

REFLECTIONS FROM GILBERT AND MING SOO HOO

1. With my pastoral experience, God gives me more opportunity to teach pastoral classes. This semester I am teaching a new course, “Building Strong Families,” that has proven enriching and challenging. This is a relevant topic as the nature and dynamics of the family change. Students, preparing to become effective ministers, request coverage on singleness as a life “calling,” divorce and remarriage, dysfunctional families (e.g., infidelity), methodology and approach to counseling couples in premarital and marital relationships, dealing with aged parents, and the like. All these issues are hot-button topics, practical and what they will face in church.



Our PCG at a recent retreat

2. Our current batch of graduating students who form our pastoral care group (PCG) shows the typical signs of elation and uncertainty -- elation over their impending graduation but uncertainty about their next step. One student senses a leading to minister outside of her current ministry but has no definite leads as yet. Another student from Vietnam desires to continue his studies in order to prepare for future teaching in his country but must take a qualifying Hebrew exam.

However, the exam is scheduled at a difficult time when his final semester is not yet complete. A Mongolian student was informed by his pastor that he wants him ordained shortly in order to assume significant responsibilities. But the student is uncomfortable to take up such a major responsibility and so prefers to defer ordination until he gains adequate pastoral experience.

3. The student council motto for Singapore Bible College this year is UNIFYR (“one fire”). As they explained: “We burn for the Lord to light up the world. We are many colors from many countries, but together we burn as one.” There is unity of vision and purpose in propagating the gospel throughout Asia. Although the challenges and approaches may differ, yet we are all one in supporting each other while laboring in different fields.
4. Ming focuses more on marriage counseling and serving the community. Her ministry challenges her to the utmost. One client, for example, harbored suicidal thoughts because of a failed relationship where her fiancé broke off the engagement shortly before the wedding. A husband and wife accuse each other as the culprit for a struggling marriage. But he has temper issues and she bears the marks of a difficult childhood resulting in irrational and unrealistic emotional experiences. So Ming is trying to guide both to deal with their respective behavior. Ming sees couples wrestling with infidelity, mistrust, no real commitment to the marriage, and other serious issues. She needs God’s wisdom and the Spirit’s guidance.
5. Recently, we were so blessed when our former neighbors Jeffrey and Bonnie Wu visited. We compared family notes and reminisced about old times in CBCM. Gilbert’s cousin and her husband (in their 80s) briefly visited Singapore while on a cruise from L.A. We treasure friends and family who remember us in prayer and their personal touch. Thank you for your love and care.

With Jeffrey and Bonnie



PRAYER NEEDS

1. The Lord sustains our health and rigor for continued effectiveness in ministry.
2. Wisdom to counsel and support the students, particularly those who will graduate in less than two months this May. Some have clear vision for the next step; others struggle for clarity.
3. SBC’s search for a principal. In the meantime, the school remains in a hold-mode in terms of direction and major emphases. But SBC continues to equip students for ministry in Asia.

Please let us know how we may pray for you  
Gilbert and Ming Soo Hoo

Cross talk

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PASTOR TUNG MUSES:

I would like to place the story of CBCM within the American story by explaining the three immigration waves of Chinese to the US.

- *The first wave* were Toisanese immigrants from about 1850 to 1960. They came to the US as workers in laundromats or restaurants or they worked on the Transcontinental Railroad and in mines as part of the “Gold Rush.” They formed chinatowns in urban areas. In our area, the Chinese Community Church of Washington DC which began in 1935 is an example. The size of this immigrant wave was restricted due to discriminatory laws against the Chinese. Descendants of this group are third, fourth or fifth generations of Chinese in America.
- *The second wave* was from 1945 to 1990. These immigrants came from Taiwan, Hongkong, and Southeast Asia as graduate students. Some stayed in the US as a result of WW2 which prevented them from returning to Asia. Some came from Christian homes in their country, but many others became Christians on campuses and formed Bible study fellowships. Later when they got jobs and settled down, they formed hundreds of churches in residential or suburban areas of US cities. Chinese Bible Church of Maryland, formed in 1976, is an example.

This wave was a large group due to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which lifted the earlier national origin quotas.

- *The third wave* was from 1990 to the present with mostly immigrants from China. This has been the largest Chinese group immigrating to the US, facilitated by the opening of relationships between China and the US. In recent years about 50,000 per year came here. They came as business people, graduate students, some from the June 4,1989

Tiananmen Square Protests and some very young middle school kids whose parents purchased homes in the US for them to study in good schools. A sizable number of this wave become Christians through campus or work as Christians witnessed to them. When they became Christians, they either joined Chinese churches of the first or second wave or established churches by Mainland Chinese to reach the Mainland Chinese. Hundreds of such Chinese churches have been started in the US.

These three waves help us to understand the differences between different types of Chinese churches in the US. Chinese churches are mostly clustered in metro areas and near college campuses across the US.

But as the Chinese church continues to develop, future projections for the Chinese Church in the US will likely show multiple models where Chinese Christians will attend church. In addition to the ethnic Chinese churches where most Chinese immigrants will join, Chinese with good English-speaking ability might also join a Caucasian megachurch, or they might join an Asian-American church consisting of mostly Korean-Americans and Chinese-Americans. Or they might join multi-cultural American churches which have different multiple ethnic groups. Or they might join one type and then move on to another type of church and attend 3-4 different types of churches over the course of their Christian life. The future is likely to reflect multiple church models where Chinese Christians will attend.

However, if many English-speaking Chinese choose to attend a mostly non-Chinese church, there may very likely be a crisis of insufficient English workers in the ethnic Chinese church to minister to the immigrants’ children and teenagers. The implication of this will be challenging for the ethnic Chinese church.

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## Spring Camp for Little Lights Kids

By Joanne Nah

A few weeks ago, some young adults and CBCM Teens had the wonderful opportunity to act as counselors for Camp Hope. But what is Camp Hope?

High school Senior Will Wang (*Photo: left, far left*) describes Camp Hope as “an opportunity for students from the Little Lights ministry to get out of the city and enjoy different activities like music, games, drama, arts, sports, bible lessons, etc., and build strong relationships with counselors. Each counselor is paired up with one or two campers to get to know them better through 1-on-1 time”, which includes talking with each other and having Bible studies. Senior Courtney Peng (*Photo: right, back row, third from left*) describes the camp as a place for “underprivileged kids...to get away from the instability of their families...to get extra help and do homework in a new environment...it’s like a free vacation.” Ultimately, they both agree that the goal of Camp Hope is to “teach the kids more about God and help them grow in their relationship with Him.”

Courtney enthusiastically described her kid and their interactions. “It’s pretty cool to learn about the kid and their life at home and everything. It really changes your perspective.” Despite being physically tired, Will felt “spiritually re-energized” and enjoyed playing with the kids there while helping them understand God better, as they were very inquisitive and had many questions. Will concludes that although “the kids were very difficult to handle at times, it was rewarding to see them grow through this trip.”

Throughout the camp experience, both teens definitely felt themselves growing closer to God through witnessing the growth of their camper’s relationship with God. Their helping and sharing “reminded [Will] of the attitude of servitude and humility that Jesus calls us to follow” and prayer time constantly pulled his mind back to “the power of prayer and felt a pull to spend more time in prayer with God.” Courtney agrees that how God was able to work through the kids, despite coming from broken homes, was truly incredible. “They were all into the music and you could see God working in them. For the Bible studies they got so excited. It really makes you question and ask how God is really working through everyone and encourages you to teach.”

They also had a huge blast with fun and games and the little pranks the kids would pull. The counselors’ wacky personalities and the kids’ vibrant attitudes really shone through in the little events that would happen each day. They both named specific hilarious experiences and could recall each counselor and kid by name, demonstrating the impact everyone left on each other.

They both would love to participate in Camp Hope again if given the chance and both encourage anyone who is on the fence about joining to “Do it!!!Now!” In summary, it “truly is a rewarding and fun experience. You will laugh a lot and you will also smile a lot and you will also have your heart touched. You will hate the kids one second for getting on your nerves and then love them the next second for reminding you of genuine love. You will make great memories that you won't want to forget.”

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## Serving the Homeless in Downtown DC

By Lydia Tan

Fifteen volunteers went out on a frigid winter morning to serve the homeless in downtown D.C. They prepared 200 lunch bags that included sandwiches and also brought along toiletries and knitted hats. They wanted to impact our community by serving them in tangible ways. The homeless are a stigmatized part of our population and society generally looks down upon them but it's amazing that God loves them so much and Christians are called to love those that are rejected by society just as Christ did.

While the purpose was to help the marginalized and needy, the CBCM volunteers were personally blessed in special ways. They came away with deeper appreciation for the life that God has blessed them with. They felt fortunate to have a good support network of family and friends, and church family is a big plus! The volunteers enjoyed conversations with those they encountered. Many of the homeless they spoke to have no family to help them in their time of crisis. Some have made bad decisions such as doing drugs and that caused them to end up on the streets. One of them has family that does not live in this area and so was not able to help them directly. Their homelessness is hopefully temporary as they ride out a rough patch in life. They took full responsibility and didn't blame anyone else for their situation. They have a hope that drives them and look toward to a future that is different from their present dire circumstances.

The volunteers were especially touched by one of the men -- they offered him an additional portion of lunch but he turned down the offer as he did not want to deprive someone of a free lunch! Our brothers and sisters were able to pray with some of the individuals and it was evident that they appreciated being prayed for and recognized the power of prayer.

The CBCM team had the opportunity to help a homeless woman who was sleeping on a park bench in front of the White House (arguably one of the most important, if not THE most important, building in the US! think about the juxtaposition!) Without sufficient warm clothing, she had desperately wrapped herself in plastic covers since she did not even have a blanket. The woman asked the CBCM group for help, saying that she had frost-bitten feet and had sought medical attention earlier but had been denied. The group managed to find a federal security officer and notified him of the woman's condition. To the credit of the White House security team, they were able to quickly send an officer to talk to the lady. The CBCMers said goodbye to the woman shortly after the officer took control of the situation.

The undistributed food was given to the Central Union Mission. The CBCM team was impressed that other folks were bringing necessities such as clothing and supplies to the shelter to donate to those less fortunate than themselves. It was really great to see that there were others that cared about these homeless individuals. The volunteers came away from their experience that day with a key thought that the homeless are not to be defined by their homelessness. Though homelessness is a reality in their lives, it's not their entire being and it is important not to marginalize people by labels such as the label of “homelessness.”

(the views in this article were contributed by Matt Chang, Wilkin Cheung, Andrew Ciao and Stephen Wong)

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