



香港浸信會神學院



Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

Today's Students, Tomorrow's Pastors.

Today's Seminary, Tomorrow's Churches.

Newsletter

May 2008



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President *Alfred Kong*

Truth

Lord of "truth," thank you for granting us the opportunity to know you and your "truth," and to be called to be servants of your "truth."

Grant us your wisdom, allowing us to know our own limitation and blind spots in the process of knowing the "truth."

Grant us humility, allowing us to understand that we are neither the absolute authority nor the sole standard of "truth."

Grant us patience, allowing us not to let partial "truth" be the whole "truth" due to our own impetuosity.

Grant us courage, allowing us to acknowledge our own mistakes before the "truth."

Grant us prudence, allowing us to be careful about our motives when speaking the "truth."

Grant us love, allowing us to do more to build others up and less to tear others down with "truth."

Grant us your grace, allowing us to not only thirst for "the Lord's truth" but also to get hold of "the Lord of truth."



Experiencing Seminary Life Camp



Brief introduction of the study programs, student affairs and field practicum.



Participation in Morning Prayer Meeting



A visit to the library



Fellowship over the table at supper



Conversing with our teacher



Sharing with our seminary students



Frank and truthful sharing during the Consecration Meeting



“Experiencing Seminary Life Camp” is held every year for those who are prepared to be equipped in the seminary or who are in search for God’s calling in their lives. It provides an opportunity for participants to know more about the Seminary and the life of a seminary student. Furthermore, they can understand more about God’s will through listening to sermons, quiet meditation, seminary students’ testimonies and praying with fellow group members.

This year’s camp has just been held from February 27 through 28 and the theme was “Take My Life.” There were 31 participants. We deeply felt that this was a camp filled with God’s grace and wish to share with you a few instances in the camp in this issue.

A Meeting with Flesh, Blood and Grace –

Testimonies of God’s Calling Meeting

Some camp participants described the Testimonies of God’s Calling Meeting as one with “Flesh, Blood and Grace.” It was one of the instances that touched the hearts of our participants the most. In this meeting, a student and two alumni shared their stories of being called by God and their experiences in seminary study. Owing to limited space, only parts of the three testimonies can be published. Short as the testimonies might be, we can still see clearly the abundance of God’s grace in them.

Student Sin Wai-yeung

(1st year, B.A.P.S. program)

This sister, who was formerly a social worker, shared how in March 2007 in a revival meeting she faced the choice of “whether to choose God or not to choose God.” Having been obsessed with the idea of full time ministry, at that time she finally could not help standing up to respond to God’s calling. Later God verified his call to her time and again so that she gradually began to walk down the road of consecration. However, being her family’s breadwinner, how could Wai-yeung surpass her financial obstacle?

God had opened a door for Wai-yeung two months before she decided to consecrate herself to him. Wai-yeung



shares her story: “In January 2007, my family decided to sell our flat, and my mother suddenly said she would give me a hundred thousand dollars. As I used to support the family, I simply could not have sufficient savings to afford four years of seminary study, not to mention that I hoped to continue supporting the family while studying. This was basically impossible. But then mother gave me a hundred thousand dollars, I could not help asking God: “O God, what are you doing to me? Why do you give me money?”

“In the past when I thought about changing my job, mother would worry that if my salary were cut, I would not have enough money to support the family. When I raised the issue of studying in a seminary, at first mother was momentarily stunned without knowing how to react, but then she said, ‘If this is what you want, go ahead and do what you like.’ As for my father, usually he would grumble whenever we talked about the Christian church, but when I plucked up my courage to tell him my wish to study in a seminary, quite contrary to my expectation his response was: ‘Oh, is it? That is fine. Just tell your mother! If she thinks all right, I have no objection.’ This was something which would have been impossible in the past! What is more, knowing that I planned to study in a seminary, my younger sister volunteered to shoulder the financial needs of the family, thus temporarily releasing me from shouldering the burden. These have all been God’s deeds and in this way, he has allowed me to experience his wonderful preparation!”

Alumna Chan Hop-ying

(class of 2007)

In the past, Hop-ying faced with setbacks in her life and longed to relieve her pain quietly. Now God carried her out of the valley and led her to walk on the road of consecration. Under God's guidance, one step at a time, she joined a short-term mission trip to South East Asian countries and began probing God's will about full time ministry. She furthered her studies in business management in the States but then ran into the impact of September 11. She returned to Hong Kong to work as an executive secretary in the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong and was later married to a minister whom she met in Vietnam. Her husband was then furthering his study in HKBTS.



How could she walk her life road thereafter? Hop-ying shared this with us: "I have had the determination to be equipped in a seminary, but the economic pressure I faced after marriage made me refrain from taking a step forward. One evening in my devotional, I read this verse: 'My grace is sufficient for you.' It struck me as God's way of reminding me that I had been counting on my own strength in the past and that I still wanted to walk the road of full time ministry according to my own will rather than truly trust in God. Now, God once again promised that 'My grace is sufficient for you,' which drew me to remember that day when we got married, my husband and I took an oath to consecrate our family to God. That was January 2004. When March came, I joined the Experiencing Seminary Life Camp just like every one of you. On the camp, Dr. Wong Fook Kong sang with his guitar a song with the lyrics 'How beautiful is God's grace that nothing can ever replace it.' The song was familiar to me and had brought me through 18 years of my Christian life from the year I was baptized until 2004. How God's grace has been sufficient throughout my Christian life!"

"As of today I have graduated from HKBTS, I very much wish to share something important to all of you. The Christian life is a life of adventure. We do not know how God will lead us and yet we know that God has prepared many protective devices. When I respond to God in faith, I will tread on high places, and God will allow his will to fulfill in my life."

Alumus Lai Chak-lun

(class of 2003; ordained pastor in 2006)

Rev. Lai was married in early 2000 and began studying in HKBTS in August the same year. Then he had to live with different kinds of adjustment. Furthermore, since he lived with his family in Sham Tseng midway between Tsuen Wan and Tuen



Mun, it took him quite some time to commute to school. He felt the first year studying in HKBTS truly painstaking, and found his first year seminary study to be exhausting. However, God through the hardship taught him to manage his time, to discipline his mind to persevere. He had once complained the teachers' expectation on students being too high. Later when he had his practicum at a local church, he came to understand that there were many requirements in the ministry field and that it was necessary for teachers to help students build a good foundation.

He was grateful to teachers' being demanding at that time and for teachers' concern today: "Having graduated for nearly five years, we have had class meetings nearly every month. Every time when we invite our teachers to attend and share with us, however busy they are, they are always pleased to deliver a devotional message and take time to learn from us about our growth. It is true that alma mater does have 'after sale service!'"

"Once on a Seminary Sunday, a seminary staff set up a book booth to display study program pamphlets and books published by the Seminary. Although she and I did not know each other very well, after the service she took the initiative to ask how I was getting on and even ask whether I have had my daily devotion. I was truly touched. At no time since I studied in the Seminary has anyone ever asked me such a question. Perhaps they think that I am an all-rounded person. But the truth is just the contrary — studying in the seminary can also leave no time for our daily devotions. Until now during my ministry at church, hardly anyone will ask me whether I have my regular quiet time with God. In fact that lady staff was not checking upon me but was only showing her sisterly concern about me at that time. When I replied, 'Yes, I do,' her eyes sparkled with cheerful contentment, prompting me to rejoice with gladness!"

The Question and Answer Session

Right after the students' sharing, there was a question and answer session conducted by Dr. Andres Tang, the moderator of the session. There were two questions raised with the answers given below.

Question: If a married brother studies full time in a seminary while his wife shoulders the family's finance alone and takes care of the children, which will be hard work for his spouse and he will inevitably feel guilty. How then should he handle the matter?

Answer 1 (Rev. Lai Chak-lun):

This is a realistic question. In studying in the seminary, one has to consider many of the costs including economic changes in the family. We must trust that the grace of God is sufficient. Take my own example: Being a high school teacher, my wife earns a pretty good salary. Even after I studied in the Seminary, her salary alone could still make ends meet. Besides, I experienced God's wondrous grace when something unexpected happened a year before I studied in HKBTS. I was suddenly offered a high-paying job and my boss allowed me to work for just one year. That year's salary was put into my savings for me to use in my seminary study.

While studying in the Seminary, there were ups and downs in my wife's emotions because the burden she had to bear was more than she had expected. The process was not at all romantic and sometimes there were tears. But as a result our husband-wife relationship was deepened and our passion for ministry consolidated still further. We came to see that on the surface it seems that I was the one who studied in the seminary, but in reality my wife and I were studying together. As for children's care, after I became a minister at church, every Sunday when we brought our kids to church, brothers and sisters volunteered to help us take care of them, reducing much of the stress we had been feeling. All in all, we should believe that God's grace is sufficient!

Answer 2 (Alumna Chan Hop-ying):

The year when my husband and I began studying in HKBTS, we had just got married with almost no savings. When the time came to pay the school fee for the second semester, we counted our savings which were merely enough for one

of us to make the payment. I then spoke to my husband, "You take this sum of money to pay the school fee and I terminate my study." My husband consoled me, telling me not to do so but instead encouraged me to pray with him and seek help from God. Although we prayed to God, I still resorted to the use of human means: I wanted to ask my family to lend us some money. Yet my husband disagreed for that would make my family worry. A day before the deadline for us to pay the school fee, something wonderful happened! I received a check in my mail box in which there was an amount of money which was sufficient for us to cope with our life for a period of time. Then I noticed a piece of paper attached to the check with the words: "Your school fee has been paid." This was a major lesson of faith for me.

In fact, a HKBTS student can have several channels to earn an income. Means one: Beginning from the second semester, students taking field education will receive from the church "transport allowance." Means two: Those academically outstanding students can apply for a scholarship and those in immediate financial needs can apply for student grant. Means three: Students can apply to be a "work grant" to work five hours a week in the Seminary (as a library clerk or a research assistant for professors).

Answer 3 (Dr. Andres Tang):

To ensure success for either the husband or the wife to take seminary study, the couple from the beginning must have the same heart. Besides, while studying in the seminary, one must not immerse oneself into heaps of books only. One needs to spare some time to be with one's spouse for this is a basic responsibility of a husband or a wife.

Question: How can I be sure of God's calling? How will I not misinterpret my own thought as God's will?

Answer (Dr. Andres Tang):

Generally speaking, God calls a person through the following two ways.

One is calling by God through special experience. God speaks to a person in various ways, for example, through the preacher in a revival meeting who interprets the scripture and then calls upon the audience to enter full time ministry. This can be called a "dramatic experience." This experience is more commonly accepted as God's way of making his will known to you through a preacher. But it requires continual verifications

on your part to demonstrate what you perceive is not merely your subjective will but God's will.

The other experience is your daily experience, that is your regular church life. When you commit yourself to Christ and have a passion for the Christian ministry, your life testimony will become a testimony before your church ministers and fellow church members. They can verify that you have certain spiritual gifts and are fit for full time ministry so that they can recommend you to study in the seminary. Furthermore, you should gladly and willingly minister to fellow Christians in the church and not for the sake of compensation. Unlike those who get frustrated or defeated in the marketplace, they would strive to gain a good sense of fulfillment in "serving



the Lord diligently." Those who are called by God will take pleasure to be equipped in the seminary as this will help them get ready for full time ministry because they have a passion for God's ministry. This type of calling stands the test of time. Take myself as an example. It took me six years to go through the process from receiving God's calling to actually going to study in the seminary. Throughout those six years, I had not forgotten God's calling and I kept furthering my studies and serving God at church and elsewhere. When the time was ripe, I went to study in the seminary.

You should also talk with your church pastors and Christian elders, seeking further verifications. It is not only an individual's business to study in the seminary but also that of the whole church as you are representing the whole church to study in the seminary.

In the camp, there were two sermon messages: The short talk on the first evening and the chapel hour on the second day.

Excerpt from the "Short Talk"

How Does God Take My Life?

Rev. Brain Lam
(Chaplain)

Scripture: I Samuel 16:1-13

Rev. Lam used the story of Samuel's anointing David as his text to explain to the participants how God looks at a person and how he takes the initiative to choose servants after his own heart. He first talked about the two passages: verses 1 to 5 and 6 to 10, analyzed two antithetical motifs of "rejects" and "selects," and then pointed out that "look" is another motif in the second passage. In the following excerpt, we skip the first passage and focus on the second one, starting with the second passage on the motif of "look," the third motif to the end of the talk.



"Look" is another motif in I Samuel 16:6-10. In verse 6, "Samuel saw Eliab," and in verse 7 God warns him, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." In just these two verses, the word "look" appears four times and is an important word. When the word "look" is used in verse one: "...I have chosen one of his sons to be king." The Hebrew word for "have chosen" means "to look." God "looks" at what kind of a person we are and "looks" at the kind of person we will become.

In verse 6, when Samuel saw Eliab, he thought, "He must be the Lord's anointed one." Why was Samuel so certain? It was probably that Eliab was tall and well-built and the king at that time would have to take the Israelites into battle. As you can see, even Samuel assumed he would be a suitable king. Is that the way most of us think today? A minister should be like this or like that. Sometimes we look down on ourselves because we assume that a minister must be like this or like that, and I would never be one. On the other hand, we may be so conceited that we think that a minister should be like that and I am just the right one. Not necessarily so! What is most important is that God selects you and calls you. We often say "Do not look at a person superficially" and this is certainly not without a good reason. But when you look carefully at the text, you should say: We have to look at men or women as God looks at them.

In fact we must be careful not to look at a person as people look at others in general. The key is how to look at men. The scripture clearly says, "The Lord does not look at things the way we look at them. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." God uses you and me because he has selected us. He chooses a new generation of servants. Why has God selected you? It must be that God finds something pleasing in you. What is interesting is that we do not know what that something is. After all, that quality is something different from what other people have. God looked at David and saw something that pleased him; he saw also what David would become. In verse 1, he says, "I have chosen one of Jesse's sons to be king." How does God look at you?

You have come to this camp as you may be actively considering full time ministry. Baptists maintain that all believers are priests, and so every believer ought to serve God though the mode of ministry can be different. We may not all be called to be ministers, but God will call men or women to shoulder the responsibility of a minister according to his will. Today, how does God look at you?

In verses 11 and 12 that follow, we see how the youngest child has been neglected. Even when it is clear that all of Jesse's sons have to be called to come, he was the very person to be overlooked. This may be due to his age or some other reasons. After all, no one has ever thought of him. Is that true to you? You have never thought of yourself as a minister?

In verse 12, it is interesting to note that the youngest child is "ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features" which is different from the description "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" in verse 7. The scripture describes Saul in I Samuel 9:2 as "impressive," the word also means "handsome," and we can see that Saul is tall and handsome. God chooses you for he finds some special feature in you that nobody knows. In the scripture that follows, it seems to imply that David was short in stature. What David and Saul have in common is that they are both handsome. Saul is tall and handsome while Jesse's youngest son is handsome together with something else. What is that something else? The scripture does not tell us.

In the last verse, verse 13 in I Samuel 16, the name David is mentioned for the first time. What must not be ignored is the Spirit of the Lord. From that day on, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power" which is in sharp contrast to "the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul" in verse 14.

"Take my life" can be understood as "How do I take my life?" Remember the woman in Mark 14 who broke her jar of very expensive perfume and poured it on Jesus' head shortly before the Passover. She took what was the most important and the most precious in her life to pour on Jesus. This demonstrates to us how we may use what is the most valuable in our lives. "Take my life" can also be understood to mean "How does God take my life?" In this passage in I Samuel, from beginning to end, God takes an active role. The reason why David is the leader for the coming generation is because the Spirit of the Lord has come upon David. "Take my life" means God takes my life and uses it for his purpose.

If you were David, what would you do? The scripture says that this eighth son of Jesse "is tending the sheep" while three of his elder brothers are good at fighting in battle. Just because he is sheep-tending by occupation, the next time he appears, he can win over Goliath. This is what we would never imagine. Chapter 17 says that David "chose five smooth stones from the stream" and defeated Goliath without putting on a coat of armor or a bronze helmet or carrying any weapon. God takes our lives just because in the past we have done something as we "have kept the sheep" and thereafter God can use us.

David was "ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features" which in itself is neither his strength nor his weaknesses. Many things in life are neutral in value, whether it is good or bad depends on how we look at it. In I Samuel 17:42, Goliath despised David simply because "he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome." God chooses us for there must be something he finds precious, and yet men do not. The main point is that God uses you, and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon David is just the beginning. David will have a long, long way to go because "take my life" suggests a long-term process. God's choice of David is described in I Samuel 16, and it is not until II Samuel 5 that David finally becomes the king of Judah and Israel. God uses David all his life, and yet David's life is not without faults.

In conclusion, some ministers may sin and fall from grace, causing God to reject them. It may be that it is inevitable for a generation of ministers to have their limitations and deficiencies so that God needs to raise up another generation of ministers. Will you be part of the new generation of ministers? Will God look upon some special features in you of which even you are unaware? "Take my life" can be understood as "How do I take my life" or "How does God take my life." Since God is in the leading role, you must trust God, knowing he looks at you and knows how he can use you.

True to What Is Entrusted

Dr. Clement Shum

(Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament)

Scripture: Amos 7:10-17

You must be surprised why one who studies the New Testament and the apostle Paul would choose an Old Testament text to preach. At first, I really wanted to talk about Paul, but I had been preoccupied with this scripture text of Amos 7:10-17 for several months.



This scripture records an important event in which two Israel's religious traditions — the prophetic tradition and the priestly tradition — were in conflict. Why are these two traditions in conflict? There was a man, Amos, who traveled a long way to Israel and even called up the king at his palace to utter something unpleasant. What was his message that was so unpleasant to the ears? According to the scriptures, Amos told the Israelite king Jeroboam that he would die by the sword and the northern kingdom would be destroyed with his people becoming captured and taken into exile. The northern kingdom is Israel. Simply because of this man who spoke in front of the king, his bold message then triggered a series of dialogues and gave rise to a conflict — a conflict between the prophetic tradition and the priestly tradition.

Why did Amos go to the northern kingdom to utter such a message? When we read the book of Amos once again, we will discover that the northern kingdom was in good shape, the national strength and people's livelihood were pretty good. But this is only a superficial observation. In this book, Amos, on behalf of God, made a speech, though only a few sentences, that drew a true picture of the northern kingdom. This explains why he dared to voice out such an unpleasant message before the king. Amos 2:6-8 reveals the real situation of Israel when Jeroboam was on the throne: Despite its national strength being strong, its people betrayed the innocent and distorted

the standard of truth and justice. The text also mentions that "father and son use the same girl" revealing how degraded their morality was. This simple description tells us why Amos stood before Jeroboam to declare his days were numbered and that Israel was doomed to be destroyed.

What Amos said about Israel at his time was quite like what is now the case in Hong Kong. Not to mention what happened here in the last month, you can see that the social and political situations in Hong Kong are not much different from that in Israel in the past. It is true that we have economic prosperity and enjoy law and order, but there are also great disparity in the distribution of wealth, a lack of justice with the rich often oppressing the poor. There is indeed a need for someone to stand up and speak out on behalf of God.

Chapter 7 describes Amos met with obstruction when he declared his shocking message. This obstruction came from Amaziah who served God in the northern kingdom. Having heard what Amos had to say, Amaziah sent a message to Jeroboam and then said to Amos: "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah." Note the verb Amaziah uses "flee" which implies to "escape" or "run for one's life," hinting that if Amos does not run, he may not have a chance of surviving. Amaziah said this because there were the king's sanctuary and the kingdom's temple at Bethel.

Amos delivers God's message but it was met with opposition and threat from a priest, even risking his life. Those who serve God will meet with similar kinds of problems and not enjoy plain sailing. The road of ministry is rugged and not the easy journey we may have imagined.

Do we have such a situation in Hong Kong? Yes, we do. When we serve God, we will meet with such problems which usually come not from non-believers but from the community to which we minister. I know a minister who has served in a church for several years and finally left in dismay. What this minister has done from beginning to end is one thing: To keep preaching the word of God to the congregation. The deacons of the church are not pleased, saying that the minister should teach the Bible less but rather organize more activities like picnics and barbecues to attract more people to increase the size of the congregation. That would have been a convenient thing to do if the minister had no convictions. As time went

by, conflicts increased. Not only the minister's spiritual life but also her physical health was adversely affected. At last she only chose to resign and sadly left the church.

The text tells us that there is one reason why Amos dared to go up to Jeroboam: God told him to. He answered the challenged Amaziah confronted him that he had had no sound background or good training. God simply told him to tell the northern kingdom was doomed and so he came. What made Amos so daringly courageous was God's calling. God's calling is not to be disobeyed. What God has commanded, man is to obey. He cannot say no. The minister mentioned above was also called by God to preach the word of God and therefore she had to do it no matter what.

What God has commanded is indeed very important. Let us look at Amaziah. He is the priest or the high priest of Bethel, the high priest of the northern kingdom. Maybe you feel surprised and ask, "Wasn't the high priest be found in Jerusalem in the south? Why was he found in the northern kingdom, in Bethel?" According to I Kings 9:1-3, the temple in Jerusalem is the place for worshipping God and therefore the high priest should serve God there. Why was he in Bethel? This has to do with Jeroboam I. After coming to power in the northern kingdom, Jeroboam I was worried that people in the northern kingdom would go to Jerusalem at least three times a year to observe religious festivals. Then he made two calves of gold and placed them at Dan and Bethel respectively and told his people to worship God there instead. For what Jeroboam had done, the Lord at once sent an anonymous person to declare his doom. This incident is recorded in I King 13.

In other words, the tradition of sacrifice in these places has never been approved and blessed by God. Why then did the northern kingdom have a high priest? Hasn't Amaziah heard about such a history? Why would he still be a priest in the northern kingdom? To whom did he actually minister? What was his purpose in ministry? The text tells us that the reason for his ministry is that "this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom." Clear, isn't it? This man was ministering to the king Jeroboam. This man does not have God's calling. He is doing his job for money, benefits, status and power. Brothers and sisters, we should be careful about our motives in serving God! If the motive is wrong, there will not be blessings

from God. Let us be clear about that. Do we really have God's calling? Does God really call us to take this road to serve God full time? This is of grave importance. Isn't it wrong to serve God? To serve God is correct but what is more important is whether God calls us to do. If we are not too sure about God's calling us to take this road, in the end we are bound to meet with difficulties. We may say that both Amos and the minister have met with difficulties. You bet, but God has mercy on them and holds them in his hand because they are faithful to what they are entrusted. But if your motive in ministry is wrong, God will leave you alone for it is you who unilaterally do what you do and not God's will.

In recent years there is a book that is popular among local Chinese churches and it is about how a middle-aged man should consider serving God in his remaining years after laboring half his life in the world. To do something correct and meaningful for God is right; to serve God is right; to lead a good life in the remaining years of one's life is also right; but is it because of these reasons that one steps onto the road of ministry? The most important consideration should be whether God calls us to do. We should ask ourselves before God: "Dear Lord, what do you want me to do? How would you want me to lead a meaningful life the rest of my life?" Do we really have God's calling? What do we come here to do? For those of us who have been serving God for many years, we still need to ask: "Are the things that I am doing today in keeping with what I was entrusted yesterday? Are the things that I am doing today the best ways to respond to the calling I received from God in the past?" If we do not reflect on these questions, then when the workload keeps increasing or there are setbacks along the road, we will go sideway from God's original calling. On the contrary, we may become more and more happy, experience more smooth sailing and be more successful. Unfortunately that may also drive us sideways too. It is better for us to ask God clearly, "O Lord, what actually do you want me to do?" If we are certain that it is God's will for us to step onto the road of ministry, please give a correct response: Be true to God. Other matters such as personal capability or economic pressure should not be our worries; leave them to God. Please respond with faith to this divine calling from above, and be truth to what God has entrusted to us: Be true to what is entrusted!

Opening the Classroom Doors——

Getting a Feel of Taking Classes

The campers were divided into groups and arranged to go into various classes as auditing students to take lessons together with our own students. Every camper has had one or two such a class-taking experience. What actually have they heard in those classes?

“In these two lessons, through the six dramatic marriages of Henry VIII in the 16th century, we retraced the beginning of reformation of England and hence explained the factors that molded the structure and practices of the Anglican Church.” (Dr. Nathan Ng: Church History)

“To follow Jesus means to walk the road treaded by Jesus; to be Jesus' disciple is not something about rational understanding and the study of Jesus' deeds and words but something to do with relationship building, identifying with Jesus and accepting his style of living.” (Dr. Clement Shum: New Testament Message)

“Full lament has complaint, ventilation of frustration, turning point, renewed faith.” (Dr. Jerry Moye: Old Testament Interpretation)

“After a relationship of trust is established between the client and the minister, the counseling process can be more effective and the minister can then through questioning and even confrontation help the client face himself / herself and face God who is full of love and truth.” (Dr. Desmond Choi: Principles of Pastoral Care and Counseling)

“Leon Morris states that the Christian way is never a way of rigid conformity to a system. 'It is one of the curious things in life that Christians have all too often neglected this [freedom]....'” (Dr. Lindsay Robertson: Systematic Theology)

“To Karl Barth 'dogmatics is ethics' and Christianity requires us to act according to what one believes Knowing and doing should be in unison and never separated.” (Dr. Vincent Lau: Christian Ethics)

“The influence of Plato to Christian theology consists mainly in turning God into a deity alien to this world and then further making him apathetic to the suffering of this world.” (Dr. Andres Tang: Introduction to Western Philosophy)



Two Campers' Responses

Brother Wan and sister Yin is a young couple who joined the camp because Yin was prepared to take full time seminary study while Wan hoped to accompany his wife and seek God's will together. As a result, what did they experience in this two-day camp?

Wan: In the camp, I spent more time thinking about serving God and if one day God calls me, I believe I will make a genuine response. But at this moment I clearly know my role to be “the supporting half” backing up my wife who will take the road of full time ministry.

Yin: A while ago I talked to one of the professors and her analysis was right and her suggestion was in line with my

need. What impressed me most was the chapel message. We joined one more chapel than other campers because we made the mistake of joining the chapel on the first day. Both chapels were good and the two teachers' sermons gave us important advice.

Wan: The group meeting last night was rather in great haste but the one we had this afternoon was different. We had sufficient time for the individual sharing. We were all strangers to one another at first but because of our Christian faith, we began to have an open, honest sharing and mutual supplication within the time allowed. For this I was grateful to God!

Yin: Before joining the camp, my husband and I were worried that he would have to live in the male students' quarter and I, in the female students' quarter. As it turned out, we were assigned to stay in the married students' quarter; this

was beyond our expectations! Being together in the same room, we had the opportunity to stay up late to pray last night. I felt that my husband had made a big sacrifice: In order that I could study in a local seminary, he had given up a secured livelihood in England and returned to Hong Kong with me. We know that we have been going in this direction but when we prayed together, we found that God had not only called me but my whole family. That moment, God gave both of us an open heart so that we could better

understand our respective love and prompting in the Lord.

Wan: Last night we first listened to Rev. Lam's sermon message and then we shared and prayed in our group. After that, both of us prayed together. We were amazed at the perfect timing when we prayed, it was like putting the isolated pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. As a result, I now have a bigger, clearer picture!

Different Lives Have Different Promptings

Every life created by God is distinct. In these two days, although campers were always together, what each of them saw, thought and felt touched in the heart would not be entirely the same. The following are excerpts of some of the responses of the campers who wrote them down before leaving the camp.

- ▲ God has changed me in the camp as I began to let go of my tenacious thought patterns by not bargaining with God. At this moment I came to realize that when I walk on God's road, I have to take the road first and then God will pave it and lead my way one step at a time. A moment ago when I quietly read the Bible, God gave me a piece of advice: One man cannot serve two masters. If I keep asking God to help me solve this and that problem, then I would ask myself whether I want to minister to the world or minister to my own self.
- ▲ The two student leaders who shared with us in our group that despite their being inadequate in many ways, God still uses them. This kind of sharing helps me wipe out my own worries and boost the confidence as I am always too conscious of my deficiencies.
- ▲ Some of the participants were troubled by problems like economic pressure, academic qualification and family, but I have none of such obstacles except one of HKBTS's entrance requirements, "be committed to the call of God to full time Christian ministry," which makes me have a second thought. I yearn for more spiritual knowledge and theological knowledge, but what I saw and heard in the camp suggests that I need to hear God's calling first. The

professors reminded us not to limit God to our mode of thinking but rather pay attention to how God speaks to us. I have peace in my heart for I believe God will give me a suitable ministry post no matter whether I will be a full time minister or not.

- ▲ I am happy because at first I could only have one day's holiday and as a result, I could join the whole two-day camp and I learned a lot. Through the sermon messages, God led me to clarify his calling for me, and I got strengthened and encouraged by campers' sharing. In the past, I have evaded the thought of full time ministry, but now I hope to take the first step forward in that direction.
- ▲ In the past I often said I need to seek God's calling but now I find that if God really calls me, do I truly want to consecrate my life to God? Am I willing to respond? I should ask God to lead and change me as he shows me the way.
- ▲ In the camp, I have found many people like myself with similar worries and struggles. Now I have become much relieved, knowing that in the future if I study in a seminary, there will be many co-walkers. In just two short days it is amazing that we could so openly and frankly share and support one another. I felt moved. Whether or not we apply to study in a seminary, I hope each of us will try hard to advance in our faith.





A Visit to Shek Pik Prison: A Warm Current in Cold Weather

With the help of Minister Cheng Kwan-yip from the Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association, the Student Union's Missions Department organized a team of nine students, who on January 17, paid a visit to Shek Pik Prison for adult offenders. Incidentally on that day a cold air current struck Hong Kong. At Tung Chung in Lantau Island, our students took a bus to Shek Pik and then walked for about 10 minutes up a steep road to the maximum security Shek Pik Prison. The meeting was divided into two sections: The morning and afternoon sections. There were more than 40 prison inmates attending the meetings, most of whom were non-Christian youngsters. The following is one of our students' sharing.

Ng Chi-lok (2nd year, B.A.P.S. program)

I still remembered the time in 2004 when our church visited Lo Wu Correctional Institution, a minimum security institution for short-termed prisoners. But Shek Pik Prison is a maximum security prison requiring us to walk through five doorways from the entrance to get to the place where the meeting was held. There was an ear-splitting sound of heavy metal knocking together when the door was closed. Moreover, our belongings had to be left in the store room and our whole bodies were thoroughly searched by a metal detecting device. What is more, we were total strangers to the prison environment and the prison inmates, merely knowing that they came from complicated backgrounds. All these inevitably made us feel a bit frightened and anxious.

We thanked God for his grace allowing the preparation procedure to go smoothly as we arranged fellow-students to lead the singing, give testimonies and share the gospel message. What was more amazing was that although the prison chapel was under renovation that day and we had to meet in the canteen, God graciously prepared some musical instruments (the guitars and an electronic synthesizer) to make the meeting a success. In leading the prison inmates to sing and pray, we witnessed the mighty power of the Holy Spirit: The seemingly hard-hearted men who remained aloof at first gradually made

eye contact with us, became more attentive and even sang and prayed with us. They actively raised questions

about faith, showed no resistance against the Christian gospel and shared their lives with us without any embarrassment. Even though we were in the prison ward, at that moment no one felt worried or anxious. There was no darkness or feeling of guilt but an atmosphere of being a family.

Time passed quickly, and as we were about to leave, we shook hands with the inmates and I even gave each of them a hug. One of them spoke to me, "It has been a long time since I was last embraced. I almost forgot that feeling of warmth!" At that time I saw that sturdy man's eyes were watered and I remembered the words of Matthew 5:45b: "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Each of these prison inmates is created in the image of God, and God loves them, how can we not care for them! Although on the surface they were unwilling to listen to our words, in their hearts they carefully listened. This was what I had not expected. From these responses I came to know that they were in need of care and help from others and longed for people to visit them. Their reception to the gospel gave me encouragement to equip myself better. I think if we are willing to open a small door, they will open a bigger door for us. It all depends on who takes the first step forward. Of course, if you don't ever open your door, just sit still and talk, that will be meaningless for you practically do not get in touch with their world. I still remember a former prison inmate once said, "This group of people being sentenced to imprisonment will never think of stepping into a church or letting themselves quiet down to listen to the gospel, and yet Jesus does not forsake each one of them!"

I hope and pray that we can encourage more people to participate in the prison ministry and bring Christ's word of life, the light and warmth of love to those in our prisons.

"Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well." (Ecclesiastes 11:6)



Against the cold wind, our students brought the warmth of the Lord into Shek Pik Prison.



The Church and the Gospel :

Beginning with the Theological Conversation between Howard Yoder and Donald McGavran

Dr. Vincent Lau

Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Christian Ethics)



"Tremendous church growth is going on in the world today."¹ This is the opening sentence in *Understanding Church Growth* by Donald A. McGavran, the founder of the church growth movement. This was an epoch-making statement.

Since the 1970s, the church growth movement has a strong impact upon evangelism worldwide, and church growth has become a well-established school of thought in global Christian theological seminaries. Moreover, the discussion of church growth movement has been in the ascendancy in the churches of the west. In February 1973 the Institute of Mennonite Studies organized a symposium on the theme, "The Challenge of Church Growth," among their speakers was John Howard Yoder. In his paper at that meeting, Yoder reiterates his strong commitment to church growth as a means of propagating the gospel and adding forces to missions. At the same time, he expresses his reservations regarding the soundness of the theory and the effectiveness of the strategies missionary administrators have devised to implement church growth.² He is clear to say that the purpose of a theological conversation should be to serve the church and support the brethren. While Yoder admits criticism can be passive and negative, he emphasizes that criticism at its best expresses a responsible concern for the person or a theological respect for the idea analyzed. In his paper, he expresses his firm hope that his interpretation of the church growth theory can be taken as constructive criticism.³

Beginning from the 1980s, church growth has become a hot topic among local church pastors and ministers. Even now, talks and training sessions on church growth draw a capacity crowd, suggesting that the topic is as popular as ever. (The theological meaning of this phenomenon is reserved for a later article.) Due to limited space, this article will focus on Yoder's dissertation in order to give a general view of his theological criticism of church growth theory. Our intention

here is to reflect deeply upon the issue of the church and the gospel. The writer will first introduce Yoder's theological perspective on the concept of church growth, will then explain Yoder's understanding of the church and the meaning of the gospel in relation to baptism, and will finally call readers to join him in reflecting upon the challenge of Hong Kong churches today.

Yoder's Theological Analysis of the Concept of "Church Growth"

Yoder uses 'The New Humanity' as the heading for the last section of his article "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective" to analyze the theological meaning of "church growth" in the New Testament. Its content can be divided into three areas as discussed below:

I. The Meaning of the Gospel

Yoder asserts that the apostle Paul introduces the nature of the church in Ephesians 2 and 3, pointing out that the Church must achieve unity between Jews and Gentiles. From a consideration of their cultural, ethnic and religious differences, the two groups of people are originally incompatible. Since historically the Jews have embraced the law while the Gentiles have had no law as their moral guide, the two groups must be seen as two very different kinds of people with a deep division and a high wall separating them. Despite their seemingly irreconcilable differences, Paul points out that according to the eternal plan as revealed by God, a new humanity is to be created among these two groups, and what destroys the wall separating them is the gospel. In fact, what "destroys the wall" is neither the fruit of the gospel, nor the goal of the gospel, nor the means of the gospel: It is rather the gospel itself, as expressed in the person of Jesus Christ. This is the central issue debated by Paul and Peter as recorded in Galatians 2. Paul strongly opposes Peter when he avoids eating with the Gentiles.

To Paul, Peter's action appears to create two churches, one for the Jews and the other for the Gentiles, while the two groups acknowledge each other but their cultural differences separate them. To Paul, Peter's action radically denies the central message of the gospel. Yoder makes it clear that the growth of the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the central theme of Acts 10 to 15. However, Yoder then is quick to point out that the emphasis is not primarily on numerical growth of membership but rather on the church's growth in overcoming the cultural barrier and on the church's expansion as it unites people of different ethnicities.⁴ In short, the gospel is Jesus Christ who has destroyed the wall and a new humanity is thus born, that is the church.

2. Church Growth Strategy

Can we actually find records about church growth strategy in the New Testament? Yoder argues that we cannot. He asserts that no "self-conscious strategy-making" for church growth can be found in the New Testament and there is no such "self-conscious strategy-making" thought among the early church's missionaries. In fact, apostolic church growth is often an accidental outcome of other events. Acts records that the apostles preached everywhere and records people's reaction to the gospel of Christ, which was sometimes positive and sometimes negative. From this, we can tell that the number of people coming to Christ is not the author's primary concern. When compared with the ministry in Jerusalem, the evangelistic results in Athens, Ephesus and Lystra are far inferior; yet there is no sign that the author is upset. Therefore, Yoder asserts that the concern of the apostolic church is not the increase of church members but the theological significance brought about by the gospel in destroying the wall dividing people of different ethnicities and the work of the Holy Spirit.⁵

3. The Main Themes of New Testament Books

From a comprehensive survey of other New Testament books such as James, I and II Peter and Revelation, Yoder finds that it is difficult to relate them to "church growth." The context and challenges faced by churches are related to the vision of a little group of scattered people suffering innocently yet enduring with patience. To them, to be faithful to God does not mean they must successfully win more lost souls. Their only call is this: Do not get annoyed by the imminent sufferings but make it clear to the world what our hope is. These churches never paid attention to strategy, but rather remained a little flock in the midst of the world, facing the hostility of the world without ever losing hope.⁶

Looking at the Church and the Gospel from Baptism

In his book *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World* (1992), Yoder discusses in detail the relationship between baptism and the new humanity.

As is generally known, Paul is a great missionary whose letters to the churches are directed at problems faced by the churches he has established. These local churches, founded by missionaries in Galatia, Ephesus and Corinth, are bound to have members who are Jews and Gentiles. Paul requests that as a community, church members should worship, pray and break bread together regardless of their ethnic origins. However, to the Jews and the Gentiles, Paul's request causes them to face a dilemma and so they grumble. Both groups think that due to their cultural differences, Paul should not put them to shame. In response, Paul defends his own instructions in II Corinthians 5, explaining why he wants the Jews and the Gentiles to eat together.

Paul says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Corinthians 5:17) Yoder holds that "a new creation" (is the translation in NIV version while the NEB version is "a new world") comes close to the original meaning of Paul: We Christians are a community of new-born people and a renewed community who are no longer individuals.⁷ Actually, the target readers of these letters are the whole church, not individuals. In other words, individualism has never been the teaching of the Bible and so individualism should never be a part of the church. Paul points out, "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view..." (II Corinthians 5:16) According to NEB, a more accurate translation should be "ethnic," that is "to regard no one from an ethnic point of view." Yoder regards verses 14 to 16 as having a deeper level of meaning: When we are baptized into a church, everyone's former ethnic difference and social status disappear, meaning that the identity of the Jews and the Gentiles will no longer exist. Therefore all the taboos due to one's ethnic origin will be removed. As part of the body of Christ, that is of the same family, church members should worship, pray and break bread together.⁸

When Paul writes to the Galatians, he teaches them something similar: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jews nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27-28) Throughout the book of Galatians, this unity in Christ refers to their being God's children

(Galatians 3:26; 4:5-7); in Galatians 6:15, Paul also points out whether they are circumcised or not, they are a new creation. Therefore, he also urges the Galatians Christians to let go of the ethnic problem.⁹ As to the Ephesians, Paul tells them: "For he...to create in himself a new creation out of the two, thus making peace." (Ephesians. 2:14-15) Paul uses the words "a new creation" and "peace" and clearly points out that the dividing wall between the Jews and the Gentiles has been destroyed by the death of Christ. This is in line with what he says in Galatians 3:28.¹⁰

Yoder emphasizes that while the words Paul uses in these three passages are different, the meaning is the same. Baptism is an action uniting the Jews and the Gentiles and a celebration of their unity in Christ. Baptism represents the birth of a new creation; ethnic and cultural barriers and estrangement have been demolished by the death of Christ; believers will no longer be divided by their ethnicity, social status and gender but will be treated as equal as they live together peacefully.¹¹ In fact, to the society in those days, the life practiced of this new creation brought an absolutely epoch-making shock to their world and was the first step towards social equality.

The Challenge of Hong Kong Churches Today

Maybe we would say: Members of Hong Kong churches today are speaking the same mother tongue, have the same ethnic origin, and have a high degree of homogeneity: Those who speak Cantonese join a Cantonese-speaking church, those who speak Swatow join a Swatow-speaking church, those who speak Putonghua join a Putonghua-speaking church and those who speak English join an English-speaking church. How would the problem mentioned in Paul's letters occur in Hong Kong?

If we ascertain that the problem faced by the early church is related to the ethnic problem between the Jews and the Gentiles, then "destroy the dividing wall" and "cross-ethnic reconciliation" seem to have nothing to do with today's churches. But Yoder reminds us that to today's churches, Ephesians 2 and 3 do not refer only to Jews and Gentiles but to "the borders of the church," that is the border between Christians and non-Christians, the border between the church and the world and this is the theological challenge that we truly and continually face.¹²

In Hong Kong churches today, do we have "the church borders" as pointed out by Yoder? Let us reflect on the following:

First of all, there is a wide gulf of social division in Hong Kong society, the most conspicuous one being the discrimination against mainland immigrants. Besides, there is also the ethnic problem that should not be ignored. For example, the discrimination against people from South Asia. In fact, the new generations of these people from South Asia have been born and bred in Hong Kong and can speak fluent Cantonese. For example, Gill Mohindapaul Singh is an actor on local television. However, these people are stereotyped and regarded as a group who is lazy and often abuses the social security scheme. Please honestly ask yourself: Do we have no discrimination against these "non-native ethnic minority groups"?

Since most of the churches in Hong Kong have members from the middle class, can we truly accept and embrace friends from the lower social strata? Can some mainland immigrants who have lower educational level, who cannot speak fluent Cantonese and who are a bit vulgar in their taste of life be welcomed into our church circle? Can we genuinely and unceasingly care for their physical and psychological needs? Can they be treated as equals? Are we willing to share with them what we have? Are we readily equipped to minister to mainland immigrants and those non-native ethnic minority communities residing here?

Another point worth considering is this: Many churches today (especially those middle class churches with a few hundred members) are unwilling to launch a ministry for grass-root people. A possible reason is a great difference in background. Thus, even if such a ministry is launched, the worship service for members is often classified according to members' social background. A possible motive is that it is easier to minister to a homogeneous community. That means it is easier to have more effective ministerial care and so maybe the ultimate consideration is church growth. Of course, there can be another reason as a defense: It is out of the practical idea that "like draws like" or "birds of a feather flock together." Such an arrangement is meant to reduce stress and conflict due to members' diversity in background and so coagulate members to lead to church growth. However, isn't such stress and conflict what members should learn to overcome in church life? It is through fellowship with brothers and sisters from different social backgrounds that we learn to understand the needs of others and accept different viewpoints. In so doing we broaden our horizons and eliminate the blind spot of self-centeredness. Although this kind of adjustment in interpersonal relationship is a hard lesson to learn, isn't it the kind of discipleship that



From the Vice President and the Dean

The Joy of Prayer

Joshua Cho

I have come to treasure prayer more and more in these few years. I find myself constantly thinking about prayer, studying the subject of prayer and practicing prayer in my daily life.

Prayer has become as natural as breathing and eating. Prayer has become the most basic reality of my life, an important aspect of my effort to lead a life of faith and the force permeating my daily life and action. In prayer I can be silent before God, listen to his voice and experience the reality of his presence. I have discovered that prayer and living have merged.

When prayer has filled and quickened a person's life, his or her life is no longer a heap of fragments. Prayer is an expression of our relationship with God and it changes our lives. In our communion with God, we discover that prayer is broad enough to cover the full range of our life experience: Our pain and happiness, our remorse and redemption, and our death and new life. A person of prayer is empowered to apologize for impetuosity; seek forgiveness for pride; feel shame and contrition and find enlightened to recognize hypocrisy; be willing to submit oneself to God in search for truth, goodness and beauty; be willing to overcome shyness and fears by rising and drawing near to those in need of love; be willing to obey God, to become devoted to loving oneself, loving others and loving God and to share the joy of life with others. Such life transformation leads one to focus on love and manifest love as the center of a life of prayer. A person of prayer loves both God and men while a man without prayer can never fully love God nor man.

is beneficial to us? Isn't that the very reason for Paul to reproach Peter as mentioned above? We need to reflect upon the following questions: Is this kind of worship service that is classified according to members' social background practiced today in order to facilitate effective ministerial care and church growth contrary to Paul's teaching? Will it unconsciously intensify the problem of "the borders of the church"? Is a heterogeneous church more in line with biblical principles and does it have more in-depth theological significance than a homogeneous church? Even if there are research findings today showing that there is a higher possibility for a homogeneous church to have faster church growth than a heterogeneous one, should the church stick to biblical principles, make the harder choice and forsake the quest for effectiveness? Undeniably, in essence, the quest for effectiveness and church growth can be positive or at least neutral in value judgment; nevertheless, when it comes into conflict with our principle in faith and biblical truth, we need to be careful.

Yoder points out that the gospel destroys the wall dividing ethnicities (you and me). The one who destroys it is Jesus Christ who is the gospel in all its fullness. Baptism represents the birth of a new humanity. The ethnic and cultural barriers and estrangement have since been destroyed by the death of Jesus Christ. Today's churches in Hong Kong may not have the ethnic problem found in those days, but what about the border between the church and other communities in our society? Is the local church ready to embrace a non-native ethnic minority community? Does it have sufficient vitality to emulate the early church when suffering comes: To testify hope with its members' lives and live out the Christian faith through their lives?

¹ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, rev. and ed. C. Peter Wagner, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 3.

² John Howard Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," in *The Challenge of Church Growth – A Symposium*, Institute of Mennonite Studies – Missionary Studies No. 1, ed. Wibert R. Shenk (Scottsdale: Herald, 1973), 31, 46-47.

³ Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," 31.

⁴ Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," 43-44.

⁵ Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," 44.

⁶ Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," 45.

⁷ John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992), 28.

⁸ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 28-29.

⁹ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 29.

¹⁰ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 29.

¹¹ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 29-30.

¹² Yoder, "Church Growth Issues in Theological Perspective," 44.

However, prayer is a paradox: It is something we must continue learning throughout our lives, and yet it is a gift given by God. On the one hand, despite all the difficulties in life that seem to swallow us up, we need all the more to learn to pray and draw closer to God. On the other hand, when we pray to and seek after God, we begin to realize that God has been with us and has even promised to give us himself. Prayer has become the mode through which we respond to and share God's love. If we are willing to seek God, he will appear before us; if we thirst to embrace God, God will be in our midst.

Without realizing it, I have been serving in HKBTS for eight years. Throughout my ministry, there have been both difficulties and joy. HKBTS is the place where I studied 25 years ago. Now HKBTS is the place where my character is being formed. Facing the challenges of life with its winds and billows, I turn to God's love which enchants me, sustains me and teaches me how to pray.

Since I first came here to teach eight years ago, I was touched by the passion for prayer of a group of office staff members, mostly women. Every Monday at 1:30 pm, this group continues to this day to assemble after lunch to pray earnestly for one another and for the Seminary. I have been touched by the purity of their love for God. It is God who opened my heart to feel their passion for prayer and allowed these women to teach me the perseverance of prayer.

I am one who has always worked hard as a student of theology, likes to think about and wrestle with complex problems of faith, one who like the challenge of setting up a system of theological thought, delivering sermons and writing articles on prayer. Nevertheless, my passion for prayer cannot be compared with the devotion of that group of staff members who has received no formal theological training. They love God with pure hearts and they have influenced and shaped my theology.

In the past, I received strict systematic theological training and one of the responsibilities of a theologian is constantly to reformulate and analyze doctrines. Ever since I assumed the duties of the Dean of Academic Studies, I have shifted over to

the study of ethics, especially the ethics of character. I made this change with the hope that I can learn more about the "practical" wisdom of "being a man" and "managing things." This has become an important transition point in my life of study and ministry. But I later find out that ethics and the attempt to live the virtuous life are limited since the rational mind is so limited when it comes to man's immense problems. Therefore, I have a growing interest in studying spiritual theology and actually spending more time in prayer. I find myself praying throughout my daily ministry, while walking briskly as an exercise in the evening, during and after a conversation with students or colleagues, while joyfully chatting with friends and in the midst of life's inevitable storms and billowing waves. I especially like to pray with friends. This is what I have come to experience: As friendship increases, the urge to pray together also increases; while the desire to pray together increases, friendship deepens all the more. This is a wonderful experience in which I come to feel love in prayer, the love between God and man. This is another "transition" of my life. My good friend said to me, "Joshua, I am amazed how you have been changed by your growing interest in spiritual theology and prayer."

It is true that the more we pray with friends, the more friendship deepens and the more we love God. A few months ago, I got to know a person who is a C.E.O. of an organization, and since our first meeting we have met every month to share the joys of our life experiences. Although we were strangers until recently our friendship has developed into a deep one. Although it was he who first came to talk to me, hoping I could be his mentor, I soon made it clear I dared not assume this role. Instead I suggested we mentor each other as we shared friendship.

Every time we meet, I share with him some of my theological reflections and experience while he shares his experience in the commercial field where he works at management level in an organization. Much to my amazement and joy, these conversations are always sweet and enriching. He has the insight in the field of management and together with a heart of passion and purity before God. God has combined his "insight" and "purity." It seems that this is an outflow of a deep

prayer life. A man of prayer can be as shrewd as a snake and as innocent as a dove. His life is a God-transformed life.

In a conversation when I spoke about some possible decision I might make as I faced some of life's difficulties, he asked whether I saw any traces of God in the midst. I shared with him how over the last six months I had seen God's traces in big and small matters and God's presence and mercy. After my reply, I looked him straight in the eye and asked him, "Did what I just share answer your question, or do you have another question for me?"

Then he said in a bashful way, "Did you make your decision based on the wisdom of human flesh?" Having heard this further question, I myself felt both surprised and embarrassed. I thought to myself: "He is suggesting that I had made my decision from the impulses of the flesh, and I actually do this? Then I tried hard to explain that such a way of thinking was fairly initial, impromptu, based on unrefined feeling, things that just popped into my mind. Such thinking is not meant to be put into practice but to be modified according to real life situations. Meanwhile I could not but honestly face myself, admitting that behind those thoughts I had not concentrated on God or focused enough on him. I could not ignore his keen observation: Man should always focus on God's will. I could not ignore this sincere advice.

In fact, we often say "Focus on God's will." But at that moment with my new friend, God helped me see how solid, deep and pure his words were. What he said pierced my heart with a force I was unable to wipe out. While I felt ashamed and surprised at the same time I was overjoyed to receive such wise counsel. He is indeed my good friend.

Finally, we ended the conversation with prayer. We were pure in heart in our prayer, like small children saying their prayers to God. He earnestly prayed for me, praying with all his heart and strength for me. I listened carefully, taking in every word he said, listening to discern what was God's will in his words and envisioning the picture behind those words. I was amazed and I was glad. Surely God had spoken to me and let me know that I should be all the more pure and innocent before him.

This is what the fresh spiritual experience and fresh prayer experience that my friend brought me.

Certainly, such a prayer is like gentle water yet strong enough to break even a solid rock. Such prayer is like a stream of water droplets falling onto the surface of a rock, finally breaking it into pieces. In prayer, God's word is soft and gentle, yet it falls on the human heart which can be as hard as a rock. Prayer can open up a person's heart to receive God's word so that life can be broken, softened and nourished.

I offer up this prayer: May God bless this Seminary which I love so much to be a place of prayer so that every individual can purely bathe in God's blessing, learn to pray and be loved by God, love God and man, and be softened by God's word. If we decide to pray, though there are bound to be many currents and hard challenges in life, all will eventually pass us by because God's love and our brothers' and sisters' love will cause our souls to be joyful. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.

Academic Affairs News

1. Academic Seminar

This year's third academic seminar was held on February 21. Dr. Andres Tang, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture), spoke on the topic "On Kevin J. Vanhoozer's Speech-Act Theory Centered Theological Hermeneutics."

2. Mission Week Lectures

This year's Mission Week was held from March 11 to 13 at Sai O chapel. The theme was "Evangelistic Ministry on Campuses in Mainland China." Dr. Peter Ng, Dr. Ying Fuk-tsang and Dr. Abel Lam spoke respectively on the topics: "Purposes of Church School Revisited – Cases Studies of Chinese Christian Universities," "Competition of Two Ways? – Historical Review of Chinese Christian Student Movements," and "Evangelistic Ministry of Third Churches on Campuses in Mainland China: A New Development of Evangelistic Ministry Patterns on Campuses in Mainland China."

3. Putonghua Tea Time and Lunch

On April 2 and 3, there were Putonghua Tea Time and Lunch in which students and the faculty were encouraged to converse in Putonghua.

4. Morning Assembly

On April 17, Dr. Robert Jewett, the Emeritus Professor of New Testament from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, spoke on the topic "Romans as a Missionary Letter: Aimed at Overcoming Shameful Status." Dr. Yeung Hak-kun and Dr. Chow Siu-chun were the interpreter and respondent respectively.

5. Field Practicum Topical Lectures

On April 17, Rev. Tze Chi-kin and Rev. Tong Wing-man spoke on the topic "The Discipline of the Ministry of Life."

6. Sabbatical Leave

Dr. Kevin Mok, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Counseling Psychology) took his sabbatical leave from January to May.

From the Chaplain

Rev. Brian Lam (Chaplain)

The Reality of Spiritual Community Life

When was the last time someone asked you, "Have you prayed to God recently?"

In the Seminary, all the teachers, students and staff should theoretically be mature Christians. Ideally, we should all have a time of solitude and regular prayer life. In reality, this may not be the case.

When did someone lately ask you, "Have you prayed to God recently?"

What would you feel if someone asked you such a question? Would you feel offended? Would you say to yourself: How dare you ask to check on my spiritual condition? Who do you think you are? Or do you feel pleased and grateful for there is someone who truly cares about you? Of course, it also depends on who that person is to ask, "Have you prayed to God recently?" If it is my dear wife, I will be very happy. If he/she is a close colleague and friend, I will do some self-introspection to see if it is God who is speaking to me through him/her.

Last Tuesday, the Spiritual Devotion Department of

the Student Union organized a noontime fast and prayer meeting. The student who led the meeting gently asked all those present, "Dear fellow members, how are you getting on lately?" As a result we had an in-depth sharing among ourselves about our recent stress and struggles around that time.

Last Wednesday, I led a growth group of eight graduating students. They looked back over the past few years of seminary life and fondly recalled the progress of their relationships. The importance of communion with Christian brothers and sisters was deeply felt and appreciated.

This Monday, we had our regular staff prayer meeting after lunch. One of the staff was about to leave us, switching to a new ministry that she had longed to have. The sharing and feedback from the other staff were natural and straightforward. As I listened, I appreciated the atmosphere of openness.

I may not need to ask you, "Have you prayed to God recently?" However, an important concern is: When did you last experience the reality of the spiritual life of a Christian community?

Admissions and Registration Office

Mandy Chung (Registrar)

Last winter, the number of cold days was protracted, and as our Sai O Campus is situated near the waterfront, the wind was extraordinarily strong and cold. In March, the weather grew warmer everyday. In early spring, the plants of HKBTS campus began to display the beauty of grass, flowers, plants and trees, putting forth their buds, shoots and leaves. In the midst of these bright and colorful plants, this year's graduating students were arranged to take their graduation photos with the Seminary's faculty and staff. On the morning of March 3, dozens of this year's graduates gathered at the chapel to take their graduation photos. What a joyful scene! It was a great day for different groups in the HKBTS's family to have a meaningful gathering.

The "Experiencing Seminary Life Camp" has just ended and there is a detailed report in this issue of the Seminary's *Newsletter*. Thus, I don't want to say more than is necessary. But here I want to share what made a deep impression on me in the camp. The Camp was held from February 27 to 28, when participants had to take a two-day leave from their jobs. I greatly admired those who were willing to do so and was tremendously encouraged by their openness to reflect and seek to know God's will for their lives. But what touched me most was the meeting in

which testimonies of God's calling were recalled and shared. As Registrar of the Admissions and Registration Office, I have to look through each of the application forms carefully, and so I am well aware of testimonies of each admitted student. In the Camp, one student and two alumni respectively shared how they struggled when God called them into full time ministry, how God helped them overcome one difficulty after another, and how God helped change the impossible into the possible. Although I was well aware of their experience, these familiar stories still touched my heart again! I am convinced that it is this passion of "being touched and still further touched" has become a great driving force for my ministry in HKBTS. If God has called you to go into full time ministry, please pluck up your courage to step on to this blessed road and be trained in the Seminary under the Lord's guidance. If you have any inquiry about admission into the Seminary, please call 2768 5130.

This summer, we will offer intensive courses on "Pre-marital & Marital Counseling" and "NLP—A Brief Approach & Its Application to Christian Counseling." In addition, the Fall Semester will commence in late August, and as usual, there are a few courses that welcome ministers and lay Christians to join as audit students. For inquiry, call 2768 5129 or log on the Seminary's website.

Lay Theological Education Department

Anna Tam (Director)

Children are pillars of the future society. Yet in this era, truth is hard to determine since and what is right gets mixed up with what is wrong. We find it difficult to "train a child in the way he should go," so that "when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22: 6). In metropolitan Hong Kong, children are bombarded with all kinds of influences in their various stages of growth. It is high time for the churches to seek cooperation with the family, minister to children properly, and help them form positive, right and wholesome values. Accordingly, LTED will launch the Diploma/Certificate Program in Children's Ministry in October this year to provide a holistic and systematic training in ministerial skills and basic training in biblical and theological education for Christians interested in or already involved in ministering to children aged six to twelve at church or in school (P.1 to P.6).

This program is mainly divided into two parts: "increasing one's knowledge" and "cultivating one's spiritual life," with a focus on the "family" and the "church." We will help students form the notion of a holistic ministerial preparation from the theoretical level in order to deepen their understanding and increase their knowledge of the children's ministry. We also take "cultivation

of one's spiritual life" seriously, expecting our students to set a good example to influence the children in their ministry and teaching. At the same time, we will guide students to understand the mutual relationship between children and their family, and encourage students to cooperate with the family in fostering the healthy growth of their children. Students' skills and confidence will be enhanced through field practicum. In addition, the program will invite professionals from various sectors to share their experience with students and thus broaden our students' horizon of understanding of the children's ministry. Students will also have the opportunity to share among themselves, pray for one another and form a mutually supportive fellowship.

In order to bring to the attention of our Christian brothers and sisters the importance of the children's ministry, and help churches and parents face the challenge of cultivating children in the new era, a seminar and a follow-up workshop were organized. The seminar was entitled "A Little More Love in the Family—A Family-based New Blueprint for Cultivating Children." Mr. Charles Yu and Ms. Shirley Loo were invited as speakers. Mr. Yu's topic was "To Mold a New Generation of Children by Using SQ, AQ, MQ and EQ," while Ms. Loo's topic was "To Look at the New Project of Cultivating Children from the Family." After the seminar, there were a number of follow-up workshops. The seminar was held from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm on April 19 at Mongkok Baptist Church.

Student Union

Chong Pui-kit (Chairperson)

Every year brothers and sisters from different churches continue to be called by God to be equipped in HKBTS to be God's good and faithful servants. But it is hard to receive sufficient training in just three to four years.

It may be easy if seminary students only need to study diligently and hand in homework assignments promptly. It may be a bit harder when there is also the field practicum and to put into effective practice what one has learned. However, on top of these, there are family life and family responsibilities to shoulder; a seminary student's mental and physical strength will be overdrawn at all time. To cope successfully with all these demands, a student must have tremendous strength just to maintain balance during these few years of demanding seminary study.

In order not to fall into a "formless and empty" state in these three to four years, a student must learn to set priorities. No one would say that we should neglect our families or our seminary studies; but at the same time, this will refrain us from participating more in campus life and from storing up rich memories for the rest of our lives. Surely does it mean that this is inevitable and we can only feel regrettable afterward?

Anyone around this campus is sure to notice the relationship of students and teachers is harmonious and intimate. Fellow students are generally willing to join our activities and the many other activities organized within the student body. Who dares to say that there is a loss in students' campus life? However, it still seems that something is missing. I sometimes cannot help but ask: Upon graduation, what does HKBTS mean to me? Surely it does not mean that what is remembered are one homework assignment after another, one examination after another, a pile of lecture notes

upon another, one activity after another!

Meditating and reflecting upon the past, from the clues and footprint inking, the gist of the problem gradually appears: Maybe between us and HKBTS, between us and our campus network a few white spots gradually appear and what these white spots swallow up is the feeling of being part of a family.

We are neither campers paying for hostel service nor the consumers of knowledge paying school fees in exchange for knowledge. As we are HKBTS's students who begin our full time ministry life history—being born and bred—here, we should be part of the HKBTS family. Besides being granted a certificate and an academic degree, what are the other more substantial things that we can enumerate ourselves and others about HKBTS and conjure up in our HKBTS memories?

"Be In Unison to Build, Be Connected to the HKBTS Family" is the theme for the Student Union this year. It is earnestly hoped that through planning and organizing various activities and the actual making by hand of the "little presents," those white spots can be repainted with the solid color of a family, the HKBTS family.

While we all have families, we do not have just one family. To us, the Sai O campus is not only a school but also a spiritual family to which we all belong. The relationship of this year's graduating class with the Seminary will come to a conclusion after their graduation from the Seminary. It is inevitable that a new chapter is bound to open. This poetic chapter that connects us to HKBTS will be filled and written with words handed down from one generation of students to the next with teachers and staff holding hands together until our Lord Jesus Christ puts a perfect full stop to it.

Distance Education Program

Anna Tam (Director)

The Distance Education Program has been established for 10 years. Last November we held a thanksgiving meeting to remind ourselves of the ways we had experienced God's grace. There was neither a lustrous spectacle nor eminent guests. Instead, only members of DEP—instructors, students and their family, graduates, partner organizations and staff—gathered together to praise the Lord for his grace in the past 10 years.

That day, President Alfred Kong exhorted us, using the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 as his text. Besides, there were a number of people enumerating the grace of the Lord. Different members from DEP testified how their lives had been renewed by God's grace as they studied our programs. The first testimony was a female graduate of the "Spiritual Light Project," a program designed for the needs of visually-impaired Christians. She mentioned how God had used the DEP study to give her encouragement so that she furthered her LTED bachelor degree program study with no fear of difficulties by studying together with her visually normal classmates with the intention of ministering more effectively to visually-impaired Christians in the future.

Next was a former graduate from the "Onesimus Training Project," designed for converted inmates in correctional institutions. He told us of the way God changed

his life through taking a DEP's Bible Study Program. He also shared his experience as a minister of Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association today, helping those prison inmates who have lost their freedom after being convicted of crimes. Furthermore, he shared the blessing of ministering to the elderly in his church, glorifying God unceasingly.

Then, there was a career woman who has not only kept busy with her daytime job, but also must care for her family and small children. Under her almost impossible circumstances, she expressed her gratitude to God for allowing her to pursue theological study by correspondence and through a DEP's program, her spiritual life has been renewed and enhanced.

After that, a representative of our instructors also shared her experience of God's grace. She said that God encouraged her by giving her the opportunity of being a DEP instructor. Every time she read students' words of response, she realized how real and wonderful God is. The two-hour thanksgiving meeting passed by quickly and it was with reluctance that all the participants left with hearts overflowing with joy and gratitude to God.

We strongly believe that the God who has been leading DEP so far will continue to lead us in the coming 10 years and show us how to serve him in the ministry of equipping our fellow Christians.



Obituary

Dr. Edgar Carter Morgan

Dr. Edgar Carter Morgan went to be with the Lord in Seneca, South Carolina, U.S.A., on April 5, 2008. He was the Dean of Academic Studies of the Seminary from 1955 to 1979. During his 24 years of deanship, Dr. Morgan served twice as

acting president and once as interim president. He and Mrs. Morgan returned to Hong Kong to teach at the Seminary again from 1991 to 1996 and participated in the Seminary's 50th anniversary in 2001. The words and actions of Dr. Carter Morgan, the teacher-pastor and the man of God, spoke volume of his commitment to the Seminary and the church, and, above all, his love for God. A memorial service was held at the Seminary on April 29. Many alumni and friends from local Baptist churches were present to pay their final tribute to Dr. Morgan. Dr. Morgan will always be fondly remembered by our alumni, the Seminary and Baptist churches in Hong Kong.

Faculty News

- **Dr. Andres Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture) spoke on the topic "On Kevin J. Vanhoozer's Speech-Act Theory Centered Biblical Hermeneutics" at a seminar "How to Read the Bible: Authors, Text or Readers" co-organized by Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement and The Society of Virtue, Wisdom and Culture. Besides, Dr. Tang's articles, "The Divine Other and the Created Other in the Theology of Jürgen Moltmann" was published in *Regent Review of Christian Thoughts* Issue 7 (December 2007); "The Activity of Interpreting Scripture 'from Particularity through Universality to Particularity': Evangelical Faith and Biblical Studies" was published in *China Graduate School of Theology Journal* 44 (January 2008).
- **Dr. Joshua Cho**, Professor of Christian Thought (Systematic Theology) was the speaker at the 27th Spiritual Devotional

Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Hong Kong from February 27 to March 1. The theme was "My Home – My Lord: True Happiness Begins from God." The first three evenings were devotional meetings and the topics for each evening were "Be Friend with One's 'Self';" "Be Friend with 'God';" "Be Friend with 'Man'" while the fourth evening was an evangelistic meeting and the topic was "A True Friend."

- **Dr. Clement Shum**, Visiting Assistant Professor of New Testament, was the speaker at the Bible Seminar organized by Chinese Bible International Ltd. held on March 3 and 10. He spoke on the book of Colossians.

Visitor

Dr. Doran McCarty, former Director of Doctor of Ministry Program of Golden Gate Theological Seminary, visited the Seminary from January 13 through February 12.

Lay Theological Education Department

- **Student Recruitment into the Diploma / Certificate Programs in Christian Women Theological Training**

Courses offered from April to June:

Course Name	Lecturer	Venue	Date/Time
Methods and Skills in Evangelism	Ms. Wong Kit-fong	Hong Kong Grace Baptist Church	April 15 – May 20 (6 lessons) 9:30 – 11:30 am
Discovering Spiritual Gifts and Coordination in Ministry	Mrs. Celia Juergens	Mongkok Education Center	April 8 – May 13 (6 lessons) 9:30 – 11:30 am
Study of Genesis (Chapters 1-22)	Ms. Yeung Tung-ying	Mongkok Education Center	May 27 – June 24 (5 lessons) 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
Study of I & II Chronicles	Ms. Lee Chun	Mongkok Education Center	April 1 – May 20 (8 lessons) 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
The Many Faces of Emotion	Ms. Chan Shuk-han	Hong Kong Grace Baptist Church	May 22 – June 26 (6 lessons) 9:30 – 11:30 am
O.T. Book Study: Esther	Ms. So Man-yee	Mongkok Education Center	April 10 – May 15 (5 lessons) 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
The Journey of Women's Growth	Mr. Ng Sze-yuen	Mongkok Education Center	May 29 – June 26 (5 lessons) 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
New Testament Survey	Ms. Cheng Suet-ling	Mongkok Education Center	April 17 – June 26 (10 lessons) 9:30 – 11:30 am
O.T. Book Study: Judges	Mrs. Anna Tam	Mongkok Education Center	April 11 – May 30 (8 lessons) 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

• Student Recruitment into the Diploma / Certificate Programs in Lay Theological Education Training

Courses offered from April to June:

Course Name	Lecturer	Venue	Date/Time
Exploring World Religions	Dr. Eric Kwong	Mongkok Education Center	April 7 - June 2 (8 lessons) 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Apologetics and Mission Ministry	Mr. Leung Wing-sum	Mongkok Education Center	April 7 - June 2 (8 lessons) 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Getting in Touch with the New Generation	FES Staff	Mongkok Education Center	April 7 - June 2 (8 lessons) 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Human Resource Management in the Church	Mr. Yu Chi-man	Applied Theological Education Center	April 7 – June 2 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Music Ministry for the Church Elderly	Ms. Cheng Suet-ling	Mongkok Education Center	April 8 – May 27 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Christian Teaching Methods	Dr. Wong-Miu Yuk-ping	Mongkok Education Center	April 16 – June 4 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Process and Skills in Counseling	Mr. Kwok Chak-yan	Mongkok Education Center	April 10 – June 5 (8 lessons) 7:00 – 10:00 pm
Personality, Temperament and Ministry	President Alfred Kong	Mongkok Education Center	April 10 – June 5 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Recreation and Sports Ministry for the Elderly	Dr. Cheung Siu-yin Guest Lecturers: Dr. Chan Yee-hang Mr. Cheng Kai-chee	Mongkok Education Center	April 10 – June 5 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Care and Counseling for the Elderly	Dr. Kwan Yui-huen	Mongkok Education Center	April 10 – June 5 (8 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
N.T. Book Study: I Corinthians	Mrs. Anna Tam	Mongkok Education Center	May 30 – June 20 (4 lessons) 7:15 – 9:45 pm
Religious Activities in Campus	Headmistress Lo Oi-lan Guest Lecturer: Mr. Chan Mei-tak	Mongkok Education Center	April 11 – May 30 (8 lessons) 7:00 – 9:45 pm

Place of Tuition:

Hong Kong Area Hong Kong Grace Baptist Church (1A, Kin Bong Building, 27B Shu Kuk Street, North Point.)

Kowloon Area Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary Mongkok Center

(10/F., Chung Kiu Commercial Building, 47-51 Shan Tung Street, Mongkok.)

Applied Theological Education Center (7/F., Christian Center, 56 Bute Street, Mongkok.)

For inquiries, call 2711 2552, or log on our website www.hkbts.edu.hk/ited to download application forms.

• Opening Convocation Ceremony

Admission has been closed to the following programs: "Youth Mentor Training Diploma Program," "Church Administrative Affairs Diploma / Certificate Program," "Missions Training Diploma / Certificate Program," "Elderly Ministry Diploma / Certificate Program."

The Opening Convocation Ceremony was held on April 2 at the Mongkok Education Center. Please remember our new students in your prayers.

Distance Education Program

- A new diploma program will begin in September while the certificate program may begin at any time.

Correspondence and On-line Programs

Name of Program	Program Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Diploma in Bible Studies Program	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 a church pastor's recommendation	March and September	For the semester beginning in March Semester: Hong Kong: February 10 Overseas : January 25 For the September Semester: Hong Kong: August 10 Overseas : July 25
Diploma in Christian Studies Program	Designed for equipping students for ministry, the program helps students strengthen their foundation in the Christian faith, doctrine and theology.			
Higher Diploma in Bible Studies / Christian Studies Programs	Further studies for students completing the diploma program			
Certificate in N.T. / O.T. Studies Program	Introductory programs in Bible study	All are welcome	Register at any time	
On-line Certificate in New Testament Studies Program			Concession in fees is provided. Enquiries are welcome.	

Elective students: Students can choose correspondence courses according to their own interest. For details, please log on the "Distance Education" website.

Trial study of the on-line program is welcome: <http://distance.hkbts.edu.hk>.

• Topical Lecture

Topic : **Friends or Foes? The Relationship between Catholicism and Protestantism**
 Speaker : Dr. Nathan Ng (Associate Professor of Christian Thought: Church History)
 Content : Why did Catholicism and Protestantism go separate ways in the past?
 How do today's Protestant Christians look at Catholicism?
 This talk will discuss the intricate and complex relationship between the two religious faiths from the historical and religious perspectives.
 Date : May 31 (Saturday) 2:30 – 4:00 pm
 Venue : Applied Theological Education Center (8/F, Christian Center, 56 Bute Street, Mongkok, Kowloon)
 Registration : Free admission. For reservation, please call 2768 5105 or email deinfo@hkbts.edu.hk

For details, please log on the distance education website: www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist/

• Spiritual Light Project

The First Certificate in Old Testament Studies Program of the Spiritual Light Project jointly organized by HKBTS and the Christian Ministry to Visually Impaired Persons will begin in May and welcome application from visually impaired Christians.

The program is intended to guide students to complete their study of Old Testament scriptures, to heighten their understanding of the Bible and to consolidate and enhance their Christian faith, and empower their ministry. For inquiries, call 2768 5105.

Pastoral Continuing Education Center

Courses and talks offered from April to June Quarter

Course / Talk	Lecturer	Date / Time
Growth Group for Ministers (evening course)	Rev. William Lam	April 7 – June 2 (Mon) 6:30 – 9:00 pm
T-JTA Personality Analysis Training	Rev. Lam Wing-shu	May 26 – June 23 (Mon) 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Temperament and Spirituality	President Alfred Kong	May 26 – July 7 (Mon) 2:30 – 5:30 pm
Social Science Research Methods and Church Growth	Dr. Leung Wai-yin	July 7 – 28 (Mon) 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Co-organized with Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center:		
The Use of PowerPoint in Preaching	Mr. Kwan Kwong-chi	Group A: April 14 – 28 (Mon) 2:30 – 5:30 pm Group B: April 16 – 30 (Wed) 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
A Report on the “Battle” of Worship: In Search of a “Peaceful” Solution	Dr. Yau Tok-yui	May 19 (Mon) 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

A course pamphlet has been published. Readers can log on our website: www.hkbts.edu.hk

For application or inquiries: 2782 9787 by phone, 2630 1373 by fax or pce@hkbts.edu.hk by email. An application form can be downloaded from the Seminary’s website.

- Alumni Association members and graduates of HKBTS, ministers and seminary students of Baptist churches (including practicum students and students taking degree programs in our Lay Theological Education Department, full time students in the 14 member seminaries of the Hong Kong Theological Education Association) can have tuition fee concessions.

The Second Christian Leaders Management Program

The recruitment into the second Christian Leaders Management Program jointly organized by HKBTS and Peter F. Drucker Academy (Hong Kong) has been in progress. The program aims at training ministers and leaders in Christian para-church organizations to be outstanding leaders for the Christian community and our society. It is a five-month intensive program, comprises three units and is targeted at ministers and leaders in the Christian church or Christian organizations, the middle management staff in Christian organizations and Christian administrative staff in non-profit making organizations.

Publication News

Hill Road (issue 21) will be off the printing press in June and the theme is “Worship as Ethics.” There will be seven theme articles: “Ethical Dimensions of Worship in the Old Testament” (Wong Fook Kong), “The Place of Worship in New Testament Ethics” (Samuel Chia), “‘Present Your Bodies as a Living Sacrifice...’: An Investigation of Paul’s View of Worship with reference to Romans 12:1-15:13” (Clement Shum), “‘As It Is in Heaven’: The Lord’s Prayer in the Patristic Sermons on the Cultivation on Morality and Spirituality” (Justin Tan), “Worship: The ‘Right’ Relationship: A Lutheran Perspective” (Charlene Chang), “Worship as Ethics: A Yoderian



Visit” (Vincent Lau), and “Sacred Music: Its Ethical Formation, Approaching through Jeremy S. Begbie” (Andres Tang). There will also be several miscellaneous articles and book reviews.

Dr. Samuel Tang’s new book *The Psalms of Prayer (II)* will be published in June as volume 10 in the *Psalms Among Psalms* series. The book discusses 10 individual psalms of prayer and 6 congregational psalms of prayer. Following the format adopted in the series, each individual psalm is expounded under four sections: “general introduction,” “commentary,” “spiritual messages” and “digest.” It is suitable for pulpit, family and personal devotional use.

For subscription or inquiries, call the Publication Office at 2768 5168.

Alumni News

- **Alumus Lam Pui-kiu, Abel** (class of 1987) was ordained pastor by Kowloon City Baptist Church on December 26, 2007.
- **Alumnus Mok Siu-leung** (class of 2006) and Miss Kwong Lai-ming got married and the wedding ceremony was held at the Seminary's Sai O chapel on December 29, 2007.
- **Alumna Tse Kit-wai** (class of 2006) and Mr. Ngai Chun-yip got married and the wedding ceremony was held at Immanuel Baptist Church on January 5.
- **The Annual General Assembly** of Alumni Association will be held at HKBTS's Applied Theological Education Center on May 26.

Special Awards and Long Service Award Presentation Ceremony

The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary

requests the honor of your presence
and
offers praise and thanksgiving to the Lord
at the
Special Awards
and
Long Service Award Presentation Ceremony
on May 29, 2008 (Thursday)
at 7:00 pm
at Seminary Chapel, 1 Nin Ming Road,
Sai Kung North, Sai O, N.T.



Reply

I will support The Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary by

- ☐ praying for the Seminary's theological education ministry
- ☐ contributing \$_____ for
- ☐ Educational Fund ☐ Others: _____
- Name: _____
(Mr / Ms / Rev / Dr / Mr & Mrs)
- Address: _____
- Tel: _____ Fax: _____
- E-mail: _____

Donation Methods:

- ☐ **Crossed cheque** payable to
"Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary"
- ☐ **Cash** either deliver to the Seminary or direct pay-in to our
Hang Seng Bank Account No. "242-026144-003"

- ☐ **Credit card:** ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD

Cardholder's Name: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

Card No.: _____ Expiry date: _____

Amount: HK\$ _____

(Credit card charges are denominated in HK\$)

- ☐ **Monthly Autopay** by Bank Account or Credit Card —
autopay form will be forwarded to you

- 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 inquiry: Tel : (852) 2768 5113 or (852) 2715 9511
Fax: (852) 2768 5102

Thank you for your support !

Financial Report

General Fund, 1 December 2007 - 29 February 2008

	HK\$
Income	6,944,310.89
Expenditure	<u>7,443,181.33</u>
Deficit	<u>(498,870.44)</u>

DONORS REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2007

Education Fund (Church)

九龍城浸信會啟福音堂	1,000.00
上水浸信會	12,000.00
上環浸信會	2,000.00
大埔浸信會	10,000.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	1,000.00
佐敦道浸信會	750.00
旺角浸信會	7,669.40
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00
香港仔浸信會	24,445.00
香港浸信教會	83,500.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00
香港懷恩浸信教會	15,000.00
粉嶺浸信會	29,000.00
荃灣潮語浸信會	1,000.00
基磐浸信會	3,500.00
愛群道浸信會	6,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,000.00
廣林浸信會	1,000.00
興田浸信會	4,000.00
灣仔浸信會	90,000.00
觀塘浸信會	7,996.50
基督教宣道會華基堂	500.00
基督教豐盛生命堂	4,500.00
	HK\$ 312,560.90
Chinese Indep. Baptist Church-S.F.	<u>USD 540.00</u>

Education Fund (Donor/Organization)

輝煌基金會有限公司	50,000.00
伍玉嫻	100.00
江耀全伉儷	3,000.00
何惠珍	5,000.00
何譚惠如	2,000.00
吳國傑伉儷	500.00
呂志華	1,000.00
林威烈	1,000.00
胡文恩	300.00
徐詩雅	300.00
校友(#06021)	1,000.00
許鋒威	400.00
陳浩鵬	20.50
陳麗英	700.00
馮德華	300.00
黃華娟	100.00
葉煥章	300.00
劉永生	300.00
劉建紅	600.00
蔡永姚	5,000.00
蔡志強伉儷	500.00
鄭肖珍	2,000.00
鄭非兒	300.00
鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00

謝任生伉儷	1,000.00
謝金玉	600.00
龐凌玉珍	500.00
羅佩珊	100.00
羅凱慈	500.00
關德華	140.00
蘇愛蘭	1,000.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	500.00
聖誕義賣	8,340.00
頌主福音粵曲合唱團	1,000.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	400.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	20,000.00
無名氏	133.00
無名氏	100.20
	HK\$ 111,133.70
Connie Pong K. L.	USD 200.00
Glenn Chan	USD 100.00
	USD 300.00
黃慕聖	AUD 250.00

President Council

白中興	20,000.00
譚日旭	2,000.00
	HK\$ 22,000.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00
B. S. Smith Foundation Ltd.	120,000.00
香港中華基督教青年會	9,000.00
「百年樹人」基金	200.00
愛子	200.00
	HK\$ 134,200.00

56th Graduation Ceremony

(Ministerial Training Programs)	
基督教深井靈光堂	HK\$ 300.00

Administrative Development Fund

錢恩培	HK\$ 10,000.00
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Lay Theological Education Program

杜桂鵬	1,000.00
唐伍慧慈	1,000.00
鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00
蕭桂娥	1,500.00
聖誕義賣	8,340.00
	HK\$ 12,840.00

LTED Bursary Fund

張麗清	300.00
許小娟	1,000.00
許偉華	500.00
陳寶儀	500.00
鄭穗娟	5,000.00
聖誕義賣	1,040.00
	HK\$ 8,340.00

LTED Graduation Ceremony

觀塘浸信會	200.00
信徒普及神學訓練課程畢業同學	1,000.00
教會幹事訓練課程畢業同學	1,050.00
蒙召與裝備證書課程畢業同學	900.00
	HK\$ 3,150.00

LTED Book Fund

布官題	200.00
李鳳嫻	200.00
李燕珊	500.00
杜桂鵬	200.00
麥倩儀	200.00
麥瑞嫻	200.00
曾永昌	200.00
趙穎嫻	200.00
鄧廣智	200.00
關匡強	200.00
無名氏	200.00
	HK\$ 2,500.00

Distance Education Program

Ernest & Sylvia Ho	2,000.00
Wong Hoi Shan Elsa	1,100.00
何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
張麗清	500.00
鄧小寶	500.00
無名氏	1,000.00
	HK\$ 8,100.00

Local Filipino Program

張智理伉儷	5,000.00
陳麗英	200.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
	HK\$ 5,600.00

DONORS REPORT FOR JANUARY 2008

Education Fund (Church)

上環浸信會	2,000.00
大埔浸信會	10,000.00
大埔國際浸信會	1,500.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	1,000.00
以馬內利浸信會	7,000.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	1,000.00
西貢浸信會	6,000.00
佐敦道浸信會	750.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00
香港仔浸信會	29,609.90
香港浸信教會	83,500.00
馬鞍山浸信會	10,000.00
基磐浸信會	3,000.00
第一城浸信會	6,250.00
置富浸信教會	2,000.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,000.00
觀塘浸信會	2,871.00
浸信宣道會明道堂	500.00
基督教宣道會華基堂	500.00
基督教宣道會觀塘堂	6,900.00
HK\$	180,880.90
S.F. Chi.Bapt.Ch.Womens Missionary	USD 500.00

Education Fund (Donor/Organization)

香港華人基督教聯會	50,000.00
Kwan Yee Man	1,000.00
Lo Ying Hum & Wong Shui Kau	10,000.00
Tham Lai Yuow	2,300.00
王紹良	2,000.00
伍玉嬋	100.00
朱潔萍	2,000.00
江耀全伉儷	3,000.00
何譚惠如	2,000.00
吳國傑伉儷	500.00
呂志華	1,000.00
林麗花	100.00
胡文恩	300.00
徐詩雅	300.00
張晉伉儷	850.00
許鋒威	400.00

馮德華	300.00
黃華娟	100.00
葉煥章	300.00
劉永生	300.00
劉建紅	600.00
劉福全伉儷	500.00
蔡志強伉儷	500.00
鄭非兒	300.00
鄧炳光伉儷	2,000.00
鄭振華伉儷	2,500.00
龐凌玉珍	500.00
羅佩珊	100.00
羅凱慈	500.00
關德華	140.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	500.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	400.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	5.00

朱余輾英

President Council

譚日旭	HK\$ 2,000.00
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Ruth Plittigrew Memorial Fund

梁兆津伉儷	HK\$ 200,000.00
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Chu Wing Hon Book Fund

朱亮基	HK\$ 10,000.00
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Scholarship and Bursaries

北角浸信會-明義神學助學金	500,000.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00
愛子	200.00
HK\$	505,200.00

Annual Concert

Tham Lai Yuow	2,000.00
李正行	3,500.00
李明珠	2,000.00
陳寶虹	2,000.00
盧慕潔	10,000.00
盧錦華	300.00
無名氏	400.00
HK\$	20,200.00

Lay Theological Education Program

北角浸信會-明義神學助學金	500,000.00
李鳳嫻	100.00
杜桂鵬	1,000.00
蔡超儀	180.00
蕭桂娥	1,500.00
HK\$	502,780.00

LTED Bursary Fund

王秋蓮	500.00
杜桂鵬	1,000.00
HK\$	1,500.00

LTED Graduation Ceremony

青少年導師訓練文憑課程畢業生	HK\$ 3,968.80
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Distance Education Program

Ernest & Sylvia Ho	2,000.00
何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
鄒小寶	1,500.00
無名氏	30,000.00
HK\$	36,500.00

Local Filipino Program

Faith Fellowship Baptist Church	750.00
IBC Filipino (HK)	250.00
九龍菲語浸信會	780.00
何鏡煒伉儷	10,000.00
張智理伉儷	5,000.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
HK\$	17,180.00

DONORS REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2008

Education Fund (Church)

九龍城浸信會	165,000.00
上環浸信會	2,000.00
大埔浸信會	10,000.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	1,000.00
以馬內利浸信會	3,500.00
石澳浸信會福音堂	4,000.00
尖沙嘴浸信會	30,000.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	1,000.00
何文田潮語浸信會	2,539.10
佐敦道浸信會	750.00
沙田浸信會	14,000.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00
香港仔浸信會	25,973.00
香港浸信教會	88,300.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	2,400.00
恩典浸信會	10,000.00
粉嶺浸信會	4,000.00
基磐浸信會	3,000.00
愛群道浸信會	5,000.00
置富浸信教會	1,500.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,000.00
廣源邨禧年浸信會	6,000.00
興華浸信會	4,000.00
中國基督教播道會同福堂	15,000.00
基督教宣道會華基堂	500.00
HK\$	<u>405,962.10</u>

Education Fund (Donor/Organization)

Mr. & Mrs. Ip K.P.	1,000.00
尹燕詩	6,000.00
伍玉嫻	100.00
江耀全伉儷	3,000.00
何譚惠如	2,000.00
吳國傑伉儷	500.00
呂志華	1,000.00
李育謙	5,000.00
林麗花女士	600.00
胡文恩	300.00
凌氏	500.00
徐詩雅	300.00
許鋒威	400.00
陳麗英	500.00
馮德華	300.00
黃華娟	100.00
葉煥章	300.00
劉永生	300.00

劉建紅	600.00
蔡志強伉儷	500.00
鄭非兒	300.00
鄧志昆伉儷	1,200.00
鄧炳光伉儷	1,000.00
謝金玉	1,800.00
龐凌玉珍	500.00
羅佩珊	100.00
關德華伉儷	140.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	500.00
主知名	50,000.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	400.00
無名氏	300.00
無名氏	1,000.00
無名氏	500.00
無名氏	3,000.00
無名氏	30,000.00
無名氏	0.20
HK\$	<u>114,340.20</u>
Sally	<u>USD 100.00</u>
無名氏	<u>CNY 0.10</u>

President Council

譚日旭	HK\$ <u>2,000.00</u>
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Scholarship and Bursaries

梁憲孫伉儷	
「溫何惠英女仕紀念」助學金	50,000.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00
愛子	200.00
HK\$	<u>55,200.00</u>

Lay Theological Education Program

杜桂鵬	500.00
蕭桂娥	1,500.00
無名氏	20.00
HK\$	<u>2,020.00</u>

LTED Bursary Fund

楊東英	HK\$ <u>820.00</u>
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Distance Education Program

Ernest & Sylvia Ho	2,000.00
何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
HK\$	<u>5,000.00</u>

Local Filipino Program

New Beginnings Christian Fellowship-HK	427.50
張智理伉儷	5,000.00
陳麗英	200.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
HK\$	<u>6,027.50</u>

Annual Concert

元朗浸信會	250.00
聖公會聖巴拿巴堂	300.00
Liang's Limited	5,000.00
L. Y. NG	500.00
Natalie Choi	150.00
王敏芝	400.00
朱活平伉儷	2,000.00
朱蔡淑芬	500.00
何曼玲	500.00
吳梓明伉儷	1,000.00
吳麗卿	500.00
李樹輝伉儷	1,000.00
李錦霞	1,000.00
沈明義伉儷	500.00
招志強伉儷	1,000.00
林志強伉儷	1,000.00
韋秀蘋	200.00
倪承恩	1,000.00
張啓明伉儷	300.00
梁敏昌	2,000.00
梁蕙蘭	200.00
黃挺安伉儷	5,000.00
黃婉鈴	100.00
黃詠珊	500.00
黃熾英	500.00
鄒小寶	1,500.00
歐陽學詒	500.00
鄭肖珍	1,000.00
黎婉媚	1,000.00
羅志雄	500.00
關德華伉儷	500.00
饒炳剛伉儷	300.00
無名氏	500.00
HK\$	<u>31,200.00</u>

Precious Moments

December 17, 2007 Christmas Celebration

Teachers, students, staff and alumni
– As a community blessed and called
by God, we offer up our worship to
God in remembrance of the birth of
our Saviour.



◀ After the worship service, there was the moment of games and fellowship.



February 27-28, 2008 Experiencing Seminary Life Camp

31 brothers and sisters from different churches joined the camp.

After the chapel on February 28,
participants, the faculty, staff and
students who helped out in
the camp took a group photo.



February 29, 2008 Ministry for the 27th Baptist Devotional and Evangelistic Meeting

Our students who served as counselors on the last day
of the 27th Spiritual Devotional Meeting of the Baptist
Convention of Hong Kong helped give advice to brothers
and sisters called by God to full time ministry.
They took a photo with Dr. Cho, the then speaker.



**March 10, 2008 Day of Silent Retreat:
Experiencing the Sabbath**

Students participated in the traditional Sabbath feast and were introduced to the content of the Sabbath celebration so that they receive God's deliverance and guidance.



March 11–13, 2008 Mission Week Seminar
The theme for this year's Mission Week is "Evangelistic Ministry on Campuses in Mainland China." Dr. Peter Ng, Dr. Ying Fuk-tsang and Dr. Abel Lam were invited to share their views with our students during those three days.



**March 13, 2008 Sports Day:
HKBTS Welcomes the Olympic**

Each seminary student needs to be "fit for service" by disciplining oneself in one's spirituality and morality, as well as physical fitness.

