



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

August 2008



Aimed at **Overcoming Shameful Status:**

Romans as a Missionary Letter

Professor Robert Jewett

The Seminary invited world renowned New Testament scholar, Professor Robert Jewett, to be our speaker at the morning chapel on April 17. Dr. Chow Siu-chun was the respondent. Dr. Jewett claimed Roman's main theme is the overcoming of shameful status and pointed out that this same issue often lies behind the many conflicts of the 21st century. We are indeed privileged that Dr. Jewett has granted HKBTS's *English Newsletter* permission to publish his manuscript in this issue.

Scripture: Romans 1:1-17, 14:1-16:16

Introduction

One of the oddities of Romans research, dominated thus far by western scholars, is the lack of interest in the twofold admonition to "welcome" each other in Rom 14:1 and 15:7 and the twenty-one repetitions of the formula "greet so and so" in chapter 16. In the vast scholarly literature on Romans, there is not a single article devoted to either of these terms. The reference in 16:16 to the "holy kiss" has attracted more attention,¹ but no study has thus far explained its function in the congregational situation or the argument of the letter. In the studies written on the dialectic between honor and shame in Romans, there is no mention of the social function of honoring guests implicit in these references.²

Given the fact that these admonitions form the climax of the letter, their significance is indisputable. Yet commentators have lacked the theological and social sensitivity to understand what was at stake in these prominent references. The preoccupation with issues of guilt and forgiveness, which has dominated the theology of Romans since Augustine's time, has rendered our

theological tradition oddly uninterested in the pervasive social issues of shameful exclusion and honorable welcome. What is the function of these themes in the argument of the Paul's letter? What is their social and theological relevance in the situation Paul is attempting to address in Romans? Is there a basis here to develop a new ethic of honorable welcome in the 21st century? We begin the quest with a consideration of the language of honor and shame in the opening chapter of the letter.

I. Overcoming shameful status in the argument of Romans

E. A. Judge helps us understand that Paul in Romans is reversing a broad cultural tradition in the ancient world that viewed the earning of honor as the only suitable goal for life. "It was held that the winning of honor was the only adequate reward for merit in public life."³ This insight was confirmed by *Empire of Honor*, in which J.E. Lendon describes the views of the upper class in the Roman Empire:

When a great aristocrat peered down into society beneath him, there was a threshold beneath which, to his mind, honor did not exist; there were people, a great many people, without honor, and best kept that way....The slave is the archetype of the man without honor.⁴

Most of the audience of Romans consisted of persons with no prospects of gaining such glory. In the hierarchical context of Roman society, the early Christians were mostly slaves and former slaves who were demeaned from birth on prejudicial grounds. The rhetoric of shame in New Testament usage includes both shameful deeds and shameful status imposed by others.⁵ It is the second type of shame that surfaces most prominently in this letter. In fact the most damaging form of shame is this second type, namely to internalize prejudicial assessments that persons or groups are worthless, that their lives are without significance.

In "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," Halvor Moxnes places the argument of the letter in the ancient cultural context of an "honor society" in which "recognition and approval from others" is central, which means that the "group is more important than the individual."⁶ This contrasts with the dominant concern of Western theology and interpretation of Romans, "in which guilt and guilt-feeling predominate as a response to wrongdoing."⁷ He notes that the word fields of honor and shame play important roles in the argument of Romans, with references to "honor, dishonor, shameless, be ashamed, put to shame, glory, glorify, praise, boast and boasting" playing decisive roles in Paul's argument. This focus on honor and shame relates to the central purpose of the letter as Moxnes understands it, "to bring together believing Jews and non-Jews in one community."⁸ This means that shameful exclusion should be overcome, and that cannot be accomplished by forgiveness. This relates to the fact that guilt and forgiveness are decidedly secondary issues in Romans.

To these references, I would add the socially discriminatory categories that Moxnes overlooked such as

- "Greeks and barbarians, educated and uneducated" in 1:14;
- The 28 appearances of the potentially shameful epithet "Gentiles";
- The categories "weak" and "strong" employed in 14:1-15:7;
- The 25 references to social gestures of honor in the form of "welcome" and "greeting" that dominate the last three chapters;
- And the 70 references to "righteousness," "make righteous," etc. that are often mistranslated as "justification."

When compared with the single allusion to the "passing over previously committed sins" in Rom 3:25, it is clear that a mainstream has been confused for a minor current in the tradition of interpreting Romans. Therefore, in place of the traditional theology of Romans that concentrates on individual guilt and forgiveness for failing to live up to the law, I propose that the central issue is setting the world right by overcoming its perverse systems of honor and shame through conformity to various forms of law.

This allows Paul's letter to have a fresh relevance for the 21st century. Although it was relevant in previous centuries to stress forgiveness because most people in the West feared the fires of hell because they were not living up to the law, forgiveness is less relevant for most societies today. Most people living in Europe and North America no longer feel bound by the law, and the societies in Africa and Asia lack the tradition of biblical rules. The most significant conflicts in our time come from shame in the form of social discrimination. Muslims who dominate the news in this "era of Jihad" resent their domination by others; they feel discriminated against, and in fact the aggressive policies of the west, currently led by the United States, are an expression of the feeling of superiority. Other nations that have suffered from various forms of imperialism act out of resentment against their former masters, which makes peaceful international relations difficult to maintain. Paul's argument has great relevance in this contemporary situation, because Rom 1-3 says that none is superior; that all nations have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. In face of claims that some group earns God's blessings because of its alleged virtues, Rom 3-6, 9-11 says all people can be saved by grace alone. We need to reformulate the classical Reformation doctrine of "justification by faith" in relevant social terms. To become "righteous through faith" means to accept the gospel of Christ's shameful death in behalf of the shamed, which means that all of us humans are equally honored. God is not the God of the Jews or the Gentiles alone, argues Paul at the end of Romans 3, because his righteousness is impartial. If we understood this, we would all be willing to stop crusading against each other, and to place ourselves under the same standards of international law, which would be the key to world peace.



2. The challenge of the mission to the barbarians in Spain

This new approach to the theology of Romans is linked with the central purpose of this letter, which was to enlist Roman support for the mission to Spain. Here again, there is a surprise. In 1:14, Paul employs some discriminatory language by referring to “Greeks and barbarians...wise and foolish.” These terms articulate the social boundaries of Greco-Roman culture in a thoroughly abusive manner. As studies of βάρβαρος by Yves Albert Dauge and others have shown,⁹ this is the “N-” word in Greco-Roman culture. When paired with its ideological opposite, “Greeks,” it denotes the violent, perverse, corrupt, uncivilized realm beyond and at times within the Roman Empire that threatens peace and security. There may be parallels here to the ancient Chinese view of the dangerous barbarians of the North. Similarly, the terms σοφός (“wise”) and ἀνοήτος (“unwise/uneducated”) depict the educational boundary between citizens of the Roman Empire and the shameful masses. But it is not just Paul’s use of these epithets of honor and shame that jars the reader; he undercuts the moral premise of the Greco-Roman world in proclaiming his indebtedness to the shameful as well as to the honorable representatives of the antitheses.

When the remarkable formulation is followed by the antithesis “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” in Rom 1:16-17, there is a reversal of the claim of ethnic priority that was being claimed by the Gentile Christian majority in Rome.¹⁰ The reference to not being “ashamed of the gospel” (1:16) also sets the tone for the entire subsequent letter. As one can see from the parallel text in 1 Cor 1:20-31, the gospel was innately shameful as far as ancient cultures were concerned. The message about a messianic redeemer being crucified was a “stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” A divine self revelation on an obscene cross seemed to demean God and overlook the honor and propriety of established religious traditions, both Jewish and Greco-Roman. Rather than appealing to the honorable and righteous members of society, such a gospel seemed designed to appeal to the despised and the powerless. To use the words of 1 Corinthians once again, “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world ... so that no one might boast in the presence of God.” (1 Cor 1:27-29) There were powerful, social reasons why Paul should have been ashamed of this gospel; his claim not to be ashamed signals that a social and ideological revolution has been inaugurated by the gospel.

This revolutionary viewpoint is directly related to the mission to Spain. In Rom 15:24, Paul refers to his plan to “see

you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be sped forward on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little.” The crucial element in verse 24 in relation to the Spanish mission is the expression “send forward,” or “sped onward” which is perceived by commentators as something of a technical expression in early Christian missionary circles.¹¹ Paul is politely requesting logistical support for his mission project.¹² In 15:28, Paul says that after the offering has been delivered to Jerusalem, “I shall go on by way of you to Spain.” Again by implication this reference invites the Roman churches to become involved in the planning and support of the Spanish project.

What was there about the Spanish mission that required such tactful preparation? If, indeed, the entire letter to the Romans is directly related to this project as I show in the commentary, why was it all necessary? Why did Paul not think it was feasible to start the mission in Spain as he had in Thessalonica or Corinth? Why not arrive without advanced notice or preparation, start preaching in a synagogue, find a local patron or patroness, and build a local congregation of converts? In light of information that is now available, we are now in a position to provide an informed answer to this question.

The first matter on which new information is available relates to the presence of Jewish population in Spain during the Julio-Claudian period. Older commentators assume the presence of Jewish communities in Spain, relying primarily on outdated information.¹³ In fact evidence of substantial Jewish settlement in Spain does not appear until the third and fourth centuries C. E., as W. P. Bowers has shown.¹⁴

The lack of Jewish settlement in Spain posed several large barriers to Paul’s previous missionary strategy. Not only did this eliminate the prospects of Jewish converts to the gospel, but it also ruled out finding a group of God-fearers or proselytes in the Spanish cities to recruit as the initial core of Christian churches. There would be no initial interest in a messianic proclamation prepared by devotion to the Septuagint. The absence of synagogues also eliminated the avenues that Paul normally used to establish a base of operations in the Greek cities of the east. Wherever possible Paul began his missionary activities in local synagogues and move to an independent base of operations after troubles erupted or patrons and patronesses emerged.¹⁵ Without a synagogue as a starting point, the crucial contacts with appropriate patrons would be extremely difficult to make, especially for a handworker of Paul’s social class.

The absence of synagogues would pose a related economic problem, because Jewish travelers often used such buildings as convenient hostels and places to develop business contacts. In the case of Spain, prior arrangements for bases of operations

and the recruitment of appropriate patrons would be required in the absence of the resources of local synagogues. Given the Roman domination of the economic resources in Spain and the high proportion of mines, industries, and estates directly owned and managed by the empire,¹⁶ it would likely be necessary to approach this problem through persons close to administrators in Rome. The broad consequence of the lack of Jewish settlement is that the entire strategy of the Spanish mission needs to be reconceived.

With regard to the Spanish cultural situation during the period of Paul's intended mission, I have discovered that Paul's reference to shameful "barbarians" in Rom 1:14 would have included the Spaniards, from the Roman point of view. Despite the presence of a small, Romanized upper class in Spain, large portions of the peninsula were substantially untouched by the veneer of Roman civilization.¹⁷ The rural population in particular and the northern portions of Spain specifically remained apart from Greco-Roman culture. In general, "those who held Latin rights and were more or less Romanized formed a small minority of the population of Spain, while the status of the rest remained the same . . ."¹⁸ On the decisive question of the language spoken in Spain, the barriers to a Greek speaker like Paul were rather high. While Latin was spoken in the major cities, at least in part, and at times rather poorly, the "Iberians and Celt-Iberians of Spain spoke their own languages..."¹⁹ Recent studies of the cultural situation in Spain confirm this picture.

The situation in Spain presented Paul's missionary strategizing with formidable challenges both on the linguistic and political levels. Proclamation and instruction in Latin would be required, and there is no evidence that Paul was sufficiently fluent to carry this out without translators. Indeed, such resources would be difficult to develop, because the Hebrew scriptures were not yet available in Latin, and the first evidence we have of Latin-speaking churches is in the middle of the Second Century.²⁰ Even the church in Rome remained Greek speaking until the middle of the third century,²¹ while elsewhere in the West the church was associated for centuries with Greek immigrants.²² The translation of the gospel, the liturgy, and the instructional traditions into another language would be a substantial undertaking, especially in light of the fact that a range of additional translation resources would be required to extend past the restricted circle of Latin civilization in Spain. Since the Latinized urban centers functioned as outposts of Roman rule and civilization in ways quite different from the Greek speaking portions of the empire where Paul had scored his earlier successes, care would have to be taken to find local patrons who were not resented by the native population.

In sum, the Spanish mission required a level of planning

and support that represented a huge leap from the improvised scheme of earlier Pauline missionizing.

3. Overcoming chauvinism within the Roman congregations

When one understands the challenge of a mission to the "barbarians" in Spain, it becomes clear why so much of Romans seeks to overcome chauvinistic behavior among the congregations in Rome. Since these congregations were treating each other as dangerous barbarians, refusing to accept each other, they were behaving much like the Romans had behaved in Spain. A mission under these circumstances would be perceived by the Spaniards as one more exercise in hateful Roman imperialism. This is why Paul spends so much time providing ways to overcome chauvinism.

In 14:13 and 15:7 there is an admonition to mutual "welcome" in a context that commentators agree was closely related to the congregational situation. The specific ethic of the letter opens with the words, "Welcome the one who is weak in faith, but not in order to dispute debatable points" (Rom 14:1). This is a clear reference to the Jewish Christian conservatives, the "weak" who are being discriminated against by the Gentile Christian majority in Rome. The term "weak" was probably applied by the majority in a pejorative sense, depicting their opponents as persons too "weak" to break free from the Jewish law. It is likely that this group included some of the Jewish Christian exiles mentioned in chapter 16 who are now returning to Rome after the lapse of the Edict of Claudius. Following the reconstruction of Wolfgang Wiefel, it appears that they were not being accepted back into the groups they had earlier helped to form. Conflicts over theology, ethics, worship, and leadership had emerged. As we can tell from the wording of Paul's admonition, when they were admitted into these congregations, it was "to dispute debatable points," that is, to get them in a corner and show them what's what. Paul insists instead on an unconditional form of welcome, in which liberals were to accept conservatives without trying to change them. As we can see from the wording of 15:7, Paul extends this principle both ways: "Welcome one another; therefore . . ." This fits the argument of 14:1-15:7 which forbids mutual conversion of opponents in the church: each side is to build up the other; protecting the integrity of those whose theology and cultures lead them to different perspectives and practices in the church.

In Romans 16 Paul greets a large number of persons whom he had met in previous missionary activities in the eastern half of the Mediterranean world. They are now back in Rome, which correlates with what we know about official Roman policy. In C.E. 49 the Emperor Claudius issued an edict banning Jewish agitators

from Rome because of uproars over a certain “Chrestus.” I still accept the standard inference that conflicts between Christian evangelists and Jewish zealots and traditionalists in the Roman synagogues led to this edict that disrupted both synagogue and church life in the city until the end of Claudius’ career in C. E. 54. The book of Acts indicates that Priscilla and Aquila, whom Paul greets in 16:3-5, were refugees forced out of Rome whom Paul met in Corinth when he arrived there in the winter of C. E. 50. Other likely refugees mentioned in chapter 16 are Epaenetus, Mary, Andronicus and Junia, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Herodion, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus and his mother. The most probable explanation for Paul’s acquaintance with these early Christian leaders is that they met during exile. Paul knows that they have returned to the capitol of the empire during the peaceful, early years of the Nero administration before he writes in the winter of C. E. 56-57 from Corinth.

The massive study of Roman Christianity by Peter Lampe,²³ my colleague in Heidelberg, goes beyond these frequently accepted inferences to suggest the precise districts in the city where Christianity got its start. Using a topographic method based on the coincidence between five different types of archeological and literary evidence, Lampe showed that two of the most likely areas for early Christian house churches were in Trastevere and the section on the Appian Way around the Porta Capena inhabited by the immigrants. These are the slum districts where slaves and handworkers lived, the most shamed element in the population of Rome, whose names surface in chapter 16.

This theme of inclusive welcome of shameful outsiders is continued in the repeated formulas of chapter 16. “Greet so and so” is repeated 21 times in this chapter, in various forms. The meaning of the term “greet” in the Greco-Roman culture is actually to put one’s arms around the other; to hug or kiss them as a sign of welcome. It was ordinarily done when a guest enters the house or space of a host. So the implication of this repeated admonition is the same as we found in 14:1 and 15:7, to welcome people into your love feasts.

The climax in this request for mutual welcome, which would overcome the conflicts between these early Christian groups, is found in 16:16, “greet one another with a holy kiss.” In contrast to much of the kissing in the modern world, in Paul’s time it was primarily a family matter. One kissed family members when meeting them. In the case of early Christian groups, the holy kiss sealed the solidarity of extended family. It said, in effect, you are my “brother” or “sister;” it is the ultimate expression of honor. And in view of the fact that most Christians did not own homes, the kiss was extended when they met for their common meals. It was a regular feature in the early Christian love feasts. What I

would like to point out, however, is that to “greet one another” in this manner would overcome the hostilities and prejudices between early Christian groups, and make them ready to participate in the mission to the imperial outsiders in Spain.

This gospel of generous grace has been betrayed by Christian chauvinism, thwarting the mission to unify the world, just as in Paul’s time, it threatened the possibility of a successful mission to the barbarians in Spain.

4. New light on the thesis of Romans

The thesis of Romans is that the righteousness of God is the greatest power in the world. In 1:16, Paul writes that the gospel “is the power of God for salvation, for all who believe.” The gospel of Christ shamefully crucified shatters all efforts to retain claims of cultural superiority. It is revealed in Christ, whose death expressed divine love at its height and exposed human depravity at its depth. Christ revealed the deepest dilemma of religion, that it can be misused as a means of status acquisition, leading us to say, “We are more righteous than you,” and “We know better than you how to achieve freedom and peace.” This is why Paul insists that this transformation is available to all who believe, whether Greco-Romans or barbarians. The righteousness of God overturns the unjust systems of honor and shame that each nation and group creates, showing that all humans are equally loved by God with a holy, impartial, righteous passion. This power demands mutual acceptance of others. This has not been understood by western interpreters, who since the Reformation have devoted their energies to define the correct doctrine of justification so as to prove the superiority of their group of believers. This leads western commentators to disregard the significance of the climactic, final chapters of Romans that call for mutual acceptance in place of theological exclusion of fellow believers. We return to this theme in the final lecture that identifies the interpolations of 16:17-20 and 16:25-27 as early efforts to avoid the tolerant implications of Paul’s argument and to establish intolerant exclusion as the norm advocated by Paul.

In fact, Paul devotes 16 chapters of his longest letter to demonstrate how divine righteousness as revealed in Christ should be understood and lived out. This has a direct bearing on how the “God of peace” in 15:33 and the global reconciliation of 15:7-13 should be understood. If divine righteousness is indeed impartial, then in the international arena, we should treat other nations as equals under international law. In the church arena similar to the situation of congregational competition that Paul was facing in Rome, it means inviting members of other groups into one’s own love feasts that celebrate the *koinonia* established by the shameful death of Christ in behalf of the shamed. It is in mutual greetings of one another, through the holy kiss at

the beginning of our meetings together; that the redemptive power of divine righteousness is spread.

Conclusion

The time has come in the 21st century for the true nature of early Christian communalism, the issue of barbarian shame, the insight about the perversion of religion into a means of gaining honor, and the message concerning the impartial righteousness of God to become clear. In face of the violent campaigns of contemporary Christians, Muslims and Jews that reflect distorted visions of divine righteousness, and illusions about the capacity to achieve the good through violence, the gospel of Christ shamefully crucified remains supremely relevant. This gospel of divine righteousness is the true power center of the universe, overcoming shameful status where ever it remains, and making us know that we are all God's beloved children wherever we may be on that great circle from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In Christ the line between the barbarians and the citizens of imperial centers, wherever they may be located, has been definitively erased. If this were understood and lived out, the story of the 21st century would reflect the fulfillment of the globally reconciling mission that Paul wrote this letter to advance.

Endnotes

- 1 See Stephen Benko, "The Kiss," in *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians*, ed. S. Benko (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1984), 79-102; John Ellington, "Kissing in the Bible: Form and Meaning," *BT* 41 (1990): 409-416; William Klassen, "The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament," *NTS* 39 (1993): 122-135; Eleanor Kreider, "Let the Faithful Greet Each Other: The Kiss of Peace," *Conrad Grebel Review* 5 (1987): 28-49; W. Lowrie, "The Kiss of Peace," *TTo* 12 (1955): 236-242; Nicholas James Perella, *The Kiss: Sacred and Profane: An Interpretative History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Berkeley: University of California, 1969); Klaus Thraede, "Ursprünge und Formen des 'Heiligen Kusses' im frühen Christentum," *JAC* 11-12 (1968-1969): 124-180.
- 2 Halvor Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," *JSNT* 32 (1988): 61-77, which develops the ideas in the earlier article, "Paulus og den norske vaeremåten. 'Skam' og 'aere' i Romerbrevet" [Paul and Norwegian Culture. "Shame" and "Honor" in Romans], *NorTT* 86 (1985): 129-140.
- 3 E. A. Judge, "The Conflict of Educational Aims in New Testament Thought," *Journal of Christian Education* 9 (1966): 38-39; he cites Sallust, *Bellum Jugurthinum* LXXXV: 26, "Reticence would only cause people to mistake modesty for a guilty conscience."
- 4 J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 96.
- 5 See A. Horstmann, "α-σχύνομαι be ashamed," *EDNT* 1 (1990): 42-43, which lifts up the public sense of persons "being put to shame" by others in contrast to the subjective meaning of "be ashamed" of what one has done, found especially in the use of "παῖσχύνομαι."
- 6 Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," 63.
- 7 Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," 62.
- 8 Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," 64.
- 9 Yves Albert Dauge, *Le Barbare. Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, Collection Latomus 176 (Brussels: Latomus, 1981): 393-810, showing that the term barbarian in Roman materials serves to depict outsiders as irrational, ferocious, warlike, alienated, chaotic, and in all respects the opposite of the civilized Roman.
- 10 See James C. Walters, *Ethnic Issues in Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Valley Forge: TPI, 1993), 68-79.
- 11 Michel, *Römer*, 369.
- 12 C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), 229.
- 13 Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 398; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 769; Michel, *Römer*, 369; the new edition of Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ: 175 B.C.- A.D. 135*, vol. 3, rev. and ed. G. Vermes et al. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1986), 84-85 correct the earlier edition at this point, taking Bowers' work into account.
- 14 W. P. Bowers, "Jewish Communities in Spain in the Time of Paul the Apostle," *JTS* 26 (1975): 400.
- 15 See Stanley Kent Stowers, "Social Status, Public Speaking and Private Teaching: The Circumstances of Paul's Preaching Activity," *Novum Testamentum* 26 (1984): 68-73, for evidence suggesting that the homes of patrons were the primary locus of the Pauline mission. The use of workshops for missionizing has been made plausible by Ronald F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).
- 16 M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926; citations from the second edition revised by P. M. Fraser, 1957), 213f. See also J. M. Blázquez (Martínez), "Roma y la explotación económica de la Península Ibérica," *Las Raíces de España*, ed. J. M. Gómez-Tabanera (Madrid, 1967), 253-281.
- 17 Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 211-215.
- 18 Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 215.
- 19 Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 213.
- 20 See W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 340.
- 21 See W. H. C. Frend, *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries* (London: Variorum, 1980), 126.
- 22 See Frend, "A Note on the Influence of Greek Immigrants on the Spread of Christianity in the West," in *Town and Country in the Early Christian Centuries*, 125-129.
- 23 Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987; second ed., 1990; English translation, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries*, trans. M. Steinhauser, foreword by R. Jewett (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).



Academic Affairs News

1. Summer Intensive Courses

There were two summer intensive courses held from late May to mid June. "Pre-marital and Marital Counseling" was taught by Dr. Kevin Mok, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Counseling Psychology), and "NLP – A Brief Approach & Its Application to Christian Counseling" was taught by Mrs. Cheung-Chan Choi-wan.

2. Faculty Retreat

The retreat was held from June 17 to 19. Dr. Joshua Cho, the Seminary's Vice-President, spoke on the topic "Teamwork."

Faculty News

- **Dr. Andres Tang**, Professor of Christian Thought (Theology and Culture) has published three articles: "What Is the Significance of Jacques Derrida (for Theological Thinking)?," "Rethinking of Mahayana Theology: Focusing on the Mahakaruna nad Prajna of Bodhisattva and Christ," "Be not Conformed: Understanding the Anabaptist Faith and Its Critical Significance for the Modern in the Perspective of Discipleship" in three different books respectively: *Between God and Man, A Comparison between Theology and the Theory of Dialogue*, and *Mystery and Reflection*. These articles were all published in April 2008 by Guangxi Normal University Press. His article, "The Pneumatological Epistemology of the Theology of Colin E. Gunton," was published in *Sino-Christian Studies* (June 2008).
- **Dr. Joshua Cho**, Professor of Christian Thought (Systematic Theology) toured Beijing and the Shantung province, giving lectures and sermons and visiting churches and seminaries from June 2 to 9. Besides, from June 24 to 25, he was invited to be one of the speakers at the 2008 Summer Camp for the Ministers of Chinese Christian Baptist Convention. His topic was "Looking at the Shape of Church Pastoring of Taiwan Baptist Churches from the Perspective of Baptist Polity."

- **Dr. Nathan Ng**, Associate Professor of Christian Thought (Church History), was invited to speak on the topic "The Development and Prospect of Christianity" for one of the lessons in the "Broadening the Horizon of Your Faith: The Christian General Education Program" organized by The Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union on June 12. Besides, on June 29, he was one of the speakers at the "The Impact of Baptist Missionaries to China" seminar co-organized by The Mission Center of The Baptist Convention of Hong Kong and the Kowloon City Baptist Church Mission. He spoke on the topic "The Mission and Achievement of Timothy Richard." **Dr. Vincent Lau**, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology (Christian Ethics), was also a speaker at the same seminar on the topic "A Preliminary Exploration of Issachar Jacox Roberts' Missionary Efforts in Hong Kong and Guangzhou."

Visitor

Dr. Terry York, Associate Professor of Christian Ministry and Church Music of George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, conducted a seminar on worship for the Seminary on May 19.

Please Pray for Our Students

• Summer Practicum (mid-June to mid-August)

May the Lord lead each of our students to learn to minister in different churches and Christian organizations, and also grant them a time of peace and rest.

• Spiritual Formation Camp (August 20 - 22)

Theme: Listen ...

Pray that the Lord will help each of our students look upon him and wait before him, and be prepared to listen to his voice.

Distance Education Program

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

Name of Program	Program Description	Admission Requirements	Date of Commencement	Registration Deadline
Diploma in Biblical 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 church pastor's recommendation	March and September	For the semester beginning in March: Hong Kong: February 10 Overseas: January 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.			For the semester beginning in September: Hong Kong: August 10 Overseas: July 25
Higher Diploma in Biblical Studies / Christian Studies Programs	Further studies for students completing the certificate program			
Certificate in N.T. / O.T. Studies Programs	Introductory programs in Bible study, leading students to study a Bible book systematically.	All are welcome	Register at any time	Concessions in fees are available. Students can begin at any time.

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

On-line Program	Program Description	Date of Commencement
On-line Certificate in New Testament Studies Program	An introductory program of an individual Bible book study with a choice of either the complicated Chinese or the simplified Chinese versions. It is a diversified program providing an on-line resource room as well as a platform for communication between tutors and students.	Students can begin at any time with fee concessions. Trial study of the on-line program is welcome: http://distance.hkbts.edu.hk The User ID for the complicated Chinese version: 04YM0001 Code: guest The User ID for the simplified Chinese version: 04YM0002 Code: guest

For inquiry, call 2768 5105 or log on the program's website: www.hkbts.edu.hk/dist/

Spiritual Light Project

The Commencement Ceremony of 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 was held on May 25. It was especially designed for the visually impaired. There are now 11 students taking the program. Please pray for their study.

Pastoral Continuing Education Center

Courses and talks offered in August to December

Course / Talk	Lecturer	Date / Time
To be Mentors of Life (Basic Course)	Dr. Chan Chin-ming	Aug. 25 to Sep. 8 (Mon) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm; 2:30 - 5:30 pm
Growth Group for Ministers (Evening Course)	Rev. Lam Wai-lim	Sep. 22 to Nov. 17 (Mon) 6:30 - 9:00 pm
Personality, Temperament and Pastoral Ministry	President Alfred Kong	Oct. 13 to 27 (Mon) 10:00 am - 12:30 pm; 2:00 - 5:30 pm
T-JTA Personality Analysis Training Course	Rev. Lam Wing-shu	Nov. 3 to 24 (Mon) 2:30 - 5:00 pm
Pre-marital Counseling	Dr. Kevin Mok	Nov. 17 to Dec. 15 (Mon) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Co-organized with Edna Wong Christian Worship and Arts Education Center:		
PowerPoint at Church: Basic Essence	Mr. Kwan Kwong-chi	Aug. 25 (Mon) 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
PowerPoint at Church: To Communicate with Power	Mr. Kwan Kwong -chi	Group A: Sep. 17, 24 and Oct. 8 (Wed) 10:00 am - 1:00 pm Group B: Sep. 22, 29 & Oct. 13 (Mon) 2:30 - 5:30 pm

A course pamphlet will be published in August. Readers can log on our website: www.hkbts.edu.hk.

For application or inquiry, please contact 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. For detail, please refer to the application form in the course pamphlet.

The Third Executive Development Certificate Program for Christian Leaders

The recruitment of students for the third "Executive Development Certificate Program for Christian Leaders" will begin in August. This program is jointly organized by HKBTS and Peter F. Drucker Academy (Hong Kong). The program aims to train ministers and leaders in Christian para-church organizations to be outstanding leaders for the Christian community and the broader community. The program, a five-month intensive program, comprises three units and provides intensive training through lectures, case studies and workshops. It targets ministers and leaders in Christian churches and organizations, the middle management staff in Christian organizations and Christian administrative staff in non-profit organizations. The program will run from October 13 to February 16, 2009. The deadline for enrolment is the end of September. For application and enquiry, call 2768 5124 or log on to the Seminary's website: www.hkbts.edu.hk

Lay Theological Education Department

Enrolment is welcome for the following programs:

1. Master of Christian Studies Program (Major in Christian Communication)

Program Characteristics

"Communication" lays stress on effectively disseminating a message to the target audience. A communicator needs to recognize the audience's specific needs, understand the limitations of the communication process, analyze the impact of different cultures, and grasp the characteristics and evolution of communication tools. This program responds to the above-mentioned needs by adopting an inter-disciplinary approach to equip students to integrate Christianity and communication theories to communicate the Christian message effectively.

Program Structure

An evening program for day-time workers, 2 evenings per week, can be completed within 3 years.

2. Bachelor/ Diploma / Certificate of Christian Studies Programs

Program Characteristics

To provide students with basic theological training and spiritual nurturing at the bachelor level so that the foundation on their faith can be consolidated and their spiritual formation, molded. Students are free to choose their major

studies according to their own interest in order to effectively use their spiritual gifts either at church or in the market place.

Program Structure

An evening program for day-time workers, 2 to 3 evenings per week. Students can enroll in the certificate (1 year), diploma (3 years) or bachelor (5 years) programs.

Certificate Programs: Certificate of Christian Studies, Certificate of Music Ministry

Diploma Programs: Diploma in Biblical Studies, Diploma in Music Ministry, Diploma in Caring and Counseling Ministry

Bachelor Programs: Major in Biblical Studies, Music Ministry, Caring and Counseling Ministry

3. Diploma / Certificate of Children Ministry Programs

Target Groups

To provide holistic and systematic skills and training in ministering to children as well as basic theological equipping for Christians interested in ministering to children aged 6 to 12, and for tutors in children's ministry, Christian parents, Christian teachers in school and Christian educators of children.

Program Characteristics

Its content comprises IQ, EQ, SQ and faith, the personal growth in the life of one who ministers to others, a positive attitude in children's life education, a child's growth in the family, social trends and culture. Besides, skills in teaching children to read the Bible and memorizing scriptural verses, prayer, missions and evangelism will also be highlighted.

4. Diploma / Certificate of Infant Ministry Programs

Target Groups

To provide holistic and systematic ministerial skills and training and foundational theological equipping for those Christians interested in ministering to babies from the newly-born to 5-year-old infants, and for tutors of infant ministry, Christian parents, Christian teachers in kindergarten, Christian educators of infants.

Program Characteristics

Its content includes EQ and the Christian faith, the personal growth of the ones who minister to others, spiritual formation, biblical knowledge. Besides, there will be ministerial skills and training involving the use of music, games, dramas, story telling and science. Two special subjects: "Activities for Infants at Church" and "Religious Activities in School" will also be included.

The deadline for enrolment is early August.

A Talk on "How to Nurture the Youngsters of Christian Parents"

Speaker: Mrs. Ling-Yip Lai-sim

(Executive Secretary, Education, Hong Kong Character City Movement Ltd.; Certified Trainer of "6As of Parenting")

Date: September 10 (Wednesday)

Time: 7:00 - 10:00 pm

Venue: Mongkok Education Center

Fee: HK\$50 per person

Deadline: August 29 or when the quota is filled

Inquiry: Call 2711 2552 / Email: ltedinfo@hkbt.edu.hk /

Website: www.hkbts.ed.uhk/lted

Publication News

Hill Road (Issue 21), the Seminary's bi-annual academic journal, has been published in July with "Worship as Ethics" as its theme. There are six theme articles: "Ethical Dimensions of Worship in the Old Testament" (Wong Fook-kong), "Worship as Foundation of New Testament Ethics: A Reflection on Some New Testament Passages" (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" (Shum Shiu-lun), "Worship: The 'Right' Relationship — A Lutheran Perspective" (Charlene Chang Yu-wen), "Worship as Ethics: A Yoderian Visit" (Vincent Lau), "Sacred Music: Its Ethical Formation, Approaching through Jeremy S. Begbie" (Andres Tang). Also in this issue are three miscellaneous articles and five book reviews.



Dr. Samuel Tang's *Psalms of Prayer (II)*, vol. 10 of the "Psalms among Psalms" series has also been published. The book consists of ten individual psalms of prayer and six 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 use in the pulpit, the family and personal devotionals. For subscription to *Hill Road* or inquiry, call the Publication Office at 2768 5168.

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

Financial Report

General Fund, 1 March 2008 - 31 March 2008

	HK\$
Income	2,441,391.80
Expenditure	<u>2,378,475.93</u>
Surplus	<u><u>62,915.87</u></u>

DONORS REPORT FOR MARCH 2008

Education Fund (Church)

上環浸信會	2,000.00
大角嘴浸信會	14,094.00
大埔浸信會	10,000.00
大埔浸信會天澤福音堂	1,500.00
牛池灣竹園潮語浸信會	1,000.00
牛頭角潮語浸信會	1,000.00
以馬內利浸信會	3,500.00
尖沙嘴國語浸信會	1,000.00
佐敦道浸信會	750.00
沙田浸信會	7,000.00
青山道潮語浸信會	3,000.00
紅磡浸信會	3,500.00
香港天樂浸信教會	941.50
香港仔浸信會	24,878.70
香港浸信教會	88,300.00
香港浸信教會顯理福音堂	4,500.00
香港堅尼地城浸信教會	1,200.00
粉嶺浸信會	4,000.00
圓洲角浸信會	5,000.00
置富浸信教會	1,500.00
銅鑼灣浸信會	3,000.00
錫安浸信會	3,007.00
觀塘浸信會	2,351.00
鰂魚涌浸信會	29,000.00
中華錫安傳道會慈雲山錫安堂	500.00
基督教宣道會華基堂	500.00
基督教豐盛生命堂	4,500.00
HK\$	<u><u>221,522.20</u></u>

Education Fund (Donor)

Mr. & Mrs. John Dockerill	10,000.00
Rev. & Mrs. Lum Wai Chun	5,000.00
Robert Tung	3,880.00
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
招梁碧晃	1,000.00
林潔珍	5,000.00
林麗花	1,000.00
胡文恩	300.00

President Council

譚日旭	2,000.00
無名氏	20,000.00
HK\$	<u><u>22,000.00</u></u>

Scholarship and Bursaries

大學浸信會	8,000.00
香港(西區)潮語浸信會	5,000.00
香港中華基督教青年會	
「百年樹人」基金	9,000.00
愛子	200.00
HK\$	<u><u>22,200.00</u></u>

Lay Theological Education Program

杜桂鵬	500.00
信徒普及神學訓練課程同學	48.00
蔡見歡	10.00
黎振賢	300.00
蕭桂娥	1,500.00
HK\$	<u><u>2,358.00</u></u>

LTED Bursary Fund

余美蓮	HK\$ 1,000.00
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Distance Education Program

Ernest & Sylvia Ho	2,000.00
何鏡煒伉儷	3,000.00
鄒小寶	1,000.00
HK\$	<u><u>6,000.00</u></u>

Local Filipino Program

九龍菲語浸信會	1,000.00
第一城浸信會	735.00
白中興	5,000.00
張智理伉儷	5,000.00
陳麗英	200.00
馮峰慶	500.00
溫祥、黎琮珍	400.00
HK\$	<u><u>12,835.00</u></u>

Annual Concert

九龍城潮語浸信會	2,000.00
香港仔浸信會	2,000.00
粉嶺浸信會	2,000.00
荃灣浸信會	2,000.00
鑽石山浸信會	300.00
冼陳小娥	500.00
甄永雄、余笑玲伉儷	2,000.00
鄧綺文	1,000.00
盧潔芬	200.00
HK\$	<u><u>12,000.00</u></u>

Precious Moments



April 4 Annual Concert of Praise
The concert was held at Hong Kong Cultural Center.
The theme was "Take My Life" with an audience of 1,200 people present.

May 15 Commissioning Ceremony for Our Graduates

All the faculty and students supported the graduates with prayers by asking the Lord to grant them the strength to minister by disseminating God's light and warmth to every corner of the world.



May 21 A Fasting Prayer Meeting in Commemorating the Sichuan Earthquake Disaster

Teachers, students and staff gathered together to fast and pray for Sichuan and prayed that the Lord would bestow blessings on China.

May 29 Special Awards and Long-Service Awards Presentation Ceremony

After the ceremony, officiating guests, those who sponsor the awards and award-winning students, staff and faculty took a group photo together.

