekindled Timothy's determination to get up and walk again.

Twenty odd years later, he came to another valley. The circumstance was different this time, but the choice he had to make was the same.

Timothy graduated from CGST in 1993. Because of the then situation of his mother church, he felt responsible to take up the role of pastor in his church. After one year, he was the only full-time pastor in his church. "All I wanted was to become a missionary to China Mainland, but God called me, 'Why don't you lead the whole church into this mission work?' Then I thought perhaps I should do it together with my church. So I bit the bullet and took up the position of lead pastor."

In 2006, he almost gave up due to issues with his co-workers in church. "I thought, 'Lord, you put me in this position. Now problems have surfaced. It was unfair of you not to give me a choice in the first place.'" He then took a month's leave to Canada and repeatedly meditated: "I asked The Lord, 'Do I still have a choice?' and The Lord answered, 'Now I am giving you a choice: Do you want to continue or quit?' By that time, I had been the lead pastor for 13 years and it was the first time the Lord asked me."

After a long and careful consideration, Timothy decided to continue. It was not because of any sudden miracles or gifts from The Lord. In fact, all circumstances, personnel and temperament remain the same: "But one thing was different: I chose to submit. This incident stirred up the feeling of 'being forced' which had long been buried deep in my heart, and that was the reason why I always said I had no choice. But it was all because I did not want to submit. God is really amazing: He knew I needed to go through this process of making choices. He also reminded me, 'You always have a choice whether to submit or not.' Do not shift the responsibility and blame other people or circumstances."

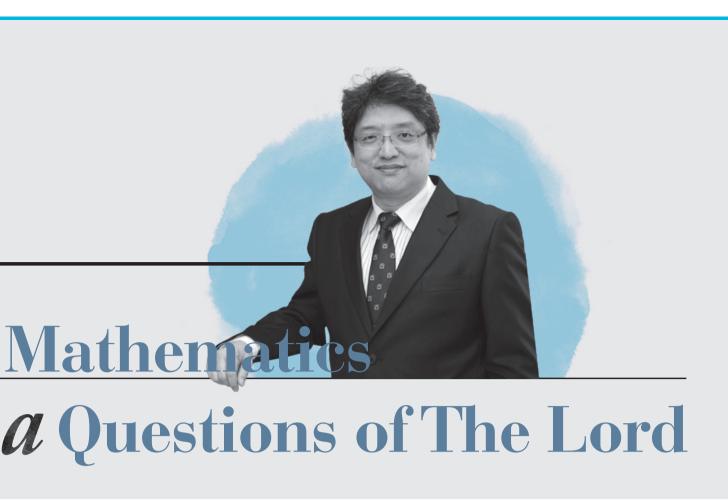
The Dimension of Growth

The realization of 'choices' helped Timothy to turn a new leaf and understand what 'growth' was all about. "Growth is not just about having biblical knowledge or a religious life. It is about dealing with the deep questions," said Timothy, who believed the first step of a growth process is to be aware of the false self before living out his true self.

But the more intelligent a person is, the easier it is for the false self to form. Timothy said, "Even though I wanted to be 'naughty', I would still pretend to be good. That is how the false self is formed."

The first time he felt 'reborn' was during a 10-day CGST retreat camp led by Dr Hans Burki. "As a spiritual mentor, he gave me a lot of inspirations and guidance which not only helped me get in touch with many insidious problems, but more importantly to handle the profound influence that my family of origin had on me."

From his many years of pastoral experience, Timothy saw growth and ministry as a desire to be true to oneself. "Difficulties do not come from the outside but from inside. External circumstances have an effect, but that should not be viewed as the biggest limitation. On pastoral ministry, there are too many things which are impossible on human terms. But does that mean we cannot



do anything? Or that we do not need to do anything? Hans showed me an important piece of homework: learn to listen. There was no shortcut or good method to attain it but it would come with practice. Hans often reminded us, 'Speak less and listen more to the heart.' A person who can listen to the voice of his own heart will be better equipped to listen to others. If we can bring people to The Lord, that would be very good and very sufficient."

In 2014, Timothy joined the CGST faculty team to teach subjects of Practical Studies, but he still remained in his church as a consultant pastor. "That was because I really want to shepherd the next generation of pastors, to pass the baton, but not throw the baton in church. Secondly, I can continue my passion for China in CGST. Thirdly, it is about missionary work. Missionary and pastoral ministry are two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. I hope in future, pastors can better integrate the two."

In recent years, Timothy has started to promote "spiritual companion". He has organised retreat camps and encouraged the practice of 'being still' and 'mutual support'. These can be coordinated with discipleship courses together. "On the one hand, one can listen to himself and others. Discipleship is to learn to listen to God, and how to listen accurately and deeply." Timothy

has also written a booklet on family rituals so that pastoral ministry can be practised at home. "A church is like a person in family and society, and this will no doubt has an effect and influence on him. No one can escape from these three areas: family, workplace and society."

The Distance of Torn Apart

"Torn apart" becomes a common term frequently used in today's society. It is also a keyword used in many talks on church ministry. "To put it mildly, 'torn apart' means 'differences'. Torn apart occurs because you and I are different! This is the reality and also a fact which the churches should not shy away from." Some equate 'unity' with 'similarity', some even say 'unity' means 'uniformity'. But Timothy denounced, "This is totally against the teaching of the Bible and its theological meaning. We have a theology of 'unity in diversity' but do not practise it. We can be 'united' because we believe in one God, submit to Him and unite in Him, but this does not mean we do not have diversity because we are in fact very different. If we try to make others the same as us, that is not unity but uniformity. The temptation to do this is huge! Even churches would want to do that."

Nowadays in Hong Kong, Timothy believes what really needed is the "gospel

of reconciliation" in the Christian faith. "Reconciliation is not assimilation! It is not to change 'you' to 'me', nor 'me' to 'you'. But if it is not properly explained, the 'gospel of reconciliation' will become 'gospel of harmony'". Timothy said 'consensus' is not the same as 'tolerance', but the 'mutual acceptance and co-existence in Christ'. "Another expression commonly heard in the church is 'That is your view and I respect that.' This means 'Whatever you do is of no relevance to me.' Wrong! 'Torn apart' is exactly due to 'the drawing of lines'. In the context of a church congregation and a team of co-workers, genuine respect means 'if you have problems, I will not stay away.' That is the taking up of something collectively and paying the cost together, just like a family." For church to nurture such a community, Timothy saw two dimensions to it. Foremost, each person has to genuinely face himself, learn to speak for himself and be responsible for his own words and deeds. At the same time, even though there are differences of opinions, one will still be willing to bear the responsibilities together.

In the three applied mathematics questions that The Lord gives to Timothy, he can not only make choices, pass the baton and share responsibilities, but also look straight into the Wonderful Counselor as the one who sets the questions.

Prayer Requests

- 1. We thank God for providing the School's financial needs in the past year. Our ministries can only be carried smoothly through the loving support of brothers and sisters from different churches. Our 2016 Budget is US\$7,500,000, and we pray that God will give us faith and supply us abundantly for this year.
- 2. Pray for the new student recruitment in the coming school year, that God will guide those responding to His calling, and prepare their hearts for the CGST study.
- 3. Pray that through the 2016 Spring TEE programs and 'Word of Life' Bible Study Series students may be richly blessed by His grace.

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"What is Your plan for me in the next 20 years? 'My Dear Millennials, you are my witnesses.'"

Lam Suk-Han

MDiv 2005

As part of the 40th Anniversary activity series, "My Dear Millennials, you are my witnesses" was the theme of our Revival Meeting that posed a challenging question to the Millennial Generation: "What is Your plan for me in the next 20 years?"

The revival meeting at Wing Kwong Pentecostal Holiness Church on September 25 evening brought together 1,600 young believers. The event was kicked off by CGST students leading the singspiration. Dr Joseph Sung Jao-Yiu, Vice Chancellor of Chinese University of Hong Kong, who is well aware of selfie trends, challenged each participant to shift their focus from only a "Me Me Me" generation, to put the focal point on the eyes of God, reminding them not to become so well-adjusted to their culture, but instead fixing their attentions on God and placing themselves before God as an offering. Dr Daniel Lee, Associate Professor of Theological Studies, preached from Martin Luther's "On Christian Liberty," to illustrate the lives and freedom of being torn down and rebuilt in Christ.

The Chung Brothers, a local Christian music group that is highly-acclaimed in jazz & blues and Gospel music, performed their composed canton-contemporary songs, encouraging young people to look upon the wisdom of

the Lord, serving as salt and light against the current of the times. Ms Wance Kwan, our Assistant Professor of Practical Studies. prompted young people to establish "New Expectations", "New Insights", "A New Race" and "A New Way". Finally, Dr Simon Cheung, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, spoke about the fall of the Kingdom of Israel as a backdrop, encouraging and reminding our young believers that in the turbulence of the era "we are not chosen by the times, but chosen by the Lord to become the testimony for the times". He advised we should listen to His Word, affirm the mission that is entrusted by Him, become the message of the age, and give testimony about His authenticity.

The revival meeting was concluded with hymnsinging, urging youngsters to respond to the Lord's call, and becoming His witness of the times. May the Lord strengthen their aspirations by guiding them every step of the way, and send them to be His witnesses.

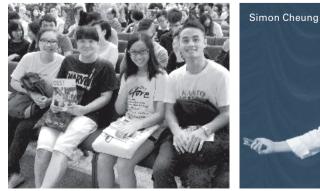


















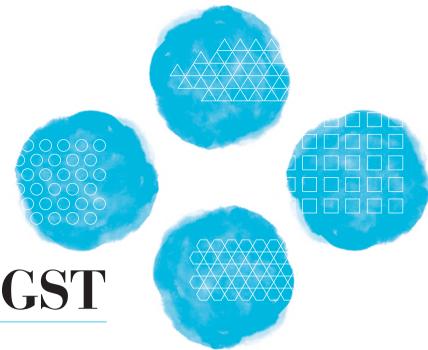




Interview with Alumnus

Interviewed and Written by Tong Fung-Ping

MCS 2013



The first fruits of CGST

Our first four MDiv graduates

In the 1970s, college graduates used to have many choices and opportunities before them. So what was it about the newly formed CGST then that attracted young believers with a university degree?

In 1978, four were awarded MDiv at CGST's very first graduation ceremony: they were Joshua Mak, Dennis Law, Andrew Ng and Ronald Yu. Their choosing CGST was both guided by God and a reflection of their trust in and recognition of the School.

Joshua Mak was the eldest of the group. After graduating from China Bible Seminary, Joshua went on missions in Vietnam, but wanted to further equip himself. At that time CGST was founded and the School provided the further theological studies that Joshua needed, especially in Greek and Hebrew.

At that time all lecturers at the School were young scholars, some were even younger than Joshua. Although not knowing them well, Joshua was moved by their passion and commitment to Chinese theological education, and after some time of fellowship, he saw humility and diligence in them. Now

Joshua is certain that his decision was correct and it was prepared by God. He witnessed CGST's launching of the movement in Chinese theological education, which later received recognition from and joined by other seminaries. CGST has indeed led the movement, with God in ultimate control.

After graduating from Tunghai University, Taiwan, Dennis Law originally applied for CGST's MCS program, but switched to seek scholarship in the MDiv program because he wanted to alleviate his parents' financial burden.

The main reason for Dennis choosing CGST was because he knew Rev Philip Teng, the School's first President, and therefore he believed it would be a good school. Dennis was also confident in the young and visionary lecturers, feeling assured that CGST was an institution raised up by God. Fearing CGST might lean towards the

intellectual and neglect the spiritual, Dennis could strongly feel that the School's lecturers worked hard to strike a balance between the two, and he could still appreciate the all-round care that the School staff had given the students.

Looking back, Dennis believed that the CGST movement was a success. It was right that the School placed an importance on academic knowledge because we could not respond to the needs of our time just by relying on our spirituality. Therefore Dennis affirms CGST's



Andrew Ng $(2^{nd} \text{ row } 2^{nd} \text{ from right})$, Dennis Law $(1^{st} \text{ row } 2^{nd} \text{ from left})$, Joshua Mak $(1^{st} \text{ row } 1^{st} \text{ from left})$, Ronald Yu $(2^{nd} \text{ row } 3^{rd} \text{ from left})$

pursuit of excellence. Today Dennis is the Principal of Chinese Theological College Australia and he concludes, "CGST has made an impact on my life."

Graduated from Hong Kong Baptist University, Andrew Ng became our Faculty-in-Preparation candidate after studying at CGST as he obtained a ThM (in theology and pastoral care) at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, USA, and a ThD in Church History awarded by Concordia Theological Seminary. After returning to Hong Kong in 1985, Andrew joined CGST to teach and to act as Director of Practicum.

Andrew came to know about CGST from a foundation course he took. When the School started, he was filled with expectations and especially touched to see young theological scholars working hard towards realizing their

dreams. Andrew believes that if the altar is distinctive, then it will attract people to come and offer sacrifices. In those days the lecturers were young, they were like peers discussing, sharing with the students and enjoying fellowship with them. Andrew sees this alternative model of spiritual growth as different and more effective than believers following and learning from spiritual elders.

As the youngest of this group of four, Ronald Yu was already a Christian before attending

Northwestern University but made a commitment to serve the Lord at a winter Bible conference. At the time it was common for students from Asia to return to their home countries upon completion of their education. After graduation, Ronald considered studying theology either in Hong Kong or abroad, and CGST was the only institution he applied to in Hong Kong.

Rev Jonathan Chao, one of the founders of CGST, was Ronald's referee. Rev Chao was his mentor at the winter Bible conference and through Rev Chao, Ronald knew about the School.

Aiming for postgraduates, CGST has a relatively higher demand on the students' academic excellence, especially in the learning of Greek and Hebrew. Ronald studied German and so he had a better grasp of the subjects, while the others found them more difficult. Nevertheless, Ronald is still certain that CGST is taking the right direction. He also agrees that CGST's establishment itself is a movement, and the goal is to elevate Chinese Christians' theological standard to respond to the needs of the age and the society. This movement has already began in the 1970s and it needs to continue for advancement.

June 2015 saw the 38th Graduation of CGST and the School commenced her 41st year. We hope that the affirmation of our first fruits and their faithful ministries will be passed on to fellow CGST alumni of the next generation.

Campus News

The President Office

- President Stephen Lee was invited to lead the retreat of Beijing International Christian Fellowship from November 20 to 22, 2015
- President Lee was invited to attend and speak at the 2016 Theological Education Consultation Conference organized by Alliance Bible Seminary between January 15 and 16, 2016.
- Vice President Kang Phee Seng presented papers during the 11th Conference of Life Education hosted by the Life Education Center of the National Taiwan University in Taipei from November 13 to 15, 2015.
- Vice President Kang was invited to attend the Retirement Dinner for Ian Torrance (Princeton/ Edinburgh) and Bryan Spinks (Yale) organized by Cambridge University Press in Atlanta, USA on November 21, 2015. During his visit, he also attended the International Conference organized by International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR), and the Annual Conference co-hosted by American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature.
- Vice President Luke Cheung attended the 2015 Triennial C-15 Consultation organized by International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) in Turkey between November 6 and 11. "Engaged and Effective: the Impact of Theological Education" was the theme of the Consultation.
- Vice President Cheung attended the International Conference "The Sinicization of Christianity" organized by Institute of World Religions and Center of Christian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences between November 19 and 22, 2015. He also presented a paper entitled "The Sinicization of Christianity from the perspective of early Christianity."
- President Emeritus Carver Yu was invited to speak at the public lecture co-organized by the Center for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong, as well as Society for the Study of History of Christianity in China on November 4, 2015.

Faculty Engagements

 Mrs Wance Chan was invited to attend the strategic planning meeting of the 2016 3rd Annual

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- Christian Forum for Reconciliation in Northeast Asia between November 10 and 13, 2015.
- Dr Annie Pan Ng was invited to attend the Annual Conference organized by American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature in Atlanta, USA between November 21 and 24, 2015.
- Dr Ng was invited to speak at a seminar organized by Inter-College of Fellowship of Evangelical Students on December 5, 2015.
- Dr Esther Xue attended an International Conference on Functional Language Typology organized by Martin Center for Applicable Linguistics in Shanghai Jiao Tong University between December 12 and 16, 2015.
- Dr Annie Pan Ng attended the 2015 International Conference in Commemoration of the Fifth Centenary of The Birth of St Teresa of Avila organized by Center of Sino-Christian Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University between December 18 and 19, 2015. "In Union with God: St Teresa of Avila and the Contemporary World" was the theme of the conference. Dr Ng presented a paper entitled "Teresa of Avila's Feminine Spirituality."
- Dr Kasper Wong attended a seminar hosted by Christian Association for the Psychology of Religion on December 19, 2015. He also presented a paper entitled "Difficult Verses in the Bible."
- Dr Annie Pan Ng was invited to lead a retreat for pastors for Evangelical Free Church of China on January 4, 2016.
- Four faculty members presented papers at the "Psychology of Christian Faith 2016" conference hosted by University of Hong Kong on January 9, 2016:
 - Dr Kasper Wong presented a paper entitled "Prospects of Psychology in Bible Study."
 - "Spirituality of the Christian Counselor in the Integration Discourse" was the topic of the paper presented by Dr Jane Mann and Dr Donna Ho Lee.
 - The paper entitled "The Secular and Spiritual Approaches to Mindfulness: Where Are We and Where Might We Go Next?" was presented by Dr Tracy Lo.
- Dr Ka Leung Wong was invited to speak at the public seminar on the Book of Ezekiel organized by Worldwide Bible Society on January 21, 2016.

- Dr Kasper Wong was invited to lecture the Book of 1 Corinthians at West Sydney Chinese Christian Church in Australia between January 22 and 25, 2016.
- We welcome Dr Liang Hong joining CGST as Assistant Professor of Theological Studies since November 2015. Dr Hong graduated from University of Tübingen with Doctor of Theology in 2015.

Staff News

Rev Dr Song Jun, Director of the Chinese Culture Research Center, presented a paper in the "Chinese Folk Literature Society" cum the 80th birthday of Professor Qin Baoqi International Symposium from September 12 to 13, 2015. His paper was also published in the book《中國秘密社會與民間文化——慶賀秦寶琦教授八秩華誕論文集》(Chinese Underground Societies and Folk Culture — Essays Commemorating the 80th Birthday of Professor Qin Baoqi) published by Fujian Renmin Publishing House in 2015.

Theological Training Programs (Putonghua)

• The two-week Program was held between January 4 and 16, 2016. President Stephen Lee preached at the morning chapel service to begin the winter intensive school term. Four courses were offered: Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies Dr Esther Xue taught "New Testament Theology"; Assistant Professor of Practical Studies Dr Annie Pan Ng lectured "Holistic Approach of Spiritual Formation"; Visiting Lecturer Dr Pau Lai lectured "Deuteronomy"; Principal of the Canadian Chinese School of Theology at Ambrose Seminary Rev Dr Jason Yeung lectured "Church in History (2)".

General Fund Financial Report Nov to Dec, 2015 **General Fund** US\$ 940,968 **Donations** Tuition & other income 580,258 1,521,226 **Expenditure** (1,171,459)Surplus 349,767 Deficit from Jan to Oct 2015 (56,943)Accumulated Surplus 292,824 2015 Capital Expenditure (236.335)

Outstanding mortgage loans as at Dec, 2015 : US\$ 2,242,377

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