

# Newsletter

November 2015

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# Edification: Building the Community of Christ

## Reflecting on the Importance of “Teaching” and “Relationships”

At the Opening Convocation ceremony of this new school year, I invited teachers and students to take on a new challenge. In the past six years, our focus has been on Preaching, Mission, Pastoral Studies, and the like. This school year, we would like to push ourselves to think about and explore more about church education.

Early this August, the faculty team enjoyed three days of congenial fellowship during the Faculty Retreat which had the following theme: “Enjoy Theology.” As part of this, the first day focused on the theme of “Enjoying Teaching” which was conducted by Dr. Jonathan Lo. In one of the sessions, Dr. Lo mentioned Professor Gordon Fee, a well-respected teacher at Regent College, who taught him not only biblical knowledge, which enabled him to know his Christian faith more clearly, but he also taught him how to take teaching seriously and value interpersonal relationships. Dr. Lo also mentioned another memorable teacher, Professor Larry Hurtado from The University of Edinburgh, who was his PhD thesis advisor and mentor. When Dr. Lo struggled with his faith, this teacher prayed for him and offered advice. Prof. Hurtado carries a cross on a necklace with him every day; he takes it off at night and picks it up again the next morning to remind himself that he takes up the cross of Christ every day.



*Joshua Cho*

His erudition, cultivation, godliness, and spirituality have deeply affected Dr. Lo.

The theme for the second day was “Enjoy Research Writing” which was conducted by Dr. Andres Tang. Having known Dr. Tang for more than ten years, I presumed that he would teach in his usual lecturing format. So, I accordingly brought with me a laptop to take notes. To everyone’s surprise, Dr. Tang actually used the format of a game to discuss and share with us! His teaching method was a brand new experience for us all!

What also impressed me deeply was the Spiritual Formation Camp held from August 18 through 20. In the afternoon of August 19, Dr. Roy Chan led a demonstration which was called the “Integration of a Life of Consecration: A Demonstration of Life Coaching.” A graduating student was willing to be part of the process and answer questions from Dr. Chan who acted as her mentor.

The first question was this: as a senior student, what would she regard as the most important thing she could tell a first year student? The second



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question was: what was the most difficult part of studying theology? The third question had two parts: what were three things that she would do differently? Among these three things, which one did she most want to change? To the very last question, she replied, "Interpersonal relationships."

These are just some snapshots of what was happening three weeks prior to the beginning of the new school term and the experiences we had serve as food for thought for us all. A year ago, I started to ponder the seminary's direction for the new school year. My intuition was that it was necessary for the seminary to have an in-depth discussion and conduct research and writing about the seminary itself and in particular, in the area of church education. I earnestly hope that our teachers can be more sophisticated in their teaching and that the church can be more focused on the education of all age groups, especially teens. What a great surprise to find that during the Faculty Retreat there was a convergence of our thoughts and feelings about teaching. Incidentally, in one of the sessions during the Spiritual Formation Camp, our students also mentioned that relationships are especially crucial while studying at the seminary.

I cannot help praising God's wondrous leading as we think with one heart about the importance of "edification" and "relationships" in the new school year.

### **Edification Is to Build the Body of Christ in God's Love**

What is edification? Edification comes from *oikos* and *domeo* in Greek. The former means "house" or "residence" and the latter means to "build up." Richard Osmer points out that edification most simply means "to build the community of Christ as the residence of God's Spirit." The type of edification ministry helps brothers and sisters exercise their spiritual gifts and grow through service. The mission of edification enables brothers and sisters to recognize, receive, and exercise their gifts and to recognize that "love" is essential and that edification ministry must act under the guidance of love.

Osmer interprets two passages from 1 Corinthians, pointing out one important implication of edification ministry: edification is to build up the body of Christ in love. Osmer explains that Paul was dealing with a

community troubled by strife as the lay people pledged their allegiances to different leaders (1 Cor 3:4). When facing this problem within the church, Paul taught them to build up the body of Christ in love.

In the third chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul portrays three images. Paul first uses the image of the field to show the "planting" and "watering" of life (1 Cor. 6-8). He says, "So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." (3:7) He points out that both planting and watering are one part of the work, his planting and Apollo's watering act in concert with each other to bring about life. For both are God's workers (*synergoi*) and fellow laborers in Christ, who belong to God and work with one heart under God (3:9a). They need to count on, cooperate with, and be of the same heart and work together as coworkers. Both to be interdependent and cooperative are the symbols of the community of Christ.

Then Paul uses the image of a house to reaffirm the point mentioned above, regarding the church as the house of God (3:9). First, a house must have a foundation and Jesus Christ is the foundation (3:11). This shows that the steward of the church should take it seriously to build the house on the foundation of Christ (3:10); if the church does not build on the foundation of Christ, it is not a church (3:11). For without Christ, a church is just an association. Second, different parts of the house must be interdependent — mutually connecting and supporting in order to be sound. This metaphor rules out the possibility of any individualism in the church and no tolerance of anyone acting independently on their own.

Paul goes on to talk about the builder of the house in 3:10-15. He regards himself as being analogous to an expert builder within the community of Christ who has laid a foundation while others have to be careful to build houses on this foundation (3:10). A builder can use different building materials like, wood, hay, straw, or gold, silver, and costly stones. A builder's work will be tested and the flame of judgment will decide in the end. Only when the materials are sturdy and it has been built on the foundation of Christ can it stand the test of the flame of judgment. Therefore, Paul gives these warnings: "each one should be careful how he builds" (3:10); "if the work is burned up, he will suffer loss" (3:15).

The third image is of God's temple; only the Spirit of God can make the church holy, so that it can be a temple of God (3:17). This image underscores the metaphor of the "body" that chapter 12 talks about. While the role of the temple of God is God's residence, Paul points out that the church is the temple of God which has an amazing view, meaning that the community of Christ supersedes the temple of Jerusalem. "For God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (3:17b). "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (3:16) Paul means to say this: whether the church is God's temple, whether it is holy, relies on whether the Spirit of God lives in the people of God. If anyone brings harm to the church, he is to confront the Holy Spirit; if anyone tarnishes the holiness of the church, he is trying to demolish God's temple. Any divisive hostility or boastful flattery will constitute the sin of destroying God's temple. Therefore, this kind of hostility or flattery is not only a sin against a personal relationship, it is also a sin that offends God.

### **Cultivating a Relationship with God and Humankind through the Love of Christ**

On this basis, Paul expounds on the usage of the gifts of the Spirit in love in 1 Corinthians 12-14. In chapters 3, and 12 to 14, Paul emphasizes the Holy Spirit and points out that the Holy Spirit lives within the community of Christ. In fact, the primary action of the Holy Spirit is to build up the community of Christ; the Holy Spirit distributes different gifts to members of the church (12:4-11) with a view to benefitting the whole community of Christ. In chapter 13, Paul points out that love is the basis of all spiritual gifts. "Love is patient, love is kind." (13:4a) This is just like God's love which is eternal, patient, and full of loving kindness. A sign of love is unity in spite of diversity which is also the antidote to factionalism and pride.

That this kind of love is spiritual in nature implies that love is the work of the Holy Spirit: our whole life—our whole being—is transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit which enables us to act through love. We are called by the Holy Spirit to act. Our actions and the power of the Holy Spirit become united. This union cannot be taken on alone. The kind of strength which cannot act through love must be renewed through the power of the Holy

Spirit so that a new being with a new mode of life can be formed within ourselves. When the former way of life is discarded, we can begin to grow in our new life which is marked by love.

Therefore, the teachings conducted at the church should not only pay attention to knowledge of the Bible, theology, and church history but also attach importance to the cultivation of relationships, helping brothers and sisters to love God and each other more. This implies that teachers' teachings not only transmit knowledge and beliefs, but also helps brothers and sisters recognize, receive, and exercise their spiritual gifts while assisting them as they cultivate their relationships with God and with each other through the love of Christ. This love from God can build up brothers and sisters who highly regard their own relationship with God and with each other.

According to the teachings in the Bible, the relationship between humankind and God must be closely related to interpersonal relationships. We cannot be Christians on our own; other Christians have gifts that we do not have. Other Christians can help us know more about God and see how poorly we understand God; other Christians can help us see the deficiencies and limitations of our own lives and challenge us as we grow together. In other words, if we long to build a more intimate relationship with God, we need the assistance and support of other Christians who will let us enter into their lives and wisdom. If not, then teaching is liable to simply be made of icy beliefs or simple adherence to moral codes, making our faith dogmatic and/or moralistic.

### **Acting as God's Coworker and Building the Community of Christ**

Therefore, within the teaching ministry of churches, an important vocation of teachers is to encourage brothers and sisters to share not only erudition but also their personal lives and struggles during the lessons in order to deepen their relationship with God and among themselves so as to build the community of Christ. A teacher will have a lot to reflect on: if students cannot deepen their relationships with God and each other, where else can they seek help? Are there other aspects of church life where there are the opportunities for spiritual growth? However, if they are not willing to share and exchange amongst themselves, then this indicates that

their relationship with God has not grown. In this regard, a teacher needs to teach students to exchange and share their erudition and personal lives. In this way, each person not only receives knowledge but is also pleased to share their own gifts, wisdom, and lives within the community.

To teach brothers and sisters to have fellowship and share, a teacher must exercise their teaching skills to promote this kind of sharing. One of the skills that promote sharing is discussion. Through discussion, a student changes from a passive receiver into an active contributor within the learning community. In this kind of dialogue, members can share their thoughts and lives and listen to the thoughts and lives of others. Genuine sharing can help to enhance the relationship between God and humankind.

Hence, a teacher will have to learn how to lead group discussions. This implies that he or she must ask good questions, follow through with them, and use them to make a point. However, a teacher also needs to understand that they cannot do it alone or force a good discussion to happen. To create a good discussion, the teacher needs to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit which will help brothers and sisters enter into sharing that enables them to become the community of Christ. In this way, the mission of a teacher is not to control the work of the Holy Spirit but to be a vessel of the Holy Spirit and let God decide the time and place He wants to create the community of Christ. A teacher's mission is to do his or her best with respect to teaching, serving within their

limitations, and being coworkers with God to build the community of Christ so that a relationship can be built—leading to the building of the community of Christ.

In the new school year, I sincerely hope that our faculty team can utilize this concept and practice as outlined above to further our quest for excellence in teaching, not only by imparting knowledge but also by teaching students to build the community of Christ together under the Holy Spirit so that this community can be the residence of the Spirit of God. In other words, a teacher not only teaches knowledge, but teaches about relationships: how to build a relationship with God and amongst ourselves. As such, we can have better discussions, exchange more erudition, and more from our personal lives, allowing us to discuss God more and share God's gifts and grace in the classroom, canteen, prayer meeting, or even while waiting the bus or walking to the MTR together.

Similarly, our students must learn to think of preaching not just as ministering in church, but also as teaching not only knowledge, but also relationships—building relationships between us and God as well as interpersonal relationships. I earnestly hope that our students' teachings strive for excellence, not only teaching knowledge but also teaching brothers and sisters to build the community of Christ together under the Holy Spirit so that this community can be the residence of the Spirit of God.



## Main Campus Theological Programs

## Voices of Our Graduates

“HKBTS is my home,” this is true for me. Looking back over these last four years, I must thank God for granting me a good group of fellow students and for molding us into a community of disciples; thank God for granting me so many good teachers and staff, from whom we learn to be disciples of God and to be faithful servants.

**Cheung Chin-pong (B.Th.)**

The end of my seminary studies does not mean that I will stop learning—instead it is a true beginning. How precious it is to devote our youth to serving God! May God use each one of us, lowly servants, so that we can exalt His name. “He must become greater, I must become less.”

**Cheung Wai-lun (B.Th.)**

In the previous four years, the most impressive experience has been this: although seminary studies can be difficult, it led me to experience the grace of God with the support of my teachers and fellow students. Thanks be to God’s grace which allowed me to be trained. May the Lord bless me, enabling me to be faithful to what He entrusts to me on the ministry path and continuing to make me a good and faithful servant.

**Kan Hoi-kit (B.Th.)**

In just four years, I came to experience what the phrase “to put into practice” and the word “discipleship” mean. That is to say, to put Christ’s teachings and examples into practice according to biblical truth and to instruct lay people to be the Lord’s disciples together. How I put what I have learned into practice at church and in society is going to be both my challenge and responsibility in the future. One supervisory pastor once said, “Only after graduation, when you learn to be a pastor in real life situations are you truly a seminary student.” What he said touched my heart deeply and has also become an admonishment for all my life.

**Lee Chi-ning (B.Th.)**

“The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.”

Thank God for granting me the opportunity to study. During the process, while there has been both bitterness and happiness, God has allowed me to experience His grace, protection, leading, and provision.

I thank my heavenly Father for granting me a group of good teachers who have not only taught us knowledge with dedication, but they have also taught us using their lives as examples from which we can see the demeanor that pastors should have. I thank my heavenly Father for granting me a good group of fellow students who have co-walked with me as we experienced God’s grace through happiness and tears.

This is all grace, all grace, nothing but grace!

**Liu Lai-wa (B.Th.)**

To have been blessed to study at HKBTS and be equipped for ministry is a lifelong blessing. Messages of encouragement from the seminary teachers and elders still play in my mind and accompany me as I step onto the path of many further blessings. I appreciate HKBTS’s nurturing, and I vow to be a faithful, humble servant and a prophet who proclaims the word of God.

**Shek Sau-wan (B.Th.)**

Although I have come across a great many challenges on my path of pastoral ministry, during my seminary studies I saw from my teachers’ life testimonies that those who follow Jesus Christ the Lord can live a life of beauty and goodness. From now on this will act as encouragement in my heart which reminds me: “You can do it as they can.”

**Shum Man-yan (B.Th.)**

Four years have quickly passed amidst many tears and much laughter.

Our teachers not only teach us faithfully, but they have also encouraged and supported us. My group of fellow students have acted as my comrades, walking along shoulder to shoulder with me. In this disciple community, I have come to further understand God’s kindness and leading. I thank my gracious Lord for His calling, molding, and equipping!

**So Mei-ho (B.Th.)**

For four years, I have experienced peace and joy, walking on the path of the Lord with peace of mind!  
I thank my teachers who provided me with many learning opportunities and many memorable experiences.  
I thank my family for their support and relieving me of household duties.  
I thank those who kept me on the right path and enabled me to be empowered during my seminary study.

**Tsang Hing-chung (B.Th.)**

Thanks be to God for calling me to be equipped at the seminary which has enriched my life.  
I must thank President Cho, the teachers, the staff, my fellow students, and also my family. I have truly experienced God's unbounded grace during these last five years. May God continue to lead me in my ministry ahead.

**Wong Suet-ling (B.Th.)**

While staring at my seminary student identity card, which was issued four years ago, many fond memories of my seminary life come to mind. While my HKBTS student identity will soon be shed, in the kingdom of God I will forever remain a seminary student who continues to learn to serve God.

**Wong Mei-yung (B.Th.)**

Since graduating from the seminary's bachelor degree in 1998, I've faced a rapidly changing society, theological developments, and ever increasing demands from my church. After being in church ministry for ten years, I have found that my preaching, theology, hermeneutics, and other aspects of my ministry have become somewhat outdated. So, I decided to pursue further studies. I must thank Sha Tin Baptist Church for supporting my further studies which allowed me to cast aside many heavy burdens and take a rest. I thank the teachers for their patience and their systematic teaching and my fellow students for coming together to be equipped and fight the good fight for the Lord. All glory be to God!

**Chan Hoi-yi (M.Div.)**

Thanks be to all the teachers, my fellow students, my family members and my friends who enabled me not to feel lonely along the road. I feel that studying was hard but worthwhile as I conclude these three years of study. I pray that my ministry in the future will also be challenging but worthwhile. I vow to be both a faithful prophet and servant.

**Ng Ming-ki (M.Div.)**

Heavenly Father, thank you for leading me into the seminary to be equipped where I came to know many of your faithful servants. What I have gained in these few years is not only knowledge but also the practice of Christian faith in community life. Heavenly Father, pray that you keep watch over us, a group of pastors newly entering into the ministry field, and bestow upon us the wisdom and the strength to teach our brothers and sisters with Truth.

**Chau Tsz-wan (M.Div.)**

In 2009, while I was acting as a pastor at a church, I also began theological training for a second time. After being a student for just one school term, the pastor at my church resigned. At that time, I thought only of the shepherding and care that the flock needed. Then my baby son got sick and was in and out of the hospital throughout the entire year. After that, I changed my ministry field.... God's training goes beyond what I can fathom and being able to finish the program is all due to God's profound grace!

**Chan Wing-yan (M.Div.)**

Thanks be to my heavenly Father's gracious leading that led me to enter the Seminary to study and be able to understand biblical truths more deeply.  
Thanks be to my teachers for their teaching by both word and deed so that I could understand more about my Christian faith and put my Christian faith into practice.  
Thanks be to my fellow students who have walked with me and kept watch over me so that all together we have walked every section of the path, which was both challenging and yet full of grace.

**Chan Tsz-chiu (M.Div.)**



Every time I pursue further studies in pastoral ministry, it makes me once again affirm this: "All my life I will press on pursuing to be a good and faithful servant of God who honestly preaches the word of God!"

**Fung Kit-ye** (M.Div.)

For the past five years, while acting as a pastor in a church, I have continued my further studies which made me truly feel each day as if it were a year. Here I must apologize to my teachers: even though I listened attentively in class and participated in the discussions, I know that many of my class assignments were not satisfactory. I must thank you for your patience. I particularly thank two of my teachers whose words of encouragement helped me to persevere. During these five years, I struggled with the death of my dearest family member and of my close friend, God's gracious hand led me out of darkness and through my difficult studies. I can only give thanks to God!

**Chan Sau-wai** (M.Div.)

During these past few years of my studies, I have found that my greatest gain has been a more in-depth understanding of the Bible. This not only enables me to understand the will of God more clearly, but it also upgrades my preaching abilities. Here I must thank God and also my teachers for their dedicated teaching and for the staff's passionate service.

**Chow Yat-keung** (M.Div.)

"Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things He does for me." (Ps 103:2)

I must say thanks for my heavenly Father's mercy and grace, which enabled me to finish my studies in these few years despite the hardships. I thank President Cho, my teachers, the staff workers, my fellow students, my brothers and sisters, and my family for all of your help, encouragement, support, and intercessions which led to my graduation. I pray that this will become a motivational force for my future ministry ahead. Help me remember God's grace forever. Glory be to God!

**Choi Ming-tak** (M.Div.)

Gracious Lord, in these three years of hard study, I thank you for the encouragement I received from teachers, my fellow students, and my family. As I step onto the ministry path, I will bear in mind President Cho's admonishment, "You are a prophet, to proclaim the word of God. You are a servant, to wash the dirty feet of other people." I vow to follow your teaching by humbly serving my fellow men and practicing your kind of love which "loves to the very end."

**Hui Sau-hi** (M.Div.)

I thank my gracious Lord for safeguarding me and leading me to return to my alma mater for further studies. After two years of study, my knowledge in the Bible and theology has kept continually increasing, and I have also experienced continual growth in my spiritual formation. I keep experiencing God's grace and faithfulness throughout the process. I am willing to be of use to God all my life and serve Him faithfully!

**Ng Chi-lok** (M.Div.)

I am grateful to my Lord that I have graduated! Thank God for allowing me to be a member of the HKBTS disciple community and that my alma mater is a place where I have been nurtured and inspired to become a pastor. I thank all my teachers for their patience and tolerance. I am thankful for my fellow students' love and care, which allowed me to be built up and trained. My heart will be forever full of gratefulness.

**Lee Yin-shan** (M.Div.)

Three years of seminary training has quickly turned into a beautiful memory. I give thanks for the co-walking of my fellow students, for the teaching of my teachers, and for God's grace. Pray that I can be a faithful servant all my life.

**Li Miu-yu** (M.Div.)

Thank you Lord for allowing me to experience all kinds of bountiful preparation— especially over the past three wonderful years. May the Lord continue to lead His servant to fulfill His good work.

**Tam Chi-hong** (M.Div.)

"Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes!" (Ps 150:4) The God who creates, saves, calls, and commissions me, only you are worthy of praise! Thank you for leading me to HKBTS and all that I have experienced within these few years. I ask that you guide me every step of the way ahead so that what I am and what I can do will please you.

**Ng Chung-yin** (M.Div.)



Throughout the whole process of further studies, I felt the pull of God's gracious hand, otherwise I would not have been able to overcome all the difficult hurdles. What is most unforgettable is that God seldom permits the dates of assignments coincide with the dates when I was busiest with my ministry, thus allowing me the chance to take a breath. The greatest gain for me was the enhancement of my expository preaching abilities and the widening of my spiritual vision. I pray that in the years to come I can serve God more effectively.

**Sung King-cheong (M.Div.)**

I am grateful to my heavenly Father for allowing me to learn at HKBTS. This has indeed been a great blessing! Not only did I study and learn theological knowledge—what is more important was the molding of my lifestyle! Through knowing God, I came to know more about myself as my life was renewed and transformed. Now, I can clearly see how much I need God! Thank God!

**Po Ling-yan (M.Div.)**

Five years of further studies in pastoral education has come to an end. In this long period of time, in addition to giving thanks to God for His grace, I need to thank my church for their support and consideration, the teachers for their teaching, my fellow students for their co-walking, the seminary staff for their service, and my family for their love. Glory be to God.

**Tsui Fei (M.Div.)**

Graduation may be the end of one life stage, but it is also the beginning of another chapter in life. "Be faithful to Christ, put mission into practice, commit myself to be Christ's disciple, keep reflecting upon theology in my ministry, and even when I become older, let me not turn from it." This is my prayer and response to all of my teachers' inspirational teaching.

**Yeung Shing (M.Div.)**

Thank God that He called me to HKBTS to study in this disciple community and rely on His promise to me, "My grace is sufficient for you..." (2 Cor 12:9) I am grateful to God for being with me, to my fellow students for encouraging each other, to President Cho who has given us this opportunity, and to all the teachers for their teachings, which are so full of wisdom!

**Wong Shing-fan (M.C.S.)**

O Lord! I am grateful to you for allowing me to experience your presence and incomparable love. Pray that the Lord will always make me remind myself that I am a servant of God who will shepherd the church according to His will. I will also always concentrate on seeking to know you and trust in you because without

you I can do nothing. O Lord! I need you in my life.

**Yip Mei-yuk (M.Div.)**

I am grateful to God for His vigilance and gracious gifts, which have allowed me to finish the master degree program and, which have also allowed me to go to two different churches to serve young people and to serve as a social worker respectively. Although I have stepped down from the previous church's youth ministry and the gospel rehabilitation work, God still offers me the best ways to use my abilities.

**Mak Kam-yam (M.C.S.)**

Thank God that through the many teachers and staff, my life can have new strength and I am able to continue taking the pastoral path to bless others.

**Hui Siu-kuen (M.Div.)**

In these three years, I have experienced God shaping my life. He has strengthened my perseverance and challenged my faithfulness through the people, things, and events around me. I learn of the secret of regaining new strength. I pray that in my ministry ahead I will not forget to be close to my Lord so that my spiritual life can continue to be renewed and I can be a servant pleasing to God.

**Lai Suk-fun (M.Div.)**

## In Loving Memory of Suk Fun

Suk Fun was diagnosed with cancer soon after her graduation. On October 2, she went to be with the Lord. For the sudden death of a graduate who had been well prepared to go into the ministry field, the whole HKBTS family experiences grief. By trusting in the Lord we receive from Him both comfort and hope.

Suk Fun will always be our co-walker because we and she alike want to be servants pleasing to God who brings the hope of an everlasting life in our hearts to those around us.

Please pray for Suk Fun's family, especially remembering her mother, husband, and her son and daughter. May the love of God embrace them all.





The sixty-fourth class of graduates is pictured along with all the faculty

## Reflections from Our Graduating Students

# Experiencing Unbounded Grace and Advancing Fearlessly

*Leung Pui-sang (M.Div).*

The past three years that I have spent studying theology have passed by so quickly, but I can still vividly recall when I began studying at the Seminary. My heart was filled with worry: worry about my financial needs, doing class assignments, taking examinations, and the direction of my future ministry. Now that I have graduated, I can see that my path has been blessed by God who has given me peace, joy, and unbounded grace.

### **Overcoming the Difficulties of Returning to School**

When I began studying at the Seminary, I was worried about my ability to do my class work because I had worked in the business sector for nine years. The days when I had to hand in class assignments and take tests and examinations were long past. I did not know how to manage my studies, and this made studying again difficult. I was particularly at a loss as to how to write a term paper and how to handle some of the more difficult subjects in theology. At that time, I was experiencing a lot of anxiety and stress.

Thank God for helping me to adapt to the environment by providing many good teachers at the Seminary. When I faced difficulties, I could always receive knowledgeable care and guidance from the teachers. In addition, there were fellow students who were able to provide support and assistance to one another, lightening everyone's burdens. Although I met with difficulties during my studies, I had the kind of inner peace that



is granted by God, which allowed me to handle the problems I faced step by step and overcome my challenges one by one.

### **Managing My Time: School and Family Obligations**

In addition to overcoming my difficulties at school, one of my biggest challenges was deciding how to manage my time as a student and still have time to be with my family. It was not easy for me to manage my studies and church practicum at the same time. Often, at the time I returned home, I was already exhausted. I struggled to find the time and energy to care for my family and perform my household duties. I often neglected the needs of my wife who did the household chores alone after work, making her drained physically, mentally, and spiritually as well. During my second year of studying, my wife became pregnant and needed my love and support more than ever, making managing my time even more difficult.

Accordingly, I prayed to God, asking Him to grant me the wisdom to handle the situation. Then God admonished me and taught me not to overlook the needs of my family; regardless of how high my GPA could be or how enthusiastic I was about my ministry, if I neglected my family, everything would be in vain. God's timely reminder allowed me to understand that I had to make a choice by regulating my time more wisely and fine-tuning my mindset by not blindly pursuing high grades but instead seeking to be inspired and enlightened in my studies and seeking to enjoy my studies. God helped me to gradually change my attitude towards my studies and ministry. As a result, not only was my burden lightened, I also had more time to spare for my family and strengthening our relationship. Thank God, all that was made possible by the grace of God who keeps watch over me.

### **Experiencing God's Will along the Path to Ministry**

In addition to helping me with my studies and family, God's gracious hand led me along the path to ministry. Ever since my admission to HKBTS, I had hoped to have my practicum at a church where church music was highly regarded. The Seminary arranged my second year practicum for me. Thank God for His preparation. I had my practicum at the Hong Kong Baptist Church on Caine Road. I was overjoyed because this particular church always emphasized the importance of church music. This meant that I could learn even more in the field of church music during my practicum.

However, within the first two months of my practicum, I

still found it difficult to adapt to my new environment. Because I came from a church with a small congregation, I found it hard to become accustomed to the culture of a large church. Thank God for helping me once again to adapt to my new environment. Additionally, the church supervisor and the pastoral staff often went out of their way to care for my needs. Gradually, I had the growing sense of belonging to that church. The church allowed me to join many different kinds of ministry: the youth ministry, the worship and praise team, the church choir, the children's ministry and evangelism. Thus I was offered the opportunities to make good usage of my spiritual gifts and learn more about church music. After graduation, I become the Church Music Pastor of HKBC and have also had the opportunity to learn more and be trained in worship studies and church music. I praise God and thank Him for His grace and I am grateful for His leading along my path to ministry!

### **Thank You Teachers: Nurturing the Mind and Spirit**

Finally, I hope to once again express my gratitude to each of my teachers for their dedication and the care they provided me. Faced with difficulties in my class work and examinations, I often went to my teachers for help. They were always patient and helpful. They did not just impart knowledge to me; they would also care for my spiritual needs, helping me to keep my spirit nourished in those busy, often difficult days. Not only did they enrich our knowledge, they also helped to mold my character, which I found especially helpful. How my teachers put their faith into practice provides me with many role models, which motivated me and provided me with an ideal to live up to.

These three years of seminary study have been the most unforgettable days of my life; the memorable moments in the classroom, on the basketball court, in the canteen and in the chapel remain fresh in my mind. After graduation, I will begin to work full-time in a church where I will need to adapt once again and face new challenges. As before, I feel anxious and worried about the future, but as I recall these years of study and having seen my path filled with God's unbounded grace, I advance without fear because I know that God's grace is enough for me! I understand that the path ahead is long and I hope that by counting on God I can shepherd my flock through faithful preaching and teachings that are faithful to the Bible. I can become a faithful servant modeled after God's heart who can glorify God and act as a blessing to others.

# Changed Forever

*Tsang Wai-hung (B.Th.)*

When I began writing this essay at 10 AM on August 25, 2015, it was also the time when the Seminary's Opening Convocation for the 2015-16 school year began. This year I am no longer a student. Looking back at the past four years of my studies at the seminary, I can see that I was on the path of "Knowing God, Recognizing Faith, and My True Self," which has changed me forever.

## **Knowing God**

Entering into the Seminary, the very first serious theological question that I faced was: "What is God?" Unexpectedly, the teacher posed this question and asked each of the 14 students in class to take turns answering and elaborating on their answers only to be "slapped in the face" by the teacher. Finally, when none of us could offer the "correct," or "satisfactory" answer, I was even persuaded to confess that actually I had not known God well enough. Due to this, I unexpectedly began my journey obsessed with such questions as "what is God?" and "who is God?" as I began my 4-year study program at the seminary.

Of course, this was no simple journey. When the students asked whether seminary study means reading through 66 books of the Bible, we were trying to find out what kind of God is God as the Bible unfolds and expounds throughout our studies in biblical studies, systematic theology, church history and the like. When I shouted "God is love," the Seminary sought to train me to reexamine what "God is love" really means. When I exalt the kind of sacrificial love displayed by Jesus hanging on the cross, I reflect on how he manifests his love to humankind through what he says and does during his more than thirty years on Earth. If I keep on asking, I will have to think carefully about the meaning of "God is love" in suffering. These four years of theological training allowed me to deeply understand that "What is God" cannot be explained in simple terms and so neither can it be answered with one universal solution.

Such an exercise in thinking challenges the God that I had conceived of and deepens my understanding of God's attributes. Sometimes it makes me feel like I am full of doubts while at other times it fills me with joy. This four-year journey of deepening my knowledge of God has enabled me to further my trust in God, to make my Christian faith more comprehensive, and to be better able to withstand difficulties.

## **Recognizing Faith**

"Faith in my service" was the most central and worst misconception that I held before my seminary studies. Although I did not say it aloud, I still thought this way. As I prayed, I submitted my "service" plan to God, asking Him to help carry it out according to my plan. I had prepared for God His action plan, hadn't I? Now, after four years of training and learning to know God once again coupled with the loving yet vigorous edification of my teachers, I had recognized my faith more than ever before. For me, the process of faith recognition was a journey, which led me to yield my sovereignty to God.

For being able to walk along this path, I must thank the inspirational teachers who showed me the ideas of many theologians, the construction of church history, and the interpretation of scriptures, knowing that my faith is no hallow conviction. First of all, the Christian faith is not a blind or superstitious conviction; instead, our faith is: owing to our knowing God, we are willing to let His will transform our lives. Moreover, knowing that to recognize my faith is to find out and go after this Lord of Creation. I learn to submit the sovereignty of my life and let God be my guide in life, for He is trustworthy and I am not.

## **Recognizing Myself**

It is not that I found a god in whom I believe so that this god will serve me but that there is one God who calls us to follow Him. When I recognize the Christian faith in this way, I am able to recognize myself as a creature with limitations—as neither the master of my own life nor the master of others; I can have no authority to devise the best life plan for myself or others—only our infinite God can. Thanks to recognizing myself in this way, I have learned humility that I could never quite

understand before.

This journey could not have happened without my fellow students walking alongside me. Amongst us, there was no need for competition or comparison. We, as with all people, are always good at criticizing other people's weaknesses, at reminding others what they should do or worrying about whether or not someone is fit to be a pastor. We are liable to see other's deficiencies but not our own; we ought not to forget that we are only finite creatures. Like our fellow students, we are but sinners redeemed by grace. Interestingly enough, others may also worry about whether or not we are fit to be pastors. In fact, we are all equals who have received God's grace and none are better than others.

Without such a group of schoolmates walking shoulder to shoulder with me, these four years of study at the seminary would have been very different. Without them, I might not have realized my own deficiencies; without them, I might also have not discovered my own strength. My schoolmates are a gift from God who have accepted me for who I am.

### **Forever Changed by My Journey**

In this way, my path has led me to study here and now my studies have come to an end. I must give thanks to all those who have supported me during this journey, especially to all the Seminary staff and my fellow students. Of course, for being able to take this journey to "know God, and to recognize faith and myself," I must thank all my teachers who are so dedicated and truly "knowledgeable pastors and scholars full of love." I pray that on my future ministry path I will take the blessings of all of you with me and may glory be to God who has called us out of darkness into His amazing light.

## **Wrestling with Oneself**

*Chiang Sau-kuan (M.Div.)*

Dragging a luggage trolley along, I stepped onto Nin Ming Road to head for HKBTS's Opening Convocation. I still remember that moment. I felt lighthearted, and my only thought was: "Wherever you lead me, Lord, I'll go." I then knew little about the call of God and only knew that I would entrust myself to God. I could not imagine what would happen after that. Today, after four years, God did not ask me to go to a foreign land, nor did I need to leave my country, my relatives, or my father's house. God led me to return to Macau where I am going to learn to shepherd His church.



### **Practical Knowledge: Learning to Care for the Needs of Others**

Every spring term the Seminary will arrange for new students to share their testimonies of God's call. All seminary students have their own experience of God's call, which is so very unique and precious. New students take turns sharing their life stories during the morning chapels. Many of them have already firmly committed themselves to ministry at church while other students have already set clear goals for their future ministry. However, I am not the same as them! They are a group of students who respond to God's call to walk on the path of consecration and take the program for ministerial preparation; as for me, my course of study is the Master of Christian Studies, a basic theological training program whose target students are lay people and staff from Christian organizations. I study to equip myself—not to be trained to be a pastor. When asked whether I would apply to take the Master of Divinity Program to be trained as a pastor, I had an inexplicable aversion. But why? Gradually I have come to understand: from the very beginning, I lacked confidence and I regarded myself as not worthy of being a pastor. Therefore, every time the issue was brought up, I would become very uncomfortable.

Although I had been with my church ministry for quite some time, I did not read or study the Bible seriously, neither did I share my experience of being born again with anyone. Furthermore, there were in fact many instances of me sinning against God. I could never have imagined that God would use me—such a useless vessel. All I could hope for was to pursue knowledge and to learn more about my Christian faith; in addition, I also needed to overcome my fear of reading English books in order to enable myself to undertake further studies in the future. For this reason, I gathered up enough courage to apply to study in the Seminary, however, I dared not even say that I could always wake up early enough in the morning to catch the ferry and the bus to come all the way from Macau to the Seminary on

time for each lesson. Nor could I guarantee that as a part-time student I could finish the program within five years.

Nevertheless, God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. Looking back at the past, I truly thank God for steadily encouraging me through these four years to come to understand His calling and enabling me to learn obedience and step onto the path of consecration.

One day during our class lesson, our teacher mentioned that he preferred to be called a pastor more than a doctor or a professor. I did not expect that these few sentences were so powerful; however, they affected me and reminded me to reexamine my own direction in life. Another time when I chatted with another teacher, she mentioned that when we were willing to respond to God's call and accept theological training, ultimately the school fee and the daily needs could not stop anyone. From then on, almost every day in my campus life, God took apart the thoughts that had made me stumble in the past and allowed me to restructure my life.

When I was under a lot of stress, struggling to read the English and biblical languages in the textbooks, struggling with theological and ethical questions, feeling dizzy, and buried in my class assignments, I felt as though I was only a fine sand amidst an ocean. However, God led me to understand: if man pursues knowledge and erudition alone, life will never be complete; only the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Afterward, God allowed me to have the experience of living in the students' quarters. Through this and the class club, I had more opportunities to have fellowship with my fellow students and we learned to serve one another in a reciprocal way. We went through the rough times in life together. During such times, we counted God's blessings in each other's lives as we mutually kept watch over each other.

Teachers' teachings and life examples coupled with my fellow-students' openness and friendliness helped to gradually change my goal of merely trying to obtain knowledge. Through the support and encouragement of brothers and sisters at my practicum church, God allowed me to experience His abundant grace more deeply. And so I began to think over and over again: what a precious and beautiful thing it is to be a pastor at church! Yielding oneself and willingly caring for the needs of others is such an important lesson to learn! In the past, I was not willing to engage in in-depth conversations with others because I did not want to spare the effort to bear someone else's struggle or pain.

God's calling, however, had a life-changing effect on me. Upon the exhortation and intercession of teachers, fellow students, pastors, brothers, and sisters, gradually I became willing to obey the prompting and call from God to shoulder a more beautiful vocation; gradually I learned to be considerate and to care for the needs of others. Owing to God's step-by-step leading and the day-by-day changes in my life, during the second school year I became a full-time student. After graduating from the Master of Christian Studies Program with the encouragement and support of teachers, pastors, and my church, I went one step further and enrolled in the M.Div. Program.

### **Internal Struggles: Learning to Be Humble and Honest**

Our teachers are willing to listen and take an active part in caring for the needs of students. It is through our teachers that the love of God surrounds this disciple community. As students study and live on campus, they not only have a heavy load of homework assignments, tests and examinations, sometimes they have to shoulder the heavy burden of family and church as well. Teachers and staff of the seminary always sincerely care for our needs and offer intercessions for our troubles.

I remember at the time when I was preparing to take the M.Div. Program, I was under great pressure mentally and physically. It was not an easy task to forget the past and look forward to what lies ahead. Because of the fact that I had not fully immersed myself in the church community in the past, I always found myself powerless in coping with homework assignments. In addition, I kept assuming that other students were better than me, deepening my sense of fatigue. This sense of powerlessness was one that I had never experienced before, not even in the days when I furthered my studies in education and professional drama. I used to be very proud and would not want to expose my own weaknesses in front of others. Yet, the more I tried to conceal and disguise these weaknesses the more I felt more frustrated.

I thank God that as many teachers in the Seminary habitually returned to work in their offices in the evenings, during the two or three evenings when I was both confused and worried, I knocked on their doors and my teachers were willing to listen and pray for me. I was touched that even when the teachers' desk were covered with books and students' assignments, they were still willing to take a break and offer exhortations and encouragement. The care and exhortation

from President Cho to us graduating students further helped me to open the door of my heart to share my inner struggle and thoughts with trustworthy fellow students and pastors. I was thus willing to establish a sincere relationship in this disciple community by following what Jesus commanded and putting the idea of loving one another into practice. Besides imparting me with erudition and knowledge, the Seminary's theological equipping has helped me to know the real me and to learn obedience and submit to God's sovereignty.

Looking back over this period when I wrestled with myself, I must thank God for changing my life and allowing the group of seminary students to study together, care for one another as we learnt from Christ, and to love one another. In the days ahead, we are willing to abide by the Seminary's motto: Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

## Support Our Graduates and New Students with Your Prayers

Please pray for our graduates and new students who step onto a new path. May they keep God's call and instruction in their hearts. We pray that God himself will sustain them, helping them experience deeply on their path that God is their strength, shield and song.

### Get to know our new students

<b>Doctor of Theology</b>	Wu Libin	Zhou Zhizhi		
<b>Master of Theology</b>	Chan Tsz-chiu	Cheung Chi-yee	Wong Mun-lun	
<b>Master of Divinity</b>	Chan Sau-fan	Chu Wun	Chung Pui-sheung	Kam Wai-man
	Lo Wan-wah	Siu ting-fai	So Ming-him	Tang Chi-hong
	Wong Tak-ching	Yuen Ka-kiu	Wong Mo S.	Han Yufang
	Lau Chee-keong			
<b>Bachelor of Theology</b>	Chan King-chung	Cheng Kwok-hung	Kwok Chi-chiu	Lam Kar-ho
	Lee Chun-kwan	Lee Ngar-wing	San Yung-yung	Tsang Wing-shan
	Yu Fung-kam	Ng Yuk-chun		
<b>Master of Christian Studies</b>	Wun Lo-shing	Kwan Hei-lun		
<b>Non-classified Students</b>	Chung Siu-fong	Ho Po-ha	Ng Pun-pun	



*New students are pictured with President Cho and the faculty after the Opening Convocation Ceremony*

# Learning How to Pray from Samuel Wells and Stanley Hauerwas



**Dr. Freeman Huen**  
Assistant Professor  
of Practical Theology  
(Social Ethics)

Dr. Samuel Wells was the speaker of the Seminary's 2015 Belote Lectures. In the three morning academic lectures he taught us to reflect on prayer, ministry, and mission under the major rubric of "Being with God." Owing to this precious opportunity, I was honored to learn from him first hand and we discussed the theology, ethics, and spirituality of prayer. When I mentioned that I had recently translated *Prayers Plainly Spoken* by Stanley Hauerwas into Chinese, we said in unison, "His prayers break all the rules." However, Wells added with a knowing smile, "But Stanley is Stanley." So, what exactly are the rules that Wells considers prayers should follow, especially public prayers? <sup>1</sup> What can we learn about how to pray from Hauerwas who does not always abide by any rules?

Even though they may have come to Christ many years ago, quite many lay Christians do not fully comprehend what prayer actually is and does, and they may even be full of doubts about it. For Wells, prayer is a theological event with a focus on the Trinity. For humans, being able to speak to God (even being commanded to do so) is obviously an amazing grace. Moreover, Christian prayer is different from divination (consulting the oracle), propitiation, or "worship and prayer" in folk religions. The practice of prayer is a vocation to which all Christians are called. This calling reveals that the Holy Father, Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit are the Triune God who listens to our prayers, personally teaches us how to pray, and even prays

with us together. Unlike other deities who stay aloof high above us, occasionally doing us a little favor or begrudgingly performing a small miracle, or demanding that humans first court their favor and afterward be grateful and reciprocate for what is done for them, the God to whom Christians pray is very much different. Our God, the Trinity, is superabundant and His grace far exceeds what we can receive. However, as humans, our limited imagination restricts the richness of God. When we refuse God's grace, this is what we mean by "sin." Often, we pray to God just for what we "want," forgetting that God has already given us everything we "need" in order to be His disciples in the world. Our God is an Agent who acts before us and always be with us. He is God the Trinity in solidarity with humanity and His faithfulness and loving kindness never fails us. He is definitely not a god who is out of reach, looks upon us coldly or indifferently, or demands that we report to Him in every great detail before He can casually decide whether to respond and act on whims. The action and plan of the Trinity does not depend on what the church will or will not do, or what the church will openly ask or will not ask.

In this way, prayer is not simply a matter of humans speaking to God, but a way for God to speak to us and a way for us to learn to listen to God. This is an opportunity for us to personally discover what kind of god He actually is, and it also indirectly tells us what our genuine needs are, who we are, to whom

we belong, and where we are going. Prayer is to put God, who always acts first, at the center. It is not human-centered or -oriented, nor do humans take the initiative. Before we verbally say our prayer, we must know: what God has done for us in the past, what He is doing now, and what He has already promised that He will do in the future. Only then can we know how to discern what we ought to do, or what we need not do. For there are things God has already done therefore we don't have to; there are things only God can do and we cannot overstep. But the intriguing mystery is, there are things obviously God Himself can do, and only He can accomplish, yet He deliberately wills to let us, who are all unworthy, to work with Him, involving us as part of His plan.

I would say that, the theological ethics of Wells is all about enabling the church to become a community of prayer. First, we need to figure out what kind of agent our Triune God actually is; what are His will, character, ways of doing things, and ultimate plan for the creation. Only then, we will know, when we pray: what are the things we should not ask for; what are the things we do not have to ask because God Himself will provide for us; what are the things we do not yet need to ask for because God wants us to continue to listen, to be silent, and to seek His will. In short, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be shown to us. The Christian prayers, especially the public prayers in church, are not for our own sake but for the sake of the world, for the purpose of fulfilling God's plan for the entire creation, seeking God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven and vice versa.

What kind of theology (the doctrine of God, ecclesiology, and eschatology) a church holds, what kind of prayers she will use; the way a church prays will also reflect the kind of theology she lives by. That is why, to pray without ceasing (entrusting everything to God) and to give thanks in all circumstances (attribute everything to God) does not necessarily mean that we are genuinely "spiritual" or "God-loving." For example, should the church pray for the next Sunday's weather when there will be an outing for the congregation (and also to offer thanksgiving for the good weather afterward)? Just think: has God ever promised that there is always a blue sky when we need it? Moreover, there are all kinds of big and small activities organized by all churches 365 days a year, if God answers all these prayers, would all the people have enough water they need? Regardless of whether these prayers are appropriate or not, the church really needs to reflect on them: are our prayers sometimes too self-centered, and not world-centered or God-centered enough? Will they sometimes expect God to be in our service

instead of asking God: how we may serve you? Or worse still, is it sometimes the case that we try to force God to clean up the mess left by the ministry we carry out in the name of serving God, but actually acting on our own initiative?

However, does it mean that even in our private prayers, Christians cannot pray for our own personal needs, or the needs of our relatives and friends, brothers, and sisters in Christ? In several sessions of the Belote Lectures, the audience repeatedly asked our speaker the similar questions: if my relative (or myself) is afflicted with an acute illness, or an incurable disease, in face of such circumstances or even impending death, how should we pray? Whether on or off stage, Wells patiently responded to these lay Christians and answered wisely with the heart of a pastor. He classifies prayers into at least three categories:

1. **Prayer of Resurrection:** That is to ask God for His miraculous intervention and to change things that human effort cannot change. For example, we can intercede for the sick and ask God Himself to heal the terminally ill directly, or indirectly through the hands of doctors. To perform a miracle is what God, and only God, can and may do. Therefore this kind of prayer is in line with the character of God the Creator, and His nature as an agent; so it is theologically in order. Nevertheless, we must also strive to better know God's character and His methods, and learn to understand God's heart and mind. Even though the sick may not be cured, this does not mean that God rejects our prayer, because God has His own way of answering prayers that He has heard. Therefore, the prayer life of lay Christians (and even that of the church) cannot monotonously, chronically, and permanently stick to asking God for interventions to meet our needs; otherwise, our spirituality and virtue will not grow.
2. **Prayer of Transfiguration:** When Christians come across ordeals and predicaments in life, besides asking for God's intervention, they can also ask God to appear before those who suffer; reveal Himself as He is, and allow them to know Him deeper through their suffering, and prove that God the Trinity is true and living. Where there is suffering, there is God, who will especially appear to those who suffer. This is His promise and a response that reflects His own character. Moreover, God can transform our physical torment and spiritual deprivation into glory, joy, peace, and even make use of our testimony of suffering to bless other people.
3. **Prayer of Incarnation:** Yet, to intercede for those who experience great tribulation (especially natural disasters

or human calamities that shake the whole society) is sometimes an extremely difficult task. We feel empathetic with those who suffer so much so that we ourselves cannot even utter a word. When we do not even know what to ask for, we then can ask God's presence with us, because God enjoys being with humans. This is His nature. When we lack faith, we ask Him for faith; when we know not how to pray, we then ask God Himself to teach us to pray because we all know that this is the moment when the Holy Spirit silently intercedes for us with His sigh.

Therefore, Wells holds that there is a basic rule that should never be violated in prayer (especially the public prayer in the Sunday service): the prayer is addressed to God the Trinity and never the congregation. To put it in a more concrete form: the one and only addressee is "You" (God the Creator), so when one prays with a mouthful of "I" or "we," and even the addressee has secretly been replaced by "you," (meaning the congregation) he or she has gone astray. The prayer is no longer a prayer to God. For instance, it may have been changed into a weekly business report or the intercessor is lecturing to the congregation.

Building on the Anglican liturgy, the catholic tradition, and his own theological ethics, Wells proposes some rules of thumb as guidelines for those who are assigned to lead the public prayer, so that they may say better prayers. For example, as a pastor, Wells is especially concerned that the message of his public prayer should be as "inclusive" as possible. That is to say, the prayer should not prevent any segment of the congregation, perhaps due to their identity or personal circumstances, from saying "Amen" together or feel excluded from the shared, common life of church.

Wells half-jokingly complained that his good friend Stanley Hauerwas's prayers "fail the test." By this, he only means that as far as format, organization, decorum, and structure are concerned, Hauerwas's prayers do not follow any rules. However, his prayers are indeed not formal intercessions used in worship but are instead prayers used in the classroom. Because they are said with his own students before every class begins, these prayers need not stick to formality. Moreover, on the surface his prayers seem to have their own way, with signature of his characteristic passion, and having an unrestrained and vigorous style brimming with talent (for example, he can even make fun of God in his prayers). But in fact, his prayers are thoughtful and each time they have been carefully composed ahead of time, especially for that day's lesson. Besides, what

attracts most criticisms in Hauerwas's prayers is the overt personal stamp of his theology. However, it is not his intention to show off his knowledge, or to instill his own theology in his students. It may be hard to imagine, but for Hauerwas, such an outstanding theologian, it is a very embarrassing chore to pray publicly; and yet, as a teacher, he has the responsibility to care for his students' spiritual needs. As a result, he cannot but mobilize all his resources he can muster to fulfill the task. In a prayer entitled "Who Am I to Pray?," he makes the following confession:

"Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of prayer. What an extraordinary thing that we can pray to you, unburden ourselves before you, place our cares, woes and joys before you. I confess I find praying an awkward business. I keep thinking, *Who am I to pray?* But I know that to be false humility, hiding my prideful desire to be my own creator. So we pray a prayer of joy in prayer, asking that we become your prayers for one another. Amen."

However unruly his prayers are, Hauerwas never mistakes to whom he prays. Of course, we do not have to (in fact, it is impossible) imitate his prayers which are imbued with his brand of theology. But what is most worthy of our imitation is his naked honesty before God. So much so that he is willing to share with his students and readers these very private and intimate words spoken to Lord the Creator. What we need to learn from Hauerwas is that we all have the "need" to pray and the essence of prayer begins with our confession of our need, deficiency, or even despair. Yet, amidst such human scarcity and helplessness, it is God who allows us to experience His abundance. In another prayer, "Teach Me to Beg," Hauerwas demonstrates to us the most basic spiritual attitude of prayer:

Dear Jesus, send your Spirit on us so that we will be taught to pray. Prayer is hard, requiring great effort, but when done, effortless. I confess I have never liked to pray. Prayer is too much like begging. So I have to pray that your generous Spirit will teach me to beg. I beg you to help all of us discover that our lives are constituted by prayer, so that we may be in your world one mighty, joyous prayer. Make us so rested by such prayer, so content to be your people, that we kill no more. Amen.

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**(Endnote)**

- 1 C. f. Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher, *Shaping the Prayers of the People: The Art of Intercession* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2014).

## Academic Affairs News

- **Opening Convocation 2015-16**

The Opening Convocation Ceremony for 2015-16 was held on August 25 in the Seminary Chapel where President Cho preached a sermon, entitled "Edification: Building a Community of Christ." Quoting two scripture passages, 1 Corinthians 3:1-17 and 13:1-13, he exhorted teachers and students by pointing out that the purpose of edification is to build a community of Christ which is the residence of the Spirit of God. Therefore, not only does a teacher impart knowledge to students but he also teaches them how to build a relationship with God and with fellow men. A teacher helps students develop their spiritual gifts and grow together in the love of God so that the body of Christ can be the House of the Spirit of God.

- **Faculty Movement**

Our teacher, Ms. Annie Mok, Visiting Assistant Professor of Education and Music, resigned at the end of July. We are grateful for Ms. Mok's faithful service to the Seminary, and we pray that God will continue to use her and lead her to step onto a new ministry path.

Ms. Lee Fung-yee joined our faculty team on August 1 to be the Lecturer of Church Music. She earned her Master of Church Music degree in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and her field of interest is the study of choral singing.

Dr. Nathan Ng was promoted to Professor of Christian Thought (Church History). Dr. Ng has served in the Seminary for 14 years. Not only is he an excellent teacher with effective teaching methods, he is also an enthusiastic scholar with many contributions in the form of research and writing. Dr. Ng's inaugural lecture was held on August 26 on the theme "A Reflection on Contemporary Challenges to Christian Orthodoxy from History."

- **Baptist Heritage Week 2015**

The Baptist Heritage Week 2015 was held from October 13 through 15 with Professor Curtis Freeman, a famous Baptist theologian, as the speaker. He is a new generation scholar and currently a Research Professor of Theology and Baptist Studies; Director of Baptist House of Studies. The overall theme was "Post-apocalyptic Dissent: Powers, Apocalypse, and Resistance." In his lectures, he shared part of the content of his latest book, *Undomesticated Dissent*, which explores the relationship between the church and the world from the perspectives of history, theology, and tradition. The morning lectures were held at the Sai O campus while the venue for the evening lectures was Immanuel Baptist Church.

- **Full-Time Ministry Seminar**

The Seminary's Full-Time Ministry Seminar was held on October 31. It was targeted at those brothers and sisters who want to know more about full-time ministry. The seminar helped them reflect upon God's calling and understand more about HKBTS's programs of study.

- **Joint Programs Graduation Ceremony**

The Joint Programs Graduation Ceremony for the Main Campus Program, Lay Theological Education Department, and Distance Education Program was held at 3:30 pm at Queen Elizabeth Stadium, Wan Chai, on November 15. Many pastors, deacons, church leaders, and brothers and sisters were present to join us to celebrate and share the joy of our graduates.

- **Student Recruitment for Main Campus Theological Programs for Spring 2015-16**

We invite applications for the Seminary's main campus theological programs which include the Master of Divinity, the Master of Divinity (Further Studies), the Master of Christian Studies, the Master of Theology, and the Doctor of Theology for the spring term 2015-16. The deadline for applications is November 30. The spring term begins on January 11, 2016.

## From the Chaplain

*Rev. Brian Lam (Chaplain)*

### **Re-ordering**

In mid-August every year, all the faculty and students join in the Spiritual Formation Camp to begin a new school year focused on building a community and on spiritual formation.

The Spiritual Formation Camp can be regarded as a kind of orientation camp. But this is not an Orientation camp like tertiary institutions have, which is designed to simply welcome new students. The camp is organized so that before the new school year begins all the faculty and students turn their eyes to our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps, "turning in the right direction" is what orientation really means.

The theme for this year's Spiritual Formation Camp held from August 18 to 20 was "Re-ordering" in which three of our teachers preached on the topics, "Re-ordering the Church," "Re-ordering Life for Seminary Students," and "Re-ordering Ministry." In order to allow our students to specifically reorganize their lives and lifestyles, there was a session of life-coaching and a group sharing session in the afternoon of the second day.

On the evening of the first day, Dr. Andres Tang preached a message entitled, "Re-ordering the Church." The church is the work of God in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, and as such, the church will continue to rely on Christ and the Holy Spirit. If lay people are self-centered, even if all people gather together, they are but a "psychic community" or a church without order as Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it.

Only when the Holy Spirit is in control of our hearts, then we are a "spiritual community," thus re-ordering of the church. Dr. Tang mentioned one specific exercise, which uses the Holy Scripture and the Holy Spirit in worship and allows us to personally experience the presence and molding

of Christ and the Holy Spirit and learn to live within the communal life of the Spirit.

On the morning of the second day, Dr. Nathan Ng preached a message on "Re-ordering Life for Seminary Students." Undertaking seminary study is usually done for the purpose of doing ministry work. A pastor is supposed to shepherd his / her congregation by means of his / her lifestyle, and therefore, a pastor's character is of supreme importance. Dr. Ng considered four areas: formal curriculum, campus activities, experience and reflection, life and practice to carefully explore the idea of disordering and reordering seminary students' lives. His analysis enabled new and old students alike to holistically examine every aspect of a seminary student's life. We all benefited a lot from his talk.

In the afternoon of the second day, Dr. Roy Chan and a third year student gave a demonstration of a type of life-coaching using the theme "Integration of a Consecrated Life." Afterwards, there was a group discussion session among students.

On the morning of the third day, Dr. Clement Shum preached on the topic, "Re-ordering Ministry." He admonished us that as we have been called to serve God full-time, we need to rearrange our priorities in life, making serving God our top priority. The question is: how can we do this for our whole lives? How can we never stray from it? Dr. Shum used Acts 26 to cite Paul's example to teach us to keep in mind that this calling is the command of Jesus Christ and that we need to serve and follow with a pure and fearful heart.

This was our spiritual formation exercise two months ago. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work and to transform our hearts and minds so that the HKBTS's disciple community will keep reforming and the lives of teachers and students will keep re-ordering.

## Admissions and Registration Office

**Mandy Chung** (*Registrar*)

Early this January, some new students admitted in the spring term were present on campus. In the twinkling of an eye, it was soon late August and time for a new group of students to enter the seminary. This school year we admitted a total of 33 students, including 2 in the Th.D. Program, 3 in the Th.M. Program, 13 in the M.Div. Program, 2 in the M.C.S. Program, 10 in the B.Th. Program and 3 non-classified students. They are brothers and sisters called by God to enter the Seminary to be equipped for ministry, and I hope that in their study over these next few years, they attach importance not only to the growth of their spiritual knowledge and ministerial skills, but also to the renewal of their spiritual lives and the cultivation of their characters. I pray that, within the seminary's disciple community, we can learn together the way to love God more, love people more, and understand the way to truly love oneself.

On October 31, the Seminary's Full-Time Ministry Seminar was conducted for those brothers and sisters interested in exploring full-time ministry and seeking theological training. They got to actually experience some theological lessons which included one by Professor Andres Tang called, "What Is Theology?" and one by Professor Wong Fook-kong called, "What Is Biblical Studies?" . The program content also included worship and hymn-singing, a sermon message, an introduction to HKBTS's study programs, students' testimonies of God's call, talking with professors (individually or in group), and talking with and praying with our current students.

We will continue our student recruitment efforts for the spring term this school year (2015-16). Owing to our curriculum design, those admitted in the spring term can only be part-time students. For enquiries, please call 2768 5130 for more details. The deadline for applications is November 30 and the spring term will begin on January 11, 2016.

We welcome church pastors, ministers, and Christian brothers and sisters to audit courses offered in the 2015-16 spring term. Please take note of the information to be released mid-December on our webpage.

## Lay Theological Education Department

**Toto Choi** (*Associate Director*)

### **Voices of LTED's New Students**

Every October, a majority of LTED's study programs begin. Among these programs, the Bachelor of Christian Studies is the longest, requiring at least five years of study. However, life is so busy and we are all under so many different pressures, lay people may not be able to afford to spend five years, or they may not have the confidence to take on the requirements of the bachelor degree program. In view of this, LTED offers a certificate program and a diploma program of the same level (which generally takes 2 to 4 years of study) so that students can set up a solid foundation of faith through studying the basic subjects, building up good spiritual lives, and also receiving equipping at each stage step by step. In fact, many students prefer to first take the certificate or diploma program and then advance to the bachelor degree program according to their individual circumstances.

This year, there are a total of 19 students admitted into the Bachelor / Diploma / Certificate of Christian Studies Program who are willing to commit the time, money, and effort in the hope that they can deepen their faith, equip themselves for ministry, and better serve God. They come from different backgrounds and are at different levels of spiritual experience; some of these new students share their testimonies and voices with us below:

I had been pushing myself hard at work, working non-stop for 20 hours a day for months while keeping busy with everything else and pushing myself to obtain success, fame, and fortune—all the while forgetting about Jesus. One day, I sat down and God led me to see the real gains and losses resulting from this. At that moment, I became awakened. In order to chase fame and fortune, I had to give up a lot of things: family, friends, brothers and sisters, and worst of all, I even forsook my Lord. I began crying, and then I repented, asking for Jesus' forgiveness. With the Lord's encouragement, prompting and command, I decided to undertake "retraining for employees" in the hope that I could gain holistic and systematic equipping in order to learn from Jesus to become a servant to serve God and men.

When I found that my own attitude and convictions toward life were beginning to be challenged and called into question, I began to feel that being a Christian was difficult. Meanwhile, I felt that my knowledge about the Bible was too shallow because I was unable to discuss my faith in depth. Although my faith in God has never been shaken, I always long to know more about the Bible. I want to be ready so that if anyone asks about my faith and why or how I worship Christ as Lord of my life, I will be ready to explain it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15) May the heavenly Father accept such a lowly person like me and may the name of the Lord be glorified.

When I was young, I felt that I was not loved by my parents. I often relied on myself, getting lost then finding a way out on my own and making myself more marketable by improving my qualifications through further studies. I ended up suffering from depression. Later on, God came to my aid and helped me to improve the relationship with my family. He led me to experience suffering so that I could be rebuilt. It is because of the experiences of my adolescence that I can encourage some of the young inmates in correctional institutions, helping them to regain hope and meanwhile, I can testify to the work of God. Although in this portrait of my life there are imperfections, they are part of the perfect will of God and He has a use for them.

Before coming to Christ, I was always complaining and was very discontent with many things; however, after coming to Christ, I have learned to give praise and obey God's will. In the Bible, there are many words of wisdom, and I am willing to pursue these divine revelations so that my life will become more enriched and more meaningful. The Bible also enables me to have a new outlook on life as I learn to see the world from God's perspective.

Thank God for enabling me to have learning opportunities in different ministry positions. Every time I served with a trembling heart full of fear, but I was able to rely on God's grace to fulfill each responsibility, leaving me with a heart of joy. During my pregnancy, I easily felt tired from the responsibility of being a church administrative secretary with a big tummy, but this would also give me a special sentiment because my twin babies have already served God with me together in my belly. This is a gift that God grants me and for which I must thank and praise God.

Every year during student recruitment, I have the opportunity to read the life testimonies of students above and thus see the wonderful work of God in so many different lives. Their sincere openness and their willingness to commit themselves to serve and study are both truly touching and encouraging.

A new school term now begins! The path of study for our students is not without difficulty and in fact, it is full of challenges. May they hold fast to God's calling, study with humility, pursue the truth the best they can, and may their lives keep renewing and growing as they follow the Lord's footsteps.

## Distance Education Program

*Chow Pui-shan (Director)*

The 2015 spring term for diploma programs began on September 1. The Orientation for New Students and the tutorial sessions for the first and second subjects were also conducted successively on August 29 while the tutorial sessions for other subjects were arranged to be held during the following two weeks. The current average number of DEP students every quarter is 343. Student recruitment and promotional work for the spring term diploma programs 2016 is in full swing while applications for the certificate programs are welcomed all year round.

Because of the DEP mode of learning, in addition to the tutorial session held once every school term and the topical lecture held twice a year, tutors and students seldom have the opportunity to get together. In order to strengthen the bonds between students and tutors, and students and other students, we try to organize extracurricular activities that can strengthen their friendships. For the first time last April, we organized a BBQ Day which received good responses from both students and tutors. During early February of this year, we issued a questionnaire and asked them to select the activities that they felt most interested in. The most popular activities were "the learning exchange meeting" and the "afternoon tea gathering." Therefore, we decided to merge the two activities into one, "the learning exchange meeting and tea gathering." It was held on the afternoon of September 13 at the Sai O campus. Its content included ice-breaking games, sharing the joys and

pains of studying in DEP programs, interactive exchanges between tutors and students, prayers and intercessions, reflections from tutors, and time for refreshment. Although some of the tutors were busy with their church ministry and were absent, some of them had prepared 2-3 minute video presentations in advance to share their teaching experiences and give encouragement to students. Other tutors used written words, sound tracks, and/or photos to introduce themselves and enable the students to understand them better.

On November 15, we will join the Main Campus Program and the Lay Theological Education Department for the Joint Programs Graduation Ceremony. In August 2012, DEP collaborated with the Baptist Convention of Canada to offer the “Canadian Pastoral Training Project” to train Christian leaders from Mainland China. Among them, there will be five students who will graduate this year. They are the first graduates of “Canadian Pastoral Training Project” and are currently preparing to come to Hong Kong for the graduation ceremony.

This year’s second topical lecture will be held on November 28 with the topic “Jewish and Christian Views on the Doctrine of Election” and the speaker will be Professor Wong Fook-kong. Every year two DEP public lectures are held to provide DEP students with the opportunity to learn more and broaden their horizons and vision. We also welcome brothers and sisters from our churches to join us. Registration has already begun and is limited.

## Student Union

### **Chan Wai-ming** (*Chair-person*)

The life of a seminary student is colorful because we live busy lives, studying and growing in the midst of many kinds of experiences while we come to experience the gracious affection of our Lord. Before our summer practicum, the Student Union’s Mission Department organized an annual exchange visit to Mainland China. However, two weeks before we set out, the original plan had to be unexpectedly changed.

Thanks to God’s grace, we successfully contacted the churches in Huizhou and communicated with the

participating students to make another trip possible. There were 37 members in the team under the leadership of our teacher, Dr. Eric Kwong. We visited and joined the worship service at a local church, the children’s ministry, and an evangelistic meeting. Throughout the whole trip, we witnessed together God’s co-walking and experienced His protection.

At the Spiritual Formation Camp before the school year began, we had a lot of time for reflection. This year’s theme for the camp was “Re-ordering” and throughout the three-day, two-night duration teachers and students considered what it meant together. By understanding more about what “re-ordering” means, we came to understand that we need to fix our gaze on Jesus Christ and through our sharing, our friendships deepened and we all became closer. Through observing the Lord’s supper, we fondly remembered the Lord’s love and all that He did for us. This year, there was a new segment where Dr. Roy Chan gave a demonstration of life-coaching so that fellow students could better understand how to face their own problems. Finally, during the sharing session new students made their self-introductions, enabling us to know them before the school year began. The graduating students also made an emotional presentation which made those present feel touched. It was in the midst of laughter and tears that we began our new school year — a school term marked by life-building co-walking.

As the school year began, the Student Union organized different activities consecutively. The Daily Life Department organized the Mid-Autumn Evening Gathering to enable teachers and students to gather and celebrate the festival. In September, the Mission Department invited the Echo Valley Evangelistic Association to come to the Seminary to share how they promote evangelistic ministry that includes the physically handicapped. In October, the Spiritual Devotion Department organized an experiential activity about the feast of tabernacles in order to enable fellow students to learn more about Jewish culture. In addition, on October 25 the Student Union held Parents’ Day so that family and friends of our students could have the opportunity to know more about the Seminary, our teachers, and the Seminary disciple community. Please pray that fellow students can deepen their understanding of our Lord and experience His grace at every turn.

## Faculty News

- **Dr. Andres Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture), spoke in the “Consultative Meeting for Leaders on the Way to Go for Our Churches” organized by The Methodist Church, Hong Kong, on the topic, “Back to the Bible: Looking at the Value and Functions of the Family.” In addition, Dr. Tang and Dr. Ou Li-jen jointly translated *Faith Thinking* by Trevor Hart into Chinese (Hong Kong: Logos Publishing House, 2015) which was published in October.
- **Dr. Clement Shum**, Assistant Professor of New Testament, wrote a book, *Tien Dao Bible Commentary: Galatians* (Hong Kong: Tien Dao, 2015), which was published in August.
- **Dr. Nathan Ng**, Professor of Christian Thought (Church History), has been awarded the Gold Medallion Book Award for the best academic books in the Seventh Gold Medallion Book Awards organized by the Association of Christian Publishers Ltd. in August. The book Dr. Ng has written is *Blurred Demarcation: Rethinking Christian Rules Which Determine Orthodoxy and Heresy* (Hong Kong: Chinese Baptist Press, 2014).
- **Dr. Freeman Huen**, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Social Ethics), has been awarded the Gold Medallion Book Award for the Best Translator of non-academic books in the Seventh Gold Medallion Book Awards organized by the Association of Christian Publishers Ltd. in August. The book Dr. Huen has translated is *Prayer Plainly Spoken* by Stanley Hauerwas and it has been published in August (Hong Kong: Logos Publishing House, 2015).

## Distance Education Program

### Exploring Truth • Reflecting upon Faith • Equipping for Ministry

Student Recruitment: The new diploma programs will begin in March 2016 while the certificate programs can begin at any time.

Correspondence Program	Program Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
<b>Diploma in Biblical Studies Program</b>	Through an in-depth study of a specific book of the Bible, students are trained to do systematic hermeneutics and Bible study.	Secondary school leavers with their church pastor's recommendation	March and September	<b>March semester :</b> Hong Kong: February 10
<b>Diploma in Christian Studies Program</b>	Designed for equipping students for ministry, the program helps students strengthen their foundation in the Christian faith, doctrine, and theology.			Overseas: January 10
<b>Higher Diploma in Biblical Studies / Christian Studies Programs</b>	Further studies for students having completed the diploma program.			<b>September semester :</b> Hong Kong: August 10
<b>Certificate in N.T./O.T. Studies Programs</b>	Introductory programs in biblical studies, leading students to study a specific book of the Bible systematically.	All are welcome.	Register at any time.	Overseas: July 10

Elective students: Students can choose a portion of the subjects offered in the correspondence courses according to their own personal interests. For details, please log on to the Distance Education website: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist).

Online Program	Program Description	Date of Commencement
<b>Online Version Online Certificate in Old Testament Studies Program  Online Certificate in New Testament Studies Program</b>	<b>Description:</b> * The program content is the same as the correspondence program. * Students can read and download learning materials and course work directly from the website. * Upon completion of the course work, a student may upload it for the tutor to mark and provide comments.	* Students can begin at any time with fee concessions. * Trial study of the online program is welcome: <a href="http://elearning@hkbts.edu.hk">http://elearning@hkbts.edu.hk</a>

For enquiries, please call 2768 5105, email [deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk), or log on to the Distance Education website: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist).

## Topical Lecture

Topic : **Jewish and Christian Views on the Doctrine of Election**

Content : The doctrine of election has gone from being a pillar of theology to being a problem for modern people because it is undemocratic and carries with it the notion of favoritism (perhaps, even racism). When coupled with the divine command to annihilate the seven Canaanite people groups, it takes on a really negative connotation. This is not just an “Old Testament” (or Jewish) problem since Christians are also a group of the elect. In this talk, we will see how Jewish and Christian Bible scholars view the issues and what answers they give to the ethical and theological questions they raise.

Speaker : Dr. Wong Fook-kong (HKBTS's Professor of Old Testament; Th.D., Harvard Divinity School)

Date : November 28 (Saturday)

Time : 2:30 – 4:00 pm

Venue : The Seminary's Applied Theological Education Center (8/F., 56 Christian Building, Bute Street, Mongkok, Kowloon)

To sign up : Call 2768 5105, or email [deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk), or log on [www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist) (sign up online)

Sign up deadline : November 27 (admission is free but space is limited)

## Lay Theological Education Department

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### Student Recruitment 2015-16

**Application for enrolment into the following programs** (Please note that teaching is conducted in Cantonese)

#### **Master of Christian Studies Program (Major in Christian Communication)**

**Aim:** To enable lay Christians with university education to integrate their Christian faith with communication theories so that they can engage in theological reflection on the present conditions and social situations. This would enable them to communicate the Christian message more effectively.

#### **Bachelor / Diploma / Certificate of Christian Studies Program**

This is a part-time evening program. Students can apply directly to study in the following programs:

**Certificate Programs** : Certificate Program of Christian Studies, Certificate Program of Music Ministry.

**Diploma Programs** : Diploma Program of Biblical Studies, Diploma Program of Music Ministry, Diploma Program of Care and Counseling Ministry.

**Bachelor Programs** : Students can choose to major in Biblical Studies, Music Ministry, Care or Counseling Ministry.

After completing the Certificate / Diploma program, students applying to study in the Diploma / Bachelor Degree Program will have all their relevant credit hours (after having passed the subject areas concerned) exempted.

*Throughout the year, the above programs accept auditing students as part-time students who can later choose to become regular students in August of every year.*

For enquiries and registration: 2711 2551 Email: [ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:ltedinfo@hkbts.edu.hk)

Website: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/lted)

**Mongkok Education Center:** 10/F, Chung Kiu Commercial Building, 47-51 Shan Tung Street, Mongkok

## Pastoral Continuing Education Center

### October-November Quarter

Course/Talk	Speaker	Date	Time
The "Liberal Studies of China" for Pastors	Rev. Au Bak-ping	Oct 12, 19, 26	9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Old Testament Prophets and Politics	Dr. Robert Lo	Nov 9	9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Application of Positive Psychology to Pastoral Care	Ms. Yau Man-yee	Nov 16, 23, 30	9:45 am – 12:45 pm
Christian Ethics	Dr. Freeman Huen, Rev. Brian Lam, Dr. Andres Tang	Nov 16, 23, 30	2:00 – 5:00 pm
Communicators of Good News—The Whole Person Proclaims the Good News	Rev. Young-man Chan	Dec 14, 21, 28	9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Good Kings? Bad Kings? — Solomon in the Eyes of the Author of the Books of Kings	Dr. Tony Sher	Dec 14	2:00 – 5:00 pm

Fee concessions : (1) A 10% discount for graduates from the Seminary's degree programs, ministers of Baptist churches, and students taking degree programs in our Lay Theological Education Department; (2) a 20% discount for cardholders of HKBTS Alumni Association; (3) a 50% discount for full-time seminary students. For details, please refer to the application form or our website: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/pace](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/pace).

Teaching location : 8/F, Christian Building, 56 Bute Street, Mongkok (take the B2 Exit from MTR Prince Edward Station)

Enrolment : Application forms can be downloaded from the Seminary's website or submitted online: [www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/pce).

Enquiries : Please contact us by calling 2768 5179 or by emailing [pce@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:pce@hkbts.edu.hk).

## Publication News

A new book, *A Theology of the Pentateuch*, written by Dr. Wong Fook-kong, the Seminary's Professor of Old Testament, will be published in January 2016. It will be the second volume in the Seminary's Biblical Theology Series. The Pentateuch is the cornerstone of the Old Testament and the theological foundation of the gospel. It explains the need for salvation and describes the beginning of salvation history. This is where doctrines like original sin, propitiatory offering, and justification by faith have their origins. *A Theology of the Pentateuch* introduces readers to the discussions and questions regarding these issues in the context of the Christian canon.

Our biannual academic journal, *Hill Road* (issue 36) will be published in December on the theme, "Theological Interpretation." There will be five theme articles: "The Ideal Kingship in the Books of Samuel" (Tony Sher), "A Theology of Election and Non-Election in the Pentateuch and Its Practical Implications" (Wong Fook-kong),

"Christological Hermeneutics" (Lindsay Robertson), "Theological Interpretation of Origen" (Nathan Ng), and "From Holy Scripture to Theological Interpretation of the Holy Scripture: John Webster's Theological Perspective" (Andres Tang). In addition, there will be three miscellaneous articles and



several book reviews. The miscellaneous articles include the Chinese translation of the lecture manuscripts, "Being with God Alone," "Being with God and One Another," and "Being with God and the World" written by Dr. Samuel Wells for this year's Belote Lectures. *Hill Road* is available at the Seminary and its town centers as well as in local Christian book stores. For enquiries, please call the Publication Office at 2768 5168.

## Alumni News

### In Fond and Loving Memory of Brother Chin Yan-pui

Mr. Chin Yan-pui, a member of the President's Council, went to be with the Lord on July 19 and the Funeral Service and the Memorial Service were held on August 15 and 22 respectively. Brother Chin has been a member of the President's Council since 2009 and has been a committee member of the Church Administration Program and the Recreation and Sports Ministry Program of our Lay Theological Education Department. He has been our co-walking partner and supporter in theological education ministry for many years. Mr. Chin was formerly a primary school headmaster for over ten years, a legend among Hong Kong track and field circles, and a senior sports educator who was a good and respectful Christian witness in the field of education and sports. We cherish this brother who has always been faithful in ministry and now he has finished his last race. We pray that peace, kindness, and loving care of the Lord will be with his family always.

- Alumna Lai Suk-fun (class of 2015) went to be with the Lord on October 2. Please pray for her family, asking for God's consolation and loving kindness to be with them always.
- Alumnus Wong Pak-ming (class of 2010) was ordained pastor by United Christian Community Church on October 4.
- Alumna Wong Kwai-fong (class of 1996) was ordained pastor by the Hong Kong Council of the Church in Christ in China on October 23.
- Alumna So Man-ye (class of 1992) and alumna Yau Yim-bink (class of 2004) were ordained pastors by Mongkok Baptist Church on October 25.

### A New Term of Officers of the HKBTS Alumni Association

Advisor	: President Joshua Cho
President	: Chu Wai-leung
Vice President	: Ip Wai-hung
Secretary	: Lee Kam-lai
Treasurer	: Ho Ka-lun
Academic Affairs	: Lo Hau-ye
Devotional	: Lau Sau-chun
Chief Convener	: Wong Mun-lun
Conveners	: Chan Yee-wa, Tam Ka-man

## Student Recruitment for Spring 2015-2016

**Master of Divinity**

**Master of Divinity (Further Studies)**

**Master of Christian Studies**

**Master of Theology**

**Doctor of Theology**

**Deadline for Admissions Applications**

November 30, 2015

**First Day of Spring Term**

January 11, 2016

Please log on to the Seminary's website at [www.hkbts.edu.hk/admissions](http://www.hkbts.edu.hk/admissions) for details.

For enquiries, call: 2768 5130

## Financial Report

### General Fund, 1 May - 31 July 2015

	HK\$
Income	12,976,806.27
Expenditure	<u>(8,658,371.54)</u>
Surplus / (Deficit)	<u><u>4,318,434.73</u></u>



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(Same as signature on credit card)

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The bank charge for credit card donation will be paid by the Seminary.

\* You may inform us to terminate this monthly donation at any time.

- Please send cheque or bank deposit slip with this reply to the Seminary at 1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong.
- Receipt will be issued and donation is tax-deductible.
- Your name and donation amount will appear in the Seminary's *Newsletter*. If you do not wish them to appear in the *Newsletter*, please tick the right box.
- Your personal data will only be used for issuing receipt and Seminary's administration purposes.
- For donation enquiries: Tel : (852) 2715 9511  
Fax: (852) 2761 0868

*Thank you for your support !*

Publishing Supervisor: **Joshua Cho** Editorial Consultant: **Stephanie Lo** Editor: **Ernest Ho** Translator: **Ernest Ho**

Published by: **Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary Limited** Address: **1 Nin Ming Road, Sai O, Sai Kung North, N.T., Hong Kong**  
Tel: (852) 2715 9511 Fax: (852) 2761 0868 Website: <http://www.hkbts.edu.hk> Email: [inquiry@hkbts.edu.hk](mailto:inquiry@hkbts.edu.hk)

Production: **ABC Arts Centre** Printing: **Sun Art Printing Company**

## DONORS REPORT FOR MAY 2015

<b>Education Fund (Church / Organization)</b>		吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	300.00
九龍國際浸信會	22,991.00	吳國傑伉儷	500.00	無名氏	300.00
上環浸信會	2,500.00	呂志華	1,100.00	無名氏	300.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	洪鷹輪	200.00	無名氏	200.00
屯門浸信教會	500.00	胡文恩伉儷	500.00	無名氏	17.00
以馬內利浸信會	4,300.00	徐詩雅	300.00		HK\$ <u>68,597.00</u>
沙田浸信會	16,000.00	袁鳳蘭	3,000.00		
旺角浸信會	30,000.00	曹偉彤	8,000.00	<b>Lay Theological Education Program</b>	
旺角潮語浸信會	5,000.00	梁麗嫦	300.00	杜桂鵬	1,575.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00	許鋒威	400.00	蔡艷桃	500.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	陳偉倫	200.00		HK\$ <u>2,075.00</u>
香港浸信教會	117,250.00	陳麗英	500.00		
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00	勞家怡	500.00	<b>Distance Education Program</b>	
恩典浸信會	10,000.00	馮德華	300.00	Ernest & Sylvia Ho	1,000.00
基石浸信會	2,700.00	黃華娟	100.00	何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	黃雅忠	10,000.00	鄒小寶	1,200.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00	無名氏	500.00
慈雲山浸信會	10,000.00	葉煥章	300.00	無名氏	444.00
置富浸信教會	2,000.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00		HK\$ <u>6,144.00</u>
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,500.00	劉建紅	600.00		
麗城浸信會	5,000.00	劉福全伉儷	600.00	<b>Local Filipino Program</b>	
觀塘浸信會	1,415.00	蔡慧英	200.00	張智理伉儷	7,500.00
基督教四方福音會彩坪堂	1,000.00	鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
基督教宣道會華基堂	2,000.00	黎嘉賢	300.00	陳麗英	200.00
基督教華人神召會旺角堂	500.00	盧美娟	1,000.00		HK\$ <u>8,100.00</u>
基督教銘恩堂大埔堂	3,000.00	盧靜宜	1,000.00		
馬利亞、馬大團契	2,000.00	羅佩珊	100.00	<b>DE: Special Need Training Program</b>	
啟聞基金	300.00	羅凱慈	500.00	無名氏	100.00
HK\$ <u>264,656.00</u>		譚嘉敏	500.00		HK\$ <u>100.00</u>
		關志偉	100.00	<b>Scholarship and Bursary Fund</b>	
<b>Education Fund (Donor)</b>		關德華伉儷	140.00	香港浸信會聯會	3,000.00
Dr. & Mrs. David Mui Chi Wing	1,200.00	龐凌玉珍	1,000.00	溫恩智執事伉儷	20,000.00
方志強	100.00	無名氏	5,000.00		HK\$ <u>23,000.00</u>
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	5,000.00	Overseas Council	600.00
王群	800.00	無名氏	3,000.00		US\$ <u>600.00</u>
白智信伉儷	500.00	無名氏	1,840.00	<b>Rev. James Mau Memorial Bursary</b>	
伍志龍	500.00	無名氏	1,000.00	冒懷慶	20,000.00
朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	1,000.00		HK\$ <u>20,000.00</u>
何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00	<b>Mrs. Sue Mau Memorial Scholarship &amp; Bursary</b>	
何偉明	200.00	無名氏	500.00	冒懷慶	20,000.00
何錦燕	500.00	無名氏	500.00		HK\$ <u>20,000.00</u>
何譚惠如	1,000.00	無名氏	400.00	<b>Canadian Pastoral Training Project</b>	
				陸倫泉	4,406.00
					HK\$ <u>4,406.00</u>

## DONORS REPORT FOR JUNE 2015

<b>Education Fund (Church / Organization)</b>		伍志龍	500.00	龐凌玉珍	1,000.00
九龍城浸信會	240,000.00	朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	5,000.00
上環浸信會	2,500.00	何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	3,000.00
土瓜灣浸信會	24,000.00	何偉明	200.00	無名氏	1,000.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	何錦燕	500.00	無名氏	1,000.00
元朗浸信會	25,000.00	何譚惠如	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00
屯門浸信教會	500.00	吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	500.00
以馬內利浸信會	4,300.00	吳國傑伉儷	500.00	無名氏	400.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00	呂志華	1,100.00	無名氏	300.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	李子意	1,000.00	無名氏	300.00
香港仔浸信會	32,825.50	林丹寶	220.00	無名氏	300.00
香港浸信教會	117,250.00	洪鷹輪	200.00	無名氏	200.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00	胡文恩伉儷	500.00	無名氏	0.50
茶果嶺浸信會	12,000.00	凌氏	500.00		HK\$ 54,275.50
基磐浸信會	3,000.00	徐詩雅	300.00	區旭強	CAD 100.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	張順堯	500.00		
深荃浸信會	500.00	曹偉彤	5,000.00	<b>Lay Theological Education Program</b>	
富亨浸信會	2,077.00	梁麗嫦	300.00	何錦燕	10,000.00
愛群道浸信會	6,000.00	許鋒威	400.00	蔡艷桃	500.00
新希望浸信會	1,500.00	陳偉倫	200.00		HK\$ 10,500.00
筲箕灣潮語浸信會	10,000.00	陳麗英	500.00	<b>Distance Education Program</b>	
置富浸信教會	2,000.00	勞家怡	500.00	Ernest & Sylvia Ho	1,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,500.00	馮德華	300.00	Wong Kam Bing, Belinda	300.00
廣林浸信會	5,000.00	黃少娟	2,000.00	何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
興田浸信會	1,000.00	黃華娟	100.00	張慧娟	100.00
灣仔浸信會	10,000.00	楊謝金玉	2,600.00	鄒小寶	1,200.00
觀塘浸信會	1,451.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00	無名氏	444.00
中國基督教播道會太古城堂	12,000.00	葉煥章	300.00		HK\$ 6,044.00
基督教四方福音會彩坪堂	1,000.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00		
基督教宣道會華基堂	2,000.00	劉建紅	600.00	<b>Local Filipino Program</b>	
基督教華人神召會旺角堂	500.00	蔡慧英	200.00	九龍國際浸信會	1,500.00
基督教豐盛生命堂	3,000.00	鄧炳光伉儷	2,000.00	張智理伉儷	7,500.00
啟聞基金	300.00	鄭泡卿	1,000.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
	HK\$ 545,403.50	黎嘉賢	300.00	陳麗英	200.00
		盧美娟	1,000.00		HK\$ 9,600.00
<b>Education Fund (Donor)</b>		薛聲明	3,000.00	<b>DE: Special Need Training Program</b>	
Ng Ka Fai, Ricky	15.00	羅佩珊	100.00	無名氏	HK\$ 100.00
方志強	100.00	羅凱慈	500.00		
王紹良	700.00	譚嘉敏	500.00	<b>Memorial Service of</b>	
王群	800.00	關志偉	100.00	Rev. Samuel Tang	HK\$ 28,600.00
白智信伉儷	500.00	關德華伉儷	140.00		

## DONORS REPORT FOR JULY 2015

<b>Education Fund (Church / Organization)</b>		白智信伉儷	500.00	無名氏	5,000.00
九龍國際浸信會	22,194.00	伍志龍	500.00	無名氏	3,000.00
上環浸信會	2,500.00	朱沛德伉儷	1,000.00	無名氏	1,000.00
大埔主恩浸信會	1,000.00	朱活平伉儷	300.00	無名氏	1,000.00
大埔浸信會	12,000.00	何仲儀	1,000.00	無名氏	500.00
屯門浸信教會	500.00	何偉明	200.00	無名氏	500.00
以馬內利浸信會	4,300.00	何錦燕	500.00	無名氏	400.00
生命頌浸信會	1,000.00	何譚惠如	1,000.00	無名氏	300.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	5,000.00	吳炳榮伉儷	8,000.00	無名氏	300.00
沙田浸信會	16,000.00	吳國傑伉儷	500.00	無名氏	300.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00	呂志華	1,100.00	無名氏	200.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00	洪鷹輪	200.00	無名氏	117.20
香港仔浸信會	18,918.30	胡文恩伉儷	500.00	無名氏	21.00
香港浸信教會	117,250.00	倪承恩	7,200.00		HK\$ <u>67,182.20</u>
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00	徐詩雅	300.00	Connie Pong K. L.	US\$ <u>200.00</u>
香港懷恩浸信教會	10,000.00	曹偉彤	6,000.00		
粉嶺浸信會	10,270.00	梁羅黎光	1,000.00	<b>Lay Theological Education Program</b>	
基磐浸信會	3,000.00	梁麗嫦	300.00	杜桂鵬	1,100.00
將軍澳浸信會	500.00	許鋒威	400.00	蔡艷桃	500.00
深荃浸信會	500.00	陳偉倫	200.00		HK\$ <u>1,600.00</u>
第一城浸信會	5,000.00	陳麗英	500.00		
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,500.00	勞家怡	500.00	<b>Distance Education Program</b>	
耀東浸信會	3,000.00	曾慶忠	500.00	Chinese Gospel Church of Dublin	8,297.16
灣仔浸信會	3,500.00	馮德華	300.00	Ernest & Sylvia Ho	1,000.00
觀塘浸信會	1,658.00	黃華娟	100.00	Tam Miu Lee	2,000.00
鑽石山浸信會	15,000.00	楊謝金玉	2,600.00	何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
東方基督教會美光堂	1,956.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00	鄒小寶	1,200.00
宣道浸信會佐敦堂	10,000.00	葉煥章	300.00	無名氏	444.00
馬頭圍基督教會	3,000.00	劉永生、鍾梓萍	300.00		HK\$ <u>15,941.16</u>
基督教四方福音會彩坪堂	1,000.00	劉建紅	600.00		
基督教宣道會華基堂	2,000.00	蔡慧英	200.00	<b>Local Filipino Program</b>	
基督教華人神召會旺角堂	500.00	鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00	張智理伉儷	7,500.00
Joyful Spring Tutorial Centre Ltd.	28,278.15	黎嘉賢	300.00	溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
啟聞基金	300.00	盧美娟	1,000.00	陳麗英	200.00
禧年行基金有限公司	55,000.00	薛聲明	1,000.00		HK\$ <u>8,100.00</u>
	HK\$ <u>368,324.45</u>	羅佩珊	100.00		
Chinese Indep. Baptist Church-S.F.	US\$ <u>540.00</u>	羅凱慈	500.00	<b>DE: Special Need Training Program</b>	
		譚嘉敏	500.00	無名氏	HK\$ <u>100.00</u>
		關志偉	100.00		
<b>Education Fund (Donor)</b>		關德華伉儷	140.00	<b>Bursary Fund</b>	
Calucin Melvin Gesim	4.00	龐凌玉珍	1,000.00	無名氏	HK\$ <u>10,000.00</u>
方志強	100.00	主知名	300.00		
王紹良	700.00	無名氏	10,000.00	<b>Memorial Service of</b>	
王群	800.00			Rev. Samuel Tang	HK\$ <u>10,000.00</u>

# Precious Moments

## **July 13-15, 2015 Summer Time Huizhou Exchange**

A team of teachers and students consisting of 36 people went to Xiao Jin Kou Church and Yang Tian Church in Huizhou. They joined the church's evangelistic meetings, children's Sunday School, Worship Service, shared life testimonies, and visited some of the families of the church members. Thank God for allowing our students to experience God's leading and co-working during the trip.



## **August 4-6 Faculty Retreat**

This year's theme for the Faculty Retreat was "Enjoying Theology." Thank God that the faculty team strengthened their fellowship as they shared the joys of teaching and research writing, mutually edifying and encouraging each other.

## **August 18-20 Spiritual Formation Camp**

All the Seminary's teachers and students joined the Spiritual Formation Camp before the school year began. The theme of the camp was "Re-ordering" and three teachers led students to reflect upon the reordering of the church, seminary life, and our own ministry while on the second day, there was a life coaching demonstration.



## **August 26 Inauguration Lecture of Professor Nathan Ng**

Dr. Nathan Ng has been promoted to Professor of Christian Thought (Church History). The Inauguration Lecture was held on August 26, with the lecture topic "Reflecting on Contemporary Challenges to Christian Orthodoxy from History." After the lecture, Dr. and Mrs. Ng had a joyful celebration with the faculty team.

## **September 18 Two Teachers Are Awarded Gold Medallion Book Awards**

Professor Nathan Ng has been awarded the Gold Medallion Book Award for the Best academic book in the Seventh Gold Medallion Book Awards organized by the Association of Christian Publishers Ltd. in August. The book he has written is called *Blurred Demarcation: Rethinking Christian Rules Which Determine Orthodoxy and Heresy*; Dr. Freeman Huen has translated Stanley Hauerwas' *Prayers Plainly Spoken* into Chinese. He has been awarded the Gold Medallion Book Award for the Best Translator of a non-academic book in the same event. President Cho and the two teachers took a picture after the award presentation ceremony.

