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## A (VERY) SHORT HISTORY OF MY READING LIFE

*By Pastor John Tung*

With our Literature Department setting up the Summer Reading Fest for us to read more Christian books, I wanted to share with you some of my experiences with reading.

I read a fair amount when I was a youngster in Taiwan. I remember reading historical novels and comic books. The novels helped me to know the history of ancient China and the comics opened up a world of imagination for me. I remember going to the neighborhood bookstores to stand or squat in the store and reading the books for “free.”

Reading went downhill when I came to the US. Then, not only was English a foreign language to me – which greatly hindered my ability to read – but my parents emphasized math and science for me. Math was a great equalizer for immigrants – since we didn’t know much English, we could make up for it by our math. I soared in math tests and scores. This was something I could excel in and gain a measure of sorely needed self-esteem in a foreign country.

My father was an engineer and he was very good in physics and math and took great interest in helping us kids with math. He also emphasized science to us since he felt that science would be a good path toward job security and livelihood in the US.

So, what little interest I had in reading was further quelled by the drive towards math and science.

Becoming a Christian, however, changed this aspect of my life. As a Christian, we read the Bible. And as I read the Bible, there were many things I

didn’t understand, so I asked questions. Other Christians began to refer me to Christian books or commentaries for me to read and understand the Bible more. This led to an increased interest in books, history, theology and humanities.

Seminary study of course is rich in literature and you have to read a LOT and write a LOT, so my study of theology led me to read even more.

The next biggest prompting for me to read, after becoming a Christian, was from the use of a Kindle. Once I got a Kindle, the number of books I read soared. The ease of having so many books in a simple device enabled me to read while waiting in stores, while lying down and while traveling. There was hardly a moment when I wasn’t able to read.

So, if you want to read more, my advice is to have an active interest in learning about your faith and obtain an electronic reading device.

Here are some of my favorite books:

Desiring God, John Piper  
The Reason for God, Tim Keller  
A Commentary on Matthew, F. Dale Bruner  
The Glory of Preaching, Darrell Johnson  
Jacob and the Prodigal, Kenneth Bailey  
Love Within Limits, Lewis Smedes  
The Joy Luck Club, Amy Tan  
Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell  
My Utmost for His Highest, Oswald Chambers  
The Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman  
Teacher Man, Frank McCourt

Literature

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# God Is Pleased

By Amy Liu

I am so thankful that the Lord has blessed CBCM so abundantly with a Caring Department (CD). In addition to being able to care for our church members in times of crisis such as loss of loved ones, financial distress from loss of employment, health problems and others, God has enabled us to extend care to our local community and some overseas ministries. We recently had a devotion at our departmental meeting, and the topic was “God Is Pleased.” The focus of the CD should be God is pleased before ministry. God is pleased when we care for our members at CBCM. God is pleased when we put our energy, enthusiasm, and creativity to serve others. He is also pleased when we strive to be the salt and light of the world.



Little Lights Christmas Banquet at CBCM

There are several ministries that CD is supporting outside CBCM. We have our yearly love offerings (cash donations) to Little Lights Ministries, Child Evangelism Fellowship, and Rockville Pregnancy Center. Little Lights Ministries is an organization that serves inner city DC children and youths with their after school programs, Christian character building, and job training. Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) has after-school clubs called Good News Clubs in elementary schools of low-income areas in Maryland. The goal of Good News Club is to disciple children with the Word of God. With CEF, CD gives financial support for the materials of a Good News Club in a Montgomery County elementary school. Rockville Pregnancy Center helps women with unplanned pregnancies to find alternatives to abortion through support and counseling. CD sponsors a yearly Baby Bottle Campaign and Baby Boutique Drive to collect cash donations and baby supplies for them. We have our yearly Operation Christmas Child Project in which we collect shoe boxes filled with school supplies, hygiene products, and small toys for poor children overseas. CD has recently donated \$500 worth of school supplies to Mary Vale Elementary School in Rockville. We chose this school because the location is in close proximity to our church, and a significant number of their students are from low-income families who cannot afford the basic school supplies. CD sponsored a Winter Coats Drive at CBCM in October for the students there. CD is considering having a team of CBCMers to volunteer at their after school program in the future.

Since 2011, CD has also supported Harmony Outreach. By partnering with Harmony Outreach, we are able to reach out to orphans, and come to the rescue of the vulnerable, at risk people in China, Ethiopia, and Cambodia. The cornerstone of Harmony Outreach’s work in China is an orphanage near Beijing called Harmony House. We have a CBCM family who has adopted a child from Harmony House.

The Caring Department wants to care for our own so please inform us if you are aware of any CBCM member who is experiencing hardship. We are also open to new ideas and new ministries to partner with.

“The focus of the Caring Department should be God is pleased...”

# A Lesson on Flexibility

By Sophia Wong

This was my third time to visit and teach workshops in a Chinese church in Bucharest, the capital of Romania. With 12 Short Term Mission trips under my belt, I thought I had learned enough about flexibility in all unexpected situations. But God has prepared something that really tested my flexibility in relying on Him completely.

My first workshop started on the next afternoon after I arrived. I was very excited to help the 100-member church to start a Children’s Ministry and to equip them to be children’s teachers. I became excited as I shared the vision of reaching out to the next generation. However I sensed that the 20-member audience was not fully engaged in my workshop. Mid-lecture, one sister spoke up and explained that they thought the workshop was about parenting your children, not training teachers. No wonder a couple of people left my class earlier! At this point, I was frantically sending an S.O.S. to God – what to do next, continue or stop? If I am going to continue, what should I teach them? Which Bible verses should I share? Within the next few seconds, I decided to abandon my original talk in the middle of the workshop and changed to parenting issues without any prior preparation, nor a second thought. I just held on the promise from Philippians 4: 13 “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

For the rest of the class, I briefly talked about the different stages of child development and how parents can help them during these stages. To my surprise, I noticed a man who had left the classroom before. After a few minutes, more people came back to the class. From this point on, the audience became attentive and they were very engaged in the discussion. It was quite amazing to experience how God guided my talk in such a situation. I know it’s not by my ability, but by God’s power, I was able to finish my first lesson, and to rewrite my second. After the second class, my teammate commented that she couldn’t tell that I only spent a couple of hours to prepare the lesson from the scratch, for it was well received. I replied that this was truly a miracle from God, and I was merely the tool in His hands.

To me, this mission trip is priceless beyond any description. My faith was stretched. My calling was reaffirmed. My joy was multiplied because my God is such an amazing God!

*My faith*

*was*

*stretched.*

*My calling*

*was*

*reaffirmed.*

*"I can do everything through him  
who gives me strength."*

*Philippians 4:13*



ST Missions Workshop

# In the Spotlight : Adam Tong & Sam Su

By Jessica Leung



Teens Group Summerfest

*On Friday, June 14, Teens Group (TG) held its annual recognition of summer's commencement: Summerfest. Summer crept up on students almost as abruptly as the teens on this particular Friday night attacked and mobbed each other with deadly water balloons and blinding shaving cream. However, we could not have enjoyed this without the help of counselors Sam Su and Adam Tong, who, alongside several other hard-working teens, arrived 4 hours prior to the event to demonstrate their Iron Chef grilling skills and their expertise on water balloons.*

**Adam Tong** started serving as a counselor in TG this past year, building upon his active service in CBCM's sports ministry and Montgomery County Fair Face Painting. Adam has graduated with a major in Kinesiology and plans to enter a master's program in Physical Education, fueled by his passion for sports and working with the youth.

## Q: What would you like to say to the teens and to our teens' parents?

Well, teens... I know God will do great things in your lives. I pray that every single one of you really experiences how great God truly is and have a deep, personal relationship with God. That you may trust in Him in everything. Trusting in Him may be one of the hardest things in our walk with Christ, as we often want things just to satisfy our needs and desires. Part of trusting God is letting go of the control that we desperately want to hang on to. We must strive to understand what His will is and trust that God knows what he is doing.

Hi parents. I want to first say thank you for letting us serve your teens. I have definitely grown and learned a lot from this opportunity. I hope that your teen has the same positive impact too. Some of you parents I know quite well, others not as much, I hope that as a counselor of your teens, I will be able to continue getting to know and chat with more of you.

**Sam Su** has been serving in TG for 3 years and will be a 3rd year pharmacy student in the fall. He loves to cook and play Starcraft II in his spare time, and he is passionate about protecting the planet ("If you have a roof with sun, there should be solar panels on it").

## Q: What would you like to say to the teens and to our teens' parents?

Teens, I hope you all still remember the Bible studies from Ephesians, especially Ephesians 6:1-4. The apostle Paul wrote that we should have obedience, the action, and obeisance, the willingness to obey. These two must come together in order to honor our fathers and mothers. As we all mature and seek to differentiate ourselves as individuals, it may be tempting to seal off and make our lives private, but life is full of traps and immersed in confusion between right and wrong. We need guidance. The wisdom that our parents can impart is far better than going it alone. I can even suggest family devotions time as a great way to start.

Above all, come to honor God and fix Christ in the highest place in your minds. Come on Sunday ready to meet Christ; dressed ready to respect Him. Bring forth your best attitude, actions, lay down all other things, and ask the Holy Spirit to fill, mold, and dwell within you.

Hi parents. Deuteronomy 11: 18-19 "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

I have found over the years that Christ only truly gets imprinted on a life when we follow this. It does not mean to literally do all of these things but instead to put Christ first in everything we do. Church cannot be a once-per-week stop as if we are stopping for fuel for a vehicle, nor is it like charging an electric car once every night. Christ must be the source, with us like a metro rail – receiving its source of power all the time.

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EXALTING JESUS CHRIST

EDIFYING THE BELIEVERS

EVANGELIZING THE WORLD